



Puget Sound Regional Council

2024 FHWA REGIONAL COMPETITION: PROJECT SPONSOR FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

AGENCY: King County Metro
PROJECT: RapidRide K Line Project

Question #1: Since the identified scope is more a menu of possibilities than confirmed elements, the scoring team needs additional detail to understand the outcomes of the specific project for which funding is being requested, beyond the general results that can result from the program type. With this in mind, please describe specific outcomes intended to result from this project, and how the different scope options would help achieve those outcomes. If possible, please also provide information about how the specific scope elements will be determined, and/or the basis for removing potential elements from consideration.

Answer #1: The RapidRide K line will provide important high-capacity transit connections within and Between Kirkland to Bellevue along the 18-mile corridor. The line will connect three regional growth centers (Totem Lake, downtown Kirkland, and downtown Bellevue), which have growing residential populations and are major employment destinations. Nearly 85,000 residents and 237,500 employees are located within a 10-minute walk (approx. ½ mile) of the corridor, a majority located within designated growth centers.

The K Line would also increase service levels, both frequency and span of service, along the entire corridor, and reduce travel times. Average bus trip travel times are estimated to decrease by 13-25 minutes per trip, reducing transfer wait times, and extend the range of destinations constrained by travel time. The table below shows frequency for each segment of a route replaced by K Line, with improvements shown in **bold**.

Route	Current Peak	RapidRide Minimum Standard	Current Off-Peak	RapidRide Minimum Standard
239	30	10	30	15
250	15	10	15	15
255	10-12	10	15	15
271	10-15	10	15	15

Speed and Reliability Investments

The project is developing operational and capital improvements in partnership with local agencies to deliver meaningful improvements in terms of future K Line speed and reliability. Over fifty potential spot improvements have been developed and refined with our local agency partners and the project will be selecting project investments based meeting an overall twenty percent corridor travel time savings goal which are supported by local agencies.

Passenger Facilities

The project will construct around 40 station pairs within the corridor to deliver the highest level of passenger comfort and experience Metro provides to future K Line riders.

Communication System Investments

The project will partner with the Cities of Kirkland and Bellevue to deploy next generation Transit Signal Priority capabilities within the planned corridor for K Line operations.

Access to Transit

The project will invest in a number of access to transit projects to remove roadblocks identified in partnership with the partner local agencies to improve access to future K Line service for those most in need of improved transit access. The team has a formal evaluation process in place to rank investment opportunities and will select the most number of investment opportunities with local agency implementation support which can be constructed with the available budget, which is estimated as 10% of the overall capital budget at this time.

Developed through a collaborative process between King County Metro and the cities of Bellevue and Kirkland, the following types of access to transit improvements are being considered for inclusion in the K Line project:

- Installation of new sidewalks
- Upgrades to existing sidewalks to meet ADA accessibility standards, including widening, leveling, installation of curb ramps, and general repair
- Installation of pedestrian-scale lighting along existing sidewalks
- Installation of new shared use paths
- Installation of new neighborhood greenways
- Installation of new crossing treatments, including signage, pavement markings, median refuge islands, beacons, and signals
- Upgrades to existing crossings, including signage, pavement markings, median refuge islands, beacons, and signals
- Installation of standard, buffered, or protected bike lanes
- Installation of secure bike parking at transit centers and park & rides

Additionally, the K Line project includes the provision of infrastructure improvements that would enhance safety and accessibility for community members when biking, walking, or rolling to K Line stations.

Mode Shift

Better connections to key growth areas and increased and faster, more reliable service will result in more boardings and mode shift to transit, thus reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Question 2: You mentioned that you engaged community members and Community-Based Organizations. Please provide more information on who they are, their connection to EFAs, and how their feedback influenced the project.

Answer #2:

In Fall 2019, Metro began engaging communities in Kirkland and Bellevue to understand their transit needs and priorities, and to gather input to inform the design of the RapidRide K Line. Metro was looking for specific feedback on route options between Totem Lake, downtown Kirkland, and the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride.

Metro conducted 15 interviews during October and November 2019. Through these interviews the team aimed to introduce RapidRide K Line to community-based organizations (CBOs), agencies, and businesses in the project area, establish a constructive and ongoing dialogue between Metro and these stakeholders, inform future public engagement for the project, especially with historically underserved populations, and gather information to inform RapidRide K Line design concepts.

The following table captures the organizations and community groups Metro interviewed.

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS INTERVIEWS		
DATE	ORGANIZATION/GROUP	COMMUNITY SERVED/REPRESENTED
10/14/19	Bellevue Chamber of Commerce	Businesses in Bellevue
10/15/19	Boys and Girls Club of Kirkland	Children in the Kirkland community
10/16/19	AtWork!	People with developmental disabilities
10/17/19	Attain Housing	Families and individuals needing housing
10/18/19	Hopelink	Families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities who are low-income or homeless in King and Snohomish Counties
10/21/19	City of Bellevue	Community in Bellevue
10/23/19	Chinese Information Services Center	Immigrants near and around Seattle, Bellevue, Kent, and Redmond

10/23/19	Bellevue Downtown Association	Community members living, working, or playing in Downtown Bellevue
10/23/19	Youth Eastside Services	Youth and families seeking behavioral health services in East King County
10/24/19	Kirkland Chamber of Commerce and Kirkland Downtown Association	Businesses in Kirkland area and community members working, living, and playing in Downtown Kirkland
10/24/19	New Bethlehem Center-Catholic Community Services	Families who are experiencing homelessness
11/01/19	Overlake Hospital	Employees and patients at Overlake Medical Center
11/06/19	Bellevue College	Students, faculty, and employees at Bellevue College
11/18/19	Amazon	Current and future Amazon employees
11/21/19	Microsoft	Current and future Microsoft employees

Metro also participated in over a dozen events throughout Kirkland and Bellevue including briefings, tabling events, transit outreach, and onboard bus outreach to introduce the future RapidRide K Line and encourage community members to take the online survey.

The table below summarizes where Metro presented to local organizations, hosted tabling booths, and performed bus and transit outreach.

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT			
EVENT	FORMAT	AUDIENCE	REACH
Kirkland Transportation Commission	Presentation and discussion	Advisory group to the Kirkland City Council	7 members
Bellevue City Council	Presentation and discussion	Elected officials from the City of Bellevue	7 members
Kirkland City Council Transportation Ad Hoc Committee	Presentation and discussion	Elected officials from the City of Kirkland	3 members
Kirkland Senior Council	Briefing and discussion	Advisory group to the Kirkland City Council	16 attendees

Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods	Briefing and discussion	Neighborhood advocates in Kirkland	15 attendees
Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative	Briefing and discussion	Transportation advocacy group representing seniors	13 attendees
King County Library, Kirkland	Tabling	Diverse group of attendees including students and seniors	42 visitors
Bellevue Farmers Market	Tabling	Bellevue community members	34 visitors
Kirkland Interfaith Network Alternative Gift Fair	Tabling	Kirkland community members and CBOs	42 visitors
North Bellevue Community Center Thanksgiving Luncheon	Tabling	Seniors served by the North Bellevue Community Center	25 visitors
Bellevue Family YMCA	Tabling	Bellevue community members	13 visitors
Hopelink's 19th Annual Turkey Trot	Tabling	Residents or Kirkland and the surrounding areas	131 visitors
King County Library, Bellevue	Tabling	Diverse group of attendees including students and seniors	30 visitors
Route 255 onboard bus outreach	Bus outreach		22 riders
Route 235 onboard bus outreach	Bus outreach		25 riders
Totem Lake Transit Center/South Kirkland Park-and-Ride outreach	Transit outreach		71 riders
Kirkland Transit Center outreach	Transit outreach		59 riders

Key themes we heard during the Needs and Priority Phase 1 of engagement include:

- Community members want transit that will get them to important destinations within the community.
- Speed of travel is important to community members.
- Community members want to be certain the bus will be there when they need it.
- Many transit riders expressed concerns about planned changes to Route 255 and resulting lack of direct connections to Downtown Seattle.
- Some people said Metro needs to better serve people with mobility, vision, hearing, or other impairments.
- Community members stressed the importance of safety at stations, including lighting and crosswalks, as well as sidewalks leading to stations.
- Difficulty getting to and from the bus stop can make it hard for people to use transit.
- Bus transit takes significantly longer than other transportation methods and is a barrier to getting places on time.

These community identified priorities align with the East Link Connections priority mobility needs that were developed in 2021-2022 and reconfirmed in 2024.

2021-2022 Key mobility needs, plus new comments:

- Provide transit to/from important community-identified destinations and where needs are greatest; including Seattle, Snohomish County, and major medical centers in the region.
- Faster travel times to get me where I want to go.
- Additional and improved connections to new locations.
- More service outside peak periods and on weekends, and more consistency between peak and off-peak/weekday and weekend service levels.
- Make transfers easier by being frequent, safe, and accessible, especially for seniors, riders with disabilities, transit-dependent riders, and long-distance travelers.

Many of the priorities shared by project-area Eastside residents echoed what was heard in the RapidRide K Line needs assessment, making them relevant today.

The feedback Metro collected during Phase 1 helped inform how and where we seek to engage with community members and groups. Throughout this project, we intentionally seek to hear from people and groups who have been historically underrepresented or overlooked in transportation planning. We will continue to focus engagement efforts on meeting people where they are, hosting events in the community, partnering with CBOs, attending regularly scheduled meetings, and engaging people in the languages they prefer to use.

NEXT STEPS

(Phase 2) Conceptual design engagement approach — Spring 2024

Originally slated to begin service in 2025, Metro paused work on RapidRide K Line at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic due to funding shortfalls. Metro is committed to engaging key partners and eastside communities as planning work restarts. Metro is working to involve Eastside communities in finalizing conceptual design plans for RapidRide K Line. In this phase, we will re-introduce the project to the community and gather feedback on community priorities and conceptual design plans for RapidRide K Line which Metro developed in partnership with local agencies and address project and agency goals. Specific areas for conversation include:

- Proposed RapidRide K Line station locations
- Priorities and barriers to accessing transit, to inform projects to make it easier for people who walk, roll, and bike to get to the station
- Priorities for people who travel in the area, to inform roadway improvements to make the bus faster and more reliable
- Additional ways to share information and gather input from eastside communities.

(Phase 3) Final concept design engagement approach — Fall 2024

Phase 3 will focus on presenting a complete vision of the proposed project, with the goals of getting detailed feedback the project team will use to refine the project vision, confirm the project meets community priorities, and complete the project's planning stage through a formal adoption of the Locally Preferred Alternative by the King County Council.

Community engagement strategies during this phase will include presenting the draft LPA on a virtual platform for detailed community feedback and direct face-to-face communication with key community leaders and interested parties. Metro will report back to community members who offered feedback to share how their ideas are reflected in the final plans.