

Memorandum

To: Transportation Commission

From: Brian Henry, East King County Lead, Service Planning, King County Metro Transit
Kimberly Scrivner, Transportation Planner, City of Kirkland

Date: October 22, 2021

Subject: East Link Connections

Staff Recommendation:

It is recommended that Transportation Commission receive a briefing and provide input on the King County Metro and Sound Transit led East Link Connections project.

Background:

East Link Connections is a coordinated, co-led process for improving transit connections throughout the Eastside as Link light rail service expands through 2024. The purpose of the project is to implement a coordinated regional transit network on the Eastside that gets people where they need and want to go.

This work builds on the North Eastside Mobility Project bus restructure that occurred in 2018-2019, which considered the coming of Link 2 Line in 2023-2024. Some routes from that project are not included in this current work and will see no changes. Others are included with small changes.

By 2024, Sound Transit will open 12 new light rail stations connecting downtown Seattle and the Eastside. In 2023, East Link, or the 2 Line, will connect to the existing alignment at Seattle's Chinatown/International District, and will expand to Judkins Park, across I-90 to Mercer Island and South Bellevue, through downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red area to Redmond Technology Station. In 2024, the Downtown Redmond Link Extension will add two more light rail stations to the 2 Line serving Marymoor Village near Marymoor Park in southeast Redmond, and the downtown Redmond residential and retail core. The project will deliver an updated mobility network that integrates with and complements Sound Transit's new Link light rail service.

Project goals:

1. Improve mobility for priority populations, as defined by Metro's Mobility Framework, including un(der)served populations
2. Equitably inform, engage, and empower current and potential customers
3. Deliver integrated service that responds to Link expansion
 - Minimize duplication of bus service with Link
 - Improve connections to Link
 - Be consistent with Metro Connects, and current and future mobility needs

Metro and Sound Transit convened a Mobility Board of individuals from the study area to provide input, set priorities, and help guide the changes. For the area around Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville and Bothell members developed the following top prioritized needs:

- Improve and add local connections
- More service on nights and weekends
- Ensure transfers are easy and seamless
- Preserve easy access to downtown Seattle

The [project Website](#) includes a survey instrument that allows review of impacted project routes including study area maps at different scales, and route maps/sheets providing change descriptions, frequency, and span of service. Routes not included on the Website have no proposed changes.

Study area routes in Kirkland included: 250, 245, 225, 930, 256 (252/257/311), 237, 542, 544, 545, 541

Key connections for Kirkland in the proposed network include:

- Routes 250 and 245 – frequent connections to Link
- Route 225 – local connection to Overlake from Kingsgate, Totem Lake via 132nd Ave NE
- New evening and Saturday service on Route 930 Totem Lake to Redmond
- Consolidate peak-service on I-405 and provide a new connection to South Lake Union and downtown Seattle
- ST Express Route 544 Redmond – S Kirkland Park and Ride – South Lake Union
- Continued ST Express Route 542 Redmond – Yarrow/Evergreen Point - UW

The presentation will cover the following topics:

- NEMP – context, relationship to E. Link
- E. Link goals/scope
- E. Link project area
- Link overview
- Engagement
- Kirkland area routes and associated Mobility Board priorities
- Kirkland connections in proposed network
- Timeline, next steps