

June X, 2017

Dave Somers, Chair, Board of Directors
Sound Transit
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

Subject: Proposed Refinements to Downtown Redmond Link Extension Project

Dear Chair Somers and Members of the Board,

With construction of East Link underway and the passage of ST3, the Redmond community is preparing for the opening of four light rail stations: the Overlake Village and Redmond Technology Center stations in 2023, and Southeast Redmond and Downtown Redmond stations in 2024. The extension of light rail to Redmond will be a transformative investment that gives more people more options for getting around, puts Redmond and Eastside residents within easy reach of hundreds of thousands of jobs, and connects Redmond with the region.

The City of Redmond is recommending refinements to the Downtown Redmond Link Extension project based on community outreach, City staff analysis, and work with Sound Transit staff, as well as Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and King County Metro and Parks staff. Our recommendations are provided below, first for Downtown Redmond and then for Southeast Redmond.

Recommended Project Refinements for Downtown Redmond Station Area

The City of Redmond recommends an elevated Downtown Redmond station near Redmond Town Center. This is a refinement of both the location and vertical profile of the Downtown Redmond station identified in the East Link Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD included an at-grade station west of Leary Way. The City's recommended refinements provide for an elevated guideway and station located three blocks to the east.

The City's recommendation was informed by the Downtown Transit Integration (TRAIN) Study that was conducted over the course of the last year to determine how best to integrate light rail transit into Downtown Redmond, so that it is safely, conveniently and efficiently accessible by transit, walking, and biking, while accommodating vehicle access for pickup and drop-off. The TRAIN Study included participation from Sound Transit, King County Metro, WSDOT, and the community. Station area values identified in the TRAIN Study were transit access, mobility, safety, and land use and urban design.

The City's most important considerations for recommending an elevated station are mobility and safety. An elevated station and guideway avoids the mobility impacts associated with up to six gated street crossings in Downtown Redmond, with gates closing on average every four minutes

during the peak period. An elevated guideway also eliminates potential conflicts between light rail vehicles and pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

The City's most important considerations for recommending the east location are transit access and mobility. The east location can accommodate bus-rail transfers on both sides of the station, eliminating most street crossings for transfer customers, thereby improving both convenience and safety. The east location also mitigates about three-blocks of potential impact to the Redmond Central Connector, which is Redmond's award-winning trail and linear park, and a critical pedestrian and bicycle facility.

The urban design of the Downtown Redmond station is a high priority for the City as it is the gateway to Downtown. Over the last 20 years Downtown Redmond has undergone a transformation from a suburban services center to a mixed-use neighborhood that is the city's cultural and civic center, which retains a connection to nature. Downtown features high-quality building design, signature public spaces, and a connection to nature – especially via trees and waterways. Both the City and the community expect the Downtown Redmond light rail station area to employ superior design that engages Downtown's urban and natural qualities, and advances our vision for Downtown.

Recommended Project Refinements for Southeast Redmond Station Area

The City recommends maintaining an at-grade station and guideway in the Southeast Redmond area, with an at-grade crossing of the SR 520-SR 202 interchange. The City recommends maintaining the station location just south of SR 520 and east of the Marymoor Park boundary.

The City conducted a preliminary evaluation of at-grade and elevated alternatives, including factors such as: bus-rail integration potential, land use and transit-oriented development opportunities, traffic and environmental impacts, the ability to connect King County's East Lake Sammamish Trail to the Redmond Central Connector, and overall cost compared to the ST3 project budget.

The City concluded that the significant factors in making a recommendation were the ability to complete the East Lake Sammamish Trail to the Redmond Central Connector and overall project affordability. An at-grade rail crossing of the SR 520-SR 202 interchange makes it possible for the trail connection to leverage interchange modifications that would be required for the light rail project, keeping the trail project affordable.

According to Sound Transit's preliminary cost estimates, the budget for this project as established in ST3 can accommodate only one elevated station. The City's strong preference is for an elevated station in Downtown Redmond. Based on work completed to date with Sound Transit staff, the City is confident that an at-grade station in Southeast Redmond can advance City values for the Southeast Redmond station area, including: transit access, integration with the neighborhood, access and mobility, safety, and a complementary relationship to other Redmond stations.

In particular, the City has identified the following station design interests in the course of evaluating project refinements:

- Provide exclusive non-motorized access from the station to Marymoor Park and from the station to the East Lake Sammamish Trail
- Use multiple parking structures to deliver the 1,400 stalls that are part of the project, with an emphasis on creative delivery of parking
- Locate parking structures so as to provide convenient station access and mitigate the impact of vehicular traffic on local streets
- Wrap parking with pedestrian-supportive land uses
- Ensure that surplus property is suitable for transit-oriented development

We look forward to continued collaboration with Sound Transit throughout design and construction of the Downtown Redmond Link Extension. Please contact Jeff Churchill at 425-556-2492 or jchurchill@redmond.gov if you have any questions or would like to discuss the recommendations in this letter.

Sincerely,

Hank Margeson
President
Redmond City Council

cc: Redmond City Council