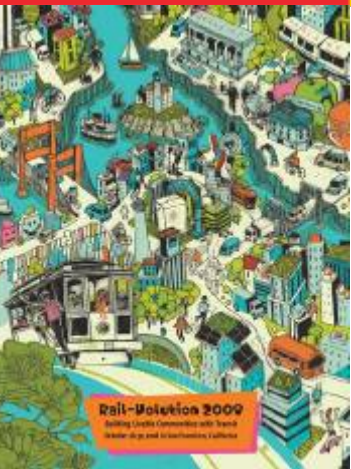




Bellevue Light Rail Best Practices

*RailVolution
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San Francisco
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Project Context

- Bellevue transitioning from suburban to urban center
- East Link light rail extension under study
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement to be published in fall 2008 – no info available for public
- Community anxiety about light rail
 - Technology new to region
 - Concern about impacts
 - Misinformation
- Pressure on Council to preclude alternatives
- City interest in maximizing investment and ensuring design of system that advances community goals



Sound Transit is currently planning and conducting environmental review for the East Link project, and extension of light rail from downtown Seattle to downtown Bellevue, Overlake, and Redmond.

Scope/committee charge

- Review experiences of other cities and national “best practices”
 - Engage community in dialogue about these experiences
 - Develop Bellevue best practices and policy recommendations for the City Council
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- NOT a discussion of technology or alignments

Best Practices

The meaning of Best Practices

“A technique, method, process or activity that will be most effective at delivering the desired outcome for light rail in Bellevue.”

Project Approach

- Issue Identification
- Research Findings
- Case Study City Tours
- Public Input Opportunities



An image of a potential Sound Transit light rail train and station in Bellevue.
(Source: Sound Transit)

Topics Selected by Committee

1. Community and Neighborhoods
2. Community Involvement
3. Connecting People to Light Rail
4. Property Values
5. Station Security
6. Land Use
7. Street Design and Operations
8. Elevated, At-Grade, and Tunnel Integration
9. Construction Impacts and Mitigation

Report

- Introduction – context and charge
- Project Methodology
- Five Guiding Principles
- Light Rail Best Practices Catalog
 - Findings
 - Bellevue Best Practices
 - Action Plan
 - Comprehensive Plan Policies
 - Codes and Standards
 - Other City Policies and Procedures
 - City Capital Investments
 - Expectations of Sound Transit



A Sound Transit light rail car at the SODO maintenance facility. (Source: Sound Transit)

Principal Findings and Conclusions

Connect Somewhere to Somewhere

- Light rail is not about tracks and ties, it's about stations—what happens around them and how people get there
- Stations must be located in places where people want to go. That's why people will ride light rail. When they can go from someplace they want to be to someplace else they want to be
- Light rail should be designed to connect “somewheres”
- Unlike most cities, land use planning has decided where those “somewheres” are located



Principal Findings and Conclusions

Light rail can be built and operated in a way that compliments, not diminishes, the character and quality of Bellevue

- Design LRT Stations to be an extension of the community (Community and Neighborhoods)
- Use the investment in light rail as a foundation for other community enhancements (Community and Neighborhoods)
- Provide connections to stations that are safe, secure and convenient (Connecting People)
- Employ design techniques that deter crime (Station Security)
- Foster a sense of ownership by users and neighbors (Station Security)



Principal Findings and Conclusions

Anticipate impacts and advocate for exceptional mitigation

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for limiting and mitigating negative impacts from light rail construction (Property Values)
- Establish a “fare paid zone” at station and program an active presence of transit and law enforcement personnel on the train and on platforms (Station Security)
- Develop a Construction Management Plan (Construction Impacts and Mitigation)
- Plan for and address the impacts of construction by providing adequate alternative access and mitigating negative impacts such as noise and vibration (Construction Impacts and Mitigation)
- Engage the residential and business communities in developing approaches to minimize impacts and provide support during construction (Construction Impacts and Mitigation)



Principal Findings and Conclusions

Alignment profile should consider unique qualities of each part of community

- Provide connections to the station that are safe, secure and convenient for pedestrians and bicycle riders (Connecting People to Light Rail)
- The alignment should support the land use plan for each of the areas it travels through (Elevated, At-grade and Tunnel)
- The alignment profile should minimize impacts on street operations (Elevated, At-grade and Tunnel)
- The alignment profile should optimize ridership (Elevated, At-grade and Tunnel)
- Employ urban design features to enhance safety and community integration (Elevated, At-grade and Tunnel)



Principal Findings and Conclusions

Early, on-going, public involvement program is essential for success in Bellevue

- This project started with the premise that the public deserves to have the opportunity to guide the design and development of the system
- Improve quality of system by creating “citizen owners” through public involvement process
- Areas of interest
 - Design of stations and alignment
 - Evaluation of impacts
 - Construction management
- Types of involvement
 - Publication of information
 - Open Houses
 - Advisory Committees



Key outcomes for Bellevue

- Created structure for positive conversation about light rail
- Created action plan for city and community to guide light rail development that advances community vision
- Better prepared as a city and staff to be partners with Sound Transit

Key lessons in process

- Limited scope and charge critical to success
- Committee ownership of recommendations
 - Council less inclined to edit
- Case study tours invaluable tool for committee learning and consideration of issues

Application for other places

- Reframing conversation about controversial project into discussion of community considerations
- Creating vision for implementation of project and surrounding community
- Preparing to partner with other agencies
- Providing information to decision-makers and community about unfamiliar technology