



MERCER ISLAND PARKING AND INTEGRATED TRANSIT OPEN HOUSE AND NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

November 18 and 19, 2014

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BACKGROUND

Throughout the planning and final design phases of East Link Extension, the Mercer Island community expressed interest in adding parking near the Mercer Island station. Sound Transit and the City of Mercer Island are working together to identify opportunities for additional parking. After evaluating several options, including private-public partnerships, the City identified the Mercer Island Community & Event Center. Sound Transit evaluated two parking expansion alternatives at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center to meet the following goals:

- **Minimize disruption to the Mercer Island Community & Event Center and surrounding neighbors during construction and operation of the parking facility**
- **Provide separate and distinct entrances for transit and Mercer Island Community & Event Center customers**
- **Provide uninterrupted vehicle drop off in front of the Mercer Island Community & Event Center**

East Link route map



Light rail travels east from Seattle across Lake Washington on the I-90 floating bridge. Light rail serves Mercer Island with a station in the center roadway of I-90. Riders will enter the station at 77th Ave. SE and 80th Ave. SE, in close proximity to the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride lot.

Timeline



OVERVIEW

On November 19, the City of Mercer Island and Sound Transit hosted an open house to introduce a potential parking facility at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center. The meeting served to educate the community on design and construction details, provide an overview of the project schedule, benefits, and new integrated transit service scenario; and gather comments. The open house was held at Mercer Island Community and Event Center from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. A neighborhood briefing was held on November 18 to engage nearby residents ahead of the public meeting.

NOTIFICATION

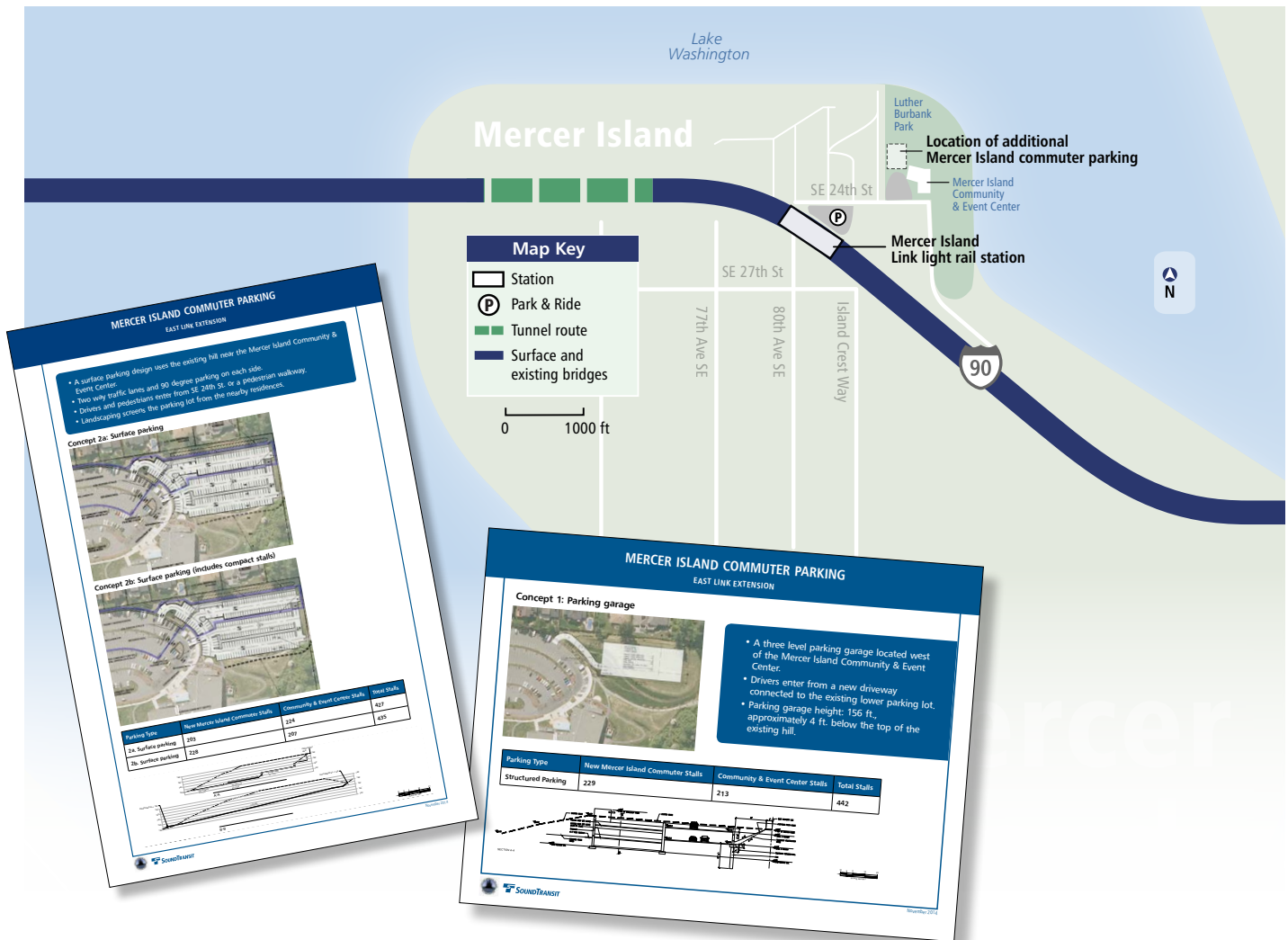
The open house was publicized through the following channels:

- Online advertisements in the Mercer Island Reporter
- Email notification to approximately 120 Mercer Island subscribers of the East Link Extension listserv
- Announcements on the Sound Transit East Link Extension web page
- Joint press release issued by the City of Mercer Island and Sound Transit
- Social media announcements on the City of Mercer Island Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Transit squads: 130 Postcards were distributed to riders at the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride during morning peak commute times
- Posters and postcards at City Hall and Mercer Island Community & Event Center
- City of Mercer Island E-Newsletter announcement
- Nextdoor.com announcement
- 60 postcards were distributed to households in the neighborhood bordering Mercer Island Community & Event Center

OPEN HOUSE OVERVIEW

Approximately 100 people attended the November 19 open house to learn about the potential parking facility at Mercer Island Community & Event Center and integrated transit service scenarios. Attendees were greeted by project staff, asked to sign-in and provided with a Mercer Island Parking Study fact sheet and comment forms. Display boards and roll plots featured information about the potential parking facility, integrated transit service, East Link, the final design process and updated design concepts for the Mercer Island station.

The City of Mercer Island and Sound Transit staff provided an overview presentation at 6 p.m. Project staff were present to answer questions and share information about design details with community members. Attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts on the potential parking facility. All meeting materials were made available on the East Link project website following the open house.



COMMENT SUMMARY

The City of Mercer Island and Sound Transit accepted public comments in person at the open house, by mail and email. A summary of feedback collected at the open house as well as 47 written comments received between November 18 and December 1, 2014 is provided below.

Potential parking facility at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center

- **Concerns about potential traffic impacts near the Mercer Island Community & Event Center:**
 - *It's already an inadequate traffic situation without considerably the additional traffic and pedestrian load. Very dangerous street crossings currently!*
 - *Please address potential traffic impacts to 81th Ave SE, may need 4-way stop.*
 - *Concerned about traffic on N. Mercer Way, need access to our neighborhood.*
- **Interest in a new parking facility at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center:**
 - *Absolutely! This is the only logical place for such a facility.*
 - *Do it right this time. Make the parking blend with the park & not be a big concrete eye sore.*
 - *Parking structure-I want it to look right, that is, respect the place. For example, if a structure is built at the community center, I'd like it to look like hill when it is finished- with a park top and sides similar to the current hill or terraces...*
 - *Concept 1 is more preferable since it provides the most parking spaces for transit riders (versus adding more spaces for the community center). Thanks for considering transit riders' needs for parking.*
 - *We need this parking! The facility should be large enough to handle peak hour parking needs of Islanders. It should be well landscaped to minimize neighborhood impact.*
 - *1.) Do the garage. 2.) Do concept 2a surface parking; Do not do concept 2b- small spaces are a headache with all the large vehicles and trucks people are driving.*
 - *Thank you for planning parking options. I need transit and to access it I need to be able to PARK. Currently this is difficult.*
 - *Big improvement – thanks for listening to previous comments (some of them).*
 - *I like the concepts. MI residents need dedicated parking for MI residents. WE have no other option besides driving to downtown.*
- **Interest in designated parking for Mercer Island residents:**
 - *We need to change the allowed parking at the Park and Ride lot to residents only like many East Coast cities. This will keep commuters from driving to close in Park and Ride lots like MI*
 - *Parking for MI residents is a great and welcome idea.*
 - *Yes more parking for Island residents.*
 - *Don't turn MI into a big transit station! If we need more parking, ask MI residents to fund construction of a MI only parking lot.*

- **Concerns related to adding parking at Luther Burbank Park:**

- *LB Park is a place for quiet contemplation of nature. Let's keep LB Park and its environments a quiet and beautiful spot. Let's not give up a precious location for a concrete lot. The best ways to get parking in downtown MI is to find it in the current Park and Ride area or in the downtown core. Leave our public open spaces for posterity.*
- *The proposed parking area is part of Luther Burbank Parks Master plan voted into place in the spring of 2006. This park land should not be considered available for anything BUT PARK USE. Can't there be several other options such as – Place the sculpture garden art work in the park and build parking right at I-90 in today's sculpture garden.*
- *Do not build a parking lot on existing park land! 1. Destruction of the hill (very valuable view land) cannot be undone. 2. More cars, congestion, and pollution will negatively impact wetlands, wildlife, p-patch garden, neighborhood, and all park users*
- *I am very concerned with the reduction in park/green space to build a parking lot that will be used by off island commuters*
- *Need parking but not at expense of MICC and neighborhood and park land.*

- **Concerns about visual impacts to surrounding neighborhoods:**

- *Gross height should not exceed existing dirt "hill" as to not abstract views from current homes.*
- *Lighting should be kept low and illuminate downward to preserve natural nature of nearby park and local residence.*



- Interest in safety for cyclists and pedestrians:
 - *I am very concerned with the increase in traffic this will create around the community center and adjacent neighborhood. In the park entrance there is already some dangerous crossings for pedestrians and bikes. Adding 200-400 more cars driving during rush periods how will this put kids and bikes at risk .*
 - *May need bike improvements, lots of bike traffic in this area.*
 - *Consider speed bumps in neighborhood if traffic models suggest more cut-through traffic.*
 - *Need pedestrian improvements for safe walk to station.*
 - *The lack of adequate streets, sidewalks, and bike lanes on the adjacent streets to accommodate this added traffic flow.*
- Interest in bus service on Mercer Island and the design of a potential parking facility
 - *We had/have existing Park and Ride on MI for MI citizens already but canceled 86% of MI bus service – I don't think we need a big Park and Ride for Bellevue, Issaquah and Renton unless that is where you build them.*
 - *Islanders have a need for peak commute time parking or buses (frequent buses) to our neighborhoods or we cannot use transit. Help!!*
 - *Get more buses*



- Interest on design of parking facility:

- *Design the MI resident-only Park and Ride to blend with the park and not be an eyesore.*
- *Parking for transit customers at the MICC is not a good option, certainly not the best option. Rather than jumping into paver over green space we should seek to find the best solution. I continue to believe that the existing MI Park and Ride provides the best solution, and we need to continue to work to determine how to expand that site. Common sense needs to prevail.*
- *Have you considered building a multi-story parking facility above the light rail station? This would be convenient for commuters and also for those who shop on M.I. This would not use land.*

- Recommendations for alternate parking facilities:

- *Not at the MIC & Event Center! Other choices: (1) the sculpture garden area could support the parking needs; be close to the station. (2) My first choice would be a lid over ST station; that would provide parking. (3) Build parking on the Bellevue side. (4) Build a structure in the MCE parking lot and keep the "Hill" for kites, kids, and nature lovers. (5) I do not see any "restroom" provisions.*
- *Place the new park and ride over I-90 not in a residential area.*



- *Work a deal with Farmers Insurance to build a larger multi-story parking garage-still allowing Farmers to park but also others. Shuttle from Farmer's to station.*
- *Do not build here at community center, recommend south side of I-90. Building at MICC will further impact the neighbors and make poor traffic at peak times much worse.*
- *Keep everything south of I-90!!*

Comments on integrated transit service scenarios, including the new 80th Ave. concept.

- *Mixed interest in the integrated transit service scenarios:*
 - *These buses that leave passengers on MI to transfer to light rail are less convenient for commuters than if their own bus would carry them directly to Seattle.*
 - *I believe that current buses traveling to Seattle on I-90 should continue the route they have currently. Provision should be made for these buses.*
 - *I do not want buses turning around by driving through Mercer Island downtown. We have a poor enough shopping area without buses driving through all the time.*
 - *Develop in downtown area only!*
- *Interest in the new 80th Ave. concept.*
 - *This is a great compromise. Good work in minimizing bus traffic in MI downtown.*
 - *Very concerned about pollution noise and crowding from large numbers of idling buses. This sounds like a profound change in the local environment. Of all options I prefer option –this appears to be the least disruptive.*
 - *The new concept is better. We still need to minimize number of buses that turn around on the island.*
 - *I like the new option for 80th Ave. It seems to be the most efficiently for redirecting the buses back to the eastside.*

NEXT STEPS

Stay Involved

The City of Mercer Island and Sound Transit are accessible by phone, email, and available to meet in person.

- Contact the City of Mercer Island at **206-275-7661**
- Sound Transit at **eastlink@soundtransit.org** or **206-398-LINK**
- Attend East Link final design open community meetings
- Visit the project website: **soundtransit.org/eastlink**

