



December 10, 2019

Mr. Rob Gannon, General Manager
King County Metro
King Street Center
201 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

Subject: Metro RapidRide K-Line

Dear Mr. Gannon:

The Kirkland City Council wishes to express support for the RapidRide K-Line coming to Kirkland, providing service between the Totem Lake Urban Center and Bellevue College. One of the City Council's key priorities is to reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles and to improve multi-modal mobility in Kirkland. To that end, the City recently adopted the Transit Implementation Plan (KTIP) which identifies strategies to support transit and increase speed and reliability on Kirkland's streets. The proposed K-Line, if appropriately implemented, will help to implement the KTIP and achieve our multi-modal transportation goals.

The City is, however, concerned about the K-line's potential impact to Kirkland's most important and popular transit route, the 255, which provides frequent, all-day access between Kirkland's Totem Lake Urban Center to the University District and downtown Seattle. Kirkland wants to ensure that there are no impacts on the continuing route 255 service as a result of the RapidRide K-Line's creation. We recognize that bringing RapidRide to Kirkland will have impacts to existing, local routes but we would like to reiterate how valuable the 255 is to our community and to the City's and the County's goals of improved transit service and increased transit ridership.

In 2016, the City of Kirkland commissioned a Bus Rapid Transit study to provide feedback in Sound Transit's ST3 program. Working in concert with King County Metro using actual boarding/alighting data, that study's ridership projections, based on various future BRT routes, showed 64% of projected ridership from Totem Lake and Juanita to Seattle as opposed the 13% of projected ridership from Totem Lake to Bellevue. Additionally, a 2018 mode-split survey taken by Kirkland residents and workers showed that Seattle is the most popular destination for Kirkland transit riders. The results from this survey showed that 34% of commute trips were taken by transit from Kirkland to Seattle, while 6% of Kirkland's bus trips were taken to Bellevue or Redmond. This survey also showed that 13% of people who work in Kirkland live in Seattle while 6% live in Bellevue or Mercer Island, and those Seattle residents took transit much more often than workers from other cities.

We already know that, as part of the North Eastside Mobility Plan (NEMP), there will be significant changes to 255 service in March of 2020, when the 255 service to downtown Seattle will require a transfer at the UW Light Rail station for Seattle-bound passengers. Kirkland understands the need for this change, and has been supportive of King County Metro's plans, with the understanding that more frequent, better service to and from downtown Seattle will be the result.

The Council would like to communicate our recommendation for the K-line alignment. Kirkland's preference for north of downtown Kirkland is the A2 alignment serving 124th Avenue NE and the I-405/NE 85th BRT station. The preferred option south of downtown is the B2 alignment serving 108th Avenue NE and while this overlaps route 255, it is preferred that the 255 be moved to State Street and Lake Washington Boulevard. It is critical that the 255 maintain the same service levels as promised in the NEMP as our community relies on this service.

Kirkland is looking forward to the increased transit service RapidRide will provide in our City and the potential to grow the share of people riding transit between Kirkland and Bellevue. This new service should complement the service changes put in place as part of the NEMP while maintaining existing high ridership service between Kirkland and Seattle across SR 520 with critical service to the University of Washington.

It is our common goal to have transit service meet the existing and future needs of our community and for more residents to choose transit. We appreciate your time and attention to Kirkland's concerns and how hard your staff has worked to be collaborative with us. We look forward to continued partnership with King County Metro to meet the needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Kirkland City Council

Penny Sweet
Mayor