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Bellevue looking to save on East Link

By JOURNAL STAFF

BELLEVUE — City of Bellevue and Sound Transit officials are looking for ways to cut costs on the six miles of East Link light rail that will run through Bellevue.

During a media briefing yesterday, officials said they're looking at re-configuring and moving the downtown tunnel station. This could reduce the depth of the 2,000-foot cut-and-cover tunnel.

They're also doing more detailed geotechnical analysis to see if the columns for the line's elevated portions don't need to be placed as deep. Along state Route 520, officials might replace elevated portions of the line with a retained cut.

Bellevue officials asked for and got the downtown tunnel. The city offered up to pay up to $160 million to help defray the extra cost.

H-J-H Design Partners is designing the South Bellevue to Overlake portion of the $2.8 billion East Link. The design contract for the Seattle to Bellevue portion will be advertised next month.

East Link construction is to start in 2015 with service starting in 2023.

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