What is RapidRide K Line?

King County Metro is developing RapidRide K Line to serve the fast-growing communities between Totem Lake, downtown Kirkland, downtown Bellevue, and Eastgate. RapidRide K Line will serve a variety of regional destinations, including service providers and community organizations, major employers in the medical, technology, and aerospace industries, and higher education institutions.

As Eastside communities continue to grow and develop, Metro strives to provide and support better, more reliable service to riders. RapidRide K Line will also provide area residents faster and easier access to regional destinations by linking to other high capacity transit such as RapidRide B Line, Sound Transit East Link light rail, and I-405 Stride bus rapid transit.

What problem does RapidRide K Line solve?

Right now, congestion in the project corridor and the parallel I-405 corridor has a significant impact on transit speed and reliability. Routes 239, 255, 250, and 271 which currently serve Bellevue and Kirkland, are among the busiest Metro routes in east King County. With tremendous growth anticipated over the next two decades in both population and employment, Bellevue and Kirkland are expected to see increased transportation demand within and between the cities and their regional centers. RapidRide K Line will help to meet increased demand for high frequency transit service, serve areas experiencing high population and employment growth, improve transit speed and reliability, and reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

RapidRide K Line by the numbers

- 159,000 jobs served by the corridor
- 4,200 increase in riders each weekday by 2026
- 13-25 minutes of trip reduction (goal)
- 2 regional centers connected (+1 proposed)

What will Regional FTA funding do?

$6,000,000 in Regional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant funding will allow Metro to build transit speed and reliability projects in Bellevue and Kirkland, including the Bellevue Downtown, Kirkland Totem Lake, and proposed Downtown Kirkland regional growth centers. The RapidRide K Line project connects five regional transit hubs: Totem Lake, Kirkland, South Kirkland, Bellevue, and Eastgate, and will connect more people to Sound Transit’s East Link light rail, I-405 Stride bus rapid transit, RapidRide B Line, and local and regional bus service.

Improving bus speed and reliability is key to achieving travel time benefits; improving on-time reliability; and safer, more convenient access to destinations and transit centers for the entire RapidRide K Line route. Metro has developed a preliminary list of speed and reliability projects, including:

- Transit signal priority
- Signal timing optimization
- Bus queue jumps
- Bus-only lanes
- Traffic channelization improvements

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Overview map

Benefits to Centers

- **Housing and employment** – RapidRide K Line will serve some of the fastest growing areas in the region, with significant growth forecasts for downtown Bellevue, downtown Kirkland, and Totem Lake.

- **Access** – RapidRide K Line will improve access and mobility for nonmotorized travelers to major destinations, including the Village at Totem Lake, the EvergreenHealth Medical Center, Overlake Medical Center, Bellevue College, and the Easttrail regional trail corridor.

- **Benefits to multiple user types** – RapidRide K Line will help meet the travel needs of many commuters and residents. General purpose, truck freight, car/vanpool, and rideshare modes will benefit from improved traffic operations and signal timing. It will bring a significant investment in access infrastructure for people walking, rolling, and biking to RapidRide K Line stations.

- **Regional connections** – RapidRide K Line will better connect two important regional growth and employment centers, and the region as a whole. It will also serve the proposed downtown Kirkland regional growth center.

- **Economic growth** – RapidRide K Line allows people to more easily and reliably get to and from the 159,000 jobs in the area. It will increase mobility and access to employment within the corridor and across the region.

- **Commute trip reduction** – According to the Washington State Department of Transportation, there are 58 commute trip reduction affected worksites in Bellevue and 16 in Kirkland. Improving speed and reliability will make K Line a more attractive alternative to driving alone.

System Continuity/Long Term Benefit-Sustainability

- **Ridership** – RapidRide K Line will bring 4,200 new daily riders as area residents view it as an attractive alternative to driving alone.

- **Travel time** – RapidRide K Line will target between 13 and 25 minutes of travel time savings per trip on the corridor, reducing travel time by 15 to 30 percent in the afternoon peak period.

- **Transit connections** – RapidRide K Line will connect to 11 transit centers as well as other high-capacity transit at Bellevue Transit Center and the NE 85th St. Stride bus rapid transit station.

Air Quality and Climate Change

- **Air quality** – Increasing ridership will take single-occupant vehicles off congested roads and highways, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollution.