

RESOLUTION NO. R2011-10

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority selecting the route, profiles, and station locations for the East Link Light Rail Project.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, commonly known as Sound Transit, was formed under RCW Chapters 81.104 and 81.112 for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region, by action of their respective county councils, pursuant to RCW 81.112.030; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit is authorized to plan, construct, and permanently operate a high-capacity system of transportation, infrastructure and services to meet regional public transportation needs in the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, in general elections held within the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority district on November 5, 1996 and November 4, 2008, voters approved local funding to implement a regional high-capacity transportation system for the Central Puget Sound region, known respectively as Sound Move and Sound Transit 2 (ST2); and

WHEREAS, ST2, the fifteen-year plan for expanding high-capacity transit in the central Puget Sound region includes an electric light-rail line connecting Seattle, Bellevue, and Redmond; and

WHEREAS, Sound Move and Sound Transit 2 are the first two phases of project and service investments reflected in the Sound Transit's Regional Transit Long-Range Plan; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan were evaluated in a programmatic supplemental environmental impact statement (June 2005); and

WHEREAS, the majority of Sound Move projects are now complete, under construction, and in service; and

WHEREAS, ST2 builds upon Sound Move and further expands mobility options for the people of the central Puget Sound; and

WHEREAS, the central Puget Sound region continues to be burdened with heavy congestion, especially across Lake Washington, and needs a congestion-free, high-capacity transit alternative in this corridor; and

WHEREAS, the region's population is expected to increase almost 40 percent between 2000 and 2030, and the population increase will further constrain the movement of people and goods and will adversely affect the region's quality of life; and

WHEREAS, East Link will expand the Link light-rail system from the International District/Chinatown Station in Seattle to Mercer Island and Bellevue via I-90, and to Redmond and thereby increase transit capacity as well as provide congestion-free, high-capacity transit access between the areas of highest population and employment density in the region. East Link will contribute up to 50,000 rider trips per day to the Link system resulting in a Link system-wide daily ridership of more than 250,000 in 2030; and

WHEREAS, on July 21, 2005, the Sound Transit Finance Committee authorized the chief executive officer to work with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to prepare a light-rail operation simulation on the I-90 floating bridge using heavy trucks and an analysis of I-90 roadway structures; and

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2006, the Board identified light-rail transit as the preferred transportation mode for high-capacity transit in the Seattle-Mercer Island-Bellevue-Redmond corridor; and

WHEREAS, in September 2006, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued notice of its intent to prepare environmental analysis of the impacts of constructing and operating the East Link Project as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Sound Transit concurrently issued a determination of significance and scoping notice for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) with WSDOT as a co-lead agency under SEPA. The

three agencies agreed that the required environmental reviews should be combined in a single EIS; and

WHEREAS, the environmental scoping process for the East Link Project included extensive community outreach, formal scoping meetings, and public hearings to solicit public input on the alternative alignments, profiles, and station locations for detailed analysis in the EIS; and

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2006, the Board identified the routes, stations, and maintenance base facilities to be studied in detail in the East Link Project Draft EIS; and

WHEREAS, over the nearly five-year period of EIS preparation, Sound Transit held hundreds of outreach meetings, including technical working meetings with staff from the cities along the East Link Project corridor and with other public agencies, as well as community and neighborhood meetings to receive public comment on the design, technical, and environmental analysis; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit, FTA, and WSDOT issued the East Link Project Draft EIS on December 12, 2008. The Draft EIS included detailed analysis of the environmental impacts of the alternatives for each route, station, and four maintenance bases. The Draft EIS also analyzed a “no-build” alternative, included potential mitigation measures for reducing project impacts, and included financial analysis of the alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the Draft EIS was widely distributed to the public, affected local jurisdictions, regional, state, and federal agencies, Indian tribes, community organizations, environmental and other interest groups, and interested individuals; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit provided an extended 75-day comment period on the Draft EIS, which closed on February 25, 2009. To ensure adequate public input, the comment period included five open houses and public hearings; and

WHEREAS, on May 14, 2009, following review of the Draft EIS, and after consideration of public and agency comments received, and other information, the Board identified preferred light-rail routes and station locations for inclusion in the East Link Final EIS and directed Sound Transit staff to work with the City of Bellevue to identify additional external funding sources for a tunnel option; and

WHEREAS, on April 22, 2010, the Board approved Motion No. M2010-44, which modified the preferred light-rail routes and station locations for the East Link Final EIS and, in response to public and agency comment, directed staff to evaluate further design options for 112th Avenue and for the Hospital Station in Bellevue; and

WHEREAS, on July 22, 2010, the Board modified the preferred light-rail design options for 112th Avenue and the Hospital Station based on the further evaluation required by Motion No. M2010-44; and

WHEREAS, in response to public and agency comments, on November 12, 2010 Sound Transit, FTA, and WSDOT published a Supplemental Draft EIS that analyzed new and modified alternatives; and

WHEREAS, during the 60-day comment period, Sound Transit held a public hearing on the Supplemental Draft EIS that provided additional opportunities for public and agency review. The comment period closed on January 10, 2010; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit, FTA, and WSDOT published the East Link Project Final EIS on July 15, 2011. The Final EIS considers and responds to the public and agency comments received on the Draft and Supplemental Draft EISs. The Final EIS evaluates a no-build alternative and 24 build alternatives, including the preferred alternative route and stations identified by the Board; and

WHEREAS, relevant environmental documents, public and agency comments and responses and other materials were provided to the Board for review and consideration before the Board's decision on the East Link Project; and

WHEREAS, the Board's selection of the East Link Project to be built is informed by review of the East Link Project Final EIS, public comments from interested citizens, agencies, tribes and organizations, and other information; and

WHEREAS, in selecting the project to be built, East Link will serve high-growth employment and population centers in the corridor and the region as provided in the ST2 Plan. East Link will provide greater transit capacity and reliability and improve travel time for people traveling between Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond and will also provide a competitive alternative to the automobile for people traveling to and from these areas. In particular, the selected route will meet growing transit and mobility demands by increasing person-moving capacity across Lake Washington on I-90 by up to 60 percent. It will strengthen the transportation linkages between the major urban employment and residential centers in Seattle, Bellevue, Overlake, and Redmond. It will substantially reduce travel time for most transit riders accessing the system who have origins and destinations in or near the corridor. The East Link Project will benefit people throughout the region by providing a transportation system and high-capacity corridor within the region that offers fast, reliable, all-day transit access to major employment and activity centers in that corridor. In addition, the project selected to be built will support the Seattle, Bellevue, and Redmond adopted land-use plans to create concentrated centers of high-density, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented development consistent with the State of Washington Growth Management Act and the Puget Sound Regional Council's transportation and land-use plans (Visions 2020 and 2040) directing high-capacity transit to centers within communities actively planning for growth; and

WHEREAS, after due consideration of the environmental, social, economic and other relevant factors, including public and agency comment and environmental review, the Board finds that it is in the best interest of and will best serve the people of the Sound Transit district and others, to select and implement the East Link Project set forth below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority as follows:

Section 1: The route, profile, and station locations for the East Link Light Rail Project are identified in the following paragraphs (as generally described in the East Link Final EIS):

A. The route will begin in the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel and connect to the Central Link light rail system at the International District/Chinatown Station. It will enter I-90 via the existing D2 roadway, a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) ramp between downtown Seattle and Rainier Avenue. The route will be in the center reversible lanes of I-90 across Lake Washington. There will be one station in the City of Seattle between Rainier Avenue and 23rd Avenue and one in the City of Mercer Island with entrances at 77th and 80th Avenues SE.

B. The route includes an elevated exit of the I-90 center roadway at the Bellevue Way Interchange in the City of Bellevue and will preserve HOV access to and from the west on I-90. The route will proceed along the east side of Bellevue Way with an elevated station at the existing South Bellevue Park-and-Ride. The South Bellevue Station will include construction of a parking garage with approximately 1400 stalls as well as bus-transfer facilities. The route will descend from the elevated profile and continue north along the east side of Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue NE toward downtown Bellevue.

C. The route will cross to the west side of 112th Avenue and include an East Main Station with at-grade entrances. The route will then enter a tunnel portal at Main Street and proceed north in a tunnel under 110th Avenue NE with a Bellevue Transit Center subway station located under NE 4th Street. The station will include two entrances with the northern entrance near NE 6th Street and the southern entrance near NE 2nd Place. The route will then turn east on NE 6th Street and transition onto an elevated structure over 112th Avenue NE, I-405, and 116th Avenue NE. The light-rail route then turns north into the former BNSF Railway corridor and continues to an elevated Hospital Station on the north side of NE 8th Street with entrances also on the north side of NE 8th Street. The tunnel route in downtown Bellevue is contingent upon the City of

Bellevue entering into a term sheet with Sound Transit before August 10, 2011 and a binding umbrella memorandum of understanding by October 25, 2011 which provides at least the following: (1) a firm funding commitment of \$160 million (2010\$) with mechanisms to share risks and benefits between the parties; (2) support for the Project selected by the Sound Transit Board throughout the City of Bellevue; (3) commitments to develop a cooperative permitting process; and, (4) use of City right-of-way for the Project at no cost to Sound Transit, and (5) joint commitments to manage to the Project scope, schedule, and budget.

D. The route turns east into the Bel-Red corridor in a retained cut configuration between 120th and 124th Avenues. A retained-cut 120th Avenue Station will be constructed if an agreement is executed with the property owner before 60 percent final design which contains provisions that reduce Sound Transit's construction and right-of-way costs subject to future Board approval and are generally consistent with Motion No. M2010-44. The route transitions onto an elevated structure over the West Tributary of Kelsey Creek and then transitions back to grade at the 130th Station. The 130th Station, located between 130th Avenue NE and 132nd Avenue NE, includes a new 300 stall park-and-ride adjacent to and immediately north of the station. The alignment continues at-grade in the median of NE 16th Street and 136th Place NE and across NE 20th Street. The route then transitions onto an elevated structure along the south side of SR 520 and into the City of Redmond. The route transitions to grade with an Overlake Village Station at 152nd Avenue NE and then continues along SR 520 in a partially retained cut profile to the Overlake Transit Center Station. The Overlake Transit Center will be rebuilt to accommodate light rail and approximately 300 parking stalls as well as bus-transfer facilities. The Overlake Transit Center will be the East Link interim terminus until additional funding is available or cost savings achieved as part of ST2 or future voter-approved phases.

E. The route continues along the SR 520 corridor to downtown Redmond with an at-grade Southeast Redmond Station southeast of the SR 520 and SR 202 intersection. The Southeast Redmond station includes a parking garage with approximately 1,400 stalls as well

as bike parking and bus transfer facilities. After the Southeast Redmond station, the route turns west through the SR 520 and SR 202 interchange into the former BNSF Railway corridor with a terminal at-grade station in downtown Redmond west of Leary Way. The terminal station includes tail tracks past the station for train layover and turnback operations.

F. The Project will include storage tracks in the former BNSF Railway Corridor north of NE 12th Street with lead tracks and light maintenance facilities adjacent to the corridor. The location of a full maintenance facility will be studied beginning in 2012 as a separate project, including the needs for the extension to downtown Redmond. It is the Board's intent to complete the study by 2015.

Section 2: The East Link stations will be developed with access considerations for pedestrians, bus transit, passenger drop-off or pick-up, and bicycles to link the light-rail line with surrounding neighborhoods. This will include providing space near stations, where practical, for bus-passenger facilities that facilitate easy transfers and bicycle storage.

Section 3: Sound Transit will implement measures to mitigate significant impacts of construction or operation of the light-rail system as identified in the East Link Final EIS consistent with Board policy and will involve local jurisdictions, businesses, community groups, affected institutions, and the public in its implementation. In addition, Sound Transit will provide opportunities for affected neighborhoods to have input on the design of the East Link stations and other project elements to ensure cost-effective, community-sensitive design solutions. Sound Transit will continue to work with King County Metro to develop plans for bus feeder service to East Link stations to connect the light-rail line to the surrounding neighborhoods and encourage Link ridership.

Section 4: Sound Transit will continue to work with FTA to complete all necessary conditions in a timely manner to include the extension to Downtown Redmond in the Record of Decision.

Section 5: Prior to Board adoption of the binding agreement with the City of Bellevue, staff will prepare the financing options for the Project, not later than September 22, 2011.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on July 28, 2011.



Aaron Reardon
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator