

RapidRide K Line Bus Rapid Transit
King County, Washington
Small Starts Project Development
(Rating Assigned November 2025)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 15.7 Miles, 35 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$105.94 Million
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$51.91 Million (49.0%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2030):	\$18.48 Million
Existing Corridor Ridership (Warranted):	6800 Daily Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	High

Project Description: King County Metro Transit (Metro) proposes to implement bus rapid transit (BRT) in a corridor between the cities of Kirkland and Bellevue and connect Totem Lake Transit Center in the north to the Eastgate neighborhood in the south. The project includes the purchase of 16 vehicles, transit roadway improvements, and access-to-transit improvements to area sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure. The service is planned with busses running every 10 minutes on weekday peak periods, every 15–30-minutes in weekday off-peak and evenings, and every 15-minutes on weekends.

Project Purpose: Metro is pursuing the project in order to attract riders and move more people by providing reliable, efficient, environmentally friendly, and higher quality transit service than the existing local bus services in the corridor today. Metro anticipates fulfilling increasing demand for a high-capacity transit, improve access, and connectivity, and help reduce roadway congestion.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: Project entered Project Development phase in 2019. Metro selected a locally preferred alternative (LPA) and adopted it into the region’s fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in in July 2025. Metro anticipates completing the environmental review process with receipt of a Documented Categorical Exclusion in early 2027. Metro anticipates receiving a Small Starts Grant Agreement in late 2027 and starting revenue service in fall 2030.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 CIG	\$51.91	49.0%
FHWA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Grant	\$8.20	7.7%
State:		
State Regional Mobility Grant Program	\$1.59	1.5%
Local:		
Sales Tax and Fares	\$44.24	41.8%
Total:	\$105.94	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-High

Supportive Zoning in Station Areas: Medium-High

- Station areas include high-intensity and mixed-use zoning districts that support transit, including Downtown, Downtown Core, Downtown Mixed-Use Civic Center, Downtown Office, and specific transit-oriented development Districts. These TOD districts allow higher floor area ratios, increased building heights, and a mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses.
- Many zoning districts near stations already support reduced parking through lower minimum parking requirements, consideration of shared parking, and parking maximums in select mixed-use districts. Additionally, both cities are in the process of updating zoning codes to align with Washington state Senate Bill 5184 to decrease or remove parking minimums within half mile of frequent transit.

Performance and Impacts of Plans and Policies: Medium-High

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* State, regional, and local plans and studies including the Washington Growth Management Act, Puget Sound Regional Council Vision 2050, King County Comprehensive Plan, and Bellevue and Kirkland Comprehensive Plans prioritize higher-density mixed-use development around future stations. These plans call for concentrating jobs, housing, and community services within walking distance of transit, encouraging compact development patterns, reduced parking dependence, and stronger pedestrian and bicycle connections. Corridor and station area plans similarly promote infill development, multimodal connectivity, and compact growth. They identify priority redevelopment areas, encourage clustering high-density uses near stations, and coordinate land use with regional mobility goals.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* Local governments use a mix of financial and regulatory tools, including Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Business Districts, to encourage transit supportive investments. State-level housing and TOD policies supplement local strategies by encouraging diverse housing types and facilitating public-private partnerships for station area revitalization.
- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* Transit-oriented development policies in Bellevue and Kirkland are performing strongly, producing dense, mixed-use, walkable growth concentrated near major transit centers. Bellevue has seen significant shifts from office and retail to residential; parking reductions; and mixed-income projects supported by tax exemptions and public-private partnerships. Kirkland’s designated center policies and zoning allowances have enabled major mixed-use districts and redevelopment of underutilized sites, including affordable housing near transit. Across the corridor, 225 active permits and numerous multifamily projects demonstrate continued demand and effective alignment of development with transit investment.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* The RapidRide K Line has the potential to influence redevelopment across more than 627 acres of adaptable land within a half mile of the corridor. Key areas with strong redevelopment potential include underutilized commercial land and surface parking and low-density commercial areas. Puget Sound Regional Council projects a 12% population increase and 11% employment growth by 2030.

Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing in Station Areas: Medium-High

- Tools to maintain or increase affordable housing include rent-stabilization, supportive housing allowances, and requirements in regional growth center plans to document housing needs and identify programs that allow a variety of housing types. Countywide policies require local plans to account for inclusionary and incentive zoning; tenant protections and displacement-mitigation tools; and housing located near transit. Local plans in Bellevue and Kirkland recommend funding, land acquisition, incentives, fee exemptions, mandatory inclusionary zoning, and affordability requirements tied to bonuses or capacity increases. State and regional financing tools support preservation and new construction through housing trust funds, tax credits, acquisition loans, and other tax-based housing programs.

Project Overview

RapidRide K Line

Kirkland and Bellevue, WA

- RapidRide K Line Route and Stations
- Transit Center
- Park & Ride
- Link Light Rail - Sound Transit 2 Line
- RapidRide B Line
- Future Link Light Rail - Sound Transit 2 Line
- Future Stride BRT
- Municipal Boundaries

