

Proposed light rail maintenance facility draws opposition at community meeting



Lynnwood Mayor Nicola Smith welcomes residents to a community meeting about Sound Transit's proposal to build a light rail maintenance facility in Lynnwood Saturday at the Cedar Valley Grange Hall. Also at the meeting was Stewart Mhyre (left) from the Edmonds School District. (Photo by David Pan)

By David Pan/Lynnwood Today editor

Sound Transit's proposal to build a Light Rail Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility in Lynnwood didn't go over well at a Community Meeting Saturday in the Cedar Valley Grange Hall.

The meeting, hosted by the city of Lynnwood, included short presentations by Lynnwood Community Director Paul Krauss, Edmonds School District Executive Director of Business and Operations Stewart Mhyre and Sound Transit personnel.

Sound Transit's own Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), released this month, outlined a number of obstacles and problems with the proposed Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF) site in Lynnwood, which would be located north of I-5 and east of the 52nd Avenue West/Cedar Valley Road intersection at 204th Street Southwest. Three other sites in Bellevue also are under consideration by Sound Transit.

The principal obstacle appears to be the fact that the proposed OMSF site is owned by the Edmonds School District, which has plans to move its Maintenance and Transportation Operations to the site.

Mhyre said as part of the bond proposition passed in February, the district is hoping to begin work on the new facility around this time next year.

Sound Transit does not have the power of eminent domain over the Lynnwood property because the land is owned by another public agency – the Edmonds School District.

Mhyre noted at the district spent a lot of time searching for suitable land for its Maintenance and Transportation Facility and if Sound Transit were to use the district's site for its OMSF then the agency would need to find a new home for the district's facility.

“There isn’t one,” Mhyre declared.

In order for Sound Transit to be able to use the property, the district has to be a willing seller and Mhyre indicated the district isn’t interested.



The DEIS also noted that if Sound Transit’s maintenance facility is located in Lynnwood, the agency still would require storage tracks in Bellevue. The Lynnwood site would have the highest annual operating costs among the four options and Lynnwood would require changes to light rail service during the evening hours, while the Bellevue sites would not. A Lynnwood facility also would have the greatest impact on wetlands and vegetation among the four proposed options and it would be directly across the street from an established residential neighborhood.

“We think it (proposed facility) has a substantial impact on the community,” Krauss said.

Sound Transit is studying three potential sites in Bellevue – BNSF Alternative, BNSF Modified Alternative and SR 520 Alternative. The BNSF Modified Alternative is the most expensive option because it splits the OMSF on both sides of the proposed site and it is considered to be too close to on-going development. More businesses would be displaced under BNSF Modified Alternative and SR 520 Alternative.

The DEIS states that only two homes in Lynnwood would be affected by noise and vibration from the OMSF, while no homes would be impacted in all three of the Bellevue sites.

A Lynnwood resident disputed the DEIS conclusion, saying “There is no way to mitigate the noise.” The resident said the maintenance facility likely would impact two blocks of houses rather than only two houses. The light from the proposed facility also was of concern to the resident.

Bill Lider, a civil engineer who has done transportation work for Sound Transit and the city of Seattle, doesn’t see the Lynnwood site as being viable.

“My professional opinion of this project here proposed in Lynnwood, frankly, it’s dead on arrival,” he said. “You have an unwilling seller ... I don’t know why you are considering this.”

Tamara Belland, who is on the board of a nearby condo association, agrees.

“It sounds like it won’t be going ahead because of the Edmonds School District,” she said.

But she added that Lynnwood residents still need to express their opinions to Sound Transit.

“Other people in Bellevue are going to be vocal,” Belland said. “We can’t assume it (Lynnwood facility) isn’t going to happen.”

Linden Clausen, who lives close to the proposed facility, said he wasn’t in favor of the Lynnwood site “because of the impact on the neighborhood.”

One resident noted that Lynnwood has many recent immigrants, some of whom are from countries with oppressive governments. These people may have cultural concerns about talking to the government, the resident said. “People are afraid to speak to the government.”

Earlier, Krauss raised the issue of economic justice where a wealthy community says don’t build something undesirable here, but rather stick it over there, where there are middle class and lower income people, who can’t fight it as well. Krauss said the city thinks it’s a valid issue.



Residents voiced their opinions about the proposed light rail maintenance facility at a community meeting Saturday.

The city already has expressed its opposition to the Lynnwood site to Sound Transit on two separate occasions, Krauss said.

All of the speakers urged residents to voice their opinion, either at Sound Transit’s June 3 Public Hearing/Open House in Lynnwood or by writing and sending them via email or regular mail by June 23.

Sound Transit’s Public Hearing/Open House about its proposal for an Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility in Lynnwood will be from 5-7:30 p.m., June 3, at the Lynnwood Convention Center.

Sound Transit is seeking public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the potential sites in Lynnwood and Bellevue. Sound Transit and the Federal Transit Administration have published the DEIS for the Link OMSF. Review and comment on the DEIS in person, online, or by mail by June 23. The **DEIS** evaluates and describes potential impacts of the project. You can review the DEIS:

Online: soundtransit.org/omsf

At libraries: Washington State, Lynnwood and Bellevue Regional

Print copy: call 206-398-5464

Comment by email: omsf@soundtransit.org

Comment by mail: OMSF DEIS Comments Sound Transit Union Station, (Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority) 401 S. Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98104-2826

For project information in alternative formats or to request accommodations for persons with disabilities, call 1-800-201-4900/TTY Relay: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org. To reach Sound Transit Community Outreach call 206-903-7752 or email: jenna.franklin@soundtransit.org.