

AM No. 10-070

TO: City Council

FROM: John Marchione, Mayor

DATE: April 6, 2010

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION: OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDMOND, WASHINGTON, EXPRESSING THE CITY'S PREFERENCE FOR AN ALIGNMENT AND STATION ALONG SR 520 IN THE OVERLAKE VILLAGE AREA OF SEGMENT D OF THE EAST LINK PROJECT

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt a resolution expressing the City Council's Preferred Alternative as the SR 520 Alignment Within Segment D of the East Link Project in Overlake.

II. DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSONS

Rob Odle, Director, Planning and Community Development, (425) 556-2417

Bill Campbell, Director, Public Works, (425) 556-2733

Terry Marpert, Principal Planner, (425) 556-2428

Joel Pfundt, Principal Planner, Transportation Services, (425) 556-2750

Nina Rivkin, Chief Policy Advisor, Office of the Mayor, (425) 556-2103

III. DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND

In May 2009, the Sound Transit Board approved a preferred light rail alignment for the 18 mile East Link light rail corridor between Redmond and Seattle. The Board's decision was informed by and supported the City's preferences. Within East Link Segment D, this preference included the D2A Alignment, in which the light rail line is located on the north side of NE 24th Street and turns north along the west side of 152nd Ave. NE to enter the Overlake Village Station. For Segment E, the City preferred the E2 "Marymoor Alternative" Alignment, with a light rail station and park and ride in Southeast Redmond, southeast of the SR 202/SR 520 Interchange, and a station in Downtown Redmond near Leary Way and the eastern terminus of East Link.

During the past several months, Sound Transit staff worked with City staff on preliminary engineering for the D2A Alignment in Segment D to more precisely define the alignment based on the operating characteristics of the planned light rail service. Sound Transit continued to host briefings and open houses with the community as a way to gather comments and share information.

As alignment details were further refined, City staff became concerned that the operating characteristics of East Link in the D2A Alignment required a design that would not be optimal with the vision for Overlake Village. Key concerns included:

- Property impacts due to a larger turning radius at the NE 24th Street/152nd Avenue NE intersection to accommodate higher train speeds, and due to limitations on street access to adjacent properties and businesses;
- Urban design impacts from support columns needed for an elevated trackway in Overlake Village, which are part of the light rail configuration of D2A; and
- The width needed to accommodate a side running light rail alignment and station on 152nd Avenue NE. would be incompatible with pedestrian-oriented land uses and the vital retail character envisioned for this street.

New SR 520 Alignment

As a result of these concerns, City staff and a consultant on the 152nd Avenue NE Corridor Study developed an alternative alignment, which has the light rail line entering Redmond within the SR 520 Freeway right-of-way, connecting to the Overlake Village Station between 151st and 152nd Avenues NE. This option, the SR 520 alignment, is referred to as Option E, and includes a pedestrian/bicycle bridge connecting the Overlake Village Station with adjacent employment and residential areas to the north across SR 520.

This option was developed and evaluated through a public process. In February 2010, the City hosted a design charrette for the 152nd Avenue NE Corridor Study. Representatives for Overlake property owners, architects, consultants, City elected officials and staff from cities and impacted agencies attended the charrette and reviewed five alignment options, including D2A and E.

At the end of the charrette, participants evaluated the five options plus three additional options developed during the charrette against seven criteria. Option E was rated highest and a modified version of the D2A Alignment was rated second highest.

City of Redmond staff developed a walk distance analysis which concluded that in 2030, the Option E station with a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over SR 520 would serve an area within a 10 minute walk that is projected to have 45,559 jobs and a population of 11,213. Without the pedestrian/bicycle bridge the Option E station is projected to serve 22,012 jobs and a population of 9,331. The D2A station along 152nd Avenue NE (without the pedestrian/bicycle bridge) is projected to serve 20,802 jobs and a population of 11,416 in 2030. Option E with the pedestrian/bicycle bridge has the highest walk-to ridership potential of the options considered.

Sound Transit conducted a high-level feasibility analysis of Option E and concluded that it is technically feasible to construct this alignment and the Overlake Village Station within the SR 520 Freeway right-of-way. The pedestrian/bicycle bridge component of the Overlake Village Station is proposed as a City of Redmond project. The City will work with Sound Transit on further evaluation and funding for the bridge.

City staff also completed a preliminary analysis of how a light rail station along SR 520 would fit with other project priorities, particularly a future Overlake Access Ramp and the co-located stormwater and parks facilities in Overlake Village. The analysis for the Overlake Access Ramp indicates that there are at least two feasible options for an access ramp, given the location of the proposed Overlake light rail station adjacent to the freeway. The analysis for the co-located stormwater and parks facilities indicates that one of these facilities could be located in the vicinity of a freeway station.

Further Work

As the 520 Alignment was proposed only recently, staff is continuing to work on the following issues:

- Proximity to park and ride and transit access: Sound Transit staff expressed concern that under Option E, the light rail station would be located approximately 1,000 feet further away from the Overlake Park and Ride (south of the former Group Health Hospital site) and reduce transit ridership. City staff will continue to work with Sound Transit staff to increase transit access and ridership;
- Design of the SR 520 Station Relative to Other Planned Improvements: While staff has completed initial analysis of the fit of a SR 520 Station with other planned improvements for Overlake and opportunities for co-location of facilities, this work will continue as planning for East Link progresses;
- Environmental review: Sound Transit will need to determine if any further environmental review is necessary as part of completion of Sound Transit's Final Environmental Impact Statement; and
- WSDOT Assessment: WSDOT is reviewing Option E against future SR 520 projects in the area.

IV. RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Staff recommends Council support for the SR 520 Alignment in order to:

- Maximize the potential for transit-oriented development on adjacent parcels;

- Maintain a viable 152nd Avenue NE retail street;
- Significantly reduce impacts to property owners and businesses;
- Avoid impacts to traffic operations;
- Support development of a grid of streets;
- Reduce light rail travel time to Redmond by allowing faster (55 mph v. 38 mph);
- More direct service in the SR 520 right-of-way; and
- Capture a larger transit market.

V. SERVICE DELIVERY AND FISCAL IMPACT

Sound Transit will need to obtain federal, state and City permit approval to build East Link. The City's review of permit applications and permit decision is not expected to have an impact on City services or fiscal health.

VI. ALTERNATIVES

- A. Approve the proposed resolution in support of the SR 520 Alignment. Staff recommends this alignment for the reasons stated above.
- B. Continue to support an alignment which locates the Overlake Village Station on the west side of 152nd Avenue NE.

VII. TIME CONSTRAINTS

The Sound Transit Board Capital Committee is scheduled to make a recommendation on the East Link Project alignments on April 8, 2010. The Committee's recommendation will be considered by the Sound Transit Board on April 22, 2010, when the Board is scheduled to update the preferred alignment for East Link. Approval of the attached Council resolution on April 6, 2010, allows the City's preferences to be considered by the Capital Committee and the Sound Transit Board.

VIII. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution

/s/ _____ 3/31/10
Robert G. Odle, Planning Director Date

/s/ _____ 3/31/10
William J. Campbell, Public Works Director Date

Approved for Council Agenda: /s/ _____ 3/31/10
John Marchione, Mayor Date

ATTACHMENT A

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDMOND, WASHINGTON, EXPRESSING THE CITY'S PREFERENCE FOR AN ALIGNMENT AND STATION ALONG SR 520 IN THE OVERLAKE VILLAGE AREA OF SEGMENT D OF THE EAST LINK PROJECT.

WHEREAS, On November 4, 2008, the voters of the Central Puget Sound region approved Sound Transit 2 (ST2), which includes the East Link light rail corridor from Seattle to Redmond; and

WHEREAS, the City's future vision and goals, as reflected in the Redmond Comprehensive Plan, emphasize the need for transportation choices; concentrations of retail, office, residential, and recreational activity in Redmond's two urban centers; and the need for convenient, safe, and environmentally friendly transportation connections; and

WHEREAS, the City's adopted Overlake Neighborhood Plan calls for creation of a vibrant pedestrian-oriented area in Overlake Village and a main street character along 152nd Avenue NE that attracts significant numbers of people to multiple activities; and

WHEREAS, the City previously supported an East Link alignment in Segment D, known as the D2A Alignment located on the north side of NE 24th St., and west side of 152nd Ave. NE; and

WHEREAS, working with Sound Transit during the East Link preliminary engineering phase the City identified a different preferred light rail alignment through Redmond Overlake, known as the SR 520 Alignment that better supports the City's future vision and goals for Overlake as well as regional transportation goals.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDMOND, WASHINGTON, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Redmond City Council's preferred alternative in Segment D of the East Link Project is the SR 520 Alignment, whereby light rail enters Redmond within the SR 520 Freeway right-of-way and continues to an at-grade station, the Overlake Village Station, situated adjacent to SR 520 between 151st and 152nd Avenues NE. This Alternative includes evaluation of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge connecting the Overlake Village Station with adjacent employment and residential areas to the north across SR 520.

Section 2. The City Council directs the Mayor and staff to continue to work with Sound Transit and other partners to improve pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and transit access to this new station location, to increase ridership, to identify park and stormwater facilities needed to serve Overlake that are coordinated with planned East Link alignments and stations, and to ensure that the planned Overlake Village Station and alignment is designed to be compatible with Redmond's Overlake Neighborhood Plan.

ADOPTED by the Redmond City Council this ____ day of _____, 2010.

APPROVED:

RICHARD COLE, MAYOR PRO TEM

ATTEST:

MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, CITY CLERK

(SEAL)

JAMES E. HANEY, CITY ATTORNEY

FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK:
PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL:
RESOLUTION NO.