

King County Metro

East Link Connections

Public Engagement Report



2021-2022 & 2024

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1 Executive Summary

Background

At the end of May 2022, King County Metro (Metro) and Sound Transit completed a 15-month engagement process for the East Link Connections Mobility Project, resulting in a proposed network of bus service changes in east King County to prepare for and leverage the opening of the Link 2 Line between Chinatown/International District Station and Downtown Redmond Station.

Metro undertook an intentional effort to engage communities through broad public engagement including media, surveys, virtual open houses, and community-based organization outreach.¹ Metro recruited a Mobility Board made up of area residents and dedicated significant energy to establishing community priorities and shaping the proposal through multiple phases of engagement. Additionally, Metro convened a Partner Review Board of jurisdictions, community-based organizations, major institutions, and employers to ensure consistency with regional plans and broad organizational transportation needs.

Following completion of the 2021-2022 engagement, Sound Transit announced delays to the opening of the 2 Line. As a result, a final service change ordinance to implement the East Link Connections final network was never submitted to the King County Council. However, a 2021-2022 engagement summary was completed, and is included in the Exhibits section.

To ensure that the East Link Connections network remained aligned with community priorities, Metro decided to conduct an additional phase of engagement in early 2024 with the project's Mobility Board, Partner Review Board, and local jurisdictions.

This public engagement report starts with a summary of the most recent 2024 engagement, followed by the 2021-2022 engagement summary.

¹ See 2021-2022 Public Engagement Report included in the Exhibits section

Engagement Approach

Engagement conducted in 2024 aimed to review the network that was recommended from engagement in May 2022, analyze updated Metro ridership data and land-use patterns, and confirm community needs that may have changed. The focus in this final phase of engagement was to continue refining the network proposal based on this updated information and build off of the robust engagement and planning conducted in earlier phases.

Collectively the project boards reviewed new information from Metro in the context of the East Link Connections network and recommended or reviewed changes prior to ordinance submittal to the King County Council. This additional engagement was designed to strengthen the transit network by ensuring that key audiences had the opportunity to provide further community review and recommend potential changes following the delay to the Link 2 Line.

Engagement Outcomes

Prior to hosting the series of Mobility and Partner Review board meetings, Metro conducted an internal analysis of underlying conditions since 2022. This work included a review of current east King County bus ridership, ORCA business program usage, Rider/Non-Rider scientific survey results specific to east King County, and park-and-ride utilization rates. Metro staff presented these results to both boards at the first meeting, and the Mobility Board had the opportunity to update the project's key mobility needs.

Additions included in 2024 are noted below in **bold**.

Figure 1 - East Link Connections key mobility needs as updated 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.



In the second meeting, the Mobility Board proposed changes to the network based on the updated mobility needs. Additionally, Metro received a number of comments from cities and community organizations on the Partner Review Board. Metro evaluated the suggestions

using the project’s decision-making factors of equity, engagement, and service design best practices, and categorized the proposals in three divisions that were presented in the third and final meeting.

Figure 2 - Network changes suggested by the Mobility Board

Mobility Board Changes Metro can't make	Mobility Board Changes Metro is already incorporating	Changes decided by the Mobility Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deletion of Route 342 • Move service on Route 245 from 156th Ave NE to 148th Ave NE near Microsoft and Overlake • Ending Route 269 in Issaquah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate schedules for Route 220 and Route 270 to minimize transfer wait times at Bellevue Transit Center • Swap pathways of routes 240 and 249 south of the Bellevue Transit Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 220 routing in Bellevue • Route 269 routing in Redmond/Bear Creek P&R • Route 256 Freeway Station service and Kingsgate P&R • Frequency improvements to one of the following routes: 203, 220, 240

For items put forward for decisions by the Mobility Board, Metro created two options and asked the Mobility Board to select a preferred alternative for each item. Mobility Board members voted on their preferred alternatives, which were then adopted and added to the final network.

Following inclusion of the preferred alternatives, the Mobility Board voted unanimously to approve the updated East Link Connections network. Additionally, a list of future transit priorities was also updated by Mobility Board members and is reproduced in the Exhibits section of this report. The Partner Review Board similarly had an opportunity to review the future transit priorities list and add any additional items.

Following the conclusion of engagement activities, Metro continued costing and finalizing operational details to prepare the legislative ordinance. This final network development used more-accurate vehicle schedules, incorporated changes voted on at Mobility Board meetings and used updated timetables to reflect new union requirements for rest breaks for bus drivers.

To stay within the project budget, the network required a reduction of ~35,000 service hours. Changes incorporated into the final network after Mobility Board and Partner Review Board meetings were based on operational needs and aimed for consistency with overall project goals and community-identified priorities. These changes are outlined in Chapter 2, Engagement Plan and Activities.

East Link Connections Final Network

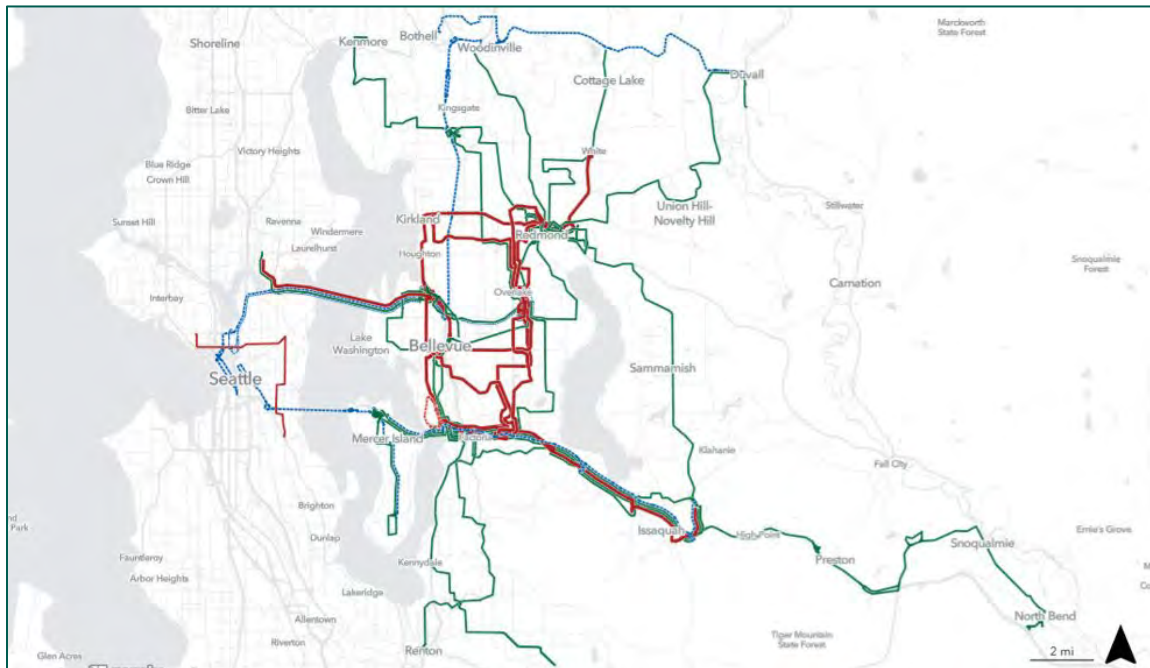
As presented, the proposed East Link Connections network makes significant progress toward achieving the key mobility needs identified through public engagement and confirmed by the Mobility Board and other project partners.

Final network highlights include:

- More frequent service on eight routes in the project area
- 23 of 24 project area routes provide a direct connection to at least one Link light rail station
- Improved access to frequent transit for 30,364 people (+8 percent) among the study area population and for 24,359 people (+14 percent) among priority populations in the study area.
- Later nighttime service on four routes
- New weekend service on five routes
- Greater overall transit system reliability with bus and bus-Link service

In addition to the proposed changes to the bus network, Metro is introducing a pilot to the on-demand Metro Flex service area in Overlake. This service will provide improved connections to community destinations, schools, and other transit services including Link light rail.

Figure 3 - Overview map of proposed East Link Connections network



2 Engagement Plan and Activities

Overall engagement approach and timeline

To ensure that the East Link Connections network remained aligned with community priorities, Metro decided to conduct an additional phase of engagement in early 2024. Because of the limited timeframe, and to honor the robust public engagement that took place in 2021-2022, Metro decided to focus the updated community engagement around the two main stakeholder groups: the project's Mobility Board and Partner Review Board.

Engagement conducted in 2024 aimed to review the network that was recommended at the conclusion of engagement in May 2022, analyze updated Metro ridership data and land-use patterns, and confirm community needs that may have changed.

Engagement took place from January to March 2024, with follow-up communications throughout the months that followed, to notify project members of final network development. Metro also updated project materials and its website to better reflect a more simplified approach to presenting technical transit information. Finally, Metro held meetings with city staff from all jurisdictions within the project area.

During engagement the two groups collectively reviewed any new information from Metro in the context of the East Link network and recommended or reviewed changes prior to ordinance submittal to the King County Council. This additional engagement was designed to strengthen the transit network by ensuring that key audiences had the opportunity to provide further review and recommend potential changes following the delay to the Link 2 Line.

Mobility Board

The Mobility Board is the project's key community advisory board and consists of people who live, work, or travel in the project area. Thirteen of the original 27 Mobility Board members participated in this additional round of meetings in 2024.

Members represented Kirkland, Seattle, Medina, Issaquah, Bellevue, Redmond, and Woodinville, and also work, study, or travel throughout the general project area. The Mobility Board is tasked with taking a holistic view of the transit network to best serve communities throughout east King County.

The series of three meetings addressed the following topics and decisions.

Meeting 1: January 22, 2024

- Goals: Reorient the Mobility Board to the Phase 3 network, present internal analysis of east King County travel trends since 2022, and identify potential changes to the key mobility needs
- Activity: Large-group discussion around additional mobility priorities to be added to the key mobility needs from 2021-2022
- Outcome: Updated priority mobility needs

Meeting 2: February 27, 2024

- Goal: Identify potential network changes to improve alignment between final network proposal and updated mobility needs
- Activity: Breakout discussions within two subarea groups to identify minor, specific changes to project routes that address updated mobility needs
- Outcome: List of potential network changes

Meeting 3: March 26, 2024

- Goals: Present feasibility and tradeoffs of the proposed network changes from Meeting 2, identify Mobility Board's preferred route alternatives and approve the final network, update future transit priorities list
- Activities: Presentation of multiple route alternatives including benefits and tradeoffs; voting activity to identify preferred alternatives; voting activity to approve the final network; large-group discussion around updates to future transit priorities list
- Outcomes: Four network changes to be included in the final network proposal, an approved final network, updated future transit priorities list

During Meeting 1, the Mobility Board made updates to the project's mobility priorities. These updated priorities, shown below with new additions in bold, served to inform network changes proposed in later meetings.

Figure 4 - East Link Connections Key Mobility Needs

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.



In Meeting 2, the Mobility Board identified potential network changes, aiming for items that would align with the updated mobility needs. Three suggestions were automatically adopted with four decisions being brought to the Mobility Board.

A number of proposed changes by the Mobility Board were not feasible due to either inconsistency with the key mobility needs or due to misalignment with the project’s decision-making criteria of equity, engagement, and service design best practices.

The following chart, shared during Meeting 3, outlines these suggestions.

Figure 5 - Network changes suggested by the Mobility Board

Mobility Board Changes Metro can't make	Mobility Board Changes Metro is already incorporating	Changes decided by the Mobility Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deletion of Route 342 • Move service on Route 245 from 156th Ave NE to 148th Ave NE near Microsoft and Overlake areas • Ending Route 269 in Issaquah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate schedules for Route 220 and Route 270 to minimize transfer wait times at Bellevue Transit Center • Swap pathways of routes 240 and 249 south of the Bellevue Transit center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 220 routing in Bellevue • Route 269 routing in Redmond/Bear Creek P&R • Route 256 Freeway Station service and Kingsgate P&R • Frequency improvements to one of the following routes: 203, 220, 240

Through evaluation of tradeoffs and how well the proposed network updates aligned with the key mobility needs, the following changes were selected by the Mobility Board and included in the final network:

- Revised routing of Route 220 in Bellevue to serve 116th Ave NE, which improves travel times and provides additional connections to destinations along 116th Ave NE
- Revised routing of Route 269 to provide more local service in SE Redmond and serve Bear Creek Park & Ride and neighborhoods currently served by this route
- Revised routing of Route 256 to off I-405 to serve Kingsgate Park & Ride in Kirkland
- Increased frequency of Route 240 if extra hours are available

Final technical and budget-related network changes referenced in the Executive Summary are outlined below, in the Final Network section.

Partner Review Board

The Partner Review Board roster, representing all groups invited to participate in the meeting series, includes more than 90 representatives. Collectively these members represent 21 cities, three King County Councilmember offices, nine community-based organizations, partner transit agencies, hospitals, school districts and colleges, and eight major regional employers.

Coinciding with the Mobility Board’s meeting series, Metro hosted three meetings of the East Link Connections Partner Review Board. The goal of the Partner Review Board’s involvement

was to ensure that Mobility Board priorities and potential network changes aligned with broader community needs, jurisdictional plans, and continued to contribute to addressing public transportation needs in the region.

Separate from the full Partner Review Board, Metro also held additional meetings with each jurisdiction in the project area for more in-depth discussions related to transit in these specific communities.

As the Partner Review Board's primary role is to review Mobility Board decisions and provide additional input for consideration, each meeting was held following the corresponding Mobility Board meeting.

Partner Review Board suggestions that were evaluated included:

- Bus routing ideas in Bellevue and Newcastle
- Aligning transit schedules to ensure trips cover the full span desired by riders
- Increasing transit access by placing new stops near key community assets
- Improving transit options near regional medical centers, including in Redmond and Issaquah

Final Network

Following the conclusion of engagement activities, Metro continued costing and finalizing operational details to prepare the legislative ordinance. This final network development used more-accurate vehicle schedules, incorporated changes voted on at Mobility Board meetings, and used updated timetables to reflect new union requirements for rest breaks for bus drivers.

To stay within the project budget, the network required a reduction of ~35,000 service hours. Changes incorporated into the final network after the Mobility Board and Partner Review Board meetings were based on operational needs and aimed to be consistent with overall project goals and community-identified priorities.

A number of technical changes were also required where insufficient layover space or street limitations did not allow for safe and accessible transit operations.

The final network changes included:

- Route 240—Renton Transit Center to Bellevue Transit Center/Bellevue Downtown Station
 - Adjust pathway to serve 112th Ave SE and East Main Station in Bellevue instead of 108th Ave SE. Providing at least one transit connection to this station is a shared Sound Transit, Metro, and City of Bellevue priority.
 - 108th Ave SE would continue to be served by Route 249.
- Route 249—South Bellevue Station to Spring District Station
 - Convert to DART route and serve Beaux Arts through the DART deviation area. Full-sized buses are unable to make new turns in this neighborhood. Due to this constraint and lower ridership in this area, DART is a more appropriate service level.

- Route 203—Issaquah Highlands P&R to South Bellevue Station
 - Adjust weekday peak frequency from 20 minutes to 30 minutes
- Route 215—North Bend P&R to Mercer Island Station
 - Adjust weekday peak frequency from 15-45 minutes to 30-90 minutes
- Route 218—Issaquah Highlands P&R to Mercer Island Station
 - Adjust weekday peak frequency from 15 minutes to 30 minutes; this is a peak-only route
- Route 251—Woodinville P&R to SE Redmond Station
 - Adjust weekend daytime frequency from 30 minutes to 60 minutes and start weekend service at 7 a.m. instead of 6 a.m.
- Route 256—Woodinville P&R to Downtown Seattle
 - Adjust weekday peak frequency from “12-30 minutes” to 30 minutes; this is a peak-only route
- Route 342—Aurora Village Transit Center to South Renton P&R
 - Delete Route 342; Route 342 has been suspended since 2023, and prior to 2023 was low-ridership, peak-only
- Route 223—Downtown Redmond to Eastgate Park and Ride
 - Hours remaining from the changes above allow for increased frequency during mid-day times from 30 to 20 minutes, serving equity priority areas

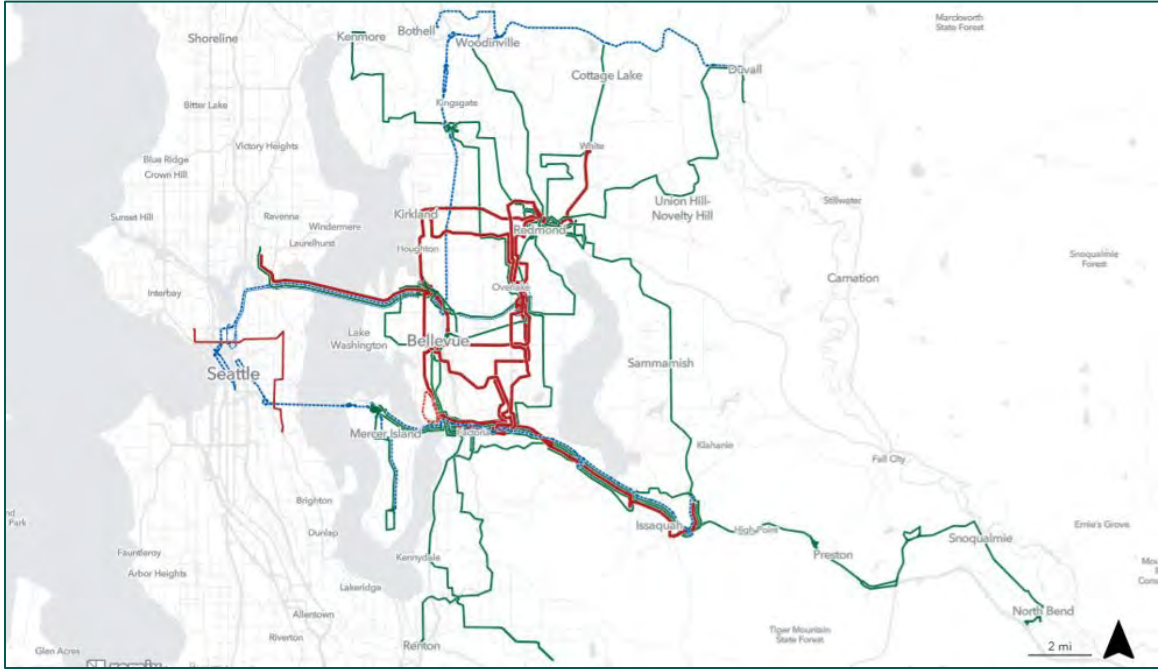
As presented, the proposed East Link Connections network makes significant progress toward achieving the key mobility needs identified through four phases of community engagement and confirmed by the Mobility Board.

Final network highlights include:

- More frequent service on eight routes in the project area
- 23 of 24 project area routes provide a direct connection to at least one Link light rail station
- Improved access to frequent transit for 30,364 people (+8 percent) among the study area population and for 24,359 people (+14 percent) among priority populations in the study area.
- Later nighttime service on four routes
- New weekend service on five routes
- Greater overall transit system reliability with bus and bus-Link service

In addition to the proposed changes to the bus network, Metro is introducing an on-demand Metro Flex pilot to the Overlake area. This service will provide improved connections to community destinations, schools, and other transit services including Link light rail.

Figure 6 - Overview map of proposed East Link Connections network



3 Exhibits

Figure 7 - Updated East Link Connections route sheet used during engagement in 2024



For future Link station opening dates, please see [ST System Expansion website](#)

Figure 8 - Mobility Board list of future transit priorities

Mobility Board future transit priorities

Service

- General frequency improvements across the network
- More late-night service
- More weekend service

Facilities

- More benches and shelters at bus stops
- Supporting local first-and-last mile infrastructure, such as bike lanes and accessible sidewalks
- Real-time information signs, including in locations like libraries, malls
- Ensure bus stops are near places where people can wait inside (community centers)
- New mobile trip-planning app, clearer Link schedules
- Improved wayfinding maps/signage at stations

Destinations and Connections

- Renton-Issaquah connection
- Increased service in rural areas (both into centers, and out to green spaces for recreation)
- Connections between Bellevue suburbs
- Connections within Kirkland. Especially near Lake Washington Tech. College
- Continue increasing Link light rail connections
- Service to Houghton freeway bus stops



Figure 9 - Sample of a route alternative presented to the Mobility Board

Route 269: Redmond local service

Alternative B

- Route 269 deviates to Bear Creek Park & Ride before serving Marymoor Station
- Bear Creek Park & Ride is served locally by routes:
 - 250
 - ST 542*
- The immediate SE Redmond area is served by routes
 - 224
 - 251

*Contingent on Sound Transit's 2025 Service Plan

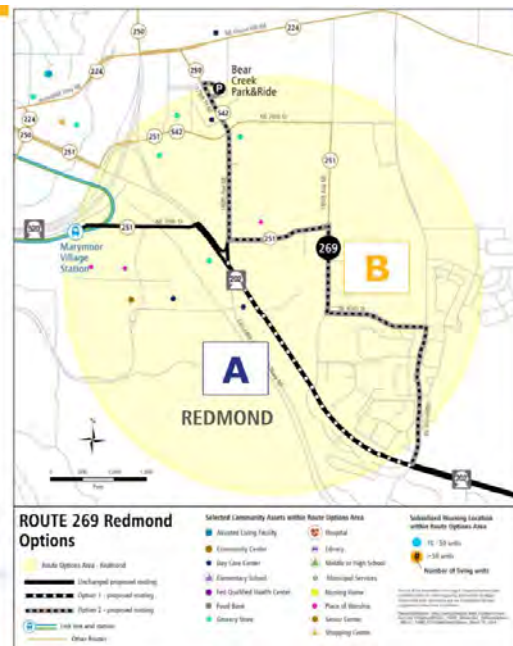


Figure 10 - Sample of final network changes and impacts to the network

Technical Changes: Overview

Route	Description of route in Phase 4 Network	Description of change	Impacts
Route 222: Cottage Lake to Redmond Technology Station	Route 222 starts/ends in Cottage Lake	Route will layover at Woodinville P&R due to lack of layover space with comfort station access in Cottage Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less service hours available for other routes
Route 240: Renton TC to Bellevue TC	Serves 108th Ave SE between downtown Bellevue and Bellevue Way SE	Adjust pathway to serve 112th Ave SE and East Main Station in Bellevue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides direct service to East Main Station Provides coverage on 112th Ave SE Route 249 108th Ave SE coverage is less frequent
Route 249: South Bellevue Station to Spring District Station	Serves Bellevue Way SE between downtown Bellevue and South Bellevue Station; serves 104th Ave SE in Beaux Arts	Convert to DART route, serve Beaux Arts with flexible deviation area. Serve 108th Ave SE and Bellevue Way SE between downtown Bellevue and South Bellevue Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster more direct route between downtown Bellevue and South Bellevue Station Beaux Arts service only covered by DART (must be scheduled ahead)



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King County Metro

East Link Connections Mobility Project

Public Engagement Report 2021-2022



Figure 11 - East Link Connections 2021 network map

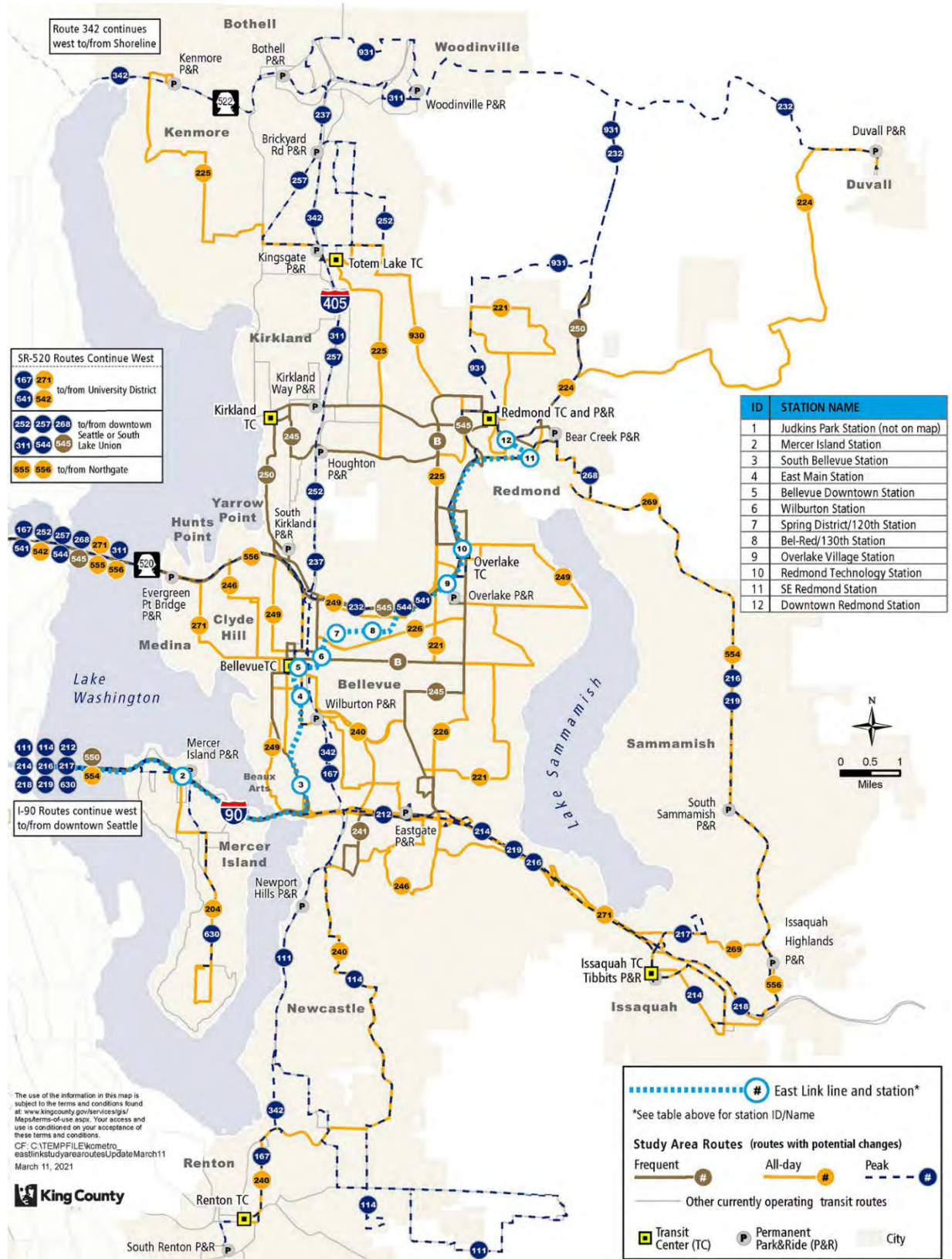


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1 Executive Summary

Context

The East Link Connections Mobility Project covers a vast area of East King County, which includes a diverse community with evolving mobility needs. By the end of 2024, Sound Transit will open 12 new Link light rail stations on the new 2 Line, connecting downtown Seattle and the fast-growing Eastside. The 2 Line will offer new high-capacity connections from Judkins Park in Seattle, across I-90 to Mercer Island and South Bellevue, through downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red area to Redmond Technology Station, by 2023. The 2 Line will be extended to downtown Redmond in 2024.

King County Metro Transit partnered with Sound Transit on East Link Connections to update mobility services for the expansion of Link light rail. Over three dozen King County Metro and Sound Transit Express buses will undergo service changes to respond to changing mobility needs and expand access for historically underserved populations. East Link Connections will deliver an updated service network from Judkins Park to the Eastside that integrates with and complements the new 2 Line.

East Link Connections is Metro's coordinated, co-led engagement process with several community-based organizations, agencies, and jurisdictional partners. Metro, in partnership with Sound Transit, conducted this extensive, three-phase community engagement process between March 2021 and April 2022. The process included the exploration and identification of needs, opportunities, and gaps in service, as well as an evaluation of possible options to revise, integrate, and connect the East King County. Community and stakeholder feedback influenced the proposed Metro and ST Express route changes shared in this project.

The East Link Connections Mobility Project's community engagement process was guided by project goals, King County's ESJ Strategic Plan, Metro's Mobility Framework, and a desire to be flexible and responsive to community needs amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Metro staff have prepared a service network recommendation to the King County Executive for consideration and approval by the King County Council. Metro expects to implement the recommendation in 2022, in conjunction with Sound Transit's Link light rail station openings.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the method and strategies of engagement for East Link Connections. As COVID-19 has had a lasting impact on Metro services and operations, our agency is working on the process of recovering and rebuilding to address the resulting complex, cross-divisional issues. The East Link team has worked and will continue to work closely with other projects and teams to ensure that engagement and communication with our diverse communities will be coordinated and streamlined.

The East Link team centered equity, public input, and service design best practices in decision making and recommendations for a preferred network concept. Metro staff will continue building relationships with historically underrepresented groups. This

includes people affected by racism, bias, poverty, linguistic diversity, disability, and immigration. Metro is committed to conducting an inclusive and accessible public engagement process while navigating the evolving needs of community now and post-pandemic.

Equity and Social Justice Approach

Equitable Engagement Practices

Several agency policies guided East Link Connections engagement goals, strategies, and practices including the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan; King County Metro’s Strategic Plan, Service Guidelines, and Mobility Framework; and Sound Transit’s Inclusive Public Participation Policy, Engagement Roadmap, and Equity and Inclusion Policy. East Link Connections will meet and exceed federal Title VI requirements for engagement. In addition to these policies, Metro and Sound Transit partnership will incorporate many best practices to equitably inform, engage, and empower current and potential customers traveling in the project area. Several key elements of the planned engagement are highlighted below.

Commitment to equitable practices in engagement on the project center on:

- Building partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs), jurisdictions, and other community-based assets.
- Developing processes for decision-making that involve and center historically marginalized populations, such as people with low or no income, students, youth, seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, limited English-speaking populations, and others with limited transportation options.
- Compensation for Mobility Board members who gave their time, talent, and effort throughout the process.

Defining Equity and Priority Populations

Metro defines equity as, “a system of fairness, providing full and equal access to opportunities, power, and resources.” Metro, like King County as a whole, is leading with racial justice, because historical and racial inequities continue to affect all of us, and our region’s ability to thrive. These values influenced the goals, strategies, and activities for the engagement plan.

The East Link Connections Project engagement efforts centered equity through collaboration and shared decision-making by:

1. Striving for a Mobility Board made up of community stakeholders—a majority of members were people of color, with low or no income, living with disabilities, and/or linguistically diverse.
2. Through relationship building with community-based organizations and community stakeholders, Metro's engagement efforts prioritized those events, institutions, and community-based organizations led by and for people of color with low or no income, with disabilities, and from linguistically diverse populations.
3. Through these relationships and collaborations, Metro learned about the best engagement practices for communities experiencing historic and current underinvestment or inequities in the project area.

Project Area

The project area was defined to include bus routes that travel within half a mile of a future East Link Station. These routes have significant potential for changes in pathway, frequency, and or/span that can expand mobility for riders by connecting to Link stations that offer frequent, high-capacity transit. The potential changes will vary based on community feedback, alignment with stated project goals, and project budget.

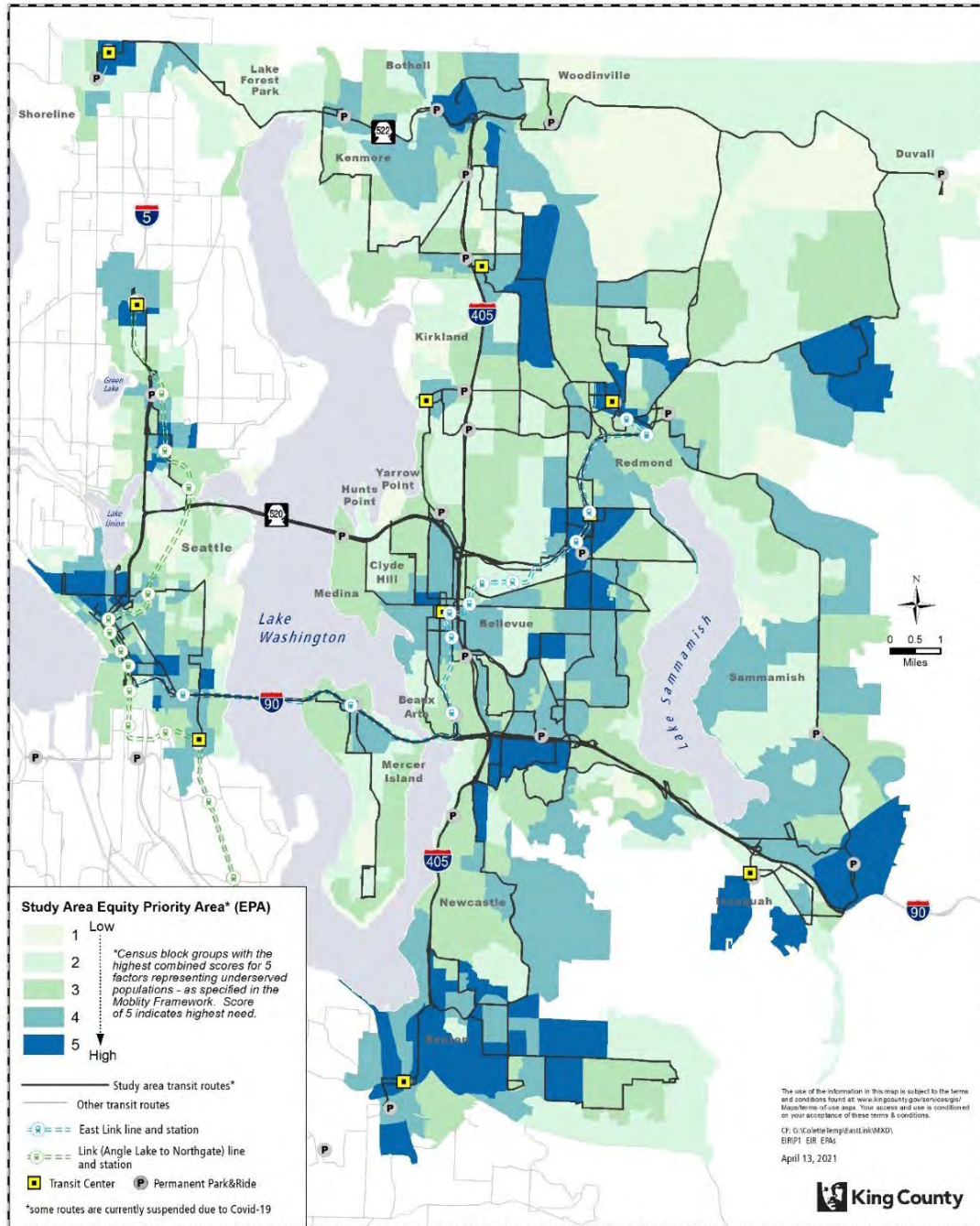
The transit routes in the project area pass through many neighborhoods, connecting to and from housing, jobs, schools, public services, and transit. These routes serve municipalities and neighborhoods such as Beaux Arts, Bellevue, Bothell, Clyde Hill, Duvall, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Medina, Mercer Island, Newcastle, North Bend, Redmond, Renton, Sammamish, Shoreline, Seattle, Snoqualmie, Woodinville, Yarrow Point.

King County Designated Areas of Unmet Need

King County defines areas of unmet need as those with high population density, high proportions of people with low-income, people of color, and people with disabilities; linguistically diverse people; and areas with limited mid-day and evening transit service to schools, jobs, and childcare centers and other ways to build wealth and opportunities. High areas of unmet need within this project area are in Bellevue's Crossroads community, Renton's Highlands Park, and Seattle's Rainier neighborhood. Metro policies guided the engagement strategy to focus on engaging riders and communities in these areas.

Figure 12 - King County project area map of Equity Priority Areas

**East Link Connections
Phase 1- Equity Impact Review: Study Area Transit Routes and Equity Priority Areas**



Demographics and Languages

The following demographic data analysis is based on 2017 data from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, accessed through [King County's Census](#)

[Viewer](#) (updated in February 2019) and was used to inform the outreach and engagement plan.

Race and disability demographics for the project area

	King County	Percent	Project Area	Percent
2020 Total Population	2,271,785		675,614	
Black/African American	155,132	7%	19,937	3%
Asian	455,742	20%	173,972	26%
American Indian/Alaska Native	17,010	<1%	2,549	<1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	18,545	<1%	1,716	<1%
Hispanic or Latinx	227,068	10%	54,359	8%
White	1,394,028	61%	422,576	63%
People with disabilities	163,628	7%	40,384	6%

Language access demographics for the project area

King County's language access policy requirement is to translate public communication materials into at least Spanish and any other languages spoken by 5 percent or more of the population in a census tract within the project area. The following table indicates the languages and the jurisdictions where that minimum threshold is met as well as Sound Transit's standard Title VI languages. This measure guided us to translate project materials and information, and to provide interpreters for events into the languages below.

Languages spoken by > 5% of population of at least one census tract in the project area	Location/jurisdiction
Spanish	Most jurisdictions in the project area
Chinese (simplified and traditional)	Most jurisdictions in the project area
Korean	Bellevue, Newcastle, unincorporated King County
Vietnamese	Bellevue, Renton
Russian	Bellevue, Renton (and many census tracts throughout the project area just under 5%)
Other commonly spoken languages (identified as 2% or higher at city level data)	Location/jurisdiction
Hindi	Bellevue, Kirkland, Newcastle, Redmond, Yarrow Pt., Mercer Island, Issaquah, Hunts Point, Beaux Arts, Clyde Hill
Tagalog	Renton

Community Engagement Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

Goal 1. Build authentic and lasting relationships with historically un(der)served populations in project area.	
Strategy	Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in equitable community-driven service network concept development Develop transparent outreach/engagement (OE) and decision-making process Inform the communities who reside and use transit in East King County about engagement opportunities Focus majority of time and resources engaging with historically un(der)served populations Spend the majority of stakeholder engagement period connecting with organizations who are historically underrepresented in regional transit conversations. This includes reaching out to 80+ Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and places of worship focused on serving immigrant/refugee/people of color, low income, youth, homelessness, and LGBTQIA communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly communicated how and why changes to network were selected, proposed, and recommended citing community feedback, Metro’s Mobility Framework, Service Planning guidelines and King County ESJ Strategic Plan Proactively shared information and engagement opportunities in a variety of ways (written, illustrative, word of mouth, social media) Attended community-hosted meetings and events Updated and followed up with County Council staff, community groups, and individuals, and other partners Recruited members of Mobility Board from historically disadvantaged populations Contracted with local CBOs to host listening sessions in their communities to communicate changes and ask for feedback
Goal 2. Final changes are designed in partnership with historically un(der)served communities in order to build a strong transit network that links transit and development and increases access and mobility.	
Strategy	Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate co-led decision making with community Continue connecting with organizations who are historically underrepresented in regional transit conversations. This includes reaching out to 80+ Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and places of worship focused on serving immigrant/refugee/people of color, low income, youth, homelessness, and LGBTQIA communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translated outreach and engagement materials into project area languages Conducted in-language engagement - e.g., virtual information sessions with access to interpreters, translated online surveys with these populations to ensure participation for linguistically diverse speakers in the process In addition to an American Community Survey 2015 dataset analysis, conducted community research to better understand

	<p>language needs in the study area. This research included conversations with community-based organizations that provide services to historically underserved populations in the study area to gather recommendations for languages to consider not mentioned in area studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened and facilitated virtual Mobility Board workshops • Conducted stakeholder interviews • Provided a variety of virtual spaces for engagement
<p>Goal 3. Broader affected communities understand the service concept goals, Metro’s goals related to equitable outcomes, and how the service concept helps Metro advance equitable outcomes in the project area.</p>	
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Tactics</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and make visible the equitable and inclusive community-driven service network concept development • Develop transparent engagement and decision-making process • Inform and promote opportunities for the communities that reside and use transit in East King County area to participate and give input. • Use print and digital communications to inform historically advantaged populations about changes being considered and opportunities to provide input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively shared information and engagement opportunities in a variety of ways so they are available to the public • Promoted opportunities to participate via social media and virtual public forums • Provided content that could be shared via project area stakeholders and partners to promote participation with the creation of a communications toolkit • Attended community virtual pre-arranged meetings/events requesting to present on the project • Updated and followed up with council staff, community groups and individuals, and other partners

Engagement Outcomes Overview

Metro values input from communities experiencing historic and current underinvestment or inequities, including those affected by racism, bias, poverty, linguistic diversity, disability, and/or immigration status. We reached out to a diverse range of community members and stakeholders from identified priority populations using approaches that intended to provide participants with meaningful ways to engage and influence the decision-making process.

Summary of engagement activities

Group	Description, desired outcomes	Activities
Mobility Board	Metro recruited community members from priority populations who live, work, or travel in the area to help Metro develop bus service changes and new mobility options as well as advise on ways Metro can engage with the community. Participants were compensated for their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited 27 Mobility Board members • Facilitated 8 Mobility Board meetings or workshops • One letter of supported signed by full Mobility Board
Partner Review Board	Board included representatives from jurisdictions and major institutions in the project area, leaders of community-based organizations, and representatives from partner transit agencies to review and provide comment on service concepts developed by the Mobility Board and Metro, and provided guidance on both engagement opportunities and implementation plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited 35+ Partner Review Board Members • Facilitated 3 Partner Review Board meetings • Collected letters of support from 5 members of Partner Review Board
CBO Partnerships	Metro contracted with local community-based organizations (CBOs) to host listening sessions/focus groups in their communities, to share changes being considered, support with outreach to their constituents, and to promote submitting input via our online survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopelink • Indian American Community Services • Ethnic Chamber of Commerce Coalition • Chinese Information Service Center
Metro Bus Operators	Operators felt included, valued, and aware of how their feedback is reflected in the draft service network concept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged Bellevue Base Safety Committee with two focus groups.
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro and Sound Transit coordinated a unified effort to engage public about network concept. • Public felt included, valued, and aware of how their feedback is reflected in the draft service network concept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent 200k+ transit alerts via email and text to Metro subscribers • Engagement materials accessible in 8 languages (Simplified Chinese, English, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish,

		<p>Tagalog, and Vietnamese)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated virtual Open house/town halls: reaching 500+ participants Mailed: 1,500 postcards Community open houses/town halls: 100+ attendees
Stakeholder Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metro and partners coordinated a unified effort to engage public about network concept. Stakeholders felt included, valued, and aware of how their feedback is reflected in the draft service network concept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30+ community-based organizations were invited to participate in all events and were provided customized information based on community. They were also updated throughout the process through emails, phone calls, and meetings as needed.
Jurisdictional and Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jurisdictions and County councilmembers will feel included, valued, and aware of how their feedback is reflected in the draft service network concept. Metro will partner with their respective offices to engage with their constituent/resident network and channels to ensure they are engaged in providing feedback on the proposed concept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended 40+ community & jurisdictional partners-hosted events and briefings. 4 letters of support written by jurisdictions in the project area.
Business/Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses felt included, valued, and aware of how their feedback is reflected in the draft service network concept. Metro will partner with businesses to engage with their employee/customer network and channels to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30+ businesses & institutions invited to participate in Partner Review Board

	ensure they are engaged in providing feedback on the proposed concept.	
Online Open House	General public felt included and valued and aware of how their feedback is reflected in the draft service network concept.	Webpage viewed 60k+ times
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotions were a key part of connecting with the community and driving them to participate at meetings and in surveys, featuring the trusted Link Connections umbrella brand and #Bus2Link. General public felt included and aware of how their feedback is reflected in the draft service network concept. Metro use different methods of media to ensure that public is informed on project and have ample opportunities and venues to provide their feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20+ unique tweets from Metro or partners 3 Media Briefings Advertisements shared on 10+ media outlets 2 Metro Blog features

What We Heard: Key Themes and How it Shaped Decision-Making

Through input from community stakeholders, the Mobility Board, Partner Review Board, and the public the East Link Connection team was able to draft an initial concept, refine, and finalize a network that responded to community need. By applying an equity lens, input from historically un(der)served populations was prioritized when considering changes to the network. Below is a table that highlights the key feedback heard from community in each phase and how service planners responded to that feedback with improvements to the network.

Phase 1 Key Themes	How it Influenced Phase 2 Proposal
Make transfers easier with frequent and accessible service, with early and late trips that provide transfers to/from Link.	<p>B Line: Extended to new Downtown Redmond station. Revised pathway on 156th Ave NE to be more direct. Route 245: Removed Factoria loop. Revise routing to serve Overlake Village station.</p> <p>Route 270: New route that replaces Route 271 between Bellevue and UW. Access 520 via Bellevue Way.</p> <p>ST 542: Increased service levels to provide connections to Redmond Technology station, UW station; extend to Bear Creek P&R.</p>

<p>More transfer opportunities so riders can travel to different local and regional destinations.</p>	<p>B Line: Extended to new Downtown Redmond station. Revised pathway on 156th Ave NE to be more direct. Route 245: Removed Factoria loop. Revise routing to serve Overlake Village station.</p> <p>Route 270: New route that replaces Route 271 between Bellevue and UW. Access 520 via Bellevue Way.</p> <p>ST 542: Increased service levels to provide connections to Redmond Technology station, UW station; extend to Bear Creek P&R.</p> <p>ST 544: Increased frequency to 10 minutes in 2024.</p>
<p>Speed and reliability, with more direct paths on faster routes where possible.</p>	<p>B Line: Extended to new Downtown Redmond station. Revised pathway on 156th Ave NE to be more direct. Route 245: Removed Factoria loop. Revise routing to serve Overlake Village station.</p> <p>Route 270: New route that replaces Route 271 between Bellevue and UW. Access 520 via Bellevue Way.</p> <p>ST 544: Increased frequency to 10 minutes in 2024.</p>
<p>Post-Covid, demand for commute travel may not be as strong. Increased demand for all-day, all-week travel.</p>	<p>Service more of the day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renton to South Bellevue Link • Totem Lake to Redmond • Woodinville to Redmond • Education Hill-Redmond-Idylwood-Overlake

Phase 2 Key Themes	How it Influenced Phase 3 Proposal
<p>Need for increased frequency across the network with emphasis in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Bellevue to Eastgate • Factoria to Link • Route 249 	<p>Overall Increased frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duvall to Redmond Link • North Bend to Mercer Island Link • Overlake to Eastgate • Sammamish to Issaquah/Redmond/MI • Issaquah to downtown Bellevue <p>Route 220: New frequent Route 220 downtown Bellevue to Eastgate</p> <p>Route 240: Increased frequency Factoria to Eastgate & Link</p>
<p>More coverage needed in SE Redmond</p>	<p>Routes 224 and 251: Extensions addressed comments over concern of coverage in SE Redmond</p>

Concern with Route 221 lost coverage on Old Redmond Road	Route 223: Connects to Redmond via Old Redmond Road
More transfer opportunities so riders can travel to different local and regional destinations.	<p><u>New connections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issaquah to Factoria (Route 203) • Spring District to S Kirkland P&R to Medina (Route 226) • Redmond to Idylwood to Overlake (Route 240) • Woodinville to Redmond (Route 249)

Phase 3 Key Themes	Final Network Improvements
In conjunction with feedback from our Mobility Board and CBO partnerships, the public survey indicated strong support for most changes made in Phase 3. Majority of routes showed 50%+ approval rate for proposed changes.	Confirmed that input from previous engagement phases were successfully integrated into final network proposal with minimal changes needed.
Expressed preference for increased frequency from Redmond to Eastgate	Route 223: Upgraded to 15 minute or better frequency 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Route 224 show majority approval of route recommendation but with requests to extend service to respond to growth and development in Duvall.	Route 224: Extended south to Big Rock Road to serve new development in Duvall.

2 Engagement Plan and Activities

Public Engagement Approach



Using Metro’s “**Have a Say**” public engagement strategy, East Link Connections focused on listening to the community’s mobility needs, learning about barriers to access, and developing opportunities for improvement. Through this engagement process, local communities informed us about changing conditions that pose mobility challenges. East Link Connections explored the benefits and tradeoffs of future mobility options with community members and stakeholders. We worked to achieve an equitable distribution of resources and fair opportunity for all

to influence decisions. We used four approaches within our engagement strategy to accomplish this work:

Customized

Decisions regarding the number of phases, the questions we asked, and how we asked were tailored to the size and scope of the potential service changes and co-created specifically for the populations likely affected.

- We used qualitative and quantitative data to determine the types of stakeholders to engage with and the appropriate methods to use.
- Where possible, we partnered with community-based organizations, social service providers, local jurisdictions, and transportation agencies to expand our reach.

Equitable

We worked to inform and hear from all communities that would likely be affected by the service changes outlined in the East Link Connections project area with equitable methods designed to improve determinants of equity through our work.

- We demonstrated process equity to create outcomes that achieve distributional equity and cross-generational equity.
- We worked to ensure all stakeholders, particularly historically un(der)served and linguistically diverse populations, were afforded equitable consideration and meaningful opportunities to participate.
- We worked to ensure people who would be affected can influence and help shape the final service change proposal and the public outreach process itself.

Informative

Information was clear, understandable, and accessible to all.

- We ensured that the project communities, stakeholders, and project partners understood the scope of the project, and how to participate and influence outcomes.
- We utilized plain language writing standards, use graphics, and translate where needed.

Transparent

We described our input, planning, and decision-making process as forthrightly as possible. To that end, we:

- **Communicated the vision of Metro Connects**, our guiding vision for mobility, and the Mobility Framework's guiding principles and recommendations for centering equity and sustainability.
- **Appointed a Mobility Board** (community advisory group) that was reflective of those whom will be affected by the changes that were considered and ultimately determined in this process; to help shape service concepts and proposals as well as communications and engagement with the public at each stage.
- **Demonstrated that community input is valued** by reporting back about what was heard, and how their input shaped the direction of the project and informed key decisions.
- **Worked with the community** to explore options to mitigate any potentially undesired impacts and discover how to support riders through change.
- **Provided guidance based on outreach and engagement** to tailor other related project elements and needs (i.e., rider education and marketing).

Sound Transit Partnership

To prepare for the extension of Link light rail service, respond to changing mobility needs, and improve mobility and access for historically un(der)served populations in East King County, Metro and Sound Transit co-led a process for delivering an updated, integrated mobility network on the Eastside and in communities surrounding the Judkins Park Station in Seattle. The formal partnership began in the summer of 2020 and was co-led with Sound Transit in coordination with many agencies and jurisdictional partners. Through the planning and engagement process, Metro and Sound Transit created a single service concept in partnership with the East Link Connections Mobility Board and based on the input and involvement of the public and stakeholders and the East Link Connections Partner Review Board. Work focused on iterative changes to a single concept rather than many concept alternatives.

East Link Connections Public Engagement Goals and Objectives

Goals

The following goals for public engagement were shaped by and met due to public influence on planning decisions, policy guidance, Have A Say best practices for equitable engagement, and Sound Transit's Public Engagement Roadmap.

- Enable durable, community-informed, and equitable decisions by the Service Planning teams.
- Build and maintain community support for East Link Connections, as well as transit service recovery and restoration planning, to spur confidence in public process, produces outcomes that advance the goals and values for equity and sustainability, and furthers the credibility of Metro and Sound Transit.
- Conduct a community-based, inclusive, transparent, and accessible public engagement process that co-creates a service proposal with the Mobility Board and is informed by the public and stakeholder engagement.
- Demonstrate distributional equity, process equity, and cross-generational equity.

Objectives

1. Ensure all stakeholders, particularly historically underserved and linguistically diverse communities have demographic representation, receive equitable levels of engagement, and are afforded equitable consideration. Objective was accomplished by:

- Engaging with and contracting with area community-based organizations, schools, businesses, and faith-based organizations to support the designing and implementation of equitable public and stakeholder input, collaboration on community events, assisting with outreach and advertising to local community members.
- Recruiting and engaging a Mobility Board made up of a demographically representative group of riders from the project area, with particular focus on recruiting and making the experience welcoming, accessible, and meaningful for BIPOC, immigrants and refugees, linguistically diverse people, people with low and/or no-incomes, and people with disabilities who help to co-create the service proposal for the East Link Connections.

- Engaging a Partner Review Board made up of local jurisdictional staff, representatives from area businesses, as well as leaders of educational institutions, and community-based organizations, who help review technical concepts for East Link Connections.
2. Ensure that the invitation to participate in the process and project information throughout is welcoming and easy to understand. Objective was accomplished by:
 - Providing technical information in plain language that is understandable and accessible to diverse groups, including linguistically diverse populations.
 - Providing interpretation and translation for linguistically diverse and audiences of people with disabilities, as appropriate.
 - Providing background on the issues being discussed to provide context and create transparency.
 - Clearly stating project options and impacts as related to key project components, including descriptions of temporary and permanent impacts, tradeoffs, and benefits.
 - Ensuring that stakeholders and project partners understand the scope and nature of the project, and understand opportunities to participate, provide input, and influence project outcomes.
 3. Develop long-term relationships in the communities we engage by building trust through a transparent process. Objective was accomplished with the following strategies.
 - Providing opportunities to engage before decisions are made through formats and in locations that are accessible to priority populations.
 - Clearly identifying the purpose of an activity: inform, consult, collaborate, shared decision making; and to follow up and show how input has been considered and incorporated.
 - Using a “no wrong door” philosophy to engagement so all staff act as a liaison for questions or feedback about aspects of mobility or other services that are not directly related to this project are welcomed and addressed.
 - Tracking, measuring, and reporting on performance metrics throughout.

Equitable Engagement Practices and Impact of COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent public health guidelines restricting in-person meetings and gatherings, there was substantial impact to in-person engagement for East Link Connections during all three phases of the project. Both Metro and Sound Transit have been adhering to Washington State mandates regarding in-person meetings, events, and gatherings. Therefore, as with Phase 1, the online open house and community meetings regarding the open house were planned to be done completely virtually.

With the COVID-19 vaccine becoming more readily available to the public in 2021, Washington State mandates relaxed to allow in-person gatherings, including public events. This reopening during the middle of Phase 2 engagement allowed for tentative planning of in-person engagement throughout early Summer of 2021. However, by the end of the summer, a reinstatement of mask mandates, stagnant vaccination rates, and the surging variants of the COVID-19 disease forced both King County Metro and Sound Transit to pull back on any planned in-person engagement.

East Link Connections continued to focus only on digital engagement efforts that could be done more safely. East Link Connection’s Mobility Project timeline, in conjunction with Washington State and King County policies restricting in-person meet ups, resulted in our team conducting a 100 percent virtual engagement process throughout the entire project. This was the first time an engagement effort of this magnitude was conducted without in-person activities. While it created several limitations for implementation of standard in-person practices, it also provided the unique opportunity to engage constituents virtually and therefore reach new audiences who may not have had access to in-person engagement activities in the past.

With the lack of in-person community events and gatherings, and with the continued need to do most outreach in virtual settings, the breadth and number of community members reached continues to be affected. Nevertheless, as all CBOs, community gatherings, and other services have moved online, the transition has been feasible. To reach our priority populations, we have continued to partner with CBOs who have helped organize previous virtual community meetings. Our large, diverse Mobility Board and Partner Review Board also helped inform engagement activities and best assessed Eastside community needs and priorities while connecting via a virtual space.

Outreach and Engagement Tactics

Engagement tactics evolved throughout the course of the project based on community feedback about the best practices for engagement and the ongoing phases of COVID-19 recovery. Outreach tools focused on distributing information to the public and engagement tools focused on collecting input to influence decisions and outcomes.

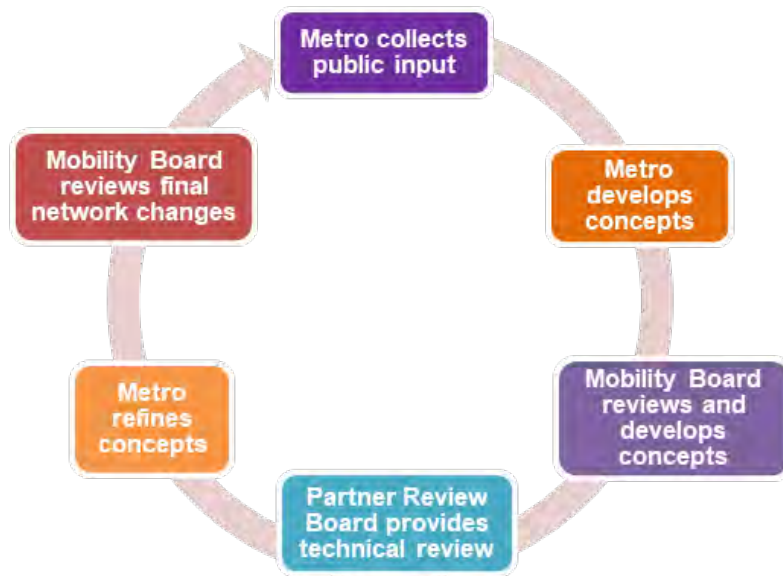
Tools for sharing information about the opportunity to participate	Tools for collecting input
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases before major opportunities for input (survey) • Digital or printed communication materials, such as fact sheets, flyers, and folios • Information or posters distributed to community-based organizations • Work with community liaison staff (when hired) to get information out • Attend community events virtually and when allowed in person • Hold virtual community briefings • Metro and Sound Transit blog posts • Social media posts (multilingual) • Paid media advertisements including ethnic media • Rider alerts at bus stops • Coach posters on board buses • Transit Alerts (texts/emails) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder interviews with community-based organizations, schools, businesses, and faith-based organizations • Mobility Board, composed of community members in project area • Partner Review Board, composed of jurisdictional agencies, employers, institutions, and CBO leaders • One-on-one surveying and discussions at neighborhood events, libraries, and at local community asset locations (when allowed) • Online survey • Conduct onboard engagement, particularly on routes that serve priority census block group areas (if and when allowed) • Facilitate virtual community discussions • In-language community liaisons conduct intercept surveys at

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular emails to CBOs and individuals who sign up for project updates • Dedicated East Link webpage with proposed route maps 	<p>bus stop locations in project area (if and when allowed)</p>
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<p>Language and cultural tools for sharing information</p>	<p>Language and cultural tools for collecting input</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translating printed materials for all community engagement events at the recommendation of community partners. • Translating online materials and surveys, • CBOs sending out language relevant information to their constituents about online surveys and other opportunities to provide feedback • In-language social media posts translated into appropriate languages • Ethnic media ads in-language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups, meetings, and other events designed and implemented by CBOs that are led by/for people of color, those with disabilities and other prioritized populations • Engagement at local cultural community events, including in-person surveying, one-on-one discussions • Mobility Board meetings held in accessible locations, include translated materials, text, presentations, and language interpreters as well as accessible printed materials for members with a vision and/or cognitive disability • Bilingual staff and Community Liaisons share information and engage at community events, at intercept surveys, etc.

Stakeholders and Partners

Metro best practices around restructuring projects includes input from the public, Mobility Board feedback, and technical review from the Partner Review Board. Figure 13 illustrates this cycle of engagement, feedback, and concept refinement.

*Stakeholder & Partner Engagement Cycle***Figure 13 - Metro Engagement Cycle**

Community Based Organizations

Establishing strong partnerships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) early in the project was essential for successful engagement throughout the project. To discuss community mobility needs and solicit feedback in response to service concepts, the East Link Connections Mobility Project team engaged with 32 CBOs by conducting stakeholder interviews in Phase 1. The East Link Connections team conducted these stakeholder interviews in a variety of ways, including over the phone, virtually, and via e-mail. This approach respected the need for relationship building and the limited capacity of these organizations in managing engagement activities for a transit project. The project provided an opportunity for Metro and Sound Transit to build and foster relationships with community organizations in a way that will facilitate engagement for future projects and improve further community-centered decision-making.

In addition to the numerous stakeholder interviews with community-based organizations, Metro and Sound Transit partnered with four CBOs in Phase 2 and Phase 3 to support targeted, community-specific engagement activities. Metro Transit partnered with the Chinese Information and Service Center, the Ethnic Chamber of Commerce Coalition, Indian American Community Services, and Hopelink. The CBO partnerships were an excellent means for continuous engagement throughout the project's lifetime.

The scope of work for this partnership included engagement and outreach in the timeframe of each phase. During these timeframes, CBOs were asked to:

- a. Advertise Metro & Sound Transit online open house events, web platform, and survey through their communication channels.
- b. Identify opportunities for engagement at local events, gatherings, and meetings.
- c. Report on outreach and engagement efforts, including a summary of community conversations, web traffic, data from social media posts,

- demographic information, activities completed, barriers encountered, and/or recommendations for informing the public of the upcoming service change.
- d. Provide recommendations for marketing and advertising the service change.
 - e. Convene, facilitate, translate, and record comments from community conversations, with informal conversation being guided by the questions and information provided, as needed.

The CBOs received financial compensation for their time and efforts. A flat rate of \$9,500 was paid to each CBO in the second and third phases of the project. The funds were to be used for compensation of staff time, participant stipends, participant food and childcare as needed, and other digital engagement tools, including subscriptions to virtual platforms.

Stakeholder Advisory Groups

The project team formed two advisory groups: a Mobility Board and a Partner Review Board, designed to engage and inform community members, local CBOs, and local government partners. The Mobility and Partner Review Boards gave stakeholders a mechanism to participate in discussions and provide input as the project team developed service design options, refined proposed routes, and selected preferred concepts.

Mobility Board

Metro and Sound Transit recruited community members who live, work, and travel within East King County to provide valuable input to develop an updated bus service proposal. The Mobility Board was essential in helping to develop and implement an equitable community engagement process.

Metro and Sound Transit aimed to convene a Mobility Board that equitably represents groups of people who have historically been left out of decision-making conversations related to transit, and who are disproportionately affected by these decisions. These groups of people include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; people with physical and/or cognitive disabilities; people with low- to no-income; people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity; immigrants and/or refugees; and people with linguistic diversity. Metro and Sound Transit used in-language recruitment materials and compensated community organizations that serve priority populations to encourage those who identify as coming from one or multiple un(der)served groups to apply to serve on the East Link Connections Mobility Board.

The criteria for board candidates include:

- Lives, works, or travels within affected communities (including but not limited to areas east and south of Kenmore, east of the I-90 and SR 520 bridges, north of east Renton, and west of Sammamish and Issaquah)
- Transit rider (bus service, rail, Accessible Services, Community Van, Vanpool, Vanshare, etc.) or potential transit rider
- Brings a strong racial equity-focused perspective and is able to draw connections between racial equity, transportation issues, and access to opportunities
- Represents the diversity of the communities in the project area, especially those who have lived experience and perspective of historically marginalized communities as described above

- Able to bring their perspective as an individual, not representing the interests of a larger organization
- Not employed by Metro, Sound Transit, or other public agencies, such as cities engaged on the project

The Mobility Board met regularly between May 2021 and May 2022 at key project milestones. The 8 meetings were held in an online format for the entirety of the project due to the COVID pandemic. Accommodations were provided to ensure that all members were able to fully participate in meetings, including but not limited to translated and accessible materials, translation, and interpretation as needed. To recognize the value of their knowledge, skills, and expertise, Mobility Board members were fully compensated for time spent at meetings at a rate of \$50/hour.

Mobility Board Representation

Mobility Board members represented diverse communities and backgrounds. The members represented working professionals, students, and those with no- to low-income. Some have been unhoused or have experienced housing access issues. Some were avid transit riders and others were new to public transportation. Below are tables capturing the demographics of our 27 board members.

Mobility Board Demographics

City (home address)	
Bellevue	7
Redmond	5
Kirkland	3
Issaquah	2
Seattle	2
Carnation	1
Medina	1
Mercer Island	1
Mill Creek	1
Renton	1
Snoqualmie	1
Woodinville	2
Total	27
Age range	
Under 18	1
18-25	1
26-35	2
36-45	7
46-55	2

Disability	
No	20
physical	2
cognitive	1
other	3
did not identify or other	1
Total	27

Annual Household Income	
\$7,500 to \$15,000	1
\$15,001 to \$25,000	2
\$35,001 to \$45,000	4
\$55,001 to \$65,000	3
\$65,001 to \$75,000	1
\$100,001 to \$140,000	1
More than \$140,000	4
I don't know	1
Prefer not to say	10
Total	27

56-65	4
66-75	1
Prefer not to say	9
Total	27

Primary language spoken	
English	20
Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, etc.)	3
Hindi	1
Spanish	1
Another language not listed	1
Total	27

Mobility Board Members by ethnicity/race in Relation to Project Area Population

	King County	Percent	Project Area	Percent	Mobility Board
2020 Total Population	2,271,785		675,614		
Black/African American	155,132	7%	19,937	3%	12%
Asian	455,742	20%	173,972	26%	35%
American Indian/Alaska Native	17,010	<1%	2,549	<1%	0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	18,545	<1%	1,716	<1%	0%
Hispanic or Latinx	227,068	10%	54,359	8%	8%
White	1,394,028	61%	422,576	63%	12%
People with disabilities	163,628	7%	40,384	6%	23%

Partner Review Board

In addition to the Mobility Board Metro's individual engagement with project partners and stakeholders, the Partner Review Board (PRB) served as a concept review board comprised of external stakeholders. The PRB included representatives from jurisdictions and major institutions in the project area, leaders of community-based organizations, and representatives from partner transit agencies. Their primary role was to review and provide comment on service concepts developed by the Mobility Board and Metro, as well as provide guidance on both engagement opportunities and implementation plans. The Partner Review Board provided an opportunity to engage with other project partners and take a more holistic view of the project as the sum of these many parts.

Partner Review Board Members

Employers	CBOs	Institutions	Jurisdictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazon • Costco • Eastside Business Association • Google • Move Redmond • Microsoft • T-Mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs • Indian Association of Western Washington • Chinese Information and Service Center • Eastside for All • Eastside Pathways • Muslim Association of Puget Sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellevue College • Washington Technical University • Hopelink • Bellevue School District • King County Parks • UW Bothell • Seattle Children’s Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Bellevue • City of Bothell • City of Clyde Hill • City of Duvall • City of Kirkland • City of Medina • City of Mercer Island • City of Newcastle • City of Redmond • City of Renton • City of Sammamish • City of Seattle • City of Woodinville • Town of Yarrow Point • Beaux Arts • Department of Local Services

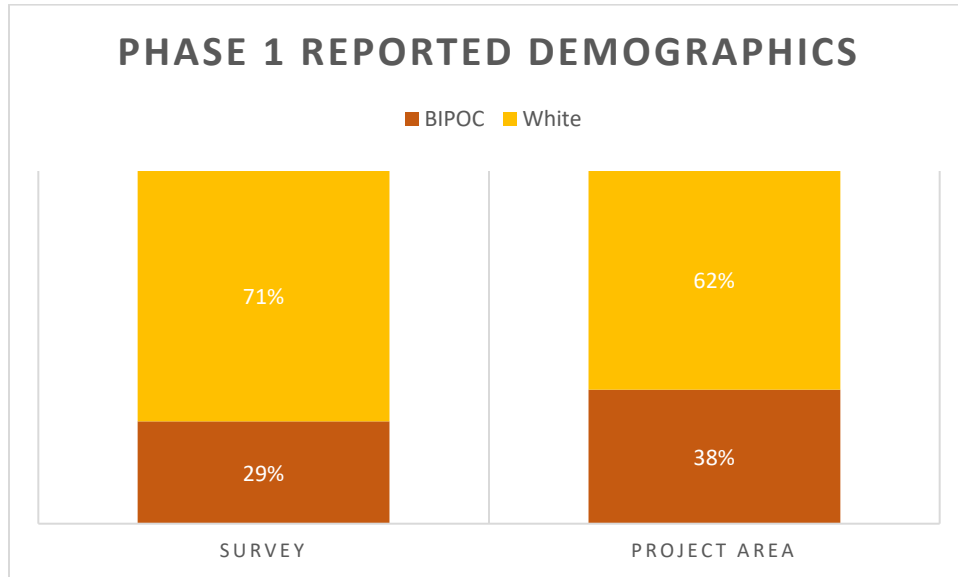
Input From Priority Populations

With the above engagement strategies and activities implemented, Metro and Sound Transit collected input from community within the project area.

Phase 1 Survey Responses

In Phase 1 we received 1,323 survey responses. We utilized the Public Input platform and were initially able to collect demographic data related to race and ethnicity. Respondents were able to share if they identified as White/Caucasian or Black, Indigenous or Person of Color (BIPOC). Note that within the first round of outreach, survey respondents were not reflective of the project area.

Figure 14 - Phase 1 reported race/ethnicity demographics



Phase 2 Survey Responses

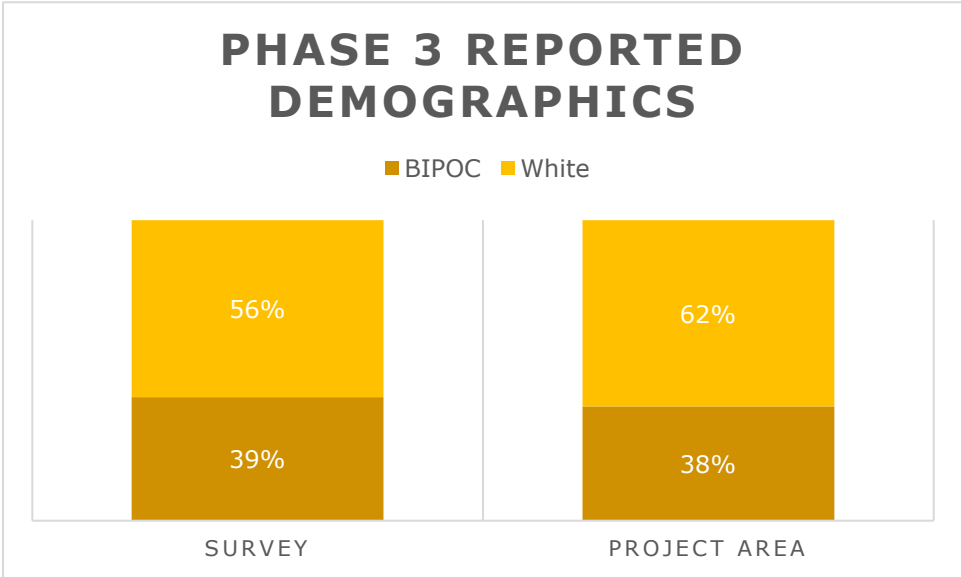
In Phase 2, the survey platform was moved from Public Input to Azure through a contract with EnviroIssues. The platform changed in response to access needs for individuals with low/no vision who rely on screen reader technology. In this phase of outreach, we received 1,832 responses, a 28 percent increase from Phase 1. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties in establishing the new platform, we were unable to collect race/ethnicity demographic data in Phase 2.

Phase 3 Survey Responses

In Phase 3, we were able to re-establish demographic data collection and captured more robust demographic data related to race/ethnicity and disability status. We also saw an 8 percent increase in responses from Phase 2 with a total of 2000 respondents in the Phase 3 survey. Through improved engagement strategies, we were able to increase both the number of responses to the survey and the representation of BIPOC responses in proportion to the representation within the project area.

Priority Demographic	Project Area Population	Population Percentage	Phase 3 Responses	Phase 3 Response Percentage
Black/African American	19,937	3%	49	3%
Asian	173,972	26%	423	25%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2,549	<1%	17	<1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1,716	<1%	12	<1%
Hispanic or Latinx	54,359	8%	93	5%
White	422,576	63%	956	56%
People with disabilities	40,384	6%	246	15%

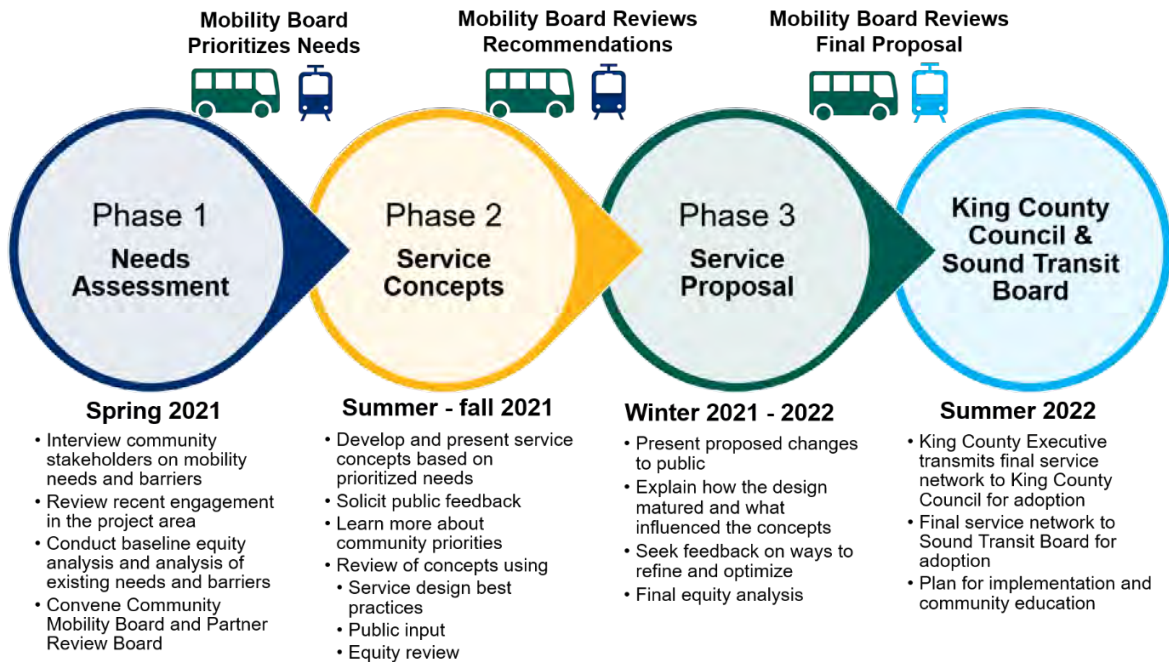
Figure 15 - Phase 3 reported race/ethnicity demographics



Project Timeline

In this project, Metro incorporated a more continuous planning process that allowed for concept development to be influenced by ongoing equity analysis and engagement findings, stakeholder conversations, and the co-creation of a service network with the Mobility Board. This process emphasized input from the online survey (as we worked to solicit responses with proportionate representation based on project area demographics) and on direct rider input, including individual, CBOs, Mobility Board, and stakeholder conversations.

Figure 16 - East Link Connections planning timeline



3 Engagement Phases Activities & Outcomes

The East Link Connections Mobility Project was done in a three-phase planning process. This allowed for flexible concept development that was influenced by an ongoing equity analysis as well as input from engagement findings through survey responses, stakeholder conversations, and the co-creation of a service network with the Mobility Board. Rather than focus on one engagement tactic to provide needed input, this model allowed for a much more holistic approach. Designing our engagement with multiple phases and various tactics allowed for the project to employ a multifaceted engagement approach, led by input from priority populations which have been historically underrepresented and rely on transit in order move around the greater Puget Sound region and beyond.

Phase 1 - Engagement focused on listening, learning, and building relationships and a mutual understanding to develop shared goals. During this phase of engagement, staff gathered information about service needs by reviewing reports from previous engagement projects and through interviews with key stakeholders in the project area. This information helped inform the draft service concept for public feedback during Phase 2 engagement.

Phase 2 – Engagement focused on informing the general public and riders in impacted communities about the project scope and vision. Staff shared the service

concept that was developed based on information gathered during Phase I and gathered feedback on the project draft concept to learn more about community priorities and explore potential tradeoffs in order to inform the draft service proposal.

Phase 3 – Engagement reflected on outcomes of Phase 2. Staff presented concepts, explained how the design matured and what influenced the concepts, sought feedback on ways to refine and optimize, and identified change opportunities that would improve the proposal or mitigate negative impacts prior to finalizing the concept. Staff summarized the previous phases of engagement and project development, reviewed how community input and priorities influenced concept development and the final plan, and explained other relevant next steps.

Phase 1 Engagement- Needs Assessment

Conducted March 2021-May 2021

Goals

The purpose of Phase 1 engagement was to assess transit needs in the project area. During the first phase of community engagement, Metro focused on creating relationships with community-based organizations in east King County, introduced the project to community members, and gathered feedback on needs and priorities for transit service. The project scope was introduced to both internal and external stakeholders. The project team learned about existing conditions, issues, and needs through analysis, equity review, local jurisdiction coordination, and community engagement. This phase concluded with an intensive workshop with the Mobility Board to discuss needs and priorities across the project area and possible solutions.

Tactics

Stakeholder Interviews

Metro and Sound Transit reached out to over 80 stakeholders to inform them of the phase 1 engagement for East Link Connections. Twenty interviews were conducted with community-based organizations, cities, and employers regarding service needs and community engagement best practices for reaching their communities.

Community Based Organizations Stakeholders

- **Together Center:** located in downtown Redmond; one-stop human services campus.
- **Chinese Information Service Center (CISC):** serves all of Eastside, helps immigrants throughout county connecting to information, services, advocacy.
- **Eastside for All:** works to address systemic racism, focused on policy-level decision making, and youth leaders as board member.
- **Youth Eastside Services:** mental health counseling services for youth ages 0-22.
- **Friends of Youth:** Housing, mental health services for Eastside youth, has a shelter and drop-in center in Redmond.
- **Hopelink:** provides a network of critical social services through a number of programs, including housing and transportation, with service centers in Redmond, Bellevue, Kirkland, Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley.

- **Ethnic Chambers of Commerce Coalition:** provide a unified voice in their communities. Education, health, and business are their top three focuses, but cover a wide range of concerns.
- **Indian American Community Services:** works to connect and empower the Asian-Indian community through programs, services, and advocacy for people of all ages and all life stages.
- **Move Redmond** (formally Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association): advocates for better walking, biking, and transit in Redmond.
- **Lighthouse for the Blind Seattle:** provides employment, support, and training opportunities for people who are blind, DeafBlind, and blind with other disabilities.
- **Snoqualmie Valley Mobility Coalition:** coalition of Snoqualmie Valley Cities, health care providers, human services organizations, non-profits, and riders with the goal of improving transportation in Snoqualmie Valley.

Employer Stakeholders

- Amazon
- Microsoft
- Bellevue Chamber
- Google
- Facebook

Jurisdictions

- City of Bellevue
- City of Issaquah
- City of Kirkland
- City of Redmond

Key Mobility Needs Identified Through Stakeholder Interviews

- Provide first and last mile connections to get people to the network
- Minimize transfers, especially for long-distance travelers who may already have multiple transfers
- Make transfers fast and easy, especially for seniors and disabled riders
- Frequent service is important in making transit easy to use and transfers more feasible
- Service should be available at more times of day and on weekends
- Include planned job and housing growth in service plans

Phase 1 Online Public Survey

The online survey was open from April 5–25, 2021 and was available in nine languages. Over the three-week period the survey received 1,323 responses. The key takeaways from the survey were:

- Travel time, frequency, and difficulty of transfers are the top three barriers to taking transit
- Post-COVID, demand for commute travel may not be as strong, indicating an increased demand for all-day, all-week travel
- Frequent bus service is important to make transfers to Link easier

Figure 17 - Phase 1 survey transit barriers responses

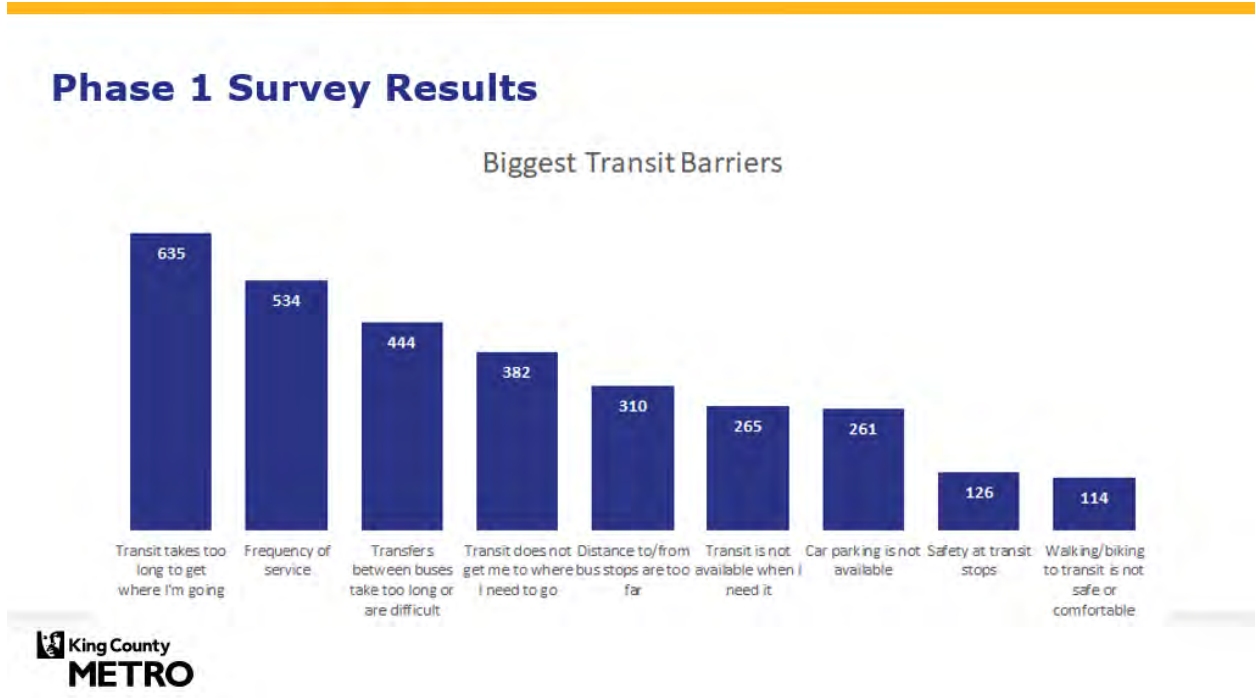
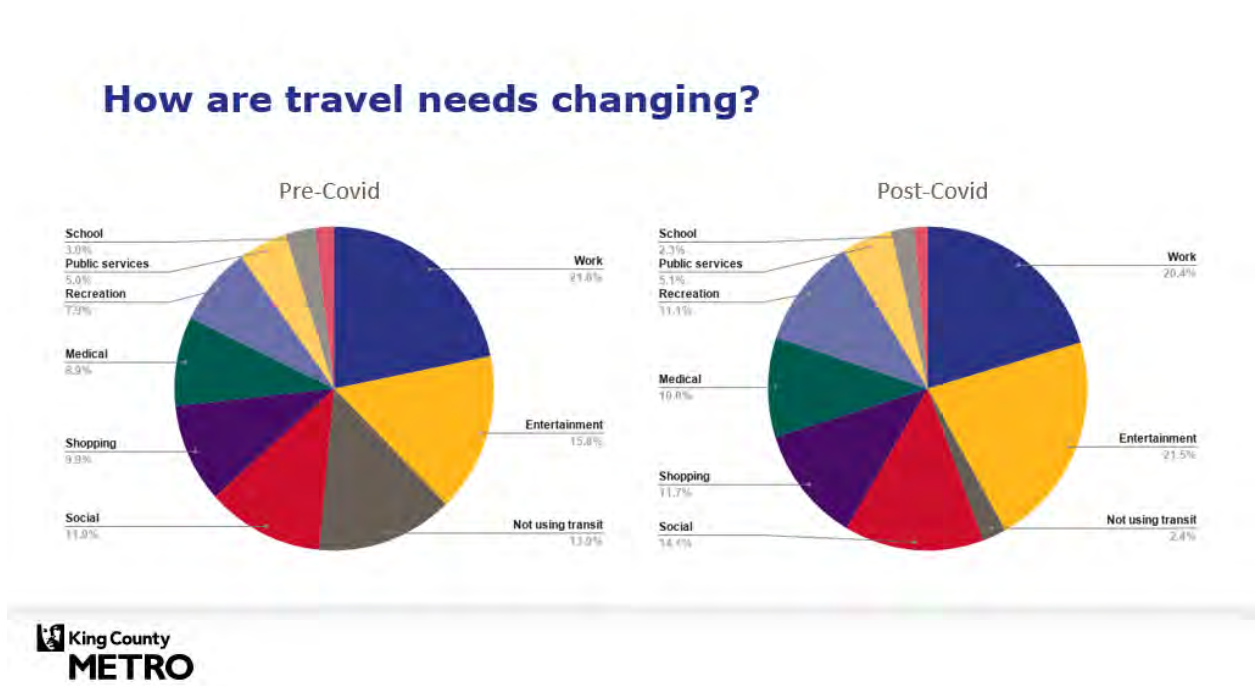


Figure 18 - Phase 1 survey travel needs responses



Mobility Board

In Phase 1, the Mobility Board met three times, twice before the launch of the public survey and once after the survey closed. The first two meetings focused on providing a project overview and learning & development opportunities around transit and transit equity.

These initial meetings also were an opportunity for Mobility Board members to outline mobility priorities within the project area as a group. As a result, the following priorities were identified.

Figure 19 - Mobility Board identified project priorities infographic



At the third Mobility Board meeting held on May 26, 2021, Metro and Sound Transit reviewed the results of the Phase 1 engagement with the board members. The Mobility Board then broke up into sub-areas and worked to prioritize needs statements by geographic area. Below is a summary of the key highlights from the discussion, and the top mobility board-identified needs for each sub-area.

South Sub-Area: Renton, Renton Highlands, Newcastle, South Bellevue

What are the known transit issues and concerns in this sub-area?

- Buses are not frequent enough, especially on off-peak periods (early morning, late night, weekends)
- Transit takes too long to get where I'm going
- Transfers between buses take too long or are too difficult
- Transit is not available at the time of day I need it. Peak-only span of Express routes is not enough.
- Unreliable transit and crowding on buses

Sub-area Prioritized Top Needs

- More service outside peak hours
- Improve first/last mile connections to transit hubs
- Leverage connections to Link, Bus/Rapid Transit
- Improve connections between Renton Highlands and Bellevue & Issaquah
- Ensure connections to hospitals and other community assets

Central Sub-Area: Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah

What are the known transit issues and concerns in this sub-area?

- Amount of time I must wait for the bus (frequency of service)
- Transit takes too long to get where I'm going
- Transfers between buses take too long or are too difficult
- Travel is more difficult in off-peak due to lack of span and/or frequency, and more difficult transfers with low frequency
- Crowding issues on some routes at peak

Sub-area Prioritized Top Needs

- Routes that make transfers easier by being frequent, safe, and accessible to all travelers, and with early and late trips that can serve transfers to or from Link.
- Routes that offer more transfer opportunities so that riders can travel to many different local and regional destinations.
- Routes that offer speed and reliability, with more direct paths on faster routes where possible.

North Sub-Area: Redmond, Kirkland, Bothell, Woodinville

What are the known transit issues and concerns in this sub-area?

- Transit takes too long to get where I'm going
- Buses are not frequent enough, especially on off-peak periods (early morning, late night, weekends)
- Transfers between buses take too long or are too difficult
- Walk distance to/from bus stop
- Doesn't go where I want

Sub-area Top Prioritized Needs

- Improve and add local connections
- More service on nights and weekends
- Ensure transfers are easy and seamless
- Preserve easy access to downtown Seattle

East: I-90 corridor, Sammamish

What are the known transit issues and concerns in this sub-area?

- Span of service —Several comments requesting routes have a wider span of operation.
- Park at transit centers and park-and-rides—Many expressing frustrations at the lack of parking
- Bus stop safety —Several comments regarding the safety at bus stops, particularly in downtown Seattle

- Frequency—Many comments wanting their routes to run more frequently

Sub-area Prioritized Top Needs

- Widen span to non-peak hours and weekends
- High frequency at traditional peak commute hours
- Issaquah to Bellevue connections
- Real-time bus information
- Adjust to new demand

With input from each Mobility Board sub-area, the project team consolidated network priorities into a table under four buckets: all-day service and greater span, local connections, good transfers, and improved speed and commuting. Figure 9 below summarizes the input captured from each sub-area.

Figure 20 - Phase 1 Mobility Themes by sub-area

Themes	North	Central	East	South
All-day service, greater span	More service on nights and weekends		Widen span to non-peak hours and weekends Adjust to new demand	More service outside peak hours
Local connections	Improve and add local connections	Routes that offer more transfer opportunities so that riders can travel to many different local and regional destinations	Issaquah to Bellevue connections	Improve connections between Renton Highlands and Bellevue & Issaquah Ensure connections to hospitals and other community assets
Good transfers	Ensure transfers are easy and seamless	Routes that make transfers easier by being frequent, safe, and accessible to all travelers, and with early and late trips that can serve transfers to or from Link		Leverage connections to Link, BRT Improve first/last mile connections to transit hubs

Speed, commuting	Preserve easy access to downtown Seattle	Routes that offer speed and reliability, with more direct paths on faster routes where possible	High frequency at traditional peak commute hours	
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The fourth Mobility Board meeting held on June 24, 2021 was an opportunity to provide feedback on early service concepts drafted for Phase 2 of the project. Mobility Board Members could share their input on the draft network before the Phase 2 launch in fall 2021.

Partner Review Board

The Partner Review Board’s primary role was to review and provide comments on transit service concepts developed in partnership with the community Mobility Board and based on input from the broader public. The Board was also engaged on how to equitably engage communities within their respective areas as well as the implementation plan.

The Partner Review Board met on June 15, 2021 and had over 33 members in attendance. At this initial meeting, members reviewed project scope, Phase 1 survey results, and Mobility Board feedback.

Paid Media: Digital Ads and Media

Ethnic Media Buy in March and April 2021

To support recruitment for the Mobility Board and promote the Phase 1 survey, multicultural and digital ads were placed by The Vida Agency (TVA) to bolster recruitment and awareness of the 12 new light rail stations connecting downtown Seattle and the Eastside. Twenty-six percent of respondents heard about this project through news media or neighborhood blogs.

TVA created a multilingual strategy and launched all components of the multifaceted campaign in early March with runs through April. The first portion of the campaign promoted the Eastlink Mobility Board Application in March, while the second portion promoted the Eastlink Connections survey in April.

For media outreach, TVA focused on both earned and paid opportunities. TVA purchased in-language ads in six multicultural media outlets. The first purchase began on March 17, 2021 and ran for three weeks. The second purchase began on April 5, 2021 and ran for three weeks.

Media Outlet	Language	Online/Print
El Siete Dias	<i>Spanish</i>	online
La Raza	<i>Spanish</i>	online
NW Asian Weekly / Seattle Chinese Post	<i>Chinese</i>	online
Seattle Chinese Times	<i>Chinese</i>	print only

Seattle Korean Weekly	<i>Korean</i>	both
NW Vietnamese News	<i>Vietnamese</i>	both
Digital	<i>Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, Hindi, Tagalog</i>	online

Outcomes & Key Takeaways

Through the conversations conducted with community-based organizations, local employers, local mobility groups, the Mobility & Partner Review Board and through a public survey, the project team was able to create a draft concept that:

1. Encouraged the design of a concept that mapped destinations that are important to community.
2. Addressed barriers and increased transit use and access.
3. Found opportunities for improvement of the current network to encourage transit use.

The table below takes high level themes from all the input collected in Phase 1 and illustrates the key outcomes to the draft network proposed in Phase 2.

Phase 1 Key Themes	How it Influenced Phase 2 Proposal
Make transfers easier with frequent and accessible service, with early and late trips that provide transfers to/from Link.	<p>B Line: Extended to new Downtown Redmond station. Revised pathway on 156th Ave NE to be more direct. Route 245: Removed Factoria loop. Revised routing to serve Overlake Village station.</p> <p>Route 270: New route that replaces Route 271 between Bellevue and UW. Access 520 via Bellevue Way.</p> <p>ST 542: Increased service levels to provide connections to Redmond Technology station, UW station; extend to Bear Creek P&R.</p>
More transfer opportunities so riders can travel to different local and regional destinations.	<p>B Line: Extended to new Downtown Redmond station. Revised pathway on 156th Ave NE to be more direct. Route 245: Removed Factoria loop. Revise routing to serve Overlake Village station.</p> <p>Route 270: New route that replaces Route 271 between Bellevue and UW. Access 520 via Bellevue Way.</p> <p>ST 542: Increased service levels to provide connections to Redmond Technology station, UW station; extend to Bear Creek P&R.</p> <p>ST 544: Increased frequency to 10 minutes in 2024.</p>

<p>Speed and reliability, with more direct paths on faster routes where possible.</p>	<p>B Line: Extended to new Downtown Redmond station. Revised pathway on 156th Ave NE to be more direct. Route 245: Removed Factoria loop. Revise routing to serve Overlake Village station.</p> <p>Route 270: New route that replaces Route 271 between Bellevue and UW. Access 520 via Bellevue Way.</p> <p>ST 544: Increased frequency to 10 minutes in 2024.</p>
<p>Post-Covid, demand for commute travel may not be as strong. Increased demand for all-day, all-week travel.</p>	<p>Service throughout more of the day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renton to South Bellevue Link • Totem Lake to Redmond • Woodinville to Redmond • Education Hill-Redmond-Idylwood-Overlake

Phase 2 Engagement- Draft Service Concept

Conducted September 2021-October 2021

Between engagement Phases 1 and 2, the project team developed preliminary concepts for service changes in partnership with the Mobility Board. These concepts responded to the needs identified during the first phase of community engagement and, specifically, the input from priority populations across the project area. These concepts showcased possibilities for future service.

Goals

In Phase 2 of engagement, community was invited to review and provide feedback on network change concepts for the project area informed by input from Phase 1. In addition, community had the opportunity to amplify concerns and interests to Metro. Based on feedback about the engagement process itself from Phase 1, during Phase 2 Metro engaged with community members at existing community events, provided translated materials at outreach events and online, and continued to build relationships with CBOs. The goals of the engagement in phase 2 were to:

- Reflect on outcomes and feedback from Phase 1 engagement.
- Present updated concepts.
- Explain how designs evolved and what influenced the updated concepts.
- Discuss solutions to concerns posed by community members and address perceived negative outcomes.
- Seek feedback to further refine and optimize concepts.
- Identify opportunities for further changes that would improve the proposal or mitigate negative impacts prior to finalizing the preferred concept.

Tactics

Mobility Board

During Phase 2, the Metro and Sound Transit Team reconvened with the Mobility Board on December 1, 2021, and January 26, 2022. At these two meetings, members:

- Reviewed public survey results and the proposed service concepts and changes by sub-area.
- Provided feedback on how well the concepts aligned with priority needs by sub-area
- Advised on specific sub-area changes where Metro’s technical analysis did not result in a clear priority change.
- Worked in geographic area groups to provide a report out on their discussions, guided by the following prompts.
 - What themes came up in your conversation?
 - Where were places of agreement or disagreement?
 - What service changes are you most excited about?

Post-Phase 2 Public Survey Mobility Board Meeting

In a Mobility Board meeting on December 1, 2021, Metro and Sound Transit presented to the board the results of the Phase 2 survey. The board then confirmed if survey results were in alignment with mobility needs and priorities identified in Phase 1. Lastly, Service Planners received recommendations from the board to support the refinement of the Phase 3 network changes. Information shared to the board during this meeting is summarized below.

North: Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville, Bothell

Takeaways from Phase 2 survey:

- Concerns about loss of service on 156th Ave NE and Old Redmond Road
- Very strong support for added service on routes 224, 250, 930 and new Route 251
- Mixed feelings about peak-only service restructures with some wanting more peak services, and others wanting more all-day service instead
- Desire for more local coverage in SE Redmond

Types of changes proposed for Phase 3 network:

- Add local service to SE Redmond by redirecting routes 224 and 251
- Extend Route 223 to Downtown Redmond via Old Redmond Road
- Move Route 245 back to 156th Ave NE
- Add new flexible service to areas around Redmond Technology Station and Overlake Village

Central: Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, Medina, Clyde Hill

Takeaways from Phase 2 engagement:

- In general, add more frequency where possible
- Concerns for reduced frequency in Lake Hills area
- Concerns for loss of service in parts of south Redmond
- More direct pathways preferred (support for 270 and B Line changes)

Types of changes proposed for Phase 3 network:

- Less "coverage routes" with low frequency, more frequency on higher ridership routes.
- New all-day, more frequent, Eastgate to downtown Bellevue route (Route 220)
- Revised service in south Redmond to avoid service loss (routes 223, 245)
- Make additional routes shorter or more direct where possible (routes 223, 249, new 220)

South: Renton, Renton Highlands, Newcastle, South Bellevue

Takeaways from Phase 2 engagement:

- Strong support for the addition of all-day, all-week service on Route 111
- Need to evaluate the tradeoffs between serving Bellevue College and fast connections to Link light rail, especially for commuters in Newcastle who previously used Route 114

Types of changes Proposed for Phase 3 network:

- Evaluating pathways for Route 240 in Bellevue depending on the connections that are most important
- Smaller pathway changes to routes 111 and 240 based on feedback from the City of Renton and ridership analyses

East: I-90 corridor, Sammamish, Mercer Island

Takeaways from Phase 2 engagement:

- Mixed support for the truncation, consolidation, avoiding duplication of Link on the I-90 routes
- Some comments about the loss of a one-seat ride into downtown Seattle and transfer time
- Some excitement about the speed and reliability of Link light rail
- Strong support for Mercer Island extension of Route 269 (56 percent approval) and the new Route 215 (60 percent approval for Route 208 being replaced)

Types of changes proposed for Phase 3 network:

- Pathway change for the Route 269 between the Issaquah-Highlands Park and Ride and I-90 to increase speed
- Streamline pathway for the Route 630 on Seattle First Hill

Pre-Phase 3 Engagement Mobility Board Meeting

After the last meeting with the Mobility Board, Service Planners worked to integrate the board's feedback into concept refinement ahead of the Phase 3 launch. During the fifth meeting held on January 26, 2022, the board was updated on draft network updates and informed of the community engagement strategy and how they could promote the third and final phase of engagement on the East Link Connections Mobility Project. Service Planners and Mobility Board members split into sub-areas and discussed the potential tradeoffs and considerations for the proposed Phase 3 changes. Below is a breakdown by sub-area of network updates.

North: Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville, Bothell

No significant changes since the update from meeting 4.

Central: Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, Medina, Clyde Hill

Highlights of Phase 3 network:

- Less "coverage routes" with low frequency, more frequency on higher ridership routes.
 - New all-day, more frequent, Eastgate to downtown Bellevue route (Route 220)
 - Increased frequency on two Link connection routes (203, 249)
 - Proposed Route 202 and Revised Route 241 deleted from proposal. Route 241 replaced by revised 240 and 203, and Route 202 replaced by routes 203, 220, and 554.
- Make routes shorter or more direct where possible (routes 223, 249, new 220)
- Revised service in Issaquah to improve local mobility.
 - Frequent service on Gilman Blvd and Front Street between Issaquah Highlands and Issaquah Transit Center with new local stops on ST 554
 - More frequent service through North Issaquah between Issaquah Highlands and Issaquah Transit Center on new Route 203

South: Renton, Renton Highlands, Newcastle, South Bellevue

Highlights of Phase 3 network:

- Due to strong Mobility Board support and the results of the Phase 2 engagement, Route 240 will travel between Eastgate Park and Ride and Bellevue Transit Center via SE Eastgate Way/I-90 and Bellevue Way SE, providing another connection to Link light rail at South Bellevue Station
- Route 240 is also upgraded to a frequent route, with 15-minute service all day on weekdays
- Added an hour of evening span (until 9 PM) on weekdays to Route 111
- No proposed changes to Routes 114, 167, and 342 proposals from the Phase 2 network

East: I-90 corridor, Sammamish, Mercer Island

Highlights of Phase 3 network:

- Pathway change for the Route 269 between the Issaquah-Highlands Park and Ride and I-90 to increase speed
- Streamline pathway for the Route 630 on Seattle First Hill
- No proposed changes to the Route 204, 215, and 218 proposals from the Phase 2 network

Partner Review Board

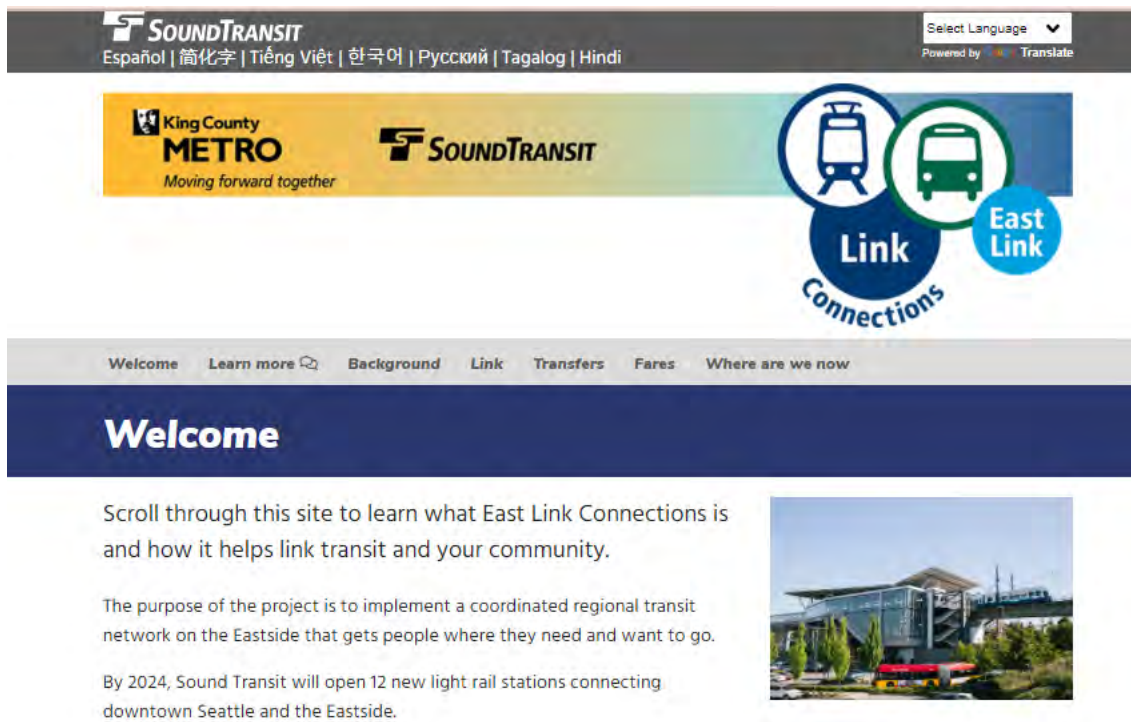
Metro and Sound Transit convened the Partner Review Board on December 7, 2021. In this meeting, staff provided the Partner Review Board the opportunity to:

- Understand the transportation mobility needs and priorities for the East Link area, identified through engagement and technical analysis.
- Provide feedback to Metro and Sound Transit on whether concepts identified in Phase 2 meet identified transportation mobility needs and issues that need to be considered in building a transit service network in the East Link Mobility Project area.

Virtual Open House Site

During Phase 2, the project team developed and managed the content of a virtual platform that served as an open house site and partnered with EnviroIssues to develop and run it. The virtual open house informed the public about the East Link Connections Project, the proposed changes to the transit network, as well as to share the route-by-route proposals along with their maps in lieu of in-person open house events due to state mandates regarding COVID. The website was translated and available in the following 8 languages: English, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Tagalog. The site also provided visitors with background information on the project, gave details on the current stage of the project, and gave contact information at which the public could direct questions.

Figure 21 - Online Open House platform



Online Public Survey

To gain input from the public on the proposed network changes in the East Link Connections project, a survey featuring the route proposals was developed and made available during Phase 3 of engagement. From September 13 to October 25, 2021, a survey regarding the proposed network changes was open to the public and available in 8 languages: English, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Tagalog. The survey was available in the virtual open house site during the time that it was open.

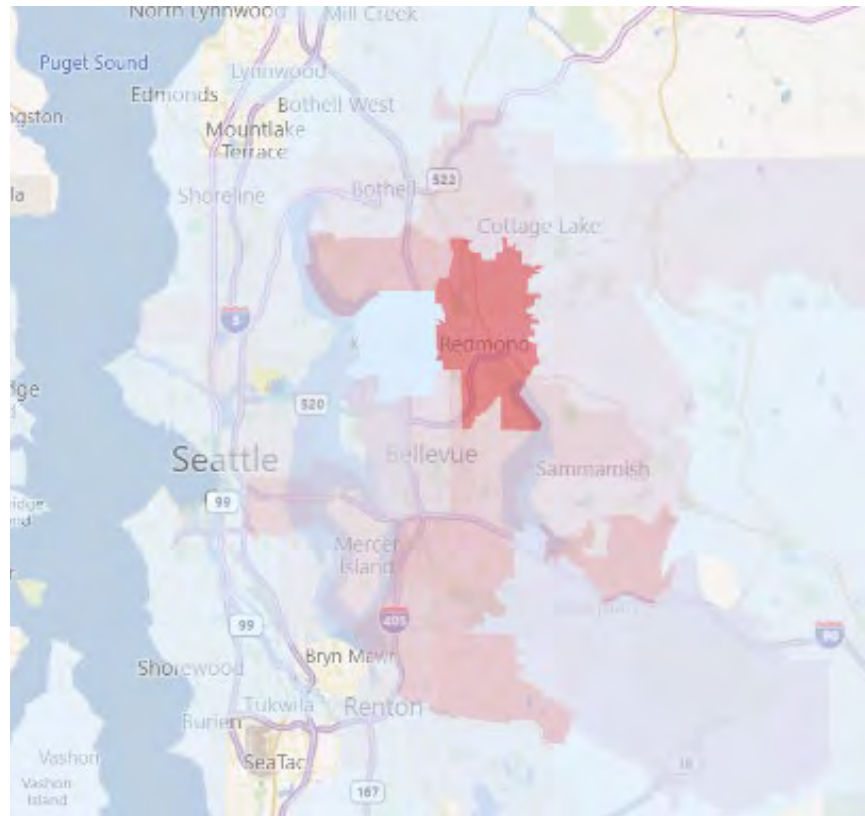
The survey received 1,832 responses in total.

- English – 1,799
- Chinese – 33

- Korean – 22
- Vietnamese – 4
- Spanish 4

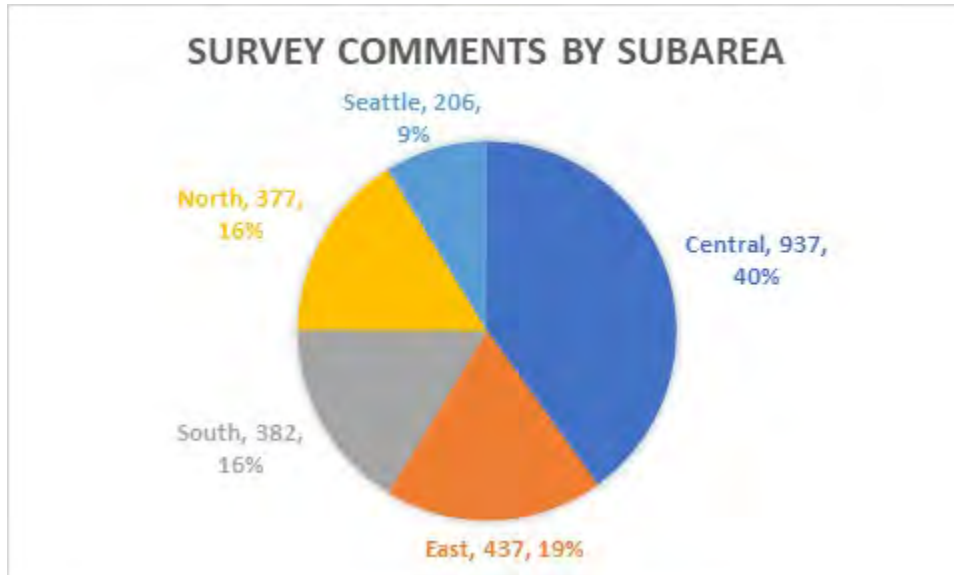
For the most part, the proposed route changes were approved of by the survey takers, with many proposals being vastly popular among respondents. Of the proposed route changes, 86.84 percent of them were approved of by the public.

Figure 22 - Phase 2 survey response density by zip code



In addition to the survey questions answered, 2,339 separate comments were provided in response to the service change proposals in all East Side sub-areas and the singular Seattle route.

Figure 23 - Phase 2 survey responses by sub-area



Phase 2 survey results showed the following findings.

North: Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville, Bothell

Route	Outreach Results
223	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for a more frequent and reliable connection between Eastgate, Bellevue College, and Overlake and liked the connections to Link light rail. Support for making route even more reliable by making route direct where possible. Concern for the loss of service south of downtown Redmond on some corridors served by Route 221 on Old Redmond Road and 148th Ave NE.
224	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong support for this proposal. Popular change (83% approve), but with a small sample size of 83 people. Overwhelming majority of survey respondents liked that more frequent service offered on this route. There was a desire from some individuals to increase service levels on this route even further. Some suggestions that this route could serve destinations in SE Redmond on the way to Redmond Transit Center.
225	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popular (51% approve, 20% disapprove), with a small sample size of 77 people. “Other” comments largely state that this route needs more frequency.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative comments about Route 234 deletion in 2019. Some call to shift the route to 156th to cover lost service on the 245.
232	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popular (62% approve, 18% disapprove), with responses and positive comments showing preference for service on all-day routes over peak-only services. Comments both positive and negative show a lack of understanding of the route 222 connection on Avondale and from Cottage Lake. Negative comments largely about loss of Duvall service.
237	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popular (50% approve, 19% disapprove), with a very small sample size of 36 people. Concerns about the phasing of this change. I-405 BRT, listed as an alternative, will not occur at the same time as this change.
250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very popular change (74% approve, 10% disapprove). Most people who support this change like that there’s a new connection to light rail, and about half of supporters specifically call of the access to Avondale as the reason they support the change. Some negative comments mention that service should be removed from Bear Creek P&R/Avondale, however for every comment calling for that deletion, there are 2 comments applauding that change, including comments such as: <i>"I support this change because I live off Avondale Rd & 104th St and work near Bear Creek P&R. If this change happens, I could take the bus to/from work every day instead of driving."</i>
251	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popular change (87% approve). Negative comments from outreach largely concerned with desire for more frequency on this route. Call for this route to serve additional destinations, especially in SE Redmond.

256	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results were mixed, but with more people approving of the change than disapproving (44% approve, 37% disapprove). • Positive comments call out the benefits of the SR 520/I-5 transit/HOV direct access ramp. Desired revisions include a wider span of service. • Negative comments fall into three categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peak-only routes are wasteful, only invest in all-day service 2. Keep the local tails of the existing peak-only routes/bring back the old 255. 3. Route consolidation will result in overcrowding/desire for a wider span of service.
930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelmingly popular. People wrote in glowingly about how this change will improve their lives.
931	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular (66% approve, 14% disapprove). Most additional comments about this route relayed a desire for all-day service in this corridor. There were very few comments stating a need for this route to go to other places/convert to larger vehicle sizes.
ST 542	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular change (60% approve, 25% disapprove). • People appreciate the additional frequency planned for this route as well as the extension to Bear Creek P&R. • People who disapproved of this change largely were commenting about the Route 545 deletion, not about the Route 542. • Opinion is split about if these changes should be phased rather than take place all at once, with some slight preference for phasing the changes.
Flexible Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This service was not part of the Phase 2 Network. Feedback was not collected on this service.

Central: Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, Medina, Clyde Hill

Route	Outreach Results
B Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong support for proposal. Respondents liked removing the current deviation to Overlake Village and extending to the future downtown Redmond station.
202	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked that it provides service in new areas Issaquah and Bellevue north of I-90 that do not have a route today.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not like low frequency of route and lack of weekend service. Between Routes 202 and 203, desire for one Issaquah with more frequency. Did not like lack of easy connectivity between north and south Issaquah routes. Did not like lower frequency between Eastgate and downtown Bellevue compared to 271 today.
203	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, Route 203 had more positive feedback than Route 202. Liked more local service in Issaquah, and new connection between Issaquah, Factoria, and South Bellevue Link light rail. • Areas for improvement: Improve the connection between south and north Issaquah, difficult in network with backtracking to Issaquah Highlands, and improve off-peak frequency.
222	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked the connections to Link, the improved service in Cottage Lake, and the more direct pathway through North Redmond and Education Hill. Also liked the southern part of the route as a replacement to today's 249. • Concern for the loss of service south of downtown Redmond on some corridors served by Route 221 on Old Redmond Road and 148th Ave NE. Disliked drop in frequency relative to Route 221 during mid-day on Education Hill.
223	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked a more frequent and reliable connection between Eastgate, Bellevue College, and Overlake and liked the connections to Link light rail. Support for making route even more reliable by making route direct where possible. • Concern for the loss of service south of downtown Redmond on some corridors served by Route 221 on Old Redmond Road and 148th Ave NE.
226	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for the route because of its simplified routing in eastern Bellevue and transfer opportunities to multiple Link stations, including an extension to South Bellevue. Supported increased frequency from today's 226. • Concern for service on NE 24th Street for connections Interlake High School and Bellevue Technology Center. The revised Route 223 would no longer serve this segment.
241	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest response rate/interest level of all Central area routes. Some support for added service in Somerset, but also some pointing out the service is duplicative of other routes between south Bellevue and downtown Bellevue.

245	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for removing Factoria one-way loop to increase reliability. Support for connections to link. • Strong concerns for revised routing which would remove service from NE 51st St and 156th Ave NE between NE 51st and NE 40th.
246	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of response supported deleting this route and replacing with more frequent service on other routes.
249	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed results. Support for new connection to Spring District from North Bellevue and South Kirkland, and improved coverage in Clyde Hill and Yarrow Point area. • Support for service that runs later than today's 249. • Concerns for long length of route, low off-peak frequency, and it being duplicative of other routes east of the Spring District. • Preference for more frequent service on 148th Ave NE at Fred Meyer. • Concerns for loss of service through Medina on 84th Ave NE.
268	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More respondents indicate they would prefer using light rail.
270	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for change by a 2 to 1 margin. Respondents liked the reliability of a shorter route, reorienting service to Bellevue Way north of downtown Bellevue (preferred nearly 4 to 1), and the ability to run Route 270 on larger buses. • Concerns were for a reduction in frequency between downtown Bellevue and Eastgate on the replacement service for that corridor (Route 240).
ST 554	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority support route reoriented towards Bellevue, for connections to Link light rail, new all-day connection between Bellevue and Issaquah, and more frequent service. • More respondents approved of adding more local stops in Issaquah, and city prefers frequent all-day local service that this could provide.

South: Renton, Renton Highlands, Newcastle, South Bellevue

Route	Outreach Results
111, 114	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong support (67% approve) for the addition of all-day, all-week service. Comments asked for even greater service levels on Route 111. • Concerns about long commute with multiple transfers for Route 114 riders that would have their service replaced by Route 240.
240	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed support (49% approved) for the Phase 2 pathway between Eastgate Park and Ride and Bellevue Transit Center via Bellevue College, 145th Pl SE, and Lake Hills Connector. • Concerns about this pathway taking too long to connect to Link. • Concerns about a loss of frequency on 145th Pl SE and Lake Hills Connector if this route replaces Route 271 along this corridor.
167, 342	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest response rate/interest level of all south area routes. • About half (49%) of survey responses did not support this change, citing not wanting to transfer at Bellevue Transit Center to get to the University District. • Comments indicated some survey respondents did not use these routes.

East: I-90 corridor, Sammamish, Mercer Island

Route	Outreach Results
204	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for the addition of Sunday service
208	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support in conjunction with the Route 215 replacement
212	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally supportive of the proposal. Some concerns about the loss of one-seat ride to downtown Seattle.
214	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed support (41% in favor, 46% against). Concerns about loss of one seat ride into downtown Seattle and the Route 554 taking longer.

215	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support
216	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed support (33% in favor, 31% against). • Concerns about additional travel time with transfers.
217	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally strong support (44% in favor, 14% against). • Some concerns about having ample trips to Factoria in the reverse-peak direction and period.
218	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed support (37% in favor, 38% against). • Concerns about longer travel times with transfers.
219	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed support (33% in favor, 33% against). • Concerns about longer travel times with transfers.
269	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support (56% in favor, 12% against). • Some concerns about the proposal no longer serving the Issaquah Transit Center.
630	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support (49% in favor, 25% against). • Some concerns about the duplication with Link light rail.

Virtual Information Sessions

During Phase 2, the Metro and Sound Transit Team hosted a total of four public virtual informational sessions and 8 open houses to individual community groups. To a total of 350 participants, Metro and Sound Transit Service Planners presented the proposed network changes in each sub-area of the project. The Metro and Sound Transit Engagement Team presented on the work of the Mobility and the Partner Review Boards, and its impact on the proposed network as well as the partnerships with community-based organizations and the overall engagement timeline. Attendees had the opportunity to give input on the proposed network as well as ask questions directly of staff during that time.

Prior to all the open houses, interpretation into Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Tagalog were made available by request in order to be accessible to non-English speaking attendees. Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) captioning was available at all events to be more accessible attendees who were deaf or hard of hearing.

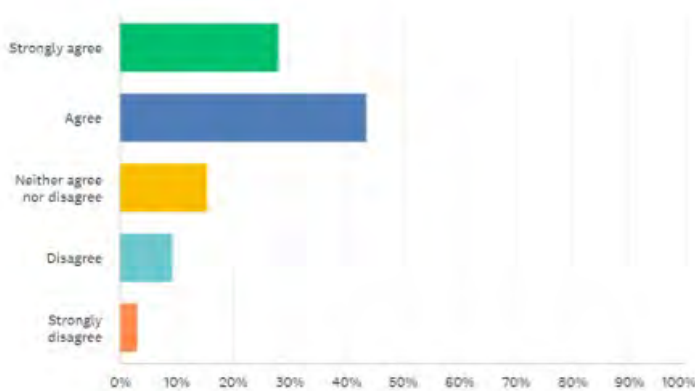
Figure 24 - Phase 2 virtual info session flyer



In a post-event survey sent to attendees, respondents reported overall that they had received sufficient time to provide service planners with meaningful feedback regarding their opinions on the service change proposals.

Figure 25 - Phase 2 virtual info session post-event survey

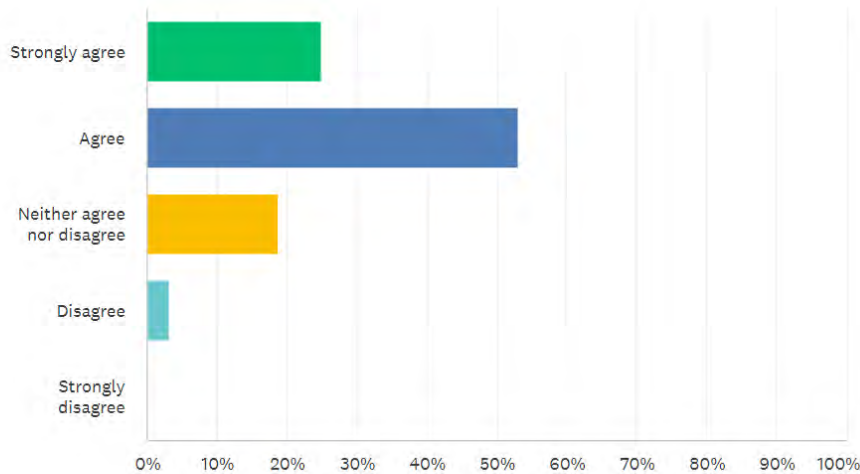
From the time I was notified, I had enough time to provide meaningful feedback.



Attendees also reported that the invitation they received or the advertisement regarding the event was effective.

Figure 26 - Phase 2 virtual info session post-event survey

The notice, advertisement, or invitation to learn more and participate was clear and welcoming.



Partnership with Community Based Organizations

During Phase 2, the Metro and Sound Transit project team partnered with CBOs (community-based organizations) as trusted advocates for priority populations within the project area to help design and implement accessible engagement. CBOs helped us understand how the proposed East Link Connections transit network options would impact access to transit, and connections to destinations, for people within priority equity populations. The methods used to gather feedback from priority populations were developed and determined in partnership with the CBOs who serve them, based on which methods each CBO determined to be most appropriate for each community. The CBO partners were compensated for their time, effort, and expertise a flat rate of \$9,500. The funds could be used to compensate staff time, participant stipends, participant food and childcare as needed, and other digital engagement tools, including subscriptions to virtual platforms.

Finally, the team contracted with the following four CBOs to support with the implementation of engagement strategies.

- **Chinese Information and Service Center:** Serves all east King County, helps immigrants throughout county connecting to information, services, advocacy.
- **Ethnic Chamber of Commerce Coalition:** Provides a unified voice in their communities. Education, health, and business are their top three focuses, but cover a wide range of concerns.
- **Hopelink:** Provides a network of critical social services through several different programs, including housing and transportation, with service centers in Redmond, Bellevue, Kirkland, Shoreline, and Snoqualmie Valley.
- **Indian American Community Services:** Works to connect and empower the Asian-Indian community through programs, services, and advocacy for people of all ages and all life stages.

Figure 27 - Image of community-based organization logos



To better support the work of the CBOs in engaging their respective communities, the team developed a toolkit made available to the CBO partners. The kit included background information on the project and its goals, the project timeline, a commitment to equity, social media sample posts, graphics, maps, a press release, sample email test, translated survey links, project FAQs, and a glossary of project-related terms. The contents of the toolkit were informed by reported needs of the CBOs. The CBO partnership in Phase 2:

- Reached over 35,000 people and 15 additional organizations.
- Hosted 18 of virtual events, at which 231 attended.
- Posted over 20 social media posts related to the project.
- Sent outreach emails through their listservs, reaching over 11,000 of people within the project area.

Within CBO Phase reports, major themes that came up from their participants regarding the service network proposals included the following.

- In general, most of the people with whom the CBOs engaged reported support for the proposed network changes.
- Some concerns were raised regarding some of the routes that were canceled.
- Stated need for transportation options further east into Snoqualmie Valley.
- In support of increased service and routes.
- Dislike of the added need to transfer on some routes on which one-seat rides will no longer be possible under the proposed network.
- Bus stop changes and additional stops create concerns with those with mobility issues.

The CBOs reported that the COVID-19 pandemic created additional barriers to their engagement efforts. They reported that it has been one of the most significant barriers, not only to this work, but their engagement overall. The traditional outreach avenues no longer existed or were challenging to access for the CBOs. This meant that they were not able to access the same amount and quality of feedback as they

were pre-pandemic. This also meant that the CBOs carried out additional work to recruit individuals for their events and to participate in the online survey. Many of the individuals were not comfortable or able to complete online surveys, especially when they were longer, as was the case for Phase 2's East Link Connections Survey.

The CBOs presented recommendations to the team regarding engagement activities for Phase 3 of the project. They suggested the following.

- That the project's service planners and engagement staff continue to make themselves available to present during the meetings the CBOs hosted. As the engagement increased, the number attendees did as well, and more staff meant they were able to ask questions directly. Shorten the length of survey and survey questions to be more accessible to the community members in their networks.
- Include major community landmarks on future maps such as popular stops, supermarkets, parks, and others to make it easier for community members to understand the maps.
- Provide more time to conduct outreach, especially to senior members of their communities.
- Address concerns that the community raised during the second phase of engagement in the next phase.
- Continued open and fast communication between the CBOs and the engagement team.
- A campaign for coordinated incentives for completing survey designed by the engagement staff.
- More collaboration and partnership between the CBOs involved in the project.
- Continue providing in-language materials.
- Send out engagement report questions in advanced to CBOs.

Route 8 Engagement

During Phase 2, a need emerged to provide targeted outreach to the area immediately surrounding the Judkins Park Station, particularly in the Central District and Judkins Park neighborhoods of Seattle. Due to its location in a high priority equity population, an additional engagement effort was conducted to reach this community and receive input on the service change proposal.

To better understand the needs of the communities along Route 8, the Metro and Sound Transit Team partnered with the community-based organizations and the tenants of an affordable housing complex located along Route 8 in the Judkins Park Neighborhood. Through initial phone calls and email invitations along with several follow up calls, the following joined the Route 8 Focus Group:

- **Center Park Apartment Complex**, an affordable housing complex in the Rainier Valley operated and managed by the Seattle Housing Authority,
- **Seattle Housing Authority**, an independent public corporation that provides long-term, low-income rental housing and rental assistance to 37,517 people, representing 18,828 households, in the city of Seattle.
- **Lighthouse for the Blind**, a private, not-for-profit social enterprise providing employment, support, and training opportunities for people who are blind, DeafBlind, and blind with other disabilities.
- **Northwest African American Museum**, a nonprofit institution that showcases African American art, history, and culture in the Pacific Northwest.
- **Seattle Girls' School**, an independent school for girls and gender nonconforming students in grades 5-8.

- **Holgate Street Church of Christ**, a community of faith serving the Judkins Park Neighborhood for over four decades.

To help remove barriers to participation, the members of the focus group were compensated for their time in the focus group meeting and for the time spent reviewing the related materials.

The Route 8 Focus Group was presented with background information about the East Link Connections project as well as the proposed Route 8 changes.

Figure 28 - Phase 2 Route 8 engagement presentation slide 1

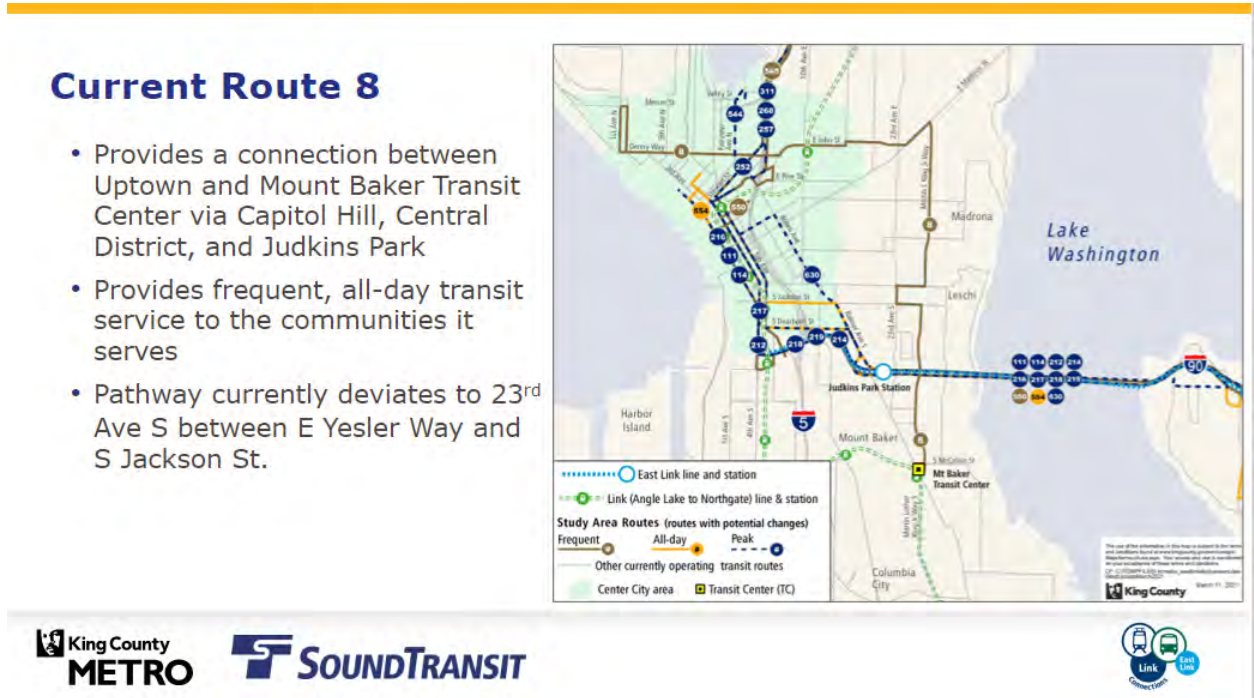


Figure 29 - Phase 2 Route 8 engagement presentation slide 2

Modified Route 8 – Remix Map

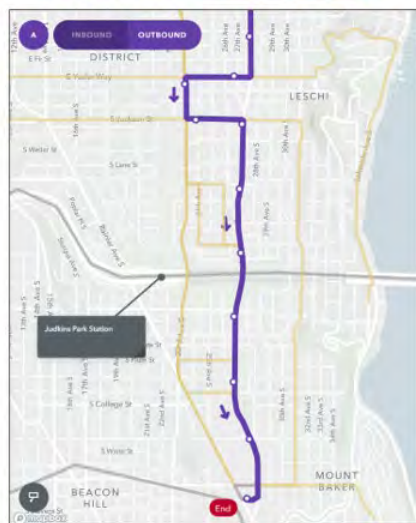
The modified Route 8 would operate along 23rd Ave S between S Jackson St and Mount Baker Transit Center instead of MLK Way S.

- Shifting it 4 blocks to the west
 - 5-minute walk for an able-bodied person
- Better connect riders to/from the Judkins Park Station
- Adds frequent, all-day transit between the Judkins Park Station, Mount Baker Transit Center/Link Station, and the S Jackson St and 23rd Ave S intersection
- The route 4 would continue to serve bus stops along MLK Way S between S Walker St and S Judkins St

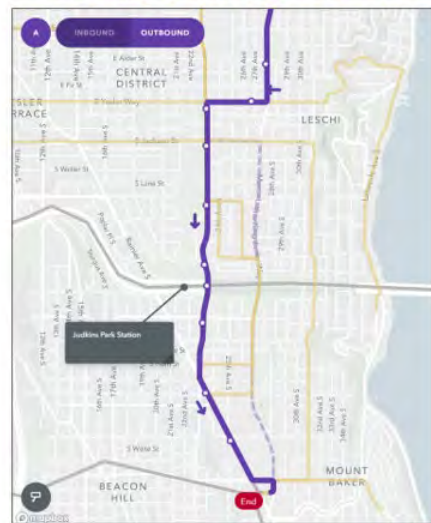


Figure 30 - Phase 2 Route 8 engagement presentation slide 3

Current Route 8



Modified Route 8



Outcomes of Route 8 Engagement

The Route 8 Focus Group participants concluded that:

- The proposed to change to the bus route would create difficulties for participants and clients of the Lighthouse for the Blind.
 - Many participants would lose their direct connection from home to Lighthouse for the Blind if the route were to move.
- Poor sidewalk conditions and the lack of sidewalks altogether are a concern when considering the new paths people will have to travel to different bus stops.
- Walking distance is not the same for all when considering mobility issues; a seemingly small change to the distance of travel to a new bus stop would be significant for someone is not able-bodied or not fully able-bodied.
- Participants supported keeping a larger coverage over route consolidation because they identified the area as lacking accessibility. They noted that Routes 48 and 8 currently cross paths which create transfer opportunities.
- Though some participants saw the value in the proposed Route 8 change, they deferred to those who are not able-bodied and have greater need.

Based on this feedback and the survey results specific to the Route 8 Phase II East Link Connections Mobility Project proposal Service Planning recommended to not move forward with the Phase II Route 8 Proposal.

From the Phase 2 engagement process, which included a focus group discussion and survey questions specific to the Route 8 proposal, Metro learned that the proposed change to the Route 8 would:

- Make riding/accessing the Route 8 challenging for many members of the community—especially those with limited sight—due to the lack of safe, continuous, well-maintained, and/or well-lit sidewalks between MLK Way S and 23rd Av S and Rainier Av S.
- Create safety concerns for Lighthouse for the Blind or Center Park Apartment Route 8 riders whose bus stop pair would be relocated to Rainier Ave S and S Walker St—this crossing is challenging and having a safer street crossing alternative is preferred by some riders.
- Negatively impact community members who rely on frequent all-day service along this segment of MLK Way between Yesler Way and Mount Baker Station for their mobility needs—the walk or role to bus service along 23rd Ave S (Route 48) or 31st Ave S (Route 14) is challenging for some, and not seen as viable alternatives to having service along MLK Way S.

Metro Service Planners addressed the concerns named in this targeted engagement and developed the following options to collect feedback on in Phase 3.

- **Option A: S Massachusetts St. routing**
 - Serves MLK between Massachusetts St. and Mount Baker TC
 - Serves S Jackson St & 23rd Av community assets
 - Serves the Judkins Park Station
 - Does not serve portion of MLK Way S between S Massachusetts St. and S Jackson St.
 - Would require a coach-test for a total of eight new turning-movements, one new transit pathway along Massachusetts St., and possible new bus stops
 - Massachusetts is not “Transit Classified” but is a collector arterial and is designated as part of the “Freight Network” as a Minor connection

• **Option B: Maintain Existing Route 8 routing, and explore future change to Route 4**

- Maintain existing Route 8 pathway. Route 8 would therefore *not* serve Judkins Park Station directly, and maintain its existing routing
- Metro would work with partners to improve wayfinding and safety between Route 8 stops along MLK and the Judkins Park Station entrance.
- Metro would explore the relocation of the Route 4 to 23rd Av S instead of the Route 8.
 - The residential streets that it currently operates on are difficult for Metro vehicles, and through East Link Connections engagement we have heard some community interest in moving the Route 4 to 23rd Ave S
 - This would require a coach-test and concurrence from SDOT (SB-Left from 23rd to Plum St.
 - This would require the completion of the Route 48 electrification project (~2025 at the earliest), and new OCS switch/turning wire for a SB-Left from 23rd Av to S Plumb St.

Print & Digital Outreach

Paid Media with The Vida Agency (TVA): Digital Ads–Static

Ethnic Media Buy September to October 2021

In Phase 2, in-language digital display ads received over 300,000 impressions that led to nearly 1,500 clicks. We saw impressive performances from every targeted language, with click-through-rates (CTR) ranging from 0.17 percent (Hindi), to a staggering 0.26 percent (Spanish). In the first ad flight promoting the survey, TVA saw above average click-through-rates (CTR) from every language. Based on previous campaigns, TVA has come to expect an average CTR around 0.15 percent.

Multicultural Media–Earned & Paid

For media outreach, TVA focused on both earned and paid opportunities. TVA purchased in-language ads in six multicultural media outlets. The first purchase began on September 20, 2021 and ran for three weeks. The second purchase began on October 7, 2021 and ran for three weeks.

Multicultural digital news media outlets included in outreach

Media Outlet	Language	Online/Print
El Siete Dias	<i>Spanish</i>	online
La Raza del Noroeste	<i>Spanish</i>	online
Northwest W Asian Weekly / Seattle Chinese Post	<i>Chinese</i>	online
Seattle Chinese Times	<i>Chinese</i>	print only
Seattle Korean Weekly	<i>Korean</i>	both
Northwest Vietnamese News	<i>Vietnamese</i>	both
Russian Town Seattle	<i>Russian</i>	online

Social Media Outreach

Phase 2 of East Link Connections community outreach was simultaneous with the North Link extension grand opening (October 2, 2021). It was difficult to fit in more organic posts in support of this project on certain channels (Instagram and Twitter) with so many other competing projects. Generally, organic posts that performed the best were posted after the North Link station opened.

Twitter

Post Date	Impressions	Engagements	Link Clicks	Notes
Sept. 28	11,086 Spanish: 2,697 Chinese: 2,911	145 Spanish: 20 Chinese: 28	9 Spanish: 1 Chinese: 4	This was a Twitter thread that included a tweet in Spanish and Chinese
Sept. 29	1,942	16	2	Retweet of the post from the 9/29 promoting the open house.
Oct. 22	3,309	79	21	

Facebook

Post Date	Impressions	Engagements	Link clicks	Notes
Sept. 17	N/A	N/A	N/A	This was a Facebook event post for the first open house; some data was unavailable for this post at time of report.
Sept. 28	1,301	32	5	
Sept. 28	177	0	0	In-language post on the county Spanish Facebook page Condado de King.
Oct. 13	1,134	34	13	Facebook event post for the second Open House
Oct. 22	2,998	96	19	
Oct. 25	1,137	41	1	

Instagram

Post Date	Impressions	Likes	IG Story views	Notes
Oct 13	1,041	86	193	We are unable to get link click data from Instagram

NextDoor

The number of impressions from posts on the social media app NextDoor was 7,158. NextDoor did not cost us additional dollars, as another Metro group had a contract with DoubleZ Media for NextDoor services at the time and this engagement was completed as a part of that contract.

Have a Say

Through Phase 2 of the project, the public was invited to reach out to the engagement team via our Have a Say email and phone number with questions, comments, and concerns regarding the proposed mobility network. From July to December 2021, 84 emails and 4 calls with voicemails were received and answered regarding the project.

The content of these communications ranged from answering logistical questions regarding the dates of availability for the survey, to receiving specific comments and questions regarding specific routes.

Mailers

To inform community about the East Link Connections project and request participation in the public survey, 131,430 mailers were sent out. To reach priority equity populations that may not otherwise be reached by digital forms of advertising, mailers were sent to 8 zip codes in priority equity populations. The post cards included translated details about how to get more information in the any of the follow languages: English, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Tagalog.

Bus Stop Signs

To further outreach to individuals and communities who would otherwise not be reached by digital forms of engagement, 60 bus stops signs were put up in the areas that would potentially be impacted by the proposed service changes around the East Side, along the Route 8 in Seattle. The signs provided details about the East Link Connections project and public survey.

Outcomes and Key Takeaways

Service Planners assessed needs identified by communities in Phase 1 and drafted a concept network shared in Phase 2. A Phase 2 survey, along with continued feedback from the Mobility Board and with additional outreach support from contracted CBOs, resulted in a 28 percent increase in engagement. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties in establishing the new platform, we were unable to collect race/ethnicity demographic data in Phase 2. However, the project team was able assess key takeaways and utilize feedback to inform changes and refine the network concept for Phase 3.

Phase 2 Key Themes	How it Influenced Phase 3 Proposal
<p>Need for increased frequency across the network with emphasis in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Bellevue to Eastgate • Factoria to Link • Route 249 	<p>Overall Increased frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duvall to Redmond Link • North Bend to Mercer Island Link • Overlake to Eastgate • Sammamish to Issaquah/Redmond/MI • Issaquah to downtown Bellevue

	<p>Route 220: New frequent Route 220 downtown Bellevue to Eastgate</p> <p>Route 240: Increased frequency Factoria to Eastgate & Link</p>
More coverage needed in SE Redmond	Routes 224 and 251: Extensions addressed comments over concern of coverage in SE Redmond
Concern with Route 221 lost coverage on Old Redmond Road	Route 223: Connects to Redmond via Old Redmond Road
More transfer opportunities so riders can travel to different local and regional destinations.	<p><u>New connections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issaquah to Factoria (Route 203) • Spring District to S Kirkland PR to Medina (Route 226) • Redmond to Idylwood to Overlake (Route 240) • Woodinville to Redmond (Route 249)

Phase 3 Engagement – Final Service Network

Conducted February 2022 – April 2022

Goals

In Phase 3 of engagement, community was invited to review and provide feedback on a proposed network for the project area. In addition, community had the opportunity to amplify concerns and interests to Metro. Based on feedback about the engagement process itself from Phase 2, during Phase 3, Metro engaged with community members at existing community events, provided translated materials at outreach events and online, and continued to build relationships with Community Based Organizations. The goals of engagement in Phase 3 were to:

- Reflect on outcomes and feedback from Phase 2 engagement.
- Present updated concepts.
- Explain how designs evolved and what influenced the updated concepts.
- Discuss solutions to concerns posed by community members and address perceived negative outcomes.
- Seek feedback to further refine and optimize concepts.
- Identify opportunities for further changes that would improve the proposal or mitigate negative impacts prior to finalizing the preferred concept.

Tactics

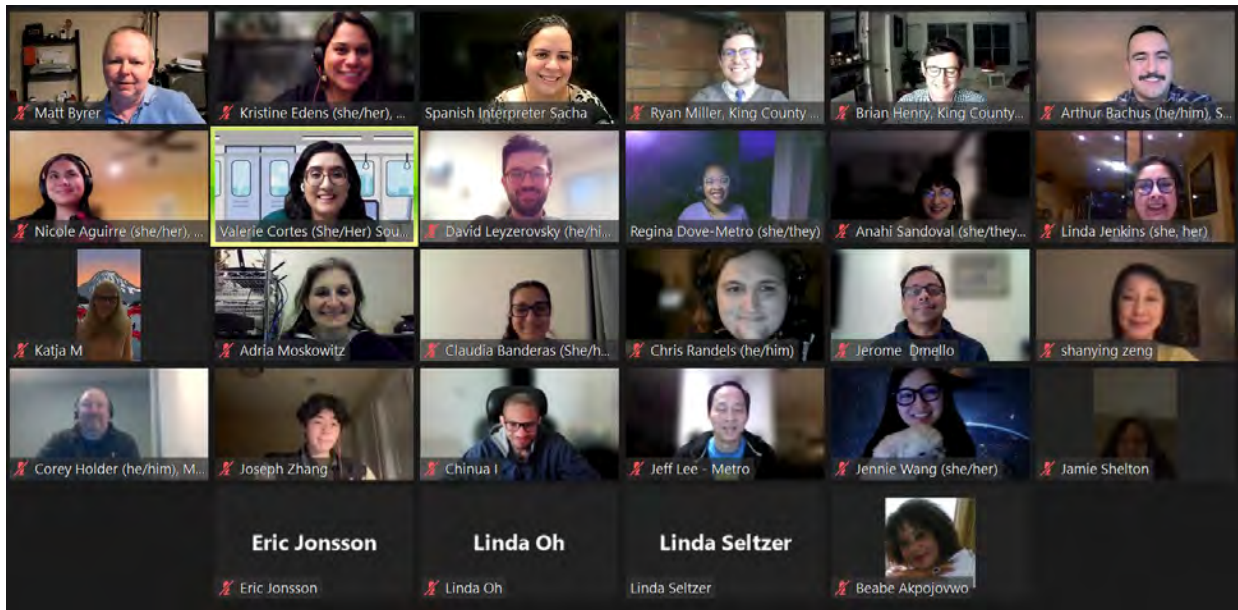
Mobility Board

Metro convened the Mobility Board virtually on April 13, 2022 and May 25, 2022. In these meetings, staff:

- Shared Metro’s final proposed network for the East Link Connections service change with the Mobility Board.

- Documented feedback from the Mobility Board on the proposed set of changes.
- Shared next steps and process leading toward King County Council for review and approval.
- Discussed opportunities for Mobility Board members to stay involved and informed.

Figure 31 - Screenshot of Mobility Board members at a meeting



Post-Phase 3 Survey Mobility Board Meeting

Mobility Board meeting number 7 was conducted on April 13, 2022. The objectives of this meeting were to:

1. Share with Mobility Board members the results of the Phase 3 engagement efforts.
2. Inform the Mobility Board of the final network proposal.
3. Collect feedback from the Mobility Board on the final network proposal and share next steps as the East Link Connections project moves towards King County Council and Mobility Board approval.

Mobility Board members were able to review Phase 3 survey results in advance and were presented key takeaways of Phase 3 engagement results, shared below.

North: Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville, Bothell

- Broad support for the Phase 3 proposals in this subarea.
- Especially strong support for investments on new Route 251 and Route 930.
- Mixed concerns about peak-only routes.
- Some wanting more service and one-seat rides.
- Others wanting resources on peak-only routes moved to all-day routes.
- General desire for more frequency on most routes.

Central: Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, Medina, Clyde Hill

- Strong support for most of proposal.
- Routes that were revised from Phase 2 saw increased support (249, 203, 220, 222, 223).
- Only Route 246 (deleted) saw negative feedback but had small response rate. The other deleted route (241) saw strong support, favoring putting frequency into other routes.

South: Renton, Renton Highlands, Newcastle, South Bellevue

- Strong support for all Phase 3 proposals (approval rating of at least 51 percent for all proposals).
- Concerns about transfers to Link or other bus routes to reach destinations in Seattle or the University District that are currently one-seat rides.
- Strong approval from jurisdictional partners on increased frequency on Route 240.
- Asks for later weekend span on Route 111 to match Phase 2 investment on weekdays.

East: I-90 corridor, Sammamish, Mercer Island

- Especially strong support for new Route 215.
- Mixed support for truncation of I-90 routes/transfer to light rail.
- Concerns of transfer environment and loss of one-seat ride.
- Understanding for the need to avoid duplication and excitement for the speed and reliability of light rail.
- Strong support for extending Route 269 to Mercer Island.
- Strong support for new alignment for the Route 630 on Seattle First Hill.

Mobility Board Final Meeting

The eighth and final Mobility Board meeting for East Link Connections was held on May 25, 2022. At this meeting, Mobility Board members received additional updates on the final network proposal and voted to approve a letter of support written by fellow members to submit to County Council along with the ordinance packet. Board members also completed a survey to provide feedback on how the process could be improved for future restructure projects and to learn about how they could stay engaged during the implementation phase of the project.

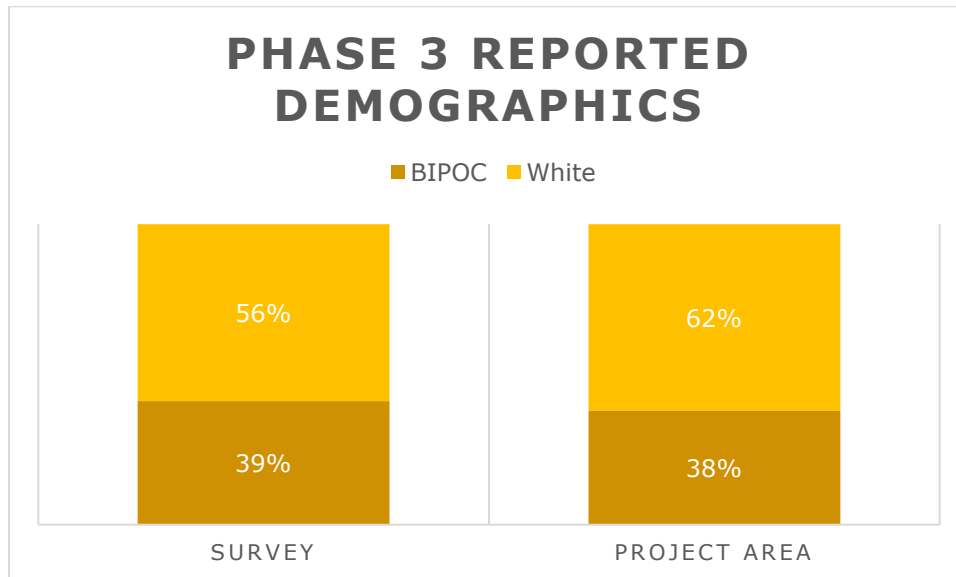
Virtual Open House

In Phase 3, the project team updated the content of the virtual platform that served as an online open house site and continued partnership with EnviroIssues to develop and run it. The online open house informed the public about the East Link Connections Project and the proposed changes to the transit network and shared the route-by-route proposals along with their maps. Online forums were held in lieu of in-person open house events due to state mandates regarding COVID. The website was translated and available in the following 8 languages: English, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Tagalog. The site also provided visitors with background information on the project, gave details on the current stage of the project, and gave contact information at which the public could direct questions.

Online Survey

There were 2,000 respondents of the final East Link Connections Project survey, an 8 percent increase of responses from Phase 2. In this survey, 38 percent of respondents identified as being a Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color, and 15 percent of respondents identified as having some type of physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental disability. These rates reflect an increased response rate of individuals from project identified priority populations and proportionately represent the project area.

Figure 32 - Phase 3 survey race/ethnicity demographics



Findings from the Phase 3 survey showed the following results.

North: Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville, Bothell

Route	Phase 3 Engagement Results
223	Better than 2 to 1 yes vs no. Improved support from Phase 2 now that 148th and Old Redmond Road are covered. Riders like the straighter pathway between Redmond and Eastgate, for more reliability.
224	Extremely strong support (about 73% approved, 11% disapproved). Most comments regarded a wish for additional service on either the weekend or to serve additional destinations in Duvall.
225	We did not receive negative feedback on this minor change to routing.
232	Strong support for this change (55% approved of the change, 13% disapproved). Most specifically called out liking the fact that resources from this route will fund improvements to all-day routes.
237	Greater than 2 to 1 approval for this change (41% approved, 19% disapproved).

	Most concerns were about the timing of this change, with people wishing this route was maintained until I-405 BRT.
250	Extremely strong support for this change (60% approved, 7% disapproved) with many folks specifically calling out how the additional service on Avondale Road and to shopping/services at Bear Creek P&R will be “life-changing” improvements.
251	Extremely strong support for this change (77% approved, 2% disapproved). Respondents love the new connection this route provides.
256	Response to this change is mixed (31% approve, 26% disapprove, 36% maybe approve). Some like the new connection to SLU, while others are concerned about travel time, crowding, or expressed a desire for all peak-only routes to become all-day routes.
930	Extremely strong support for this change (79% approved, 4% disapproved). Respondents specifically called out the need for additional all-day service on this corridor and were happy to see the Phase 3 proposal for this route meeting this need.
931	Strong support for this change (55% approved of the change, 11% disapproved). Most respondents liked the new connection this service would bring and saw a strong benefit, especially for students at UW Bothell. Some desire for this to become an all-day route.
ST 542	Better than 2-1 said yes to increase in service levels for 542 (~80%). ~47% supported the inbound stop-move.
Flexible Service	Generally strong support for this service, though there was a small sample size. Most comments were about people wanting this service in more parts of the county or additional evening service. Most respondents had no concerns about the service.

Central: Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, Medina, Clyde Hill

Route	Phase 3 Engagement Results
B Line	Still very strong support for proposed change. 70% in favor, 8% opposed.
202	Support for associated changes (203, 554). Survey question was not asked directly on Route 202, as it was only a conceptual route in Phase 2, and not an existing service.
203	3 to 1 yes vs no. The North Issaquah local routing change was particularly well received for providing improved all-day local service in Issaquah, combined with revised Route 554. A new Factoria to Issaquah connection was also popular.
220	4 to 1 yes vs no. Responses appreciated seeing this change from Phase 2, as there were concerns about frequency in the areas served.

222	2 to 1 yes vs no. Improved support from Phase 2 when combined with proposed 223 changes covering 148 th and Old Redmond Road.
223	Better than 2 to 1 yes vs no. Improved support from Phase 2 now that 148 th and Old Redmond Road are covered. Riders like the straighter pathway between Redmond and Eastgate, for more reliability.
226	Nearly to 2 to 1 yes vs no. Decline in support from Phase 2 due to Route 223 no longer serving east of 164 th Ave NE (which is currently served by Route 226). Positive responses liked the more simplified pathway and connections to Link.
241	Strong support, 62% yes to 12% no. Replacing with more frequent service between Factoria and South Bellevue on Route 240 was particularly popular.
245	Better than 3 to 1 yes vs no. Riders like the improved reliability with ending the route at Eastgate.
246	Mixed results, responses split. Low response rate to this particular route. Those in favor preferred the service go to higher ridership areas, those opposed were concerned about loss of service in Woodridge and Somerset.
249	More than 2 to 1 yes vs no. Significantly improved support from Phase 2 proposal. The shorter route was preferred for the frequency and reliability it provides. Riders also felt the Spring District to Overlake segment was largely duplicated by Link and other routes.
268	Majority in support of deleting. Riders preferred using Link to Seattle from Redmond.
270	Proposal remains popular, majority in support with nearly 5 to 1 yes vs no. Routing on Bellevue Way strongly preferred over pathway through Medina.
ST 554	Majority remain in favor of Route 554 revised to serve South Bellevue Station and downtown Bellevue, rather than crossing the lake to Seattle. Stronger support for adding local Issaquah stops than not, as it creates improved all day local service in Issaquah, especially when combined with Route 203.

South: Renton, Renton Highlands, Newcastle, South Bellevue

Route	Phase 3 (P3) Engagement Results
111	Strong support of P3 proposal with 64% of respondents supporting the proposal. There were some concerns expressed about losing a one-seat ride to downtown Seattle, but comments also supported the tradeoff of having all-day, all-week service. Comments also asked for extended span on weekends to match the P3 investment on weekdays.
114	Replacement service for Route 114 is provided by revised Route 240 and Link light rail. Overall support for the Route 240 proposal (51% yes, 14% no).

167	Replacement service for Route 167 is provided by revised Route 342 and Link light rail or new Route 270. Overall support for the Route 240 proposal (58% yes, 11% no).
240	Increased support for Route 240 P3 proposal over P2 proposal (51% yes, 14% no). Comments suggested serving the Eastgate freeway stations to save travel time, but this would result in a further walk for riders destined for Bellevue College.
342	High support for Route 342 P3 proposal (58% yes, 11% no)

East: I-90 corridor, Sammamish, Mercer Island

Route	Phase 3 Engagement Results
204	Strong support of P3 proposal (68% yes). Some requests for increasing span later in the PM.
208	Extremely strong support in replacing it for the new route 215 (84% yes).
212	Mixed support (45% yes, 31% no). Majority of respondents understood the need to avoid duplication of link while others expressed increased travel time and loss of one seat ride.
214	Mixed support (48% yes, 32% no). Some concerns about ST 554 being slow.
215	Extremely strong support (75% yes, 12% no).
216	Mixed support (42% yes, 35% no). Majority of respondents who are against the proposal do not want to have to transfer.
217	Strong support. 2 to 1 yes vs. no.
218	Mixed support (36% yes, 34% no). Majority of respondents who are against the proposal do not want to have to transfer.
219	Mixed support (37% yes, 41% no). Majority of respondents against the proposal do not want to have to transfer.
269	Strong support (64% yes, 12% no).
630	Strong support. Over 2 to 1 yes vs no.

Virtual Information Sessions

As a part of the Phase 3 engagement process, Metro and Sound Transit partnered, as in previous phases, to provide virtual info sessions open to the public. Over 80,000 multilingual mailers were sent out to inform residents of East Link Connections final network proposal. For the two virtual information sessions held in Phase 3, over 150 people attended. Live English closed captioning was featured, and translation and interpretation were offered in seven languages: Simplified Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Tagalog.

Partnership with Community Based Organizations

During Phase 3, the Metro and Sound Transit team partnered with community-based organizations as trusted advocates for priority populations within the project area. CBOs helped design and implement accessible engagement. CBOs helped us

understand how the proposed East Link Connections transit network options would impact the access to transit, and connections to destinations, of people in priority equity populations. The methods used to gather feedback from the people in priority populations *served* by CBOs were developed in partnership *with* the CBOs based on what they determined to be most appropriate for each community. The CBO partners were compensated for their time, effort, and expertise a flat rate of \$9,500. The funds could be used to compensate staff time, participant stipends, participant food and childcare as needed, and other digital engagement tools, including subscriptions to virtual platforms.

As in Phase 2, the team contracted with the following four CBOs in Phase 3.

- **Chinese Information and Service Center:** Serves all of Eastside, helps immigrants throughout county connecting to information, services, advocacy.
- **Ethnic Chamber of Commerce Coalition:** Provides a unified voice in their communities. Education, health, and business are their top three focuses, but cover a wide range of concerns.
- **Hopelink:** Provides a network of critical social services through several different programs, including housing and transportation, with service centers in Redmond, Bellevue, Kirkland, Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley.
- **Indian American Community Services:** Works to connect and empower the Asian-Indian community through programs, services, and advocacy for people of all ages and all life stages.

To better support the work of the CBOs in engaging their respective communities, the team developed a toolkit made available to the CBO partners. The toolkit included background information on the project and its goals, the project timeline, a commitment to equity, social media sample posts, graphics, maps, a press release, sample email test, translated survey links, project FAQs, and a glossary of project related terms. The contents of the toolkit were informed by reported needs of the CBOs. The team also held a Phase 3 launch meeting, and phase and project closing meeting. All meetings served to create a deeper relationship with the partners as well as to provide opportunities for the CBOs to connect and work together.

The CBOs in Phase 3:

- Reached over 38,500 people in their outreach efforts.
- Hosted of 18 virtual events at which 560 attended.
- Posted over 56 social media posts related to the project.

Additionally, an engagement strategy employed by Chinese Information Service Center in Phase 3 was especially effective. This CBO utilized the messaging app WeChat and created several organic posts to multiple group chats reaching Chinese community members across the entire project area. This engagement led to a significant increase of survey responses in Simplified Chinese during Phase 3 engagement, with a total of 132 responses representing nearly 7 percent of all submissions. This was a significant jump from the 1 percent response rate in Simplified Chinese seen in Phase 2.

Major themes that came up in CBO outreach regarding Phase 3 proposed network

- In general, those in the CBO networks understood the benefits of the East Link Mobility Network.
- There is a mixture of excitement and reservation, with some community members showing great excitement for the Link light rail but concern about

- flexible service for first mile/last mile and accessibility at the new rail stations for those with disabilities.
- Mobility and health concerns among elders were a continued concern when implementing routes and stops changes.
 - Some concern regarding the amount of information the public will receive about when these changes go into effect and how routes will be impacted. There was a fear regarding young people and others getting lost due to lack of information and education on route changes.

The CBOs reported that the COVID-19 pandemic created additional barriers to their engagement efforts in the third phase of engagement, which marked a peak in infection cases up to this point of the pandemic (and this report's creation). They reported that the pandemic has been one of the most significant barriers, not only to this work, but their engagement overall. Many staff continued to fear exposure to the pandemic and continued to work virtually. Additionally, in-person programs continue to be on hold and events continue to be hosted virtually, which impacts who and how many can attend.

The CBOs presented recommendations to the team regarding engagement activities for Phase III of the project, including the following.

- A longer timeline to carry out engagement.
- Provide hard copies of the survey for community members who do not have the technological skills and knowledge or resources to participate in an online survey.
- Include community landmarks in the maps provided such as grocery stores, parks, churches, and libraries for reference.
- Show estimated walking distance or path on the map as reference for the community members who have mobility issues and concerns about the walking distance during transfer points.
- Keep the survey open for longer.
- Weekly check in meetings with engagement staff.
- Tag CBO partners in the social media posts.
- More partnership between the partner CBOs.
- Maps that are easier to read and do not exclude rural areas of the county.
- A digital trip planner that includes the proposed routes.
- More information about first mile/last mile services.
- Highlight accessibility features of the proposed network, including station design and access.

Partner Review Board

During Phase 3, Metro convened the Partner Review Board virtually on April 26, 2022. In this meeting, participants:

- Reviewed the final network proposal based on Mobility Board recommendations.
- Prepared for the next steps in finalizing the proposal and bringing it to the King County Council for review and approval.
- Reflected on the process and shared feedback to inform future Partner Review Boards.

Route 8 Engagement

From the Phase 3 survey for the proposed Route 8 changes, 67 percent of the 200 respondents to the Route 8 question supported the proposal.

An improvement in advocacy from the previous Phase 2 concept, supporters cited “improved connections to light rail, the creation of a “hub” for Metro and Sound Transit services at the Judkins Park Station, and continued transit connections to important destinations along MLK Way between S Massachusetts St. and Mount Bakers Station (such as Lighthouse for the Blind and Center Park) as reasons. Around 15 percent did not support this proposal—a decrease from the 25 percent who did not support the Phase II concept—citing concerns of traffic congestion along Massachusetts St., not serving the Douglass-Truth Branch library, and no longer serving stops along MLK Way S and S Dearborn St.

With our partners at SDOT, Metro Service Planners tested proposed new turns for the Route 8 along S Jackson St. and S Massachusetts St. with both a 60 foot and 40-foot bus. We reviewed the channelization, signalization, and curb radii of each intersection, and then identified improvements needed to ensure viable and safe Metro bus operations and pedestrian access at each intersection. Metro and SDOT staff determined that all new turns and pathways would require some capital improvements. With the implementation of these capital improvements, all new turns and pathways would be viable and safe for Metro bus operations and customers.

Therefore, using the feedback received through East Link Connections engagement process in the survey and the Route 8 Focus Group as well as the coordination with our partners at SDOT, Metro Service Planning will be moving forward with a slightly modified version of the Route 8 Proposal. The final Route 8 is modified slightly from the proposed Route 8, using E Yesler Way instead of S Jackson St. to travel between 23rd Ave and MLK Way. The reason for this modification is twofold.

1. The modification will more directly serve destinations that community members have expressed as important—the Douglass Truth Branch Library, Catholic Community Services, and Sea Mar Cannon House at the Yesler Way and 23rd Ave intersection. This modification will still connect Route 8 riders to the S Jackson St corridor and the destinations east and west of 23 Ave via a stop pair along 23 Ave S at S Jackson St.
2. Capital changes specific to using S Jackson St. would be challenging for Metro and SDOT to incorporate, and the benefits of implementing them did not outweigh the challenges of doing so. **This modification will not** require any bus stop, capital, channelization, signalization, or striping work along the Final Route 8’s pathway at S Jackson St. or Yesler Way since these turns and pathways are already used by the Route 8 today.

Figure 33 - Phase 3 Route 8 proposal



Print & Digital Outreach

Social Media Outreach

Metro’s Strategic Communications team supported the East Link Connections project through a social media campaign in Phases 1-3. A key lesson from Phase 3 was evident from engagement analysis: the first post really matters when making an impression on your target audience. The first time a new Community Outreach project is introduced on social media is the most critical in terms of impressions and engagement. High engagement numbers can be achieved in future posts with paid boosts (see Facebook statistics from 2/24). However, it is most important to have translations and in-language graphics in the first post of a campaign when possible.

Twitter

Date	URL	Impressions	Engagement	Link Clicks
2/9/22	Link	10,092	174	69
2/16/22	Link	2,546	27	10
2/17/22	Link	7,317	55	20

2/25/22	Link	2,338	18	4
2/26/22	Link	1,240	9	3
3/4/22	Link	1,172	30	2
3/7/22	Link	7,088	86	30

Facebook

Date	URL	Impressions	Reach	Engagement	Link Clicks
2/9/22	Link	10,611	9,753	364	229
2/16/22	Link	3,117	2,984	60	32
2/24/22*	Link	45,615	26,165	2,745	1,746

***This post had a \$200 boost to increase engagement**

Instagram

Date	URL	Impressions	Reach	Link Clicks
2/9/22	Link	630	565	N/A
2/16/22	Link	544	493	N/A
2/16/22 - IG Story	No link, story expired	174	N/A	1
2/25/22 - IG Story	No link, story expired	123	N/A	3
3/4/22 - IG Story	No link, story expired	100	N/A	0
3/7/22 - IG Story	No link, story expired	189	N/A	4

***Link click data isn't available on Instagram, as links don't work in Instagram copy.**

In-Language Ad Placements

As in Phase 2, Metro partnered with The Vida Agency (TVA) in Phase 3 to implement in-language ad campaigns across the project area. TVA launched a multifaceted campaign in mid-February 2022 through mid-March 2022 to help drive awareness and participation. Ads were placed to drive community members to the online open house and the two virtual information sessions held in February 2022. Please refer to the Exhibit Section for ad placement examples.

Mailers

To inform about the East Link Connections project and request participation in the public survey, over 80,000 mailers were sent out. To reach priority equity populations that may not otherwise be reached by digital forms of advertising, mailers were sent to 8 zip codes in priority equity populations. The post cards included translated details about how to get more information in any of the following languages: English, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Tagalog.

Have a Say

Through Phase 3 of the project, the public was invited to reach out to the engagement team via our Have a Say email and phone number with questions, comments, and concerns regarding the proposed mobility network. From February through May 2022, 56 emails and 2 calls and voicemails were received and answered regarding the project.

The content of these communications ranged from answering logistical questions regarding the dates of survey availability, to receiving specific comments and questions regarding specific routes.

Outcomes and Key Takeaways

Engagement efforts in Phase 3 showed majority support for changes made in the final network. As a result, minimal changes were made by service planners in Phase 3 for the final network proposal (exceptions listed below). The Phase 3 survey, along with continued feedback from the Mobility Board and with additional outreach support from contracted CBOs, resulted in an 8 percent increase in engagement from the prior phase. We also were able to collect robust demographic data showing proportional representation of BIPOC populations within the project area in survey responses.

Phase 3 Key Themes	Final Network Improvements
Survey indicated strong support for most changes made in Phase 3. Majority of routes showed 50%+ approval rate for proposed changes.	Confirmed that input from previous engagement phases were successfully integrated into final network proposal with minor changes needed.
Expressed preference for increased frequency from Redmond to Eastgate	Route 223: Upgraded to 15 minute or better frequency 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Route 224 show majority approval of route recommendations, but with requests to extend service to respond to growth and development in Duvall.	Route 224: Extended south to Big Rock Road to serve new development in Duvall.

4 Exhibits

A. Mailers

Mailers were sent out in all three phases of engagement to inform households within the project area of the opportunity to fill out surveys and to attend virtual information sessions. At the bottom of each mailer was information translated into eight priority languages within the project area. See samples from Phase 2 and Phase 3 below.

Examples

Phase 2



Learn more and tell us what you think

have a say

Come to a virtual open house
 Sat., Sept. 18, 10–11 a.m. Wed., Sept. 29, 6–7 p.m.

Join King County Metro and Sound Transit for a discussion on the upcoming restructure of Metro and Sound Transit bus service on the Eastside as a result of the expansion of Link light rail. You will have an opportunity to preview potential route changes, talk with service planners, and provide feedback.

To register for one of these free virtual events, to take our survey, and to learn more about potential route changes visit www.elc.participate.online

Take our survey
 and comment on the potential route changes at www.elc.participate.online

Contact
haveasay@kingcounty.gov
 To request reasonable accommodations or documents in an alternative format, call 206-263-9768 (Relay: 711)

Haga clic en el siguiente enlace www.elc-espanol.participate.online para obtener información sobre el programa East Link Connections, la jornada de puertas abiertas y la encuesta.

Truy cập www.elc-vietnamese.participate.online để biết thông tin về East Link Connections, chương trình mở cửa tham quan và khảo sát này.

浏览网站www.elc-chinese.participate.online, 详细了解 East Link Connections、开放日安排、以及调查活动。

East Link Connections खुले मंच, और सर्वेक्षण के बारे में अधिक जानकारी के लिए www.elc-hindi.participate.online पर जाएं।

을 East Link Connections, 오픈 하우스 및 설문 조사 관련 정보는 www.elc-korean.participate.online 을 참조하시기 바랍니다.

Bisitahin ang www.elc-tagalog.participate.online para sa impormasyon tungkol sa East Link Connections, open house, at survey.

Відвідайте вебсайт www.elc-russian.participate.online, щоб довідатися більше про East Link Connections, день відкритих дверей та опитування.

Phase 3



Shape the future of transit on the Eastside

Tell us how to improve transit connections throughout the Eastside and the Judkins Park neighborhood in Seattle as Link light rail service expands through 2024.

Learn more and tell us what you think



Come to a information session

Thurs., Feb. 17, 6–7 p.m. Sat., Feb. 26, 10–11 a.m.

Join King County Metro and Sound Transit for updates on proposed changes to bus service on the Eastside and the Judkins Park neighborhood in Seattle in preparation for the expansion of Link light rail in 2023. These sessions provide an opportunity to talk with service planners and share feedback on updates that were made to address public feedback received in fall 2021.

Visit www.elc.participate.online to learn more about the potential bus route changes, register for one of these free information sessions, and to provide your feedback.

have a say



Take our survey

and comment on the next phase of potential route changes at www.elc.participate.online



Contact

haveasay@kingcounty.gov | 206-263-9768

To request reasonable accommodation, language interpretation, or documents call 206-263-9768 (Relay: 711)

Haga clic en el siguiente enlace www.elc-espanol.participate.online para obtener información sobre el programa East Link Connections, la jornada de puertas abiertas y la encuesta.

浏览网站www.elc-chinese.participate.online, 详细了解 East Link Connections、开放日安排、以及调查活动。

을 East Link Connections, 오픈 하우스 및 설문 조사 관련 정보는 www.elc-korean.participate.online 을 참조하시기 바랍니다.

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Truy cập www.elc-vietnamese.participate.online để biết thông tin về East Link Connections, chương trình mở cửa tham quan và khảo sát này.

East Link Connections खुले मंच, और सर्वेक्षण के बारे में अधिक जानकारी के लिए www.elc-hindi.participate.online पर जाएं।

Bisitahin ang www.elc-tagalog.participate.online para sa impormasyon tungkol sa East Link Connections, open house, at survey.

B. In-Language Digital Ad Placements

Through a partnership with The Vida Agency, several in-language ads were placed in targeted ethnic media outlets.

In-Language Advertisement Examples

Seattle Chinese Post

The screenshot shows the Seattle Chinese Post website. At the top, the logo for '西華報 Seattle Chinese Post' is displayed. Below the logo is a navigation menu with categories: 新聞 (News), 短評 (Short Reviews), 副刊 (Supplement), and 意見 (Opinion). The main content area features a large image of a Seattle Police car at night with the headline '華埠國際區聯誼會遭多名男子持槍搶劫' (A gun robbery by several men at the Chinese International District Association). To the right of the main article is a search bar and a public engagement advertisement for 'Link East Link Connections' with the text '在 2021 年 10 月 18 日之前完成我们的调查' (Complete our survey before October 18, 2021). Below the advertisement is another section titled '有有害廢物?' (Hazardous Waste?) with the text '我們可以幫助您——了解常見的家庭有害廢物產品以及如何安全地儲存和處置它們。' (We can help you—learn about common household hazardous waste products and how to safely store and dispose of them.)

Seattle Korean Weekly

Northwest Vietnamese News

The screenshot shows the website 'NW Vietnamese News' with the URL 'https://nvnorthwest.com'. The page features several news items:

- Top Left:** Article about a researcher of Trần Quang Hải, a former student of a late teacher.
- Center:** 'THÔNG BÁO' (Notice) section with 'OPERATION CLEAN STREET' and an invitation to join a cleanup in Little Saigon.
- Bottom Left:** 'ĐỜI SỐNG / ẨM THỰC / SỨC KHỎE / GIA ĐÌNH' (Life / Food / Health / Family) section with an article about 'NỒI BÁNH TẾT CỦA BA TÔI' (My Mother's Tet Cake Pot).
- Bottom Center:** 'Thông báo về việc tổ chức Lễ Tưởng Niệm Trận Hoàng Sa 19-1-1974' (Notice about the commemoration of the Hoang Sa battle).
- Right Side:** A large graphic for 'Link Connections' and 'East Link' with the text 'Định hình cho tương lai của phương tiện giao thông công cộng ở Eastside' (Shaping the future of public transit in Eastside) and 'Thực hiện khảo sát trước ngày 7 tháng 3' (Conduct survey by March 7th).

Russian Town Seattle

The advertisement for 'Russian Town Seattle' includes the following elements:

- Top Banner:** 'Ведущая международная частная школа' (Leading international private school) with 'ОТКРЫТИЕ ОСЕНЬЮ 2022' (Opening in autumn 2022) and a 'LEARN MORE >' button.
- Logo:** 'BASIS INDEPENDENT BELLEVUE'.
- Main Title:** 'Наши рекламодатели' (Our advertisers).
- Text:** 'Выражаем благодарность рекламодателям журнала Russian Town. Для размещения рекламы контактируйте с нами' (We express our gratitude to the advertisers of the Russian Town magazine. For advertising placement, contact us).
- Public Transit Section:** 'Спланируем будущее общественного транспорта в Eastside вместе' (Let's plan the future of public transit in Eastside together) with a survey deadline of 'до 7 марта' (by March 7th).
- Logos:** 'Link Connections' and 'SOUNDTRANSIT King County METRO'.
- Bottom Navigation:** 'Автомобили' (Cars) and 'Работа' (Jobs).

C. Online Open House

In Phase 2 and Phase 3, Metro and Sound Transit partnered with EnviroIssues to design an interactive webpage called the Online Open House. The Online Open House was active from March 2021-May 2022 and housed all project information available to the public including, project goals, scope, timeline, information session registration, network proposals, and engagement surveys. This site was also translated into 7 other languages: Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Hindi, Tagalog, Russian, Vietnamese, and Korean.

Online Open House Examples

The screenshot shows the top portion of the website. At the top, there is a dark grey header with the Sound Transit logo on the left and a 'Select Language' dropdown menu on the right. Below the header is a yellow and blue banner with the King County METRO logo (tagline: 'Moving forward together') and the Sound Transit logo. To the right of the banner is a graphic with three overlapping circles containing icons of a train, a bus, and a person, with the text 'Link Connections' and 'East Link'.

Below the banner is a navigation menu with the following items: Welcome, Learn more (with a speech bubble icon), Background, Link, Transfers, Fares, and Where are we now. The main content area has a dark blue background with the word 'Welcome' in white. Below this, there is a white text box containing the following text:

Scroll through this site to learn what East Link Connections is and how it helps link transit and your community.

The purpose of the project is to implement a coordinated regional transit network on the Eastside that gets people where they need and want to go.

By 2024, Sound Transit will open 12 new light rail stations connecting downtown Seattle and the Eastside.

Metro and Sound Transit are initiating a mobility project on King County's Eastside to implement a coordinated regional transit network that gets people where they need and want to go. The project will deliver an updated mobility network that integrates with and complements Sound Transit's 12 new Link light rail stations connecting downtown Seattle and the Eastside.

Implementation for the updated mobility network will start in 2023 in conjunction with the first service change immediately following the opening of light rail service between International District/Chinatown Station and Redmond Technology Station, followed by two additional stations in 2024 serving SE Redmond and Downtown Redmond. [Find out more in the background section.](#)

To the right of the text is a photograph of a modern transit station with a glass facade and a red train.

Background

What is East Link Connections?

East Link Connections is a coordinated, co-led process for improving transit connections throughout the Eastside as Link light rail service expands through 2024.

Project goals:

- Improve mobility for priority populations, as defined by Metro's Mobility Framework, including un(der)served populations.
- Equitably inform, engage and empower current and potential customers.
- Deliver integrated service that responds to Link expansion.
 - Minimize duplication of bus service with Link.
 - Improve connections to Link.
 - Be consistent with [Metro Connects](#) and current and future mobility needs.



Impacted areas:

Bellevue, Bothell, Clyde Hill, Duvall, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Medina, Mercer Island, Newcastle, Redmond, Renton, Sammamish, Shoreline, Seattle (Chinatown/International District, Central District, Mt Baker and Rainier Valley), Woodinville, Yarrow Point

Routes with proposed changes:

[B Line](#), [8](#), [111](#), [114](#), [167](#), [200](#), [202](#), [203](#), [204](#), [208](#), [212](#), [214](#), [215](#), [216](#), [217](#), [218](#), [219](#), [221](#), [222](#), [223](#), [224](#), [225](#), [226](#), [232](#), [237](#), [240](#), [241](#), [245](#), [246](#), [249](#), [250](#), [251](#), [252](#), [256](#), [257](#), [268](#), [269](#), [270](#), [271](#), [311](#), [342](#), [541](#), [542](#), [544](#), [545](#), [550](#), [554](#), [555/556](#), [630](#), [930](#), [931](#)

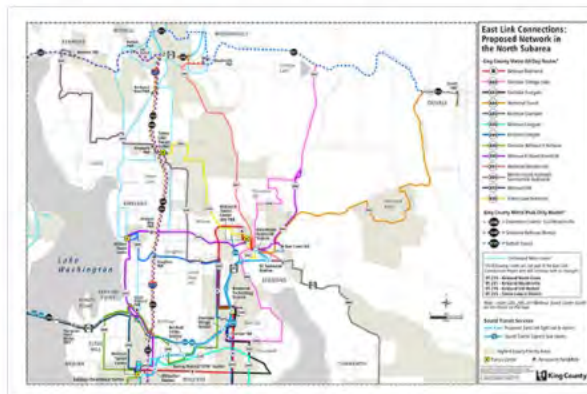
Learn more

North subarea: Bothell, Duvall, Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville

Routes: [224](#), [225](#), [232](#), [237](#), [250](#), [251](#), [252](#), [256](#), [257](#), [311](#), [930](#), [931](#)

Mobility Board-identified needs, prioritized by importance:

1. Improve and add local connections.
2. More service on nights and weekends.
3. Ensure transfers are easy and seamless.
4. Preserve easy access to downtown Seattle.



Central subarea: Bellevue, Issaquah, Redmond, Medina, Clyde Hill

Routes: [B Line](#), [202](#), [203](#), [221](#), [222](#), [223](#), [226](#), [241](#), [245](#), [246](#), [249](#), [268](#), [270](#), [271](#), [541](#), [542](#), [544](#), [545](#), [550](#), [554](#), [555/556](#)

D. Bus Stop Signs

Have A Say bus stop signs were posted at over 100 stops on impacted routes and transit hubs within the project area.

Bus Stop Sign Examples



have a say

Help Shape the Future of Transit on the Eastside

We need your feedback on potential bus route changes

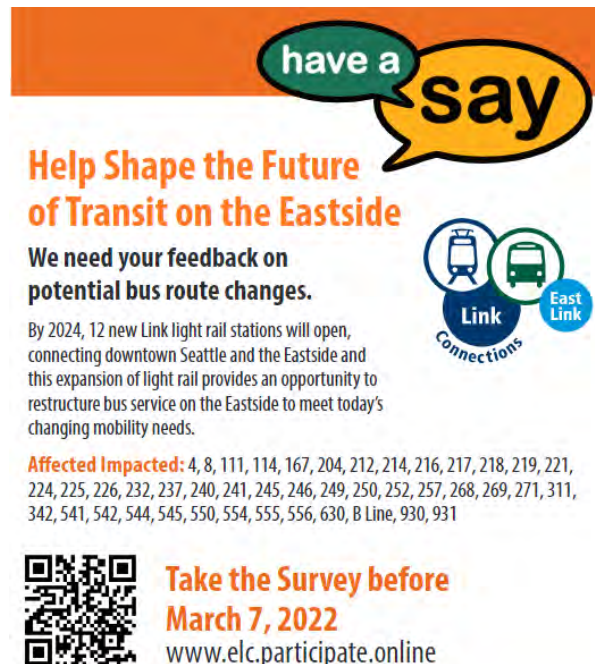


By 2024, 12 new light rail stations will open, connecting downtown Seattle and the Eastside and this expansion of light rail provides an opportunity to restructure bus service on the Eastside to meet today's changing mobility needs.

Routes Impacted:
 8, 111, 114, 167, 204, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 224, 225, 226, 232, 237, 240, 241, 245, 246, 249, 250, 252, 257, 268, 269, 271, 311, 342, 541, 542, 544, 545, 550, 554, 555, 556, 630, B Line, 930, 931

Take the Survey by Oct. 11, 2021
 at www.elc.participate.online


Disponible en Español • 韓語(中文) • Доступно на русском языке • 繁體中文 • 한국어 가능 • Có tiếng Việt • ภาษามลายู • ភាសាខ្មែរ



have a say

Help Shape the Future of Transit on the Eastside

We need your feedback on potential bus route changes.



By 2024, 12 new Link light rail stations will open, connecting downtown Seattle and the Eastside and this expansion of light rail provides an opportunity to restructure bus service on the Eastside to meet today's changing mobility needs.

Affected Impacted: 4, 8, 111, 114, 167, 204, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 224, 225, 226, 232, 237, 240, 241, 245, 246, 249, 250, 252, 257, 268, 269, 271, 311, 342, 541, 542, 544, 545, 550, 554, 555, 556, 630, B Line, 930, 931

Take the Survey before March 7, 2022
www.elc.participate.online



King County METRO **SOUNDTRANSIT**
HaveASay@kingcounty.gov
 206-263-9768 (Relay: 711)



King County METRO **SOUNDTRANSIT**

206-263-9768 (TTY Relay 711)
HaveASay@kingcounty.gov

Interpreter
 206-351-0000

Interpreters • **Turjubaan** • **Переводчик**
 Πορτογαλικά • 韓語(中文) • ភាសាខ្មែរ
 翻譯員 • Thông Dịch Viên • ប្រែប្រាស់

Seattle Chinese Times: East Link Connections: Community input needed for future integrated bus and light rail service in East King County, April 21, 2021

Seattle Chinese Times

a Seattle Chinese media outlet

焦點 線上報紙 NEW 即時新聞 社區新聞 西城工商 食住行 生活副刊 ENGLISH 線上商店 CONTACT US



社區新聞

Updated: April 21, 2021

兩三年內輕軌公交將貫通東區和西雅圖市中心 完成線上問卷幫助改進線路設計

By Staff / April 21, 2021



幫助塑造東區公共交通未來，加入 East Link Connections Mobility Board (East Link 連接流動性委員會)。一個有報酬的志願者領導機會。

King County METRO Moving forward together

SOUNDTRA

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西城商場

[Mercer Island Reporter: King County Metro and Sound Transit seek feedback from Eastside residents, February 16, 2022](#)

MERCER ISLAND REPORTER

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NEWS

King County Metro and Sound Transit seek feedback from Eastside residents

2 Line light rail link to serve 10 new stations by 2023.

By Hannah Saunders • February 16, 2022 11:35 am

Increasing service to major shopping, worship, recreation and employment centers.
 Providing more local coverage for easier connections with future Link stations.
 Decreasing travel times with streamlined service along major arterials.
 Improving midday and weekend service.
 Increasing frequency on major bus routes for faster, easier connections.
 Adding new routes to more neighborhoods.
 Further evaluation associated with streamlined service.

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TheGreatNWGlassQuest.com

Officers apprehend shoplifting suspects | Mercer Island police blotter

[The Urbanist: More Details Emerging on Bus Changes to Complement East Link Light Rail February 9, 2022](#)

The Urbanist Transportation Housing Land Use Politics Donate

More Details Emerging on Bus Changes to Complement East Link Light Rail

By Christopher Randels • February 9, 2022

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East Link Connections Project: Phase 3 Proposed Network in the Central Subarea

Map showing proposed bus routes connecting to East Link Light Rail stations in the central subarea, including locations like Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, Medina, and Clyde Hill.

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 February 23, 2022

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 February 23, 2022

Freezing Temperatures Prompt Opening of Severe Weather Shelters Across King County
 February 23, 2022

g: Mount Baker

- Seattle Transit Blog: [Join the East Link Connections Mobility Board](#), *March 8, 2021*
- The Urbanist: [Metro Begins East Link Bus Restructure Process Affecting 42 Routes](#), *April 8, 2021*
- Seattle Transit Blog: [Eastside Transit Restructure Kicks Off](#), *September 15, 2021*
- Seattle Transit Blog: [East Link Restructure: Bellevue & Redmond](#), *September 28, 2021*
- Seattle Transit Blog: [East Link Restructure: Bothell, Duvall, Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville](#), *September 30, 2021*
- Seattle Transit Blog: [East Link Connections process moves into phase 3 – Seattle Transit Blog](#), *February 16, 2022*
- Snoqualmie Valley Record: [Valley Mayors work to address regional transit challenges](#), *March 4, 2022*

F. Social Media Posts

Social Media Post Examples

Ethnic Chamber of Commerce Coalition
Published by Ali Lee · March 2 at 8:40 PM

#Eastlink Help shape the future of transit. Take the Survey!
<https://elc.participate.online/>

ELC.PARTICIPATE.ONLINE
Help shape the future of transit on the Eastside! [Learn more](#)

La Raza NW
March 17, 2021 · 🌐

Únase a la East Link Connections Mobility Board (Junta de Movilidad de Conexión Link) y ayude a dar forma al futuro del transporte público en el lado este. Una oportunidad de liderazgo voluntario compensada.

<https://kingcounty.gov/.../fares-.../east-link-connections.aspx...>



King County Metro Transit ✓
October 25 at 2:36 PM · 🌐

A reminder that if you live, work, or travel near Judkins Park, Mercer Island, Bellevue, & Redmond, we want to hear from you on the future of bus service on the eastside. The East Link Connections survey ends tonight, Monday, October 25. Learn more about the project and take the survey at <https://elc.participate.online/>.



👍 6

2 Comments

👍 Like

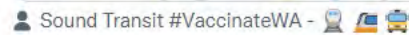
💬 Comment

➦ Share



Participe en un debate sobre la próxima reestructuración de Eastside.

Regístrese para participar en una jornada de puertas abiertas virtual, participe en la encuesta y obtenga más información sobre el East Link Connections Project: visite elc.participate.online.



12:40 PM · Sep 28, 2021 · Twitter Web App



规划 Eastside 公共交通的未来

报名参加网上开放日活动，参加调查，或详细了解 East Link Connections Project (East Link 连接项目)，请查看网站 elc.participate.online

网上开放日 或星期三，9月29日，下午6:00 - 7:00。



Sound Transit #VaccinateWA -

12:42 PM · Sep 28, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Instagram

Log In Sign Up



kcmetrobus Link light rail service to the Eastside will be here before we know it!

If you ride transit on the Eastside, we want to hear from you! Join King County Metro and Sound Transit for an open house this Saturday, October 16 from 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. to learn about the proposed changes to the bus network, ask questions, and provide feedback.

Registration is required, find the link our bio and in today's story.



86 likes

OCTOBER 13

G. Community-Based Organization (CBOs) Partnerships

Reports created and data collected by our CBO partners are available upon request.

H. Community Based Organization Advertisements

Hopelink

MAKE SURE KING COUNTY METRO HEARS FROM YOU!

Link
East Link
Connections

King County METRO
Moving forward together

SOUNDTRANSIT

JOIN US FOR A CONVERSATION ABOUT EAST LINK CONNECTIONS

This virtual event will provide an opportunity to have your questions answered and comments heard. Join King County Metro, Sound Transit, and Hopelink Mobility as we talk about potential route changes with service planners and share your feedback!

Register here to join the conversation on Friday, October 22nd from 10:00-11:15AM.

hopelink

Ethnic Chamber of Commerce Coalition

JOIN US! NOV. 18, 2021 @ 12PM

DOMESTIC WORKERS
LIFT UP OUR FAMILIES AND
OUR COMMUNITIES!

REGISTER HERE:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lunchtime-get-ready-for-2022-labor-laws-domestic-workerstransit-you-tickets-211271878877>

JOIN US AND OUR GUEST AS WE TALK ABOUT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN OUR COMMUNITY. HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR WORKERS FROM MINIMUM WAGE , TRANSIT AND THE LAW. STAY FOR THE ENTIRE PROGRAM AND WE HAVE A SPECIAL GIFT FOR YOU PROVIDED BY OUR SPONSOR FROM DOORDASH. THANK YOU!

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