



MEMORANDUM

To: Joel Pfundt, Transportation Manager

From: Kimberly Scrivner, Transportation Planner
Joel Pfundt, Transportation Manager

Date: November 24, 2020

Subject: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS DUE TO COVID-19

Staff Recommendation

The Transportation Commission should receive an update on the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic is having on regional transportation.

Background

Provided below are updates related to King County Metro, Sound Transit and the Washington State Department of Transportation based on information staff has available. The situation with all three agencies will continue to change along with conditions.

KING COUNTY METRO

Response and Recovery

- About 70% avg systemwide ridership decrease in the spring but slowly increased during the summer
 - Highest ridership routes are in areas with lower incomes and with all-day service
 - Peak hour and express service has seen the largest decline

Budget Impacts and Service/Capital Reductions

- Expected recession is predicted to account for a shortfall of \$1.5B over 10 years
- Use CARES Act funding (~\$242M), fund balance and revenue stabilization reserves for operations
- Service and Capital reductions
 - 20-30% net reduction and restructure of the bus network
 - 30-40% reduction in the Capital Improvement Program, including RapidRide & electrification
 - 5-10% reduction in all other programs and services

What Budget Changes Mean for Kirkland

- Rapid Ride K-line has been delayed but is expected to be one of the next two Rapid Ride lines implemented by Metro. The timeline will be in the 2035 timeframe, but it is likely to happen sooner. Metro is predicting 3 years for implementation of Rapid Ride routes, four of which are to be implemented prior to the K-line but are farther along in the process.

- Service changes in September 2020 included the following reductions (see Table 1):
 - Routes that will maintain full service in Kirkland: four all-day routes (230, 231, 239 and the DART 930) and two peak-hour only routes (257, 311)
 - Four routes will have reduced service (225, 250, 255 and the 245)
 - Three peak-hour only routes will be suspended (237, 252, 342)

Next Steps for Metro Service Planning

- Metro is working on revising their Service Guidelines which is their policy document that directs how Metro will increase or reduce service.
- In addition, Metro is working to update their long-range plan, called Metro Connects, which outlines the future, long-range transit network.
- Both documents are proposed to incorporate a document called the Mobility Framework which outlines how Metro can incorporate equity into their planning. This was created through coordination with an 'equity cabinet' which included 23 community leaders representing low-income communities, black, native and communities of color, immigrants and refugees, limited-English speaking people, and people with disabilities.
- Meanwhile, many conversations are happening between cities and King County regarding restoring transit service to pre-COVID levels. These conversations are ongoing.

SOUND TRANSIT

Response and Recovery

- Total system ridership dropped over 85% between February and April of 2020, then rebounded slightly and has remained relatively consistent since June
- Fares were restored on all buses and trains on July 1
- Some construction projects suspended early in 2020, all projects have since restarted

Budget Impacts and Service/Capital Reductions

- Ambitious capital program requires bonding, revenue loss, when combine with increased costs, even in a moderate recession means Sound Transit exceeds statutory debt limit
- Construction projects already under contract will continue, including Link to Redmond, Lynnwood & Federal Way
- ST3 Realignment process will develop scenarios to manage affordability (borrowing, revenue, cost, schedule)
- Realignment illustrative example, could solve the issue in a severe recession by delaying all projects five years
- Complete comprehensive ST3 Program Realignment with Sound Transit Board in July 2021

What Budget Changes Mean for Kirkland

- Regional Express 532 & 535 operating on reduced schedule, 544 and 541 service suspended
- NE 85th St Stride Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Inline Station and Interchange construction funding and design-build team procurement scheduled to move ahead with I-405/NE 132nd St Interchange project (notice to proceed July 2021), this has been delayed until completion of ST3 Program Realignment process
 - NE 85th St Interchange was scheduled to be complete in 2024
 - I-405 Stride BRT currently scheduled to open in 2025

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Response and Recovery

- Significant drop in travel (March, April) slowly rebounding
 - Vehicle traffic – dropped 45% average
 - Ferries ridership – dropped 75% average
 - Use of toll facilities – dropped 42-77%, drop larger and rebound slower for express toll lanes
- Most construction projects suspended early in 2020, all projects have since restarted
- Took actions to cut budget, including hiring freeze, suspended new consultant contracts, ferries on winter schedule

Budget Impacts and Service/Capital Reductions

- The Office of Financial Management estimated transportation revenue losses to the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic could total as much as \$100 million per month.
- 405/167 toll revenue forecasts have been reduced due to less utilization of the express toll lanes during 2020
- 2019 legislature authorized WSDOT to bond against 405/167 toll revenue, state has not bonded any toll revenue from express toll lane account yet
- Submitted Supplement Budget in October 2020 (through June 30, 2021) as well as the 2021-23 biennium budget proposal

What Budget Changes Mean for Kirkland

- I-405/NE 132nd St Interchange and I-405 - SR 522 Vicinity to SR 527 Express Toll Lanes Improvement Project continues to move forward at this time

Table 1. Detailed Metro Service Reductions for September 2020:

Route	September 2020 Service Change	Description	Pre-COVID weekly midday frequency
225	reduced service	Kenmore to Redmond Tech	30
230	full service	Bothell to Kirkland TC	30
231	full service	Woodinville P&R to Kirkland TC	30
239	full service	UW Bothell to Kirkland TC	30
250	reduced service	Bellevue - Kirkland – Redmond	15
255	reduced service	Totem Lake to UW	15
245	reduced service	Kirkland TC to Crossroads/ Factoria	15
DART 930	full service	DART - Kingsgate to Redmond	30
237	suspended	Woodinville P&R to Bellevue TC (only serves Totem Lk + Houghton Fwy Stations in Kirkland)	peak only on I-405 with 342
252	suspended	Kingsgate to DT Seattle (only serves Kingsgate P&R)	peak only on I-405 with 257
257	full service	Brickyard to DT Seattle (only serves Brickyard P&R)	peak only on I-405 with 252
311	full service	Woodinville to DT Seattle (only serves Brickyard P&R + Totem Lk Fwy St)	peak only on I-405
342	suspended	Shoreline to Renton (only serves Totem Lk + Houghton Fwy Stations)	peak only on I-405