

RapidRide K Line Community Engagement Summary

Needs and priorities assessment summary (September to December 2019)

Executive summary

Project overview

King County Metro (Metro) is bringing a new RapidRide K Line to the Eastside to provide better, more reliable bus service to communities in Kirkland and Bellevue. When RapidRide K Line begins service in 2025, it will serve the communities between Totem Lake Transit Center (in Kirkland), downtown Kirkland, downtown Bellevue, and Eastgate (in Bellevue). Building on prior engagement from the North Eastside Mobility Project (NEMP), Metro is seeking input and feedback from Kirkland and Bellevue communities on the RapidRide K Line route, station locations, and capital improvement projects.

Community engagement approach

Community engagement activities consisted of interviews with community-based organizations, businesses, service providers, and other partners; in-person outreach; and online surveys. Understanding the new RapidRide K Line will serve a diverse population of transit users, Metro is intentionally practicing a variety of inclusive engagement techniques throughout the project. This includes having a presence in the community and focused survey distribution. Additionally, Metro translated outreach and survey materials into multiple languages to better serve community members who are limited-English speakers.

What we heard

We received valuable feedback about the communities' needs and priorities for future transit service in Kirkland, Bellevue, and surrounding area, including the following key takeaways

- Community members want fast, reliable transit service that will get them where they need to go.
- Many people currently riding Route 255 are concerned about losing direct connection to Downtown Seattle.
- Community members want safe bus stations, stations that are near commonly used resources, and better service for people with mobility, vision, hearing, or other impairments.

Next steps

The community input and feedback will help us develop design concepts and inform future communications and engagement activities. We will continue to build relationships with

community members throughout the life of this project. In 2020, Metro will seek input on draft concepts and demonstrate how community feedback informed design concepts.

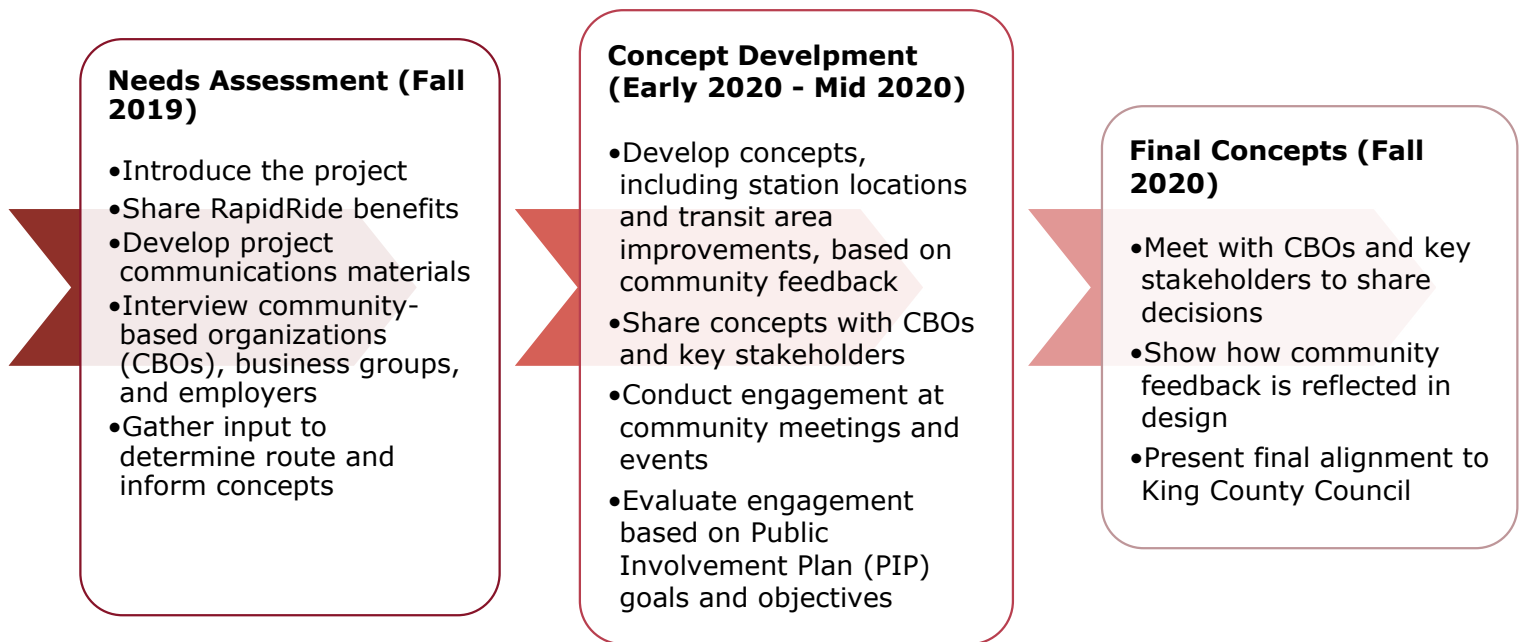
Introduction

King County Metro (Metro) is bringing new RapidRide service to provide better, more reliable bus service to communities in Kirkland and Bellevue. When RapidRide K Line begins service in 2025, it will serve the fast-growing communities between Totem Lake Transit Center (in Kirkland), downtown Kirkland, downtown Bellevue, and Eastgate (in Bellevue).

In Fall 2019, Metro began engaging community members, businesses, service providers, and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Kirkland and Bellevue to understand their transit needs and priorities, and to gather input to inform the design of RapidRide K Line. Metro was looking for specific feedback on route options between Totem Lake, downtown Kirkland, and the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride. This report summarizes the results of that engagement.

Overview

Engagement timeline



While this timeline only shows community engagement activities through 2020, the project team will continue to involve and inform the community through construction completion, planned for 2025.

Community engagement goals

Goals for the needs assessment phase of RapidRide K Line community engagement are as follows:

- Select route options that reflect the needs of the community.
- Conduct and document an intentional, inclusive, and equitable community engagement process.
- Ensure stakeholders are aware of RapidRide K Line and understand how RapidRide will impact and benefit their communities.
- Establish and grow positive relationships between Metro and community organizations, businesses, cities, and community members in Kirkland and Bellevue.

For a complete list of goals and objectives, please see Appendix A.

Community engagement approach

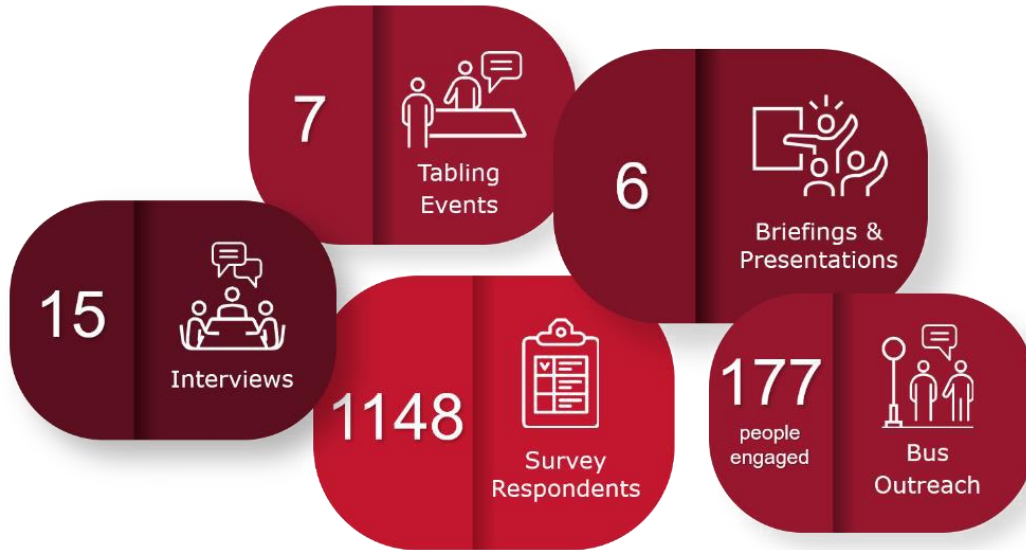
Metro’s initial round of RapidRide K Line community engagement consciously built on the relationships and communications approaches used during the North Eastside Mobility Project (NEMP) engagement process. The goal of our community engagement is to create a more integrated mobility network that better connects people to opportunities. Community input will help Metro make decisions about

- establishing potential RapidRide K Line route and station locations.
- other projects, such as dedicated bus lanes, added crosswalks, and improved roadways that improve bus speed and reliability and enhance safety for all who travel in the area.
- additional projects that improve access to transit by making it easier, safer, or more convenient to get to—or wait for—the bus.

Community engagement activities consisted of interviews, in-person engagement, and online surveys. For an in-depth explanation of our community engagement approach including building on prior engagement and a map of community engagement locations, please see Appendix B.

What we heard

We received valuable feedback about the communities' needs and priorities for future transit service in Kirkland, Bellevue, and surrounding areas.



Overall key takeaways are summarized below.

Community member priorities

- Community members want transit that will get them where they need to go.
- Speed of travel is important to community members.
- Community members want to be certain the bus will be there when they need it.

Existing route 255 service

- Many transit riders expressed concerns about planned changes to Route 255 expected in March 2020 and the resulting lack of direct connections to Downtown Seattle.
- People unfamiliar with using light rail expressed concern about the process of transferring from the bus to light rail at the University of Washington station.
- Some route 255 riders expressed concern that the faster, more reliable service promised by RapidRide would be negated by the additional time it would take them to transfer to light rail or other transit modes

RapidRide K Line station locations, amenities, and accessibility

- Some people said Metro needs to better serve people with mobility, vision, hearing or other impairments.
- Community members stressed the importance of safety at stations, including lighting and crosswalks, as well as sidewalks leading to stations.
- Locating bus stations near community resources, such as medical centers, community centers, and grocery and shopping locations, is a priority for community members.

Barriers to transit use

- Difficulty getting to and from the bus stop can make it hard for people to use transit.
- When buses come infrequently, people are less likely to rely on them.
- People are unlikely to use transit if it does not serve the places they want to go.
- A barrier exists when using transit takes significantly longer than other transportation methods.

Interviews

The project team interviewed CBOs, community groups, and large employers in Kirkland and Bellevue to build relationships, understand the needs of communities they serve or represent, and gather input for outreach and engagement strategies going forward.

The project team reached out to 28 groups in the project area requesting in-person or phone interviews, meeting with all groups that responded and expressed interest in participating in an interview. We met with six CBOs and nine employers/business associations and groups representing various communities in Kirkland and Bellevue.



The following key themes emerged

- Several interviewees spoke about changing Kirkland and Bellevue demographics and challenged a popular assumption that all community members are wealthy and employed at places that offer traditional (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) work schedules.
- Many interviewees spoke about the importance of connecting and coordinating service to other transportation options, especially considering the 2023 opening of Sound Transit’s Link light rail extension to Bellevue.
- Most interviewees suggested using a variety of outreach and engagement methods, including in-person outreach, surveys, social media, and partnering with CBOs depending on the needs of the target audience. A common theme of this feedback was the need for Metro to be visible in the community and meet people where they are.

For an in-depth look at the interview process and findings, please see Appendix C.

In-person engagement

Metro participated in 13 events throughout Kirkland and Bellevue including briefings, tabling events, transit outreach, and on-board bus outreach, to introduce the future RapidRide K Line and to encourage community members to take the online survey.



The following key themes emerged

Existing Route 255 service

- Many transit riders expressed concerns about planned changes to Route 255 in March 2020 and the resulting lack of direct connections to downtown Seattle.
- A vast majority of Route 255 riders expressed satisfaction with the current route and recommended little to no changes to its current service.

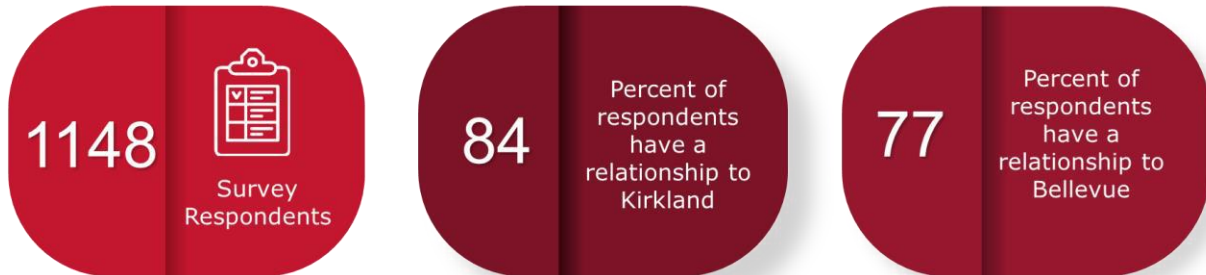
RapidRide K Line

- Most community members were unfamiliar with RapidRide by name but recognized the service after a brief description. Some expressed interest in the new line, but many Kirkland residents voiced support of current bus routes, such as Route 255.
- Many community members voiced support for RapidRide K Line, but many people who travel along the route use cars or are already content with current public transit in the area.
- Most people expressed support for increased reliability and speed that RapidRide would provide. Many are dissatisfied with the current wait times between buses and congested roads along Market Street.
- When asked which alignment they preferred, a majority of riders and community members voiced support for option A1, many citing that they live or commute along Market Street already.
- Fewer people expressed a preference for option A2. Those who did cited heavy congestion along Market Street as a reason they avoid the area that would be served by option A1.
- Most community members did not express a preference between alignments B1 or B2.

For an in-depth look at the in-person engagement process and findings, please see Appendix D.

Online survey

Metro surveyed community members to help understand transit needs and priorities and inform Rapid Ride K Line route options.



The following key themes emerged:

- Slightly more respondents prefer route A1 (42 percent) over A2 (35 percent).
- More respondents prefer route B2 (48 percent) over B1 (26 percent).
- Almost half the survey respondents (46 percent) experience a barrier to accessing the bus in Bellevue or Kirkland.

Of the 17 priorities respondents considered, respondents consistently prioritized the following six trade-offs for route choices (ranked most to least important)

1. Less time to get to where I want to go
2. Fewer bus transfers
3. Less waiting for the bus
4. Bus is there when I need it
5. More places I can park near the bus stop
6. More people take the bus who didn't take the bus before.

For an in-depth look at the online survey process and findings, please see Appendix E.

Practicing inclusive engagement

The new RapidRide K Line route will serve all transit users, from people commuting to Seattle, to employees of large and small business throughout the Eastside, to Kirkland and Bellevue

residents who need to access schools, services, and amenities. This community is economically and ethnically diverse. Metro is intentionally seeking to hear from people in groups historically underrepresented or overlooked in transportation planning. The following icons represent the tactics we used to facilitate inclusive engagement.



Presence in the community



Translation and interpretation



Focused survey distribution



Focused community briefings



Focused tabling

Project staff built on existing relationships from the NEMP process with the goal of maintaining a presence in the community. This included engaging CBOs, such as Chinese Information Services Center (CISC), who was instrumental in helping Metro effectively reach diverse community members in Spanish- and Chinese-speaking communities. We conducted interviews with CBOs serving underrepresented community members and tabled at community events that underrepresented community members were most likely to attend. We asked CBOs for input on how we can compensate them for their time and support, and we will continue seeking opportunities to formalize partnerships with CBOs as this project advances. Metro understands building trust takes time and a consistent presence in the community, and we are continuing to work towards that goal.

To help community members who have limited-English proficiency learn about the project and provide feedback, we translated the project fact sheet and survey into Spanish and Simplified Chinese. These are the two languages other than English that are most commonly spoken at home in the project area. Given the large foreign-born population in the project area, we asked CBOs about languages spoken in the communities they serve and represent. Based on the feedback from these CBOs, we also offered to translate materials into Tigrinya, Russian, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. We will continue prioritizing in-language materials and engagement opportunities as this project moves forward.

We focused our in-person outreach efforts on opportunities to engage with community members who would be unlikely to participate in an online survey otherwise. For example, we helped developed brief handouts to help point commuters to the survey during transit center and onboard bus outreach, and we held briefings with organizations serving seniors and others who have difficulty accessing transit and are also unlikely to complete an online survey. See Appendix F for the methods we used to reach community members and invite them to provide feedback on the project.

Next steps

The community input received to date will help us develop design concepts, including the K Line route alignment and station locations, and inform future communications and engagement activities. Other factors that will also inform design include

- travel times and potential time savings.
- equity and social justice.
- destinations and activity centers served.
- network considerations.
- projected future ridership.

We will continue building our relationships with community members through participating in meetings and community events while we inform and involve the broader public by hosting in-person and online engagement activities. In 2020, Metro will seek input on draft concepts, including bus station locations and transit area improvements, and demonstrate how community feedback informed these design concepts.

Appendix A: Community engagement goals

Community engagement goals

Goals and objectives for the needs and priorities phase of RapidRide K Line community engagement are as follows:

Goal: Select route options that reflect the needs of the community.

Objectives:

- Present accurate information about route options, including potential benefits and trade-offs of each option.
- Tailor engagement to learn which aspects of Metro service the community values most and wants to prioritize in RapidRide K Line.
- Learn how people use transit and what can be improved about current service.

Goal: Conduct and document an intentional, inclusive, and equitable community engagement process.

Objectives:

- Prioritize feedback from historically underserved populations that have been left out of transit planning in the past.
- Provide access to project information and opportunity to influence design decisions.
- Evaluate audience demographics at the beginning and end of each engagement phase.

Goal: Ensure stakeholders are aware of RapidRide K Line and understand how RapidRide will impact and benefit their communities.

Objectives:

- Clearly communicate the need, benefits, and process for developing RapidRide K Line.
- Inform the community about RapidRide K Line design concepts.
- Provide ways for community members to ask questions, convey concerns and requests, and ensure prompt responses from the project team.
- Clearly communicate how Metro is working to improve transit services in Kirkland and Bellevue

Goal: Establish and grow positive relationships between Metro and community organizations, businesses, cities, and community members in Kirkland and Bellevue.

Objectives:

- Clearly demonstrate how community input has and will shape project design.
- Actively listen to and reflect community input throughout concept development.
- Develop engagement strategies and tactics that respond to community needs—especially those most impacted and historically underserved.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for community members to influence the route and key design features.

Appendix B: Community engagement approach

Building on prior engagement

Some Kirkland and Bellevue community members may be familiar with future transit plans after participating in Metro’s North Eastside Mobility Project (NEMP) planning. In 2018, Metro consulted CBOs, businesses, neighborhoods, and the public on opportunities to expand transit service and improve area mobility.

The goal of the NEMP was to work toward a more complete, connected, and integrated mobility network, reflecting the METRO CONNECTS vision to improve community conditions by better connecting people to opportunity.

A vital part of Metro’s engagement throughout NEMP was establishing relationships with key community groups and organizations. As Metro began initial engagement for RapidRide K Line, the project team sought to work with many of the same groups to build upon the relationships, communications approaches, and inclusive and accessible outreach methods established during NEMP planning.

Metro will implement service changes identified in NEMP in March 2020. As Metro engaged Kirkland transit riders to plan RapidRide K Line, questions and concerns about upcoming service changes emerged as a common theme, making coordination between NEMP efforts and RapidRide K Line an important part of successful engagement.

Community engagement approach

Metro’s initial round of RapidRide K Line community engagement consciously built on the relationships and communications approaches used during the NEMP engagement process. With the goal of creating a more integrated mobility network that better connects people to opportunities, community input will help Metro make decisions about:

- Establishing potential RapidRide K Line route and station locations.
- Other projects, such as dedicated bus lanes, added crosswalks, and improved roadways that improve bus speed and reliability and enhance safety for all who travel in the area.
- Additional projects that improve access to transit by making it easier, safer, or more convenient to get to—or wait for—the bus.

Community engagement activities consisted of:

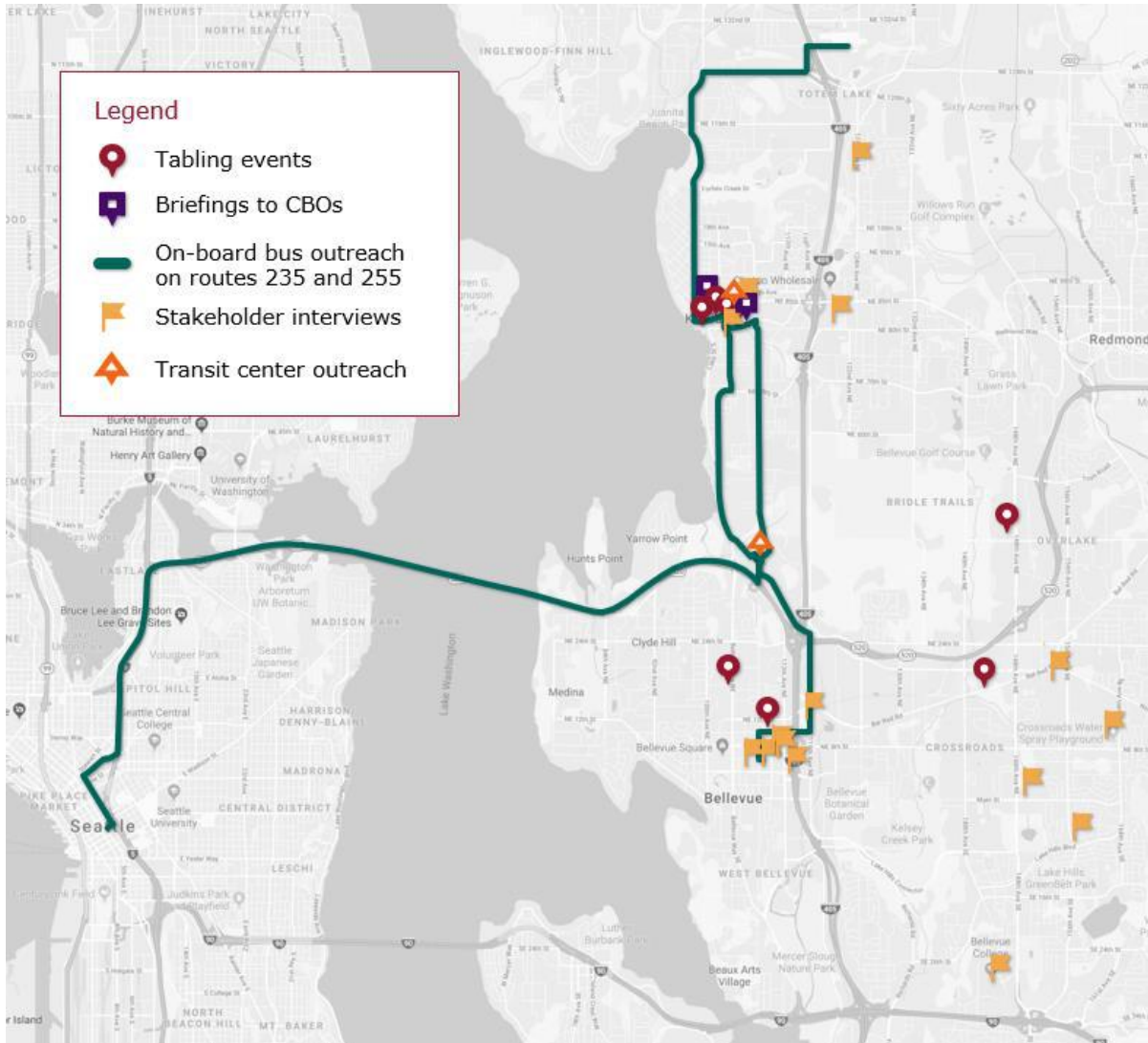
- **Interviews:** The project team interviewed CBOs, community groups, and large employers in Kirkland and Bellevue to build relationships, understand the needs of communities they serve or represent, and gather input for outreach and engagement strategies going forward. Interviews were scheduled based on the organizations’ location

along the future RapidRide K Line route, diversity of communities served, and their ability to share information throughout the community. We are not limiting community engagement to the people served or employed by these organizations; rather, this group served as a starting point to build out our network of relationships throughout the project.

- **In-person outreach:** Metro tabled and conducted outreach at community events and destinations, at transit centers, and onboard buses in the project area. Project staff asked about where people want to go (to inform route options and station locations) and their needs and barriers for using transit (to inform capital improvements). Metro also partnered with community organizations to host briefings to talk about the project and gather feedback. Project staff also presented to city council members in Kirkland and Bellevue.
- **Online survey:** Metro surveyed community members to help understand transit needs and priorities and inform Rapid Ride K Line route options. The online survey was available in Spanish and Simplified Chinese, as well as English. The survey included questions on:
 - Current barriers to using transit and specific issues or concerns around using or accessing transit
 - The path RapidRide K Line will travel between Totem Lake, downtown Kirkland, and South Kirkland Park-and-Ride.
 - Desired improvements to using and accessing transit
 - Demographic information
 - Preferred communication and outreach methods.

Map of community engagement

The map below shows the locations throughout the project area where the project team conducted interviews, participated in community events, held pop-up events, conducted outreach onboard buses and at transit centers, and held briefings with community groups.



Appendix C: Community and business interview summary

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

PRR and Metro conducted the interviews in person or by phone with participants representing CBOs, agencies, and businesses in Kirkland and Bellevue.

Date	Organization/Group	Community served/represented
10/14/20	Bellevue Chamber of Commerce	Businesses in Bellevue
10/15/20	Boys and Girls Club of Kirkland	Children in the Kirkland community
10/16/20	AtWork!	People with developmental disabilities
10/17/20	Attain Housing	Families and individuals needing housing
10/18/20	Hopelink	Families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities who are low-income or homeless in King and Snohomish Counties
10/21/20	City of Bellevue	Community in Bellevue
10/23/20	Chinese Information Services Center	Immigrants near and around Seattle, Bellevue, Kent, and Redmond
10/23/20	Bellevue Downtown Association	Community members living, working, or playing in Downtown Bellevue
10/23/20	Youth Eastside Services	Youth and families seeking behavioral health services in East King County
10/24/20	Kirkland Chamber of Commerce and Kirkland Downtown Association	Businesses in Kirkland area and community members working, living, and playing in Downtown Kirkland

10/24/20	New Bethlehem Center-Catholic Community Services	Families who are experiencing homelessness
11/01/20	Overlake Hospital	Employees and patients at Overlake Medical Center
11/06/20	Bellevue College	Students, faculty, and employees at Bellevue College
11/18/20	Amazon	Current and future Amazon employees
11/21/20	Microsoft	Current and future Microsoft employees

Key themes

Interviewees shared a variety of feedback about how people in their communities use transit, barriers to using transit, opportunities to encourage people to ride the bus, and strategies to better engage and inform people in planning. Interviewers noted the following key themes:

- Several interviewees spoke about changing Kirkland and Bellevue demographics and challenged a popular assumption that community members are wealthy and employed at places that offer traditional (9am-5pm) work schedules.
- Many interviewees spoke about the importance of connecting and coordinating RapidRide service to other transportation options, especially considering the 2023 opening of Sound Transit’s East Link extension.
- Most interviewees suggested using a variety of outreach and engagement methods tailored to the needs of the target audience.

Summary of responses

Community context and characteristics

Interviewees provided varied perspectives on the current and changing community. A few interviewees challenged a common notion that the Eastside is largely composed of wealthy elites. In addition, several interviewees spoke about the importance of providing interpretation at events and translating information into a variety of languages. In addition to translating materials into simplified Chinese and Spanish, some interviewees suggested translating materials into Tigrinya, Russian, Vietnamese, and languages spoken in India.

Several interviewees also mentioned the importance of making accommodations at engagement events for people with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments, which includes offering large print materials and interpretation.

Interviewees also spoke about the changing demographics of the area, including an increase in employees from the technology sector.

Issues in communities

Interviewees shared issues their community members face. Homelessness and access to housing were issues facing all geographic areas. Other issues mentioned included

- Personal safety.
- Access and knowledge of affordable transportation options.
- Lack of parking in downtown areas and at park and rides.

Community resources

Interviewees shared the following community resources and assets used by community members they represent. In addition to the specific community resources below, many interviewees generally said that health centers, daycare facilities, schools, religious institutions, community centers, and parks are important community resources.

Region	Community Resource
Kirkland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopelink Food Bank • Peter Kirk Community Center/Kirkland Senior Center • Kirkland Urban • Downtown Kirkland Library • Kingsgate Library • Trader Joes • PCC • Kirkland Teen Union Building • Totem Lake Village • Multi-family housing off 116 NE (east of Interstate 405)
Bellevue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Bellevue Community Center • South Bellevue Community Center • Crossroads Bellevue • KidsQuest Children’s Museum • Wilburton area • Evergreen Medical Center • Downtown Bellevue • Asian Family Market

Study needs and community priorities

Current barriers to transit use

When asked about barriers to accessing transit, interviewees stated the following barriers, in order of frequency:

- Access and knowledge of first- and last-mile transportation options
- Low frequency of bus, especially in the evenings and off-peak times
- Transit transfers are confusing to navigate, especially with limited English proficiency (LEP) populations and those with visual impairments
- Transit does not serve locations where some people want to go
- Lack of understanding about services and how to use transit
- Language barriers in materials and announcements
- Cost to ride transit is too high
- Transit takes too much time.

Improvements to encourage more transit use

We asked interviewees what improvements would encourage more people to ride the bus. Almost all interviewees expressed a desire for more frequent and reliable transit.

Other suggested improvements included:

- Improving mobility options for first-and last-mile, including adding bicycle lockers at transit centers
- Improving bus shelters
- Improving safety at bus stops, including improving lighting and adding crosswalks
- Placing stations near key community resources
- Improving the process for paying fares (i.e. tapping ORCA card prior to boarding the bus)
- Sharing information about how to ride and access transit
- Offering more affordable bus fares
- Increasing driver sensitivity to those with mobility, visual, and hearing impairments
- Considering using fixed or flexible transit routes as demographics and populations change.

RapidRide alignment options

Some participants provided feedback on the draft Kirkland alignment options:

- An interviewee representing the Kirkland Chamber of Commerce prefers RapidRide K Line route travelling on 124th Ave NE, option A2, to best serve future and new development like Google and Kirkland Urban.
- An interviewee representing Bellevue Downtown Association preferred the alignment on Market St., option A1, and Lake Washington Boulevard, option B1, but also felt that both options serve Kirkland.
- An interviewee from Bellevue Chamber of Commerce recommended routing RapidRide K Line on 108th Ave NE. The interviewee also recommended Bel-Red Road as a potential corridor.

Current transit use

Interviewees shared information about routes and services their community members currently use. Some interviewees did not know which routes community members they serve or represent regularly use. Interviewees who were familiar with the routes community members they serve identified the following routes

- Route 116
- Route 235
- Route 238
- Route 250
- Route 255
- RapidRide B Line
- Sound Transit routes 555, 566, and 576
- Routes 533 and 535
- Route 235.

Community engagement preferences

Interviewees expressed appreciation for Metro’s emphasis on serving historically underserved communities. Several interviewees also noted the importance of engaging the community early in the project and often. Interviewees suggested that Metro should modify engagement tactics for different populations who may experience different needs.

Interviewees provided other suggestions for effectively engaging communities in Kirkland and Bellevue:

- partnering with case managers to distribute information to individuals and families
- conducting outreach in person to build relationships
- translating and transcreating materials into multiple languages
- providing classroom-style workshops for older community members who write in Chinese and speak Mandarin

- going to the relevant locations to ask people about feedback on potential changes
- partnering with local jurisdictions
- advertising engagement opportunities and surveys at bus stops and on buses
- conducting outreach at health and resource fairs
- engaging schools and youth to distribute information
- ensuring that engagement events are accessible through transit.

Communicating information to the community

Many interviewees stressed the importance of sharing information using a variety of channels, including online, print, and in-person word of mouth.

Interviewees highlighted sources for both collecting community feedback and sharing project updates, including sharing information through

- community groups and social service providers.
- social media, especially Facebook and the application WeChat for people who read and write in Chinese.
- flyers and printed materials.
- bulletin boards at social service providers, libraries, and grocery stores serving diverse populations.
- local English newspapers.
- local ethnic media such as newspapers.
- mailed postcards.
- Partnering with school districts to distribute information to parents.

Additional outreach ideas

Interviewers shared the following potential outreach methods with interviewees and asked for their feedback:

- community briefings
- tabling at community events
- tabling at community resource centers
- in-person open house
- online open house
- website updates
- listservs or email.

Most interviewees found these potential outreach methods effective and stressed that Metro should engage communities early and often using a variety of participation options. Some

interviewees suggested incentivizing people to participate, which may include paying participants or offering an attractive giveaway or activity at events and while tabling.

Partnership opportunities

Some interviewees offered to help Metro inform their communities. We asked CBOs if they would consider partnering on project outreach for compensation. Potential partnership opportunities may include:

- Youth Eastside Services, AtWork!, and New Bethlehem Day Center are interested in talking to Metro about overall opportunities to partner for compensation.
- Overlake Medical Center is willing to send emails to staff about surveys. They send emails out every Monday.
- Chinese Information Services Center is interested in hosting an event during their English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. They partnered with Metro during the North Eastside Mobility Project.
- Bellevue College suggested coming to a monthly administrator meeting to provide project updates.
- Microsoft is willing to help spread the word at major project milestones.
- Amazon will post information and survey links on their employee transportation portal.
- Bellevue Downtown Association is interested in collaborating on an event and will post information on their social media channels.

Next steps

Metro will use the information gathered from these interviews to inform our ongoing outreach and engagement with communities in the Bellevue and Kirkland area. In January, Metro will determine a preferred route. In early to mid-2020, Metro will share preferred concepts with stakeholders and community members to solicit feedback.

Appendix D: In-person engagement

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

- **Briefings:** Community engagement staff presented to three local organizations, two city councils, and one transportation commission. All briefings included opportunities for questions and answers and community feedback.
- **Tabling:** Metro hosted booths at community outreach events throughout Kirkland and Bellevue from the Bellevue Farmers Market to the Hopelink Annual Turkey Trot 5K. Staff distributed ORCA card pamphlets, survey leaflets, and giveaways to booth visitors. Staff also distributed factsheets in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese. Table visitors interacted with the RapidRide K Line route display board and provided input on route options by discussing the benefits and trade-offs with staff.
- **Transit center and bus outreach:** Metro staff conducted four rounds of bus and transit center outreach along the RapidRide K Line route options. We engaged with a concentrated number of transit riders at one time and encouraged them to take the survey and share comments.

The table below summarizes in-person engagement events.

Event	Format	Audience	Reach
Kirkland Transportation Commission	Presentation and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory group to the Kirkland City Council 	7 members
Bellevue City Council	Presentation and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected officials from the City of Bellevue 	7 members
Kirkland City Council Transportation Ad Hoc Committee	Presentation and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected officials from the City of Kirkland 	3 members
Kirkland Senior Council	Briefing and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory group to the Kirkland City Council 	16 attendees
Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods	Briefing and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood advocates in Kirkland 	15 attendees
Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative	Briefing and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation advocacy group representing seniors 	13 attendees

King County Library, Kirkland	Tabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse group of attendees including students and seniors 	42 visitors
Bellevue Farmers Market	Tabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellevue community members 	34 visitors
Kirkland Interfaith Network Alternative Gift Fair	Tabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kirkland community members and CBOs 	42 visitors
North Bellevue Community Center Thanksgiving Luncheon	Tabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors served by the North Bellevue Community Center 	25 visitors
Bellevue Family YMCA	Tabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellevue community members 	13 visitors
Hopelink’s 19th Annual Turkey Trot	Tabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents of Kirkland and the surrounding areas 	131 visitors
King County Library, Bellevue	Tabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse group of attendees including students and seniors 	30 visitors
Route 255 onboard bus outreach	Bus outreach		22 riders
Route 235 onboard bus outreach	Bus outreach		25 riders
Totem Lake Transit Center/South Kirkland Park-and-Ride outreach	Transit outreach		71 riders
Kirkland Transit Center outreach	Transit outreach		59 riders

Across all community engagement events, participants shared a wide array of opinions about RapidRide K Line and general access to transit in Kirkland and Bellevue, including connections to surrounding cities such as Seattle and Redmond. Common themes include:

Existing Route 255 Service

- Many transit riders expressed concerns about planned changes to Route 255 in March 2020 and the resulting lack of direct connections to downtown Seattle.

- A vast majority of Route 255 riders expressed satisfaction with the current route and recommended little to no changes to its current service.
- A few riders shared concerns about transferring at the University of Washington (UW) Transit Station, expressing uncertainty about the transfer process.

Community leaders from neighborhoods near or along the proposed RapidRide K Line route expressed unwillingness to transfer twice to get to downtown Seattle. They pointed out that two transfers would impact speed and reliability. These community leaders view getting to downtown Seattle via 255 as more important than going to the UW.

RapidRide K Line

- Most community members were unfamiliar with RapidRide by name but recognized RapidRide after a brief description of its services. Some expressed interest in the new line, but many Kirkland residents voiced support of current bus routes, such as Route 255.
- Many community members voiced support for RapidRide K Line, but many people who travel along the route do so by car or are already content with current public transit in the area.
- Most people expressed support for increased reliability and speed that RapidRide would provide, since most are dissatisfied with the current wait times between buses and congested roads along Market Street.
- When asked which alignment they preferred, a majority of riders and community members voiced support for option A1, citing the fact that they live or commute along Market Street already.
- Fewer people expressed a preference for option A2. Those that did cited heavy congestion along Market Street as a reason they avoid the area that would be served by option A1.
- Most community members did not express a preference between alignments B1 or B2 of the RapidRide K Line route.
- Representatives from communities near or along the RapidRide K line route expressed interest in understanding the cost difference between the proposed options, specifically, the difference in cost between the Market Street (A1) and 124th Street (A2) routes.

K Line station locations, amenities, and accessibility

- Many participants highlighted a gap in bus stations and transit services in the areas where Kirkland, Bellevue, and Redmond converge. For example, residents of Bridle Trails

expressed difficulty accessing frequent and reliable public transportation in their community.

- Many transit riders live north of Totem Lake and would like to see RapidRide K Line extended further north noting that park-and-rides are at capacity during morning rush hour.
- A few participants engaged in the Totem Lake area said they often have a long wait time for the next bus because departure times do not complement typical work hours. Participants would prefer bus schedules that are more accommodating to common work schedules.
- Several riders want stops to remain close to community amenities such as the Evergreen Medical Center and grocery stores.
- Representatives from the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative expressed that fewer stations on the RapidRide K Line would make it harder for seniors and those with disabilities to use transit. F

Other Metro transit services and community engagement

- Many participants provided feedback about other Metro services including RapidRide B Line. Across all lines, visitors expressed a desire for frequent and more reliable forms of transportation throughout more areas of Kirkland, Bellevue, and Redmond.
- Several participants did not know about March 2020 service changes impacting several bus lines on the Eastside and requested more information about those changes.
- A few participants would prefer to engage with informational materials in their primary language, with some requesting information in Vietnamese.
- At most engagement events, project staff encountered several participants who had completed the survey prior to the event and were familiar with the project.
- Several people requested more information about ORCA cards and the easiest way to obtain them in bulk to hand out to community members, especially seniors and those with disabilities.
- Several people expressed appreciation for staff helping visitors take the survey on their mobile device.
- Several people requested more information on I-976 and its potential impacts to current transit services.

Presentations to City Councils and Commissions

In addition to CBO briefings, tabling, and transit center and bus outreach, Metro’s engagement approach during the needs and priorities assessment phase included informing and seeking early feedback from city councils, committees, and commissions. This approach allowed Metro to build relationships with local agency decision-makers, lay the foundation for partnership opportunities, and build support for the project.

Project staff presented at three meetings with the following key themes:

- **Oct. 23, 2019: Kirkland Transportation Commission**

 - Commissioners expressed concerns about impacts to existing transit service, RapidRide K Line replacing route 255 service, and the potential lack of direct service from Kirkland to Seattle. Commissioners provided input on engagement with neighborhoods, businesses, and community groups. Commissioners also asked questions about accessibility and connecting service to the most significant regional centers and destinations. The Commission unanimously agreed that the A2 alignment was preferred over A1. There was general agreement that B2 was preferred over B1, assuming that Route 255 service to UW would not be lost.

- **Oct. 28, 2019: Bellevue City Council**

 - Councilmembers expressed support for Metro’s engagement with local communities and businesses and made several recommendations about additional stakeholders to contact, such as Bellevue School District, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, and Choose Your Way Bellevue. Councilmembers recommended that Metro staff assess access to transit, the distance between riders’ origins or destinations and transit stops (first- and last-mile gaps), and transit-oriented development near stations. The Mayor urged ongoing work to ensure the downtown Bellevue transit system, including Bellevue Transit Center, functions well and supports anticipated growth.

- **Nov. 15, 2019: Kirkland Council Transportation Ad Hoc Committee**

 - Councilmembers provided general feedback about the importance of planning projects early for coordination with the City’s Capital Improvements Program, interest in maintaining Route 255, and identifying co-branding opportunities with Sound Transit. There was general agreement that the councilmembers preferred option A2 over A1. Opinions about option B1 versus option B2 were not as strong, but overall the Committee supported B2 more than B1.

Appendix E: Online survey

King County Metro invited people who travel in Kirkland and Bellevue, as well as community groups, to participate in an online survey throughout November 2019. We received 1148 valid responses. Most respondents have a relationship to Kirkland (84 percent) or Bellevue (77 percent). This includes respondents who live, work, access services, or visit either city for any reason. About half of respondents (54 percent) report using Route 255. Of those who take Route 255, nine out of ten (90 percent) use it to travel to Seattle.

Respondents reported the following demographic characteristics:

- Over a quarter of respondents (27 percent) reported not always having access to a car.
- Almost a quarter of survey respondents (23 percent) are people of color.
- About one in five respondents (16 percent) speak a language other than English at home. One percent of respondents took the survey in Spanish and less than one percent took the survey in Simplified Chinese.
- About one in ten respondents (13 percent) have some type of disability.
- About one in ten respondents (11 percent) have an estimated household income that is 80 percent or less of King County Area Median Income (AMI) (approximately \$79,450 or less for a household size of three people).

Kirkland, Bellevue, and general transit service

- The survey showed respondents two possible routes for segment A (from the Totem Lake Transit Center to the Kirkland Transit Center), and two possible routes for segment B (from the Kirkland Transit Center to the South Kirkland Park and Ride), with the option to see enlarged maps for more detail.



- **Slightly more respondents prefer route A1 over A2.** 42 percent of respondents preferred A1 while 35 percent preferred A2. We considered whether several demographic differences affected which routes people preferred, including: respondents' relationship to Kirkland and Bellevue, race, ethnicity, ridership, household income, and access to a vehicle. While respondent's relationship to Bellevue, race, ethnicity, household income, and access to a vehicle did not influence whether they chose A1 or A2, we did find statistically significant relationships between who people are and which route they preferred.
 - **Respondents with a relationship to Kirkland are more than twice (200 percent) as likely to prefer A2.**

- **Respondents who ride the route 255 bus are about 70 percent more likely to prefer A1.**
- **More respondents prefer route B2 over B1.** 48 percent of respondents preferred B2 while 26 percent preferred B1. We considered whether several demographic differences affected which routes people preferred, including: respondents’ relationship to Kirkland and Bellevue, race, ethnicity, ridership, household income, and access to a vehicle. While respondent’s relationship to Bellevue, race or ethnicity did not influence whether they chose B1 or B2, we found statistically significant relationships between who people are and which route they preferred.
 - **Respondents with a relationship to Kirkland are two times (200 percent) more likely to prefer B2.**
 - **Respondents who ride the route 255 bus are two times (200 percent) more likely to prefer B2, regardless of their relationship to Kirkland or Bellevue.**
 - **Respondents with limited access to a working vehicle are about 35 percent less likely to prefer B1.**
 - **Respondents with lower household incomes are about 5 percent less likely to prefer B1.**
- Many respondents expressed interest in increasing speed of buses and including direct transit to Seattle.
- Survey respondents shared the following important places to travel by bus: work, home, grocery stores, shops, public schools, transit centers, and nearby areas (Downtown Seattle, Bellevue College, University of Washington). See map below for specific locations submitted by respondents.

Access and barriers to transit

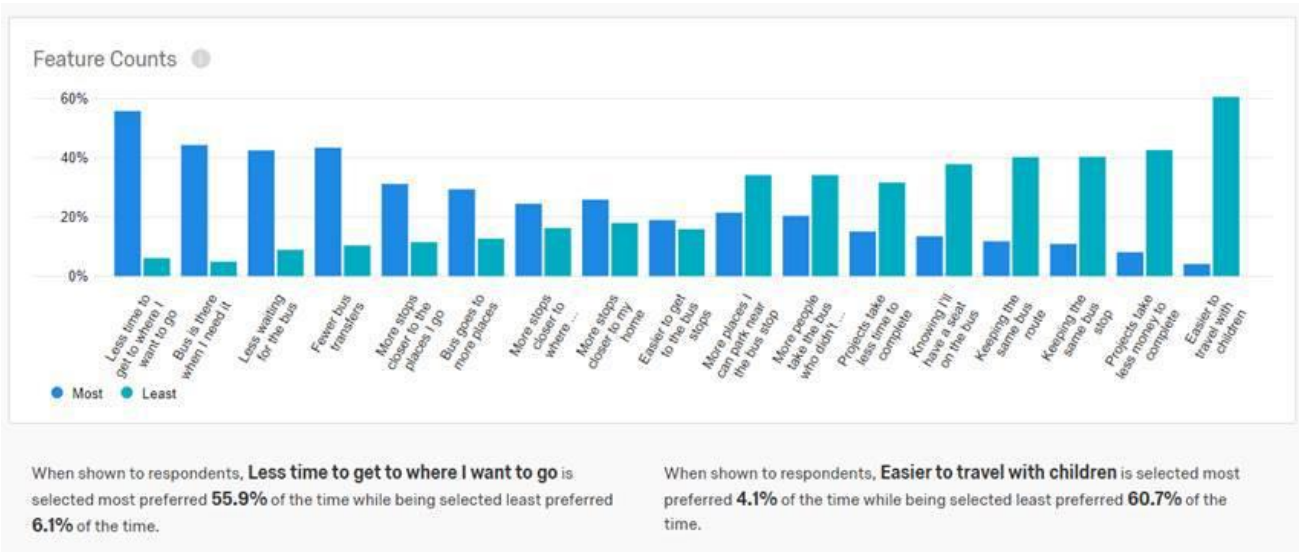
- Almost half the survey respondents (46 percent) experience a barrier to accessing the bus in Kirkland or Bellevue.
- Respondents’ most common barrier to taking the bus (64 percent) was how long it takes to get to their destination.
- The second-most common barrier to taking the bus was how often the bus comes. Over half of respondents (58 percent) identified this as a barrier.
- The third-most common barrier was how often the bus shows up on time, with some (41 percent) identifying this as a barrier.

Trade-offs and priorities for transit

- Of the 17 priorities respondents considered, respondents consistently prioritized the following six trade-offs for route choices (ranked most to least important)
 1. Less time to get to where I want to go
 2. Fewer bus transfers
 3. Less waiting for the bus
 4. Bus is there when I need it
 5. More places I can park near the bus stop
 6. More people take the bus who didn't take the bus before.

The graphic below shows the MaxDiff of the trade-offs and priorities from the online survey. MaxDiff results are an aggregate calculation (not based on an individual response) of respondent's priorities. Instead of showing each person all 17 trade-offs/priorities, we showed them a small handful. When enough people answer the questions, MaxDiff shows the aggregate answer to all the priorities without the individual response. There are more details about the MaxDiff results in the survey summary- including information about how the priorities differ based on alignment preferences.

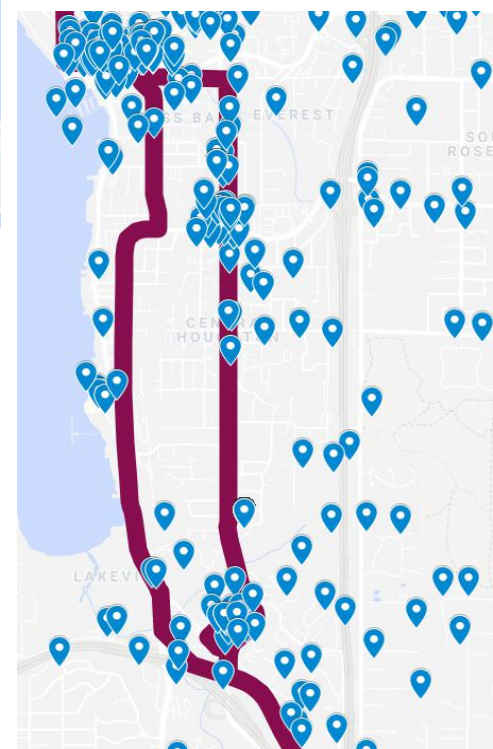
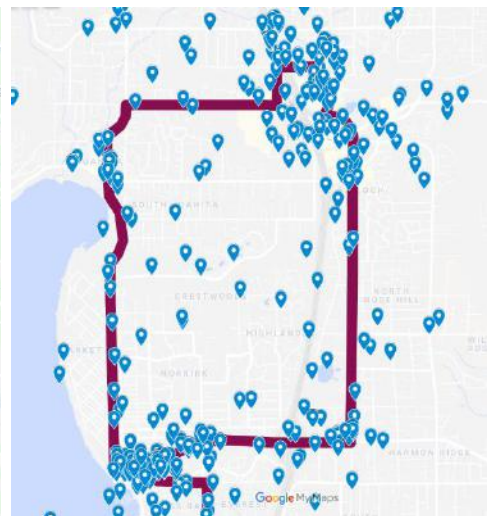
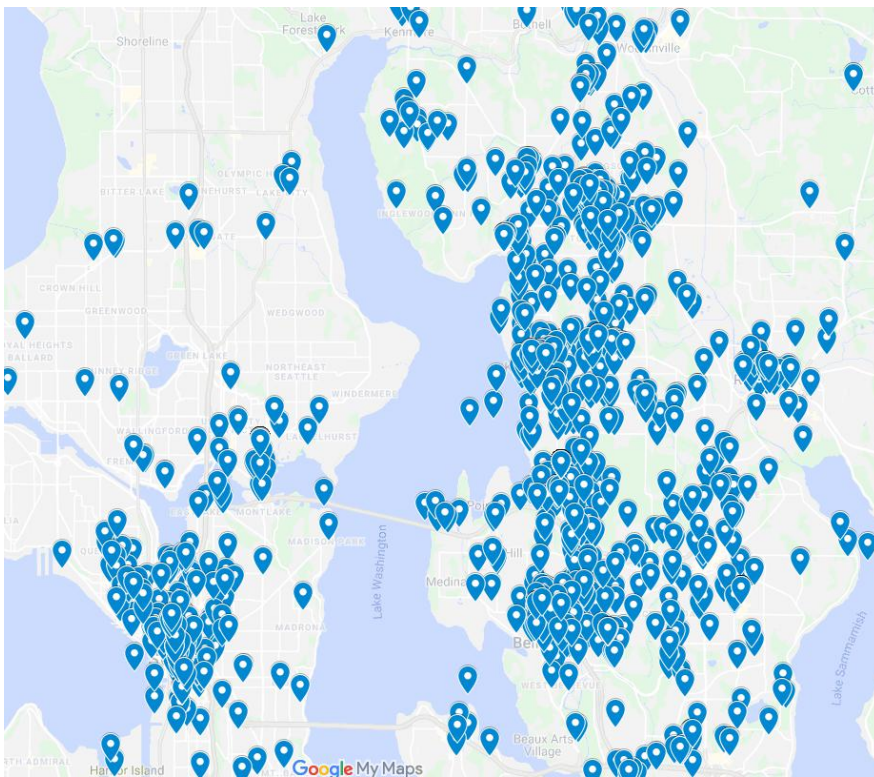
When people do see the options (instead of just being aggregated), the priority that people generally agree is the most important is "Less time to get to where I want to go". In the chart below, the bigger the space between the blue and teal colors, the more people generally agree with each other. For other priorities, the choice is more polarized (e.g., "Easier to get to the bus stop"). You can see that people say it's the "most important" just about as often as they say it's the "least important".





- Respondents prioritized getting to their home and locations of interests over keeping the same bus route, bus stops, ease of travel, or project costs and timeline. Still, route preference did influence trade-offs and priorities (e.g., A1 versus A2 or B1 versus B2). See below for the full list of trade-offs and priorities for bus service.
 - For the route options A1 and A2
 - Respondents who prefer A1 placed a higher priority on keeping the same bus route, compared to respondents who preferred A2. Project cost was the lowest priority for respondents who preferred A1.
 - Respondents who prefer A2 placed a higher priority on project cost and project completion time than they placed on knowing they would have a guaranteed seat or would keep the same bus route. Keeping the same bus stop was the lowest priority for respondents who preferred A2.
 - For the route options B1 and B2
 - Respondents who prefer B1 placed a higher priority on project completion time than they placed on keeping the same bus route or keeping the same bus stop. Project cost was the lowest priority for respondents who preferred B1.
 - Respondents who prefer B2 placed a higher priority on project cost and project completion time than they placed on knowing they would have a guaranteed seat or knowing how easy it might be to get to the bus stop. The ease of traveling with children was their lowest priority

Engagement feedback – Locations of interest

The map below includes specific points survey respondents indicated as locations they would like to access using the RapidRide K Line. There are 5,424 points on the full map. For clarity, zoomed-in versions near the route options appear below. An interactive version of the full map, including notes explaining which route options people preferred (when available), can be accessed via clicking the map or [this link](#).



Legend

-  Locations survey respondents would like to access using the RapidRide K Line
-  RapidRide K Line route options

List of trade-offs and transit priorities

The list below includes specific trade-offs respondents identified in the online survey as important possible changes to bus service in Kirkland and Bellevue.

- Bus goes to more places
- Bus is there when I need it
- Easier to get to the bus stops
- Easier to travel with children
- Fewer bus transfers
- Keeping the same bus route
- Keeping the same bus stop
- Knowing I'll have a seat on the bus
- Less time to get to where I want to go
- Less waiting for the bus
- Projects take less money to complete
- Projects take less time to complete
- More people take the bus who didn't take the bus before
- More places I can park near the bus stop
- More stops closer to my home
- More stops closer to the places I go
- More stops closer to where people live

Appendix F: Getting the word out

We used the following methods to reach community members and invite them to provide feedback on the project:



- **Tabling** at community events
- Distributing **posters** at community gathering places



- **Emails** to community partners and transit riders



- **Rider alerts** via email and text message



- Onboard **bus outreach** and at transit centers



- Sending **press release**



- **Partnering** with CBOs and local jurisdictions



- **Presenting** to community groups
- **Presenting** to Bellevue and Kirkland city councilmembers



- Information posted on the King County Metro **K Line website** and **social media**
- Posting and using **paid advertising** on King County Metro social media accounts



- **Advertising** online and in local newspapers and ethnic media print publications