

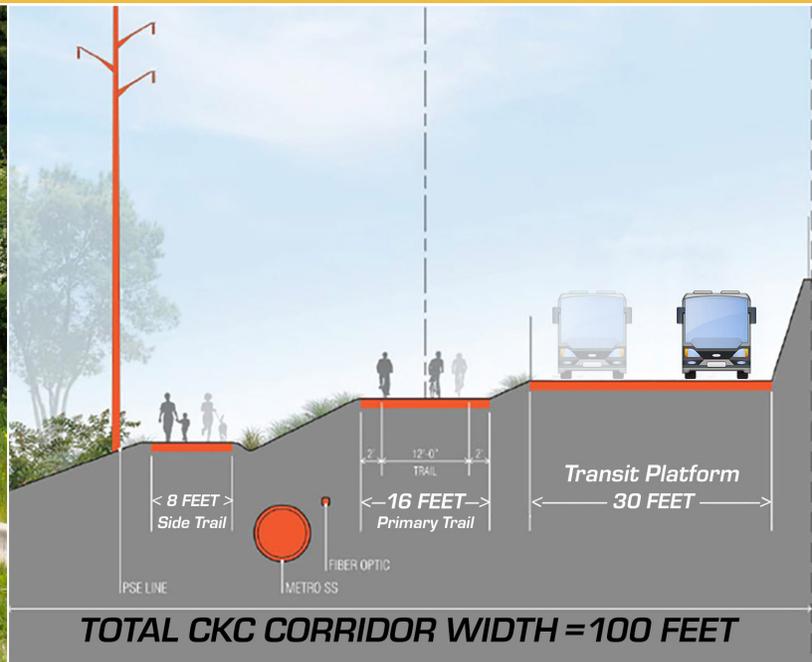


Serving Kirkland's Mobility Needs with High Capacity Transit on I-405 and the Cross Kirkland Corridor

Frequently Asked Questions about **Sound Transit 3**



photo: Ed Webster



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Sound Transit?

Sound Transit (ST) is a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) that plans, builds and operates express bus, light rail and commuter train services and is funded by tax dollars. ST's service area includes the urban areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. In 1993, the county councils of these central Puget Sound counties voted to create a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to move the Regional Transit Plan forward. Sound Transit's taxing district generally follows the urban growth boundaries created by each county in accordance with the

state Growth Management Act. In 1996 and 2008, voters within the RTA authorized Sound Transit to collect taxes to build and operate the regional transit system. The taxes are known as the RTA tax and are only assessed within the Sound Transit district.

What is ST3?

As stated by Sound Transit, "in response to rising congestion and public support for mass transit expansions, work is underway to develop a Sound Transit 3 (ST3) ballot measure for voters to consider in November 2016." On July 1, 2015 the Washington State Legislature granted Sound Transit authority to ask regional voters to approve new local revenue sources that, within 15 years, would generate up to \$15 billion in funding for mass transit expansions. Sound Transit is currently in the process of developing a final ST3 project list that will be adopted by its Board of Directors in the second quarter of 2016 for voter consideration on the November 2016 ballot.

What projects will ST3 voters consider?

In May 2015, the City of Kirkland learned of Sound Transit's intention to conduct a six-week public process from early June to mid-July to gather input on its draft Priority Projects List (PPL). The details of ST's public process were released by Sound Transit at the end of May. The City of Kirkland shared ST3's outreach opportunities with the community (online survey and community meetings) through its communications program.

In late August 2015 the ST Board of Directors (ST Board) approved the Candidate Project List which identifies potential light rail, commuter rail, and bus transit projects

from Everett to Dupont, in Pierce County. The list of Candidate Projects are currently being evaluated. (See project map. Source: www.soundtransit3.org).

Following a public involvement process that Sound Transit will implement in the first quarter of 2016, the ST Board is expected to release a Final System Plan for development. By June of 2016, the ST Board will adopt a System Plan with the final projects that will be included in the ST3 ballot.

Why have Kirkland officials been engaged in Sound Transit's process to develop a ballot proposal for Sound Transit 3?

Kirkland officials are engaged in Sound Transit's process to influence the final project list, so that the transit plan meets Kirkland's mobility needs and is compatible with Kirkland values and scale. The City of Kirkland is experiencing and forecasting continued growth in commercial and residential development. This growth is also occurring in the Puget Sound region. More Kirkland residents who work outside of the City, coupled with Kirkland employers who draw more workers from the region, will mean more commuter trips within the City and the region as a whole. Mobility alternatives must be considered. If passed by the voters in November 2016, ST3 must serve Kirkland's residents and businesses. ST3 must provide real transit alternatives to Kirkland.

The City of Kirkland is part of the Sound Transit District and registered voters within Kirkland city limits will be eligible to vote on ST3 in November 2016



Source: Soundtransit3.org

Which ST3 Candidate Projects are most important to the City of Kirkland?

As part of ST's outreach in June-July 2015, the Kirkland City Council submitted two comment letters to the ST Board of Directors expressing support for regional transit investments, including connections to downtown Kirkland.

On August 27, 2015, based on public input received, the ST Board of Directors advanced a list of Candidate Projects for further analysis and consideration for the ST3 ballot measure. Three candidate projects are of great interest to the City of Kirkland:

1. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the Express Toll Lane on I-405 (ST 3 Candidate Project E-02)
2. Light Rail Transit from Totem Lake area to Bellevue on the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC), with a connection to Issaquah (ST 3 Candidate Project E-03)
3. Bus Rapid Transit on the ERC from Totem Lake to Bellevue (ST 3 Candidate Project E-06)

What is Sound Transit's easement on the Eastside Rail Corridor, including the Cross Kirkland Corridor?

The Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) extends 42 miles between Snohomish and Renton. The rail banked portion from Woodinville to Renton represents a critical north/south transportation corridor and offers an extraordinary opportunity to enhance regional mobility through high capacity transit and non-motorized uses. The City of Kirkland owns and operates the 5.75 mile segment of the ERC in Kirkland called the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC). Sound Transit purchased a high capacity transportation easement over the rail banked portion prior to Kirkland's ownership of the CKC. The ERC Regional Advisory Council, comprised of the five owners of the ERC, are responsible for planning and implementing the vision of the ERC, which is to use this linear corridor for a high capacity transit (HCT) alignment. The five owners include Sound Transit, King County, the cities of Kirkland and Redmond, and Puget Sound Energy. Kirkland City officials will remain actively engaged in the ERC's development in a way that addresses Kirkland's mobility needs and is compatible with Kirkland values and scale.

Why is it important to have BRT on I-405 and the Eastside Rail Corridor, including the Cross Kirkland Corridor?

If done properly, BRT can deliver high mobility benefits relatively quickly and at a relatively low cost compared to rail alternatives. If BRT is run on I-405 from Lynnwood to SeaTac (ST3 Candidate Project E-02) it is critically important that it have connections to downtown Kirkland, 6th Street South and southern Totem Lake. These connections would reach major regional employers, transit centers and park and ride lots within the City.

In addition to the regional connections provided by BRT on I-405, BRT on the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) between Bellevue and Totem Lake (ST3 Candidate Project E-06) would provide connections between employment centers within the cities of

What is Bus Rapid Transit?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is an enhanced bus system that operates on dedicated bus lanes or other transit ways in order to avoid traffic congestion. BRT combines the flexibility of buses with the reliability of rail. BRT's flexibility is found in the



ability to change and expand routes easily, where a single rail line has no flexibility. With the ability to leave the dedicated bus lane, BRT can serve more destinations, including dispersed suburban

activity centers that can be hard to serve with a single light rail line. BRT includes low-noise and low-pollution emitting vehicles. Additionally, BRT can be quieter than heavy rail or light rail.

What is "Rapid" about Bus Rapid Transit?

The "Rapid" in Bus Rapid Transit is frequent and reliable transit service. It is not buses speeding rapidly through a city or neighborhoods. Conventional bus service uses general purpose traffic lanes, which can be slow due to traffic congestion, and the speed of bus services is also reduced by the time spent at bus stops, for passengers to pay the fare, and for the vehicle to pull back into traffic. BRT contains features similar to a light rail (dedicated lanes, iconic stations, off-board fare collection, and fast and frequent operations) so it is much more reliable, convenient and more rapid than regular bus services.

Kirkland and Bellevue and would also provide a seamless transition for transit onto SR520, avoiding the 520/405 interchange.

In keeping with the community's vision of the CKC to be a transportation corridor that accommodates various modes of mobility, including transit, Kirkland officials desire a high quality, yet practical, design for BRT that will be compatible with trails for pedestrians and bicycles, providing connections to existing and future transit along and beyond the CKC.

BRT on I-405 and the CKC will serve to reduce traffic congestion on major north/south corridors.

Why does the City support Light Rail Transit from Totem Lake to Issaquah via Bellevue along the Eastside Rail Corridor (Candidate Project E-03)?

Project E-03 was included by Sound Transit's staff and Board of Directors on the draft Priority Project List (PPL) which was publically released in May 2015. Through Sound Transit's June/July public process, the City supported Project E-03 being advanced as a mobility alternative that should be studied further as a Candidate Project for potential inclusion in the final ST3 measure on the November 2016 ballot. Kirkland officials are engaged in Sound Transit's process to influence the final project list, so that the transit plan meets Kirkland's mobility needs and is compatible with Kirkland values and scale.

Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Why does the City support Bus Rapid Transit on the ERC from Totem Lake to Bellevue (Candidate Project E-06)?

Kirkland officials worked to get E-06 included on the Candidate Project List because BRT is an alternative that could be a less impactful, more flexible alternative to Light Rail (E-03) on the Eastside Rail Corridor/Cross Kirkland Corridor that can be implemented sooner. For these reasons, City officials worked to ensure that Candidate Project E-06 was considered and studied for possible inclusion in ST3.

Under the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) agreement, of which CKC is a portion, there will always remain an opportunity to use this linear corridor for a high capacity transit (HCT) alignment. Kirkland City officials will remain actively engaged in the ERC's development in a way that addresses Kirkland's mobility needs and is compatible with Kirkland values and scale.

Why is Kirkland having its own BRT design concepts created?

The City has retained consultants who specialize in BRT to help Sound Transit understand Kirkland's vision of BRT on the CKC and/or the section of I-405 in Kirkland. From the City's perspective, it is a fundamental requirement that any transit on the CKC is consistent with the City's vision for the CKC as a pedestrian/bike trail, a gathering place and natural environment. In particular, Kirkland is working to make sure that any transit is placed in the 30 foot transit envelope on the eastside of the CKC, as outline in the CKC Master Plan.

The consultants hired by the City have created similar, multipurpose corridors around the world. Kirkland's analysis will provide additional information on alternative concepts to bring transit to residents and businesses, as well as improve transit in surrounding communities of Bellevue, Redmond, and Woodinville. The City's own analysis will help in future conversation with Sound Transit officials and in the City's support to get BRT projects onto the ST3 ballot.

If voters approve ST3 in November 2016, when could we expect to see any of these ST3 projects completed?

If ST 3 is approved by voters in November 2016, within 15 years the measure would generate up to \$15 billion in local revenue to fund mass transit expansions. The Candidate Projects in Kirkland represent only a small portion of this regional ballot measure. Each ST3 project would be subject to additional analysis, project design and environmental review before construction begins. Sound Transit staff have indicated 5-7 years of planning time for projects and another 5-7 years for construction. Project timing also depends upon where it falls within each funding phase. Projects will be prioritized, and if Kirkland's projects remain on the list, it is not yet know where Kirkland's projects might land in terms of priority. In other words, assuming any of the projects (E-03 or E-06) are adopted in the System Plan, it is highly unlikely that any physical changes to the CKC would happen before 10-15 years from voter approval of the measure.

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