

6a. Sound Transit Lynnwood Link Extension Project Update

Planning Commission Meeting Date: March 21, 2019

Agenda Item 6a.

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Sound Transit Lynnwood Link Extension Project Update
DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office
PRESENTED BY: Juniper Nammi, AICP, ST Project Manager

Public Hearing
 Discussion

Study Session
 Update

Recommendation On
 Other

INTRODUCTION

Design of Sound Transit's Lynnwood Link Light Rail Extension (LLE) Project is essentially complete and City staff are currently reviewing construction permits. Construction is scheduled to start in late March 2019.

Sound Transit hosted a Light Rail Construction Open House in Shoreline on February 26, 2019, to share this construction information and the project final design with the community. This event provided the first opportunity for residents to ask questions about construction. The community was also able to meet the joint venture general contractor team of Stacy and Witbeck, Kiewit, and Hoffman (SKH) that will build the southern LLE portion of the project. Skanska will be the General Contractor on the northern LLE portion starting at NE 200th Street in Shoreline.

Planning Commission last received an update on the LLE Project on March 15, 2018, at the Planning Commission retreat. Tonight, Commissioners have the opportunity to hear from City staff on the construction phase of the light rail project and ask questions for better understanding of both the design and construction of light rail in Shoreline.

BACKGROUND

The City of Shoreline has been actively engaged in Sound Transit's (ST's) planning, environmental review, public outreach, and now design of the Lynnwood Link Extension (LLE) Project in Shoreline since 2010. The City Council adopted an "Open House-based" public design review process for light rail facilities in Shoreline on August 31, 2016. This process included the following community open houses:

- Shoreline Design Process Kick-off Open House (January 27, 2016)
- 30% Design Open House (November 16, 2016)
- 60% Design Open House (May 24, 2017)
- In-Progress 90% Open House (June 27, 2018)
- 90% (Final) Design/Pre-construction Open House (February 26, 2019)

Approved By:

Project Manager JRN

Planning Director ZM

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Following each of the prior Sound Transit Open Houses, City staff reviewed comments and provided a recap of the Open House and a recommended response letter to the Council for their review and approval.

Planning Commission was initially involved in the review of 2016 development code amendments in preparation for permitting of the LLE Project, including specific requirements for light rail land use approval through a Special Use Permit process.

LLE Project Update

Sound Transit and City staff have worked together over the past year to review and adjust the project design to ensure both compliance with applicable City regulations and consistency with the applicable land use criteria for a light rail project. Through the design review process with open houses and Council comment letters, the project design was adjusted to reduce light pollution from the stations to adjacent residential neighborhoods, ensure a reasonable level of environmental sustainability in the construction and project design, and to provide compatibility between the light rail facilities and the neighborhoods in which they will be constructed.

Many elements of the project are at 100% Design and permit applications were submitted in February for completeness determination and start of review. The Shoreline South/145th Station and Garage and the Shoreline North/185th Station are at 90% design and will be refined between now and May for permitting. The Shoreline North/185th Garage is on a later design schedule due to the significant redesign to implement cost reduction measures. The Shoreline North Garage design will be completed for permitting between May and July of 2019.

Construction of Light Rail

Sound Transit submitted required construction permit applications in February 2019, and currently SKH plans to start early work construction activities in late-March/early-April 2019. Early work includes demolition of approximately 59 homes and associated improvements, removal of over 1,400 significant trees, relocation of utilities, wetland mitigation work, and set up of access roads and staging areas along the project corridor. Construction of the northern portion of the project by Skanska is anticipated to start in May or June 2019. Construction of retaining walls, stations, tracks, and accessory structures is scheduled to start Summer 2019.

Construction is organized into ten work zones in the City of Shoreline, and work will be occurring in all the zones concurrently, though within each zone, work may occur linearly from one end of a zone to the other. Temporary noise blankets will be installed on the construction fencing around the station sites and along stretches of the corridor where permanent noise walls need to be removed and reconstructed. Additional noise mitigation tools are available to nearby residents when noise blankets are not viable or adequate, including noise curtains or white noise machines.

The City is working with SKH as they develop traffic management plans and haul routes to ensure traffic safety and reduce impacts to adjacent neighborhoods. Two segments of 1st Avenue NE, south of Ridgecrest Park and south of NE 174th Street, will be closed during construction while they are relocated to the east. The portion of 5th Avenue NE extending south from NE 185th Street also needs to be moved east and will be closed

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for over two years to complete this work. East of I-5, NE 185th Street will be reconstructed in two phases, so that motorized and non-motorized traffic can be maintained for the duration of the work. Additionally, the non-motorized bridge at NE 195th Street across I-5 will be closed for three to six months while the bridge is reinforced to allow the guideway to be constructed underneath the existing bridge.

Sound Transit's contractors will need to apply for nighttime noise variances, which require advanced notice to nearby residences, for work that needs to be completed during nighttime hours. Girders for elevated and road overpass segments of the guideway will be placed at night. Night work will also include raising of Seattle City Light transmission lines over I-5 to provide clearance during construction and afterward between transmission lines and the overhead catenary lines that power the light rail trains. Seattle City Light will need to turn off power in limited areas for completion of these modifications. They will provide notice to those affected by these preplanned outages at least 72 hours in advance.

Light rail construction will also impact neighborhood traffic patterns when detours are needed and additional construction traffic on haul routes. Homes near the construction area may also experience vibrations from soil improvement and compaction or drilling of shafts for columns or installation of soil nails on retaining walls. Sound Transit is committed to acting as a good neighbor during construction by providing timely information, maintaining safety and traffic flow, and by providing a 24-hour construction hotline: 1-888-298-2395.

Tonight, Planning Commission has the opportunity to hear from City staff on the construction phase of the light rail project and ask questions for better understanding of both the design and construction of light rail in Shoreline.

TIMING AND SCHEDULE

The Special Use Permit required for the Light Rail Project is currently under review and will soon go to the Hearing Examiner for a public hearing and decision. The public hearing has been rescheduled a few times already and is now scheduled for April 24, 2019.

The first permits for Project Early work will be issued in March and April. The public can expect to start seeing clearing limit fences go up, houses demolished, trees removed, staging areas and access set up, and utility work begin as early as April.

Main project construction and wetland mitigation work will start this summer. By the end of the year the project should be well underway and will continue through 2023. System and train testing will occur in 2023 and 2024, with a start of train service to the public targeted for July 17, 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

No formal action is required on this agenda item. Staff recommends that Commissioners ask questions of City staff for a better understanding of both the design and construction phase of the LLE project in Shoreline.