Attachment A

King County METRO

RAPIDRIDE

K Line

K Line Locally Preferred Alternative Report

King County Metro Transit

April 2025

Contents

List of Figures

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BAT	Business Access and Transit
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
EB	East Bound
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
KC	King County
LPA	Locally Preferred Alternative
Metro	King County Metro Transit
NB	North Bound
K Line	RapidRide K Line
P.E.	Professional Engineer
Project	RapidRide K Line
SB	South Bound
ST	Sound Transit
ROW	Right-of-Way
RRFB	Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon
RTIS	Real-time Information System
I-405 Stride BRT	Sound Transit I-405 Stride Bus Rapid Transit service
TSP	Transit Signal Priority
WBS	West Bound
WBS	Work Breakdown Structure
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

1 Executive Summary

This Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Report describes King County Metro Transit's (Metro's) vision for new RapidRide bus rapid transit (BRT) service between the cities of Bellevue and Kirkland through a 16-mile corridor. The vision was developed as a collaboration between Metro, public agencies, and the community with planning completion in Early 2025. The future planned service, to be branded as RapidRide K Line, would serve as a major transit route connecting Totem Lake, Downtown Kirkland, South Kirkland Park-and-Ride, Downtown Bellevue, Bellevue College, and the Eastgate Park-and-Ride. In addition to connecting these regional and local centers, K Line implementation would also provide key transit connections to Sound Transit's Link Light Rail and BRT systems; as well as Metro's existing RapidRide B Line service.

The goals of the K Line Locally Preferred Alternative Report include:

- Document Metro's long-term vision for BRT service connecting Kirkland and Bellevue
- Summarize planning efforts completed to date
- Present project needs, benefits, investment costs, and collaboration

This K Line LPA report also presents how and why planning decisions were made, the public engagement efforts completed over the planning period and the LPA selection process.

Metro has established a holistic and comprehensive K Line vision considering a wide range of factors including community values, existing plans and policies, engagement findings, equity, local agency implementation support, technical findings, available budget, and project grant funding competitiveness. This vision was shared with the public and stakeholders as a draft LPA, including a community engagement process. Based on feedback from the community and local agency partners, the draft LPA has been refined. The cities of Kirkland and Bellevue provided formal letters of support in March 2025. King County Council is expected to adopt the LPA in June 2025, completing planning activities on the project.

King County Metro will begin design activities and prepare construction grant applications for this project upon King County Council adoption of the LPA, with a goal of constructing capital improvements and beginning service on the RapidRide K Line in 2030.

Planned project next steps include:

- Formal adoption of the LPA by King County Council in the summer of 2025.
- Federal construction grant application in the fall of 2025 via the Federal Transit Administration Small Start grant program
- Beginning design efforts in the summer of 2025.

2 Introduction

2.1 Description of the Proposed Project

RapidRide K Line will provide frequent, fast, reliable, efficient, and environmentally friendly bus service between the cities of Kirkland and Bellevue in east King County. By 2030, Metro plans to bring RapidRide K Line to the fast-growing communities between Totem Lake Transit Center in Kirkland, downtown Kirkland and Bellevue, and Eastgate Park-and-Ride in Bellevue. This 16-mile route connects riders to numerous other bus routes; RapidRide B Line; Sound Transit's future Stride S1 line; and Link light rail. See RapidRide K Line routing in Figure 2-1.

RapidRide brings stations with better passenger amenities, improves access to transit, and provides more frequent and reliable service. RapidRide investments include transit priority lanes, faster station boarding, more widely spaced stops, and signal upgrades.

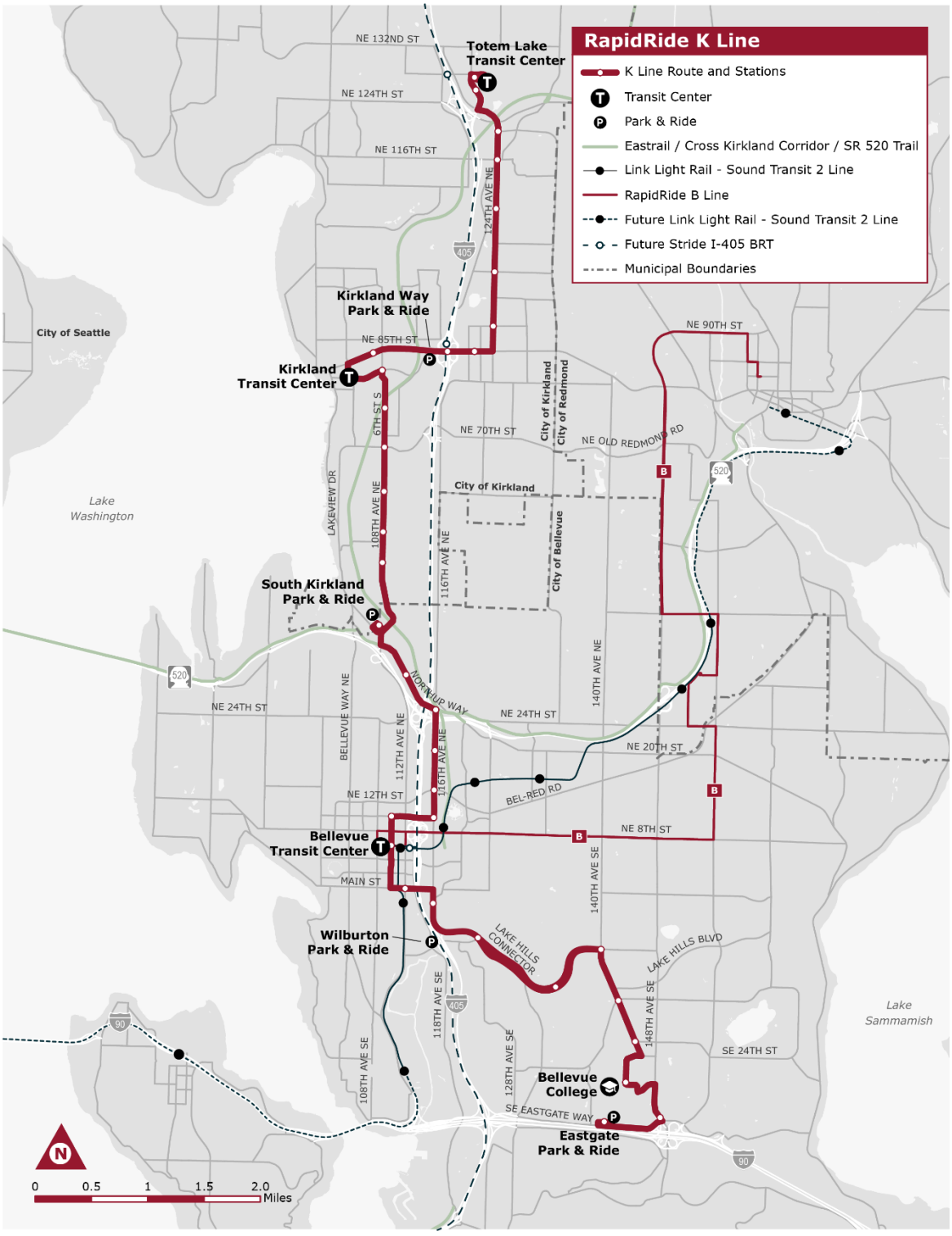
2.2 Purpose of this Report

This report describes the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the RapidRide K Line Project. The LPA is Metro's final step in project planning and defines the project vision. The RapidRide K Line Planning Team developed this LPA through a process that included strong public, stakeholder, and interjurisdictional outreach and engagement efforts.

This report describes the transit mode, route, planned station locations, and general operating characteristics of RapidRide K Line service. It also includes information on Metro's community engagement process during the RapidRide K Line planning phase.

Metro will use the LPA to seek federal funding for the project. Service is expected to begin in 2030.

Figure 2-1. RapidRide K Line route



RAPIDRIDE

K Line

2.3 RapidRide K Line Planning Timeline

In 2017, Metro's long-range plan and policy document, Metro Connects, established the vision for expanding the RapidRide network. Following the adoption of Metro Connects, the King County Council-approved Proviso P5 via Motion 14956, titled Implementation of New RapidRide Lines/Metro Connects RapidRide Expansion. It identified the RapidRide K Line as one of the first of the new generation of RapidRide lines to be enacted. In addition, in 2018, via Ordinance 18835, the King County Council adopted the 2019-20 Biennial Budget, including capital project 1134237 to implement the RapidRide K Line.

From 2019 through 2020, Metro advanced conceptual planning for RapidRide K Line in coordination with other projects evaluating transit service in Kirkland and Bellevue. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro paused planning on The RapidRide K Line until late 2021. In 2021, Metro published the RapidRide K Line Roadmap Report, documenting work completed prior to the project pause and outlining upcoming work planned for the RapidRide K Line. The King County bi-annual budget has included construction funding for the RapidRide K Line Project since 2023–2024.

Following project planning, Metro will transmit an Alignment Ordinance packet to King County Council for adoption in summer 2025. Metro plans to pursue funding needed to build the project through a Small Starts Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Metro will continue environmental review and preliminary design, final design, and construction between 2025 and 2030, with K Line revenue service planned to begin in 2030. Figure 2-2 shows the proposed timeline.

The RapidRide K Line is a key component of Metro's service improvement efforts in east King County.

Figure 2-2. RapidRide K Line corridor timeline

2.4 About RapidRide

RapidRide is Metro's highest level of investment in convenience, innovation, reliability, and service. RapidRide provides faster, more reliable service with transit priority lanes and special traffic signals timed for faster service. RapidRide is easy to use with all-door boarding and stations that are easier to access. The goals of the RapidRide K Line Project are illustrated in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3. RapidRide K Line project goals

Since the first RapidRide entered service in 2010, Metro's launched eight lines carrying approximately 18 million passengers in 2024 or 22 percent of all of Metro's annual ridership. This accounts for nearly 67,000 weekday rides, an approximately 70 percent increase in weekday ridership over the bus routes that served those same travel markets previously.

3 Project Purpose and Need

3.1 Purpose

Metro developed the purpose and need for RapidRide K Line in partnership with community and jurisdictional partners. The purpose of the RapidRide K Line project is to provide frequent, fast, reliable, efficient, and environmentally friendly bus service between the cities of Kirkland and Bellevue in east King County, connecting Totem Lake, downtown Kirkland, south Kirkland Park-and-Ride, downtown Bellevue, Bellevue College, and Eastgate Park-and-Ride. Providing more frequent, convenient, and higher quality transit service will attract more riders and move more people than traditional, local bus service.

3.2 Need

The need for improved transit service in the study area is related to the following conditions and desired outcomes:

1. **Increasing transit demand within the rapidly developing communities of Kirkland and Bellevue**

   Significant land use changes and job growth in downtown Bellevue, Totem Lake, and downtown Kirkland and areas of Bellevue east of I-405 continue to increase traffic congestion in the corridor. Currently, more than 84,000 people live within a half mile of the corridor and more than 237,000 people work there. These numbers are expected to increase with 17 percent more households and 13 percent more jobs by 2030. Increased corridor travel and greater density lends itself to greater transit demand, which could be served more

efficiently by RapidRide. Significant segments of the corridor are also identified in Metro's 2024 System Evaluation as needing additional transit service to meet service level targets.

2. Existing transit travel times and unreliable performance

Existing transit service in the corridor includes local bus routes with high levels of ridership which are performing below Metro targets for on-time performance. For example, in 2023 local service routes on the K Line corridor were late over 17 percent of their trips, which is still within the target of 80% on-time performance. However, weekend performance for several local service routes on the corridor were late arriving around 25 percent of the time.

Reliability and transit travel speeds decrease significantly during times of peak transit demand and peak congestion. For example, transit travel time increased by over 50 percent between downtown Bellevue and Bellevue College, 60 percent between the south Kirkland Park-and-Ride and downtown Bellevue and 60 percent between the Village at Totem Lake and NE 85th during peak transit ridership usage.

Implementing RapidRide K Line will provide faster, more frequent, and more reliable transit in Kirkland and Bellevue through improved bus stations with greater spacing, transit signal priority, level boarding at key locations, and transit priority lanes.

3. Providing regional transportation connectivity

Large portions of the study area do not have access to high-speed, reliable transit service such as Metro's current RapidRide routes and Sound Transit's Link light rail lines. While Sound Transit will add two new high-capacity transit corridors along I-90 and I-405, riders within the K Line corridor need fast and reliable connections to these regional routes.

- East Link light rail will use the I-90 bridge to provide frequent rail transit between Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond starting in 2025, increasing demand for transfers from bus to light rail at Bellevue Transit Center. The K Line will serve as a reliable feeder for people connecting to the light rail system.
- The K Line will run primarily in a north-south direction, parallel to the I-405 freeway. I-405 is a heavily congested highway corridor that serves as a regional bypass for long-haul vehicles and trucks traveling through the Puget Sound region and a key access route for people traveling to jobs and services in east King County. Sound Transit is developing a highway BRT route in the I-405 corridor, I-405 Stride BRT; the K Line will provide important connections from local neighborhoods to this high-capacity line.

Many existing bus stops within this corridor lack safe, well-lit pathways for people walking, biking, and rolling to access transit, especially outside the urban core. These conditions limit the overall usefulness and attractiveness of transit to potential and existing riders. The RapidRide K Line will provide transit service and passenger comfort along this corridor, similar to areas already served by RapidRide and Sound Transit. K Line stations will include safe crossing locations for both bicycle and pedestrian access. These improvements will help riders safely access the K Line and will promote walking and cycling along the corridor.

4. **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions**

   Current RapidRide lines have proven highly successful in increasing transit ridership in congested corridors; and improving transit reliability. RapidRide K Line will provide an attractive alternative to driving alone and draw new riders, better serving people who don't drive in addition to taking cars off congested roads and highways.

3.3 Goals

- The K Line project goals include:
- Improving transit connections by linking jobs and housing to the expanding regional high-capacity transit network, including Sound Transit Link light rail, Stride S1 line, and RapidRide B line.
- Improving transit rider experience through increased service, faster and more reliable transit travel times, and upgraded station passenger amenities.
- Improving access to major employment and education centers, regional transportation systems, and housing community assets.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by increasing transit ridership.
- Implementing the project through a funding partnership with FTA via the Small Starts Grant program.

4 Locally Preferred Alternative

4.1 Mode

Consistent with the past planning efforts and policy direction outlined in Metro Connects, the recommended mode for the K Line corridor is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The recommendation of BRT as the preferred technology mode stems from its applicability and adaptability to a variety of urban and suburban environments; its quick deployment capability; and its cost-effectiveness. Transit service will be provided by distinct RapidRide buses, similar to those shown on Figure 4.1, and may also be served by 40' RapidRide buses. RapidRide vehicles include a suite of passenger amenities similar to all Metro buses, as shown on Figure 4.2.

Figure 4-1. Typical RapidRide bus

Figure 4-2. RapidRide vehicle passenger amenities

4.2 Route

The 16-mile RapidRide K Line route will serve the east King County cities of Kirkland and Bellevue, providing a north-to-south connection parallel to the I-405 freeway. The K Line is designed to connect multiple centers of demand and points of transfer to the regional transit system and other transportation services. The downtown cores of both cities will be served, providing excellent connections at the Kirkland (bus only) and Bellevue (bus and light rail) transit centers. K Line will also serve the Totem Lake Transit Center and major park-and-ride facilities in south Kirkland and Eastgate. It will provide key connections to the planned Sound Transit Stride BRT and regional light rail service. The recommended RapidRide K Line route is displayed in Figure 4-3.

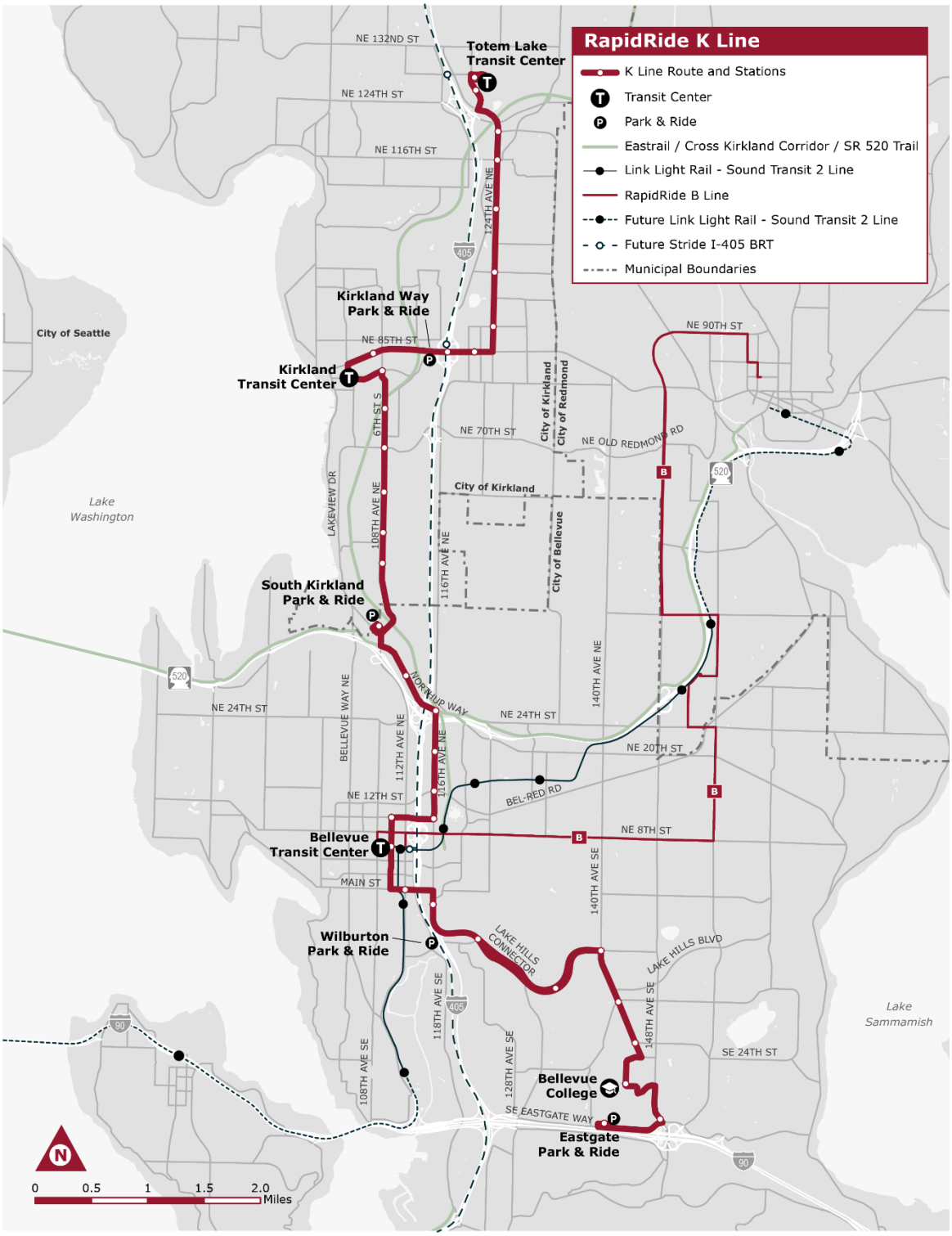
4.2.1 City of Kirkland

The RapidRide K Line begins and ends service at the Totem Lake Transit Center. Routing is planed via 120th Avenue NE, turning onto 124th Avenue NE, and continues south until NE 85th Street, where it turns west, connecting to ST BRT service. K Line then runs through the Kirkland Transit Center and heads south along 6th Street S. Where 6th Street S becomes 108th Avenue NE, the bus turns into the south Kirkland Park-and-Ride.

4.2.2 City of Bellevue

After K Line exits south Kirkland Park-and-Ride, it heads southeast along Northup Way. The bus turns right onto 116th Avenue NE and continues south until NE 10th Street, where it heads west. The K Line then runs through downtown Bellevue, traveling south along 110th Avenue NE to Main Street where it travels east over I-405 to 116th Avenue SE. The bus then turns south along 116th Avenue SE as the roadway becomes Lake Hills Connector. K Line continues along Lake Hills Connector until it heads southeast along 140th Avenue SE and 145th Place SE. It then runs through Bellevue College and heads south toward I-90 via 148th Avenue SE, which becomes 150th Avenue SE. The bus turns right on SE Eastgate Way, where it ends at the Eastgate Park-and-Ride.

Figure 4-3. Recommended RapidRide K Line route



4.3 Service Plan

K Line is expected to operate at service levels in alignment with King County Metro's RapidRide standards. Span of service is planned for 4:30 AM to 12:30 AM on weekdays and 5:30 AM to 12:30 AM on weekends, falling within 30 minutes of Sound Transit 2 Line's weekday and weekend start and end of service. Planned service levels are shown in Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4. RapidRide K Line transit headway (in minutes)

Day of Week	Peak 6a-9a/3p-7p	Off-Peak 9a-3p	Evening 7p-10p	Late Evening 10p-12:30p
Monday-Friday	10	15	15	30
Saturday/Sunday	15	15	15	30

With an estimated round trip travel time of 139 minutes and 28 minutes for layover and recovery, K Line's cycle time will be approximately 167 minutes. The K Line will require 17 buses in operation. An additional four buses may be needed to serve as spares, for a total of 21 vehicles.

Layover will occur at both ends of the line at Totem Lake Transit Center and at the Eastgate Park-and-Ride. Both locations have comfort station (restroom) facilities for operators.

4.4 Proposed Corridor Improvements

An overview of the proposed corridor improvements is shown in Figure 4-5 to Figure 4-9. Commentary and additional details follow the figures.

Figure 4-5. K Line Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) transit improvements: Segment A

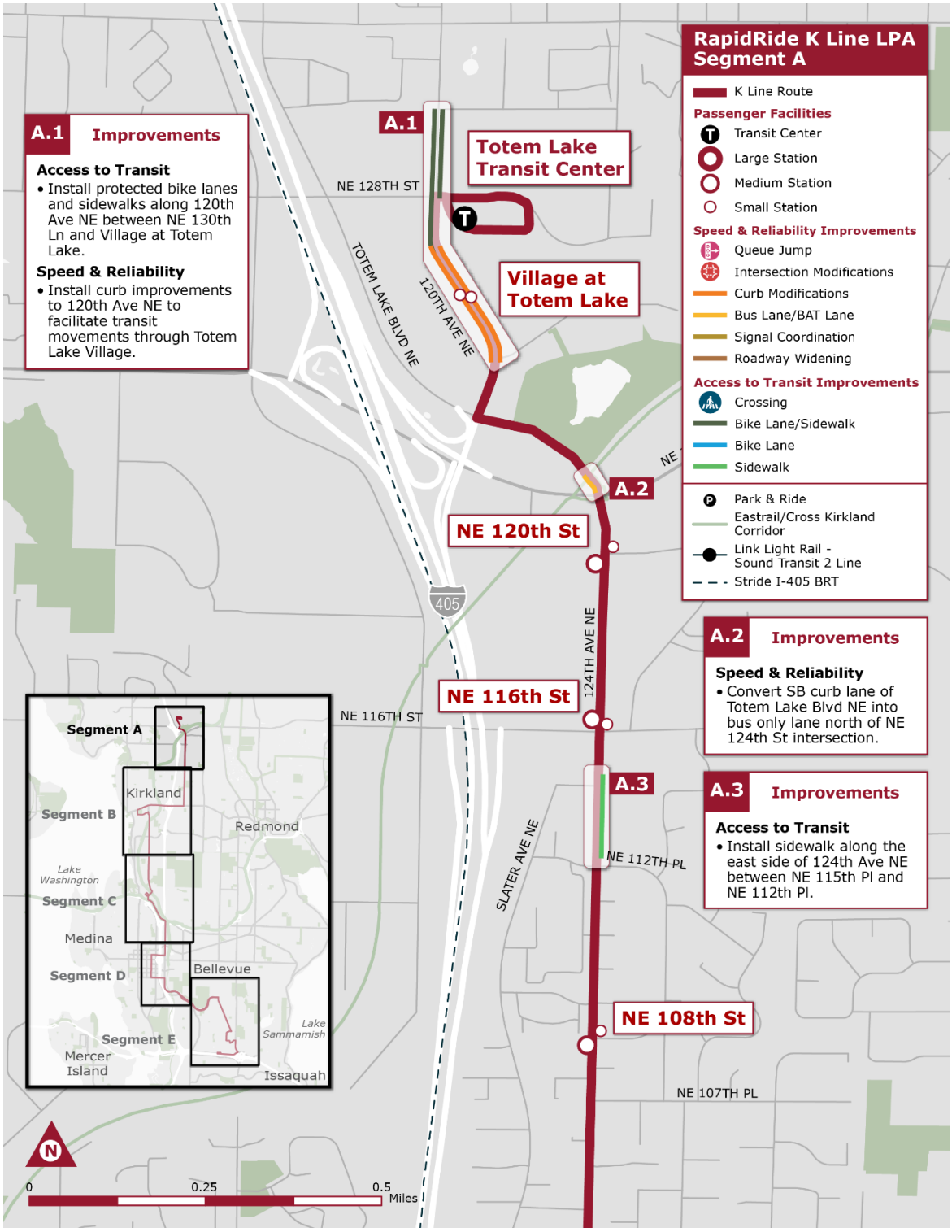


Figure 4-6. K Line LPA transit improvements: Segment B

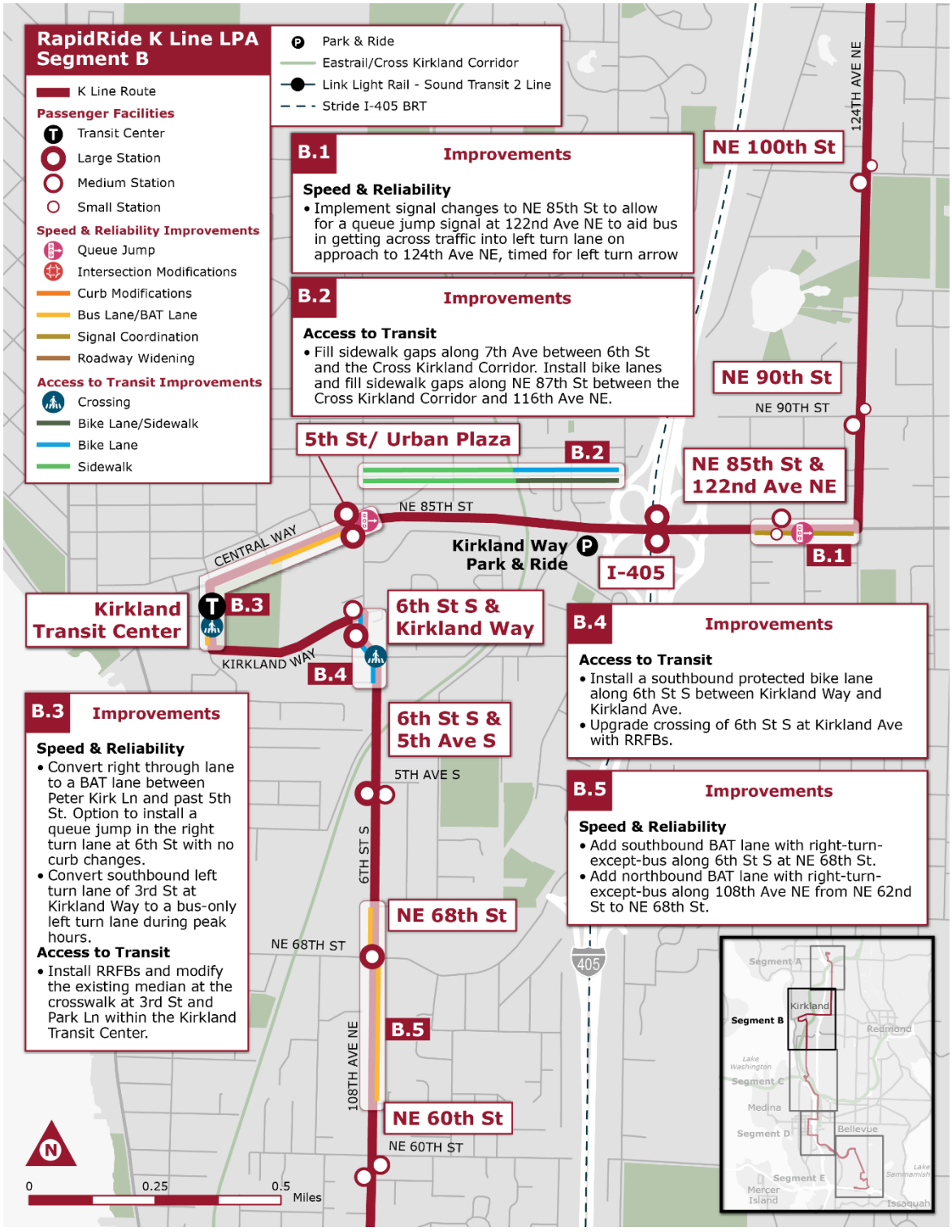


Figure 4-7. K Line LPA transit improvements: Segment C

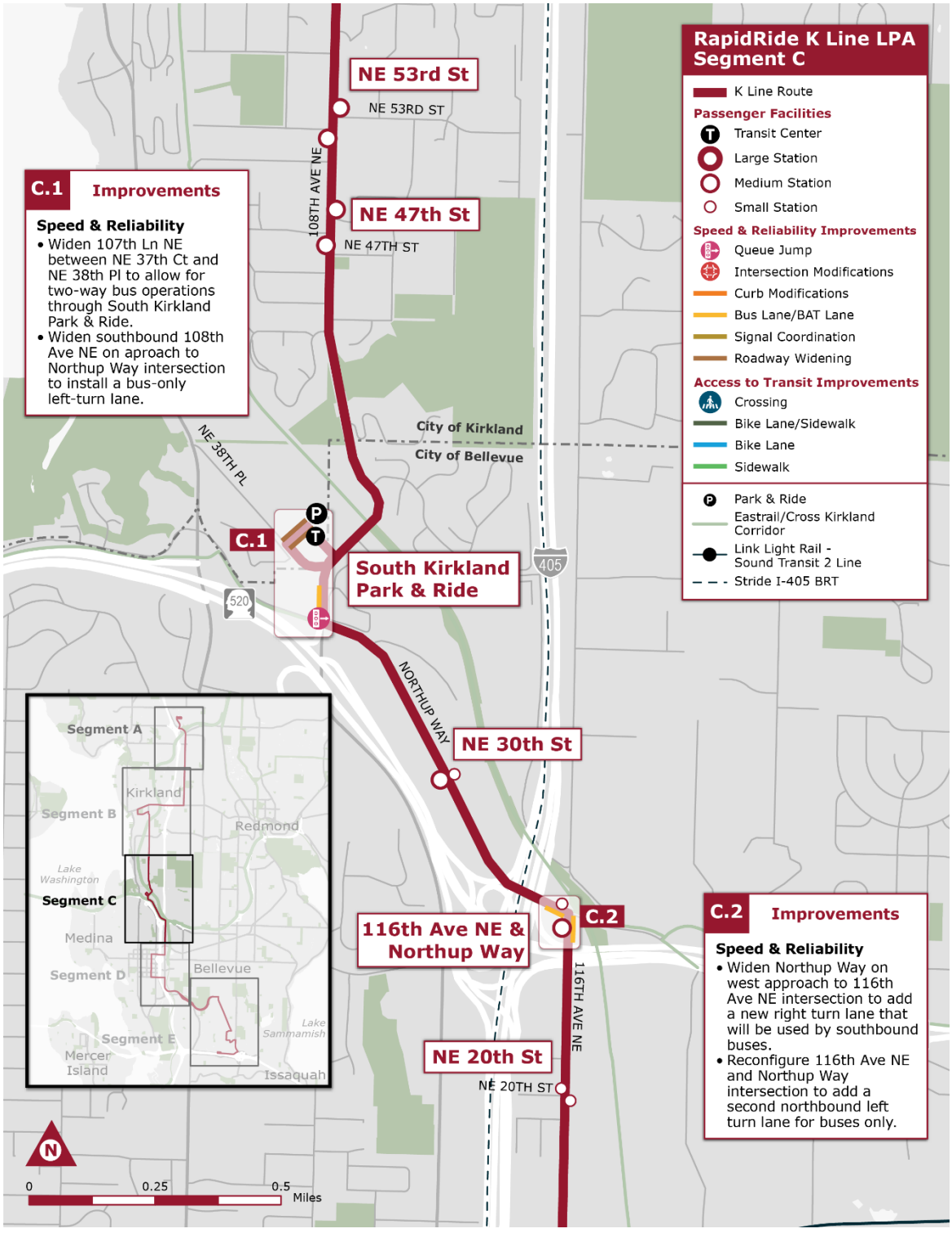


Figure 4-8. K Line LPA transit improvements: Segment D

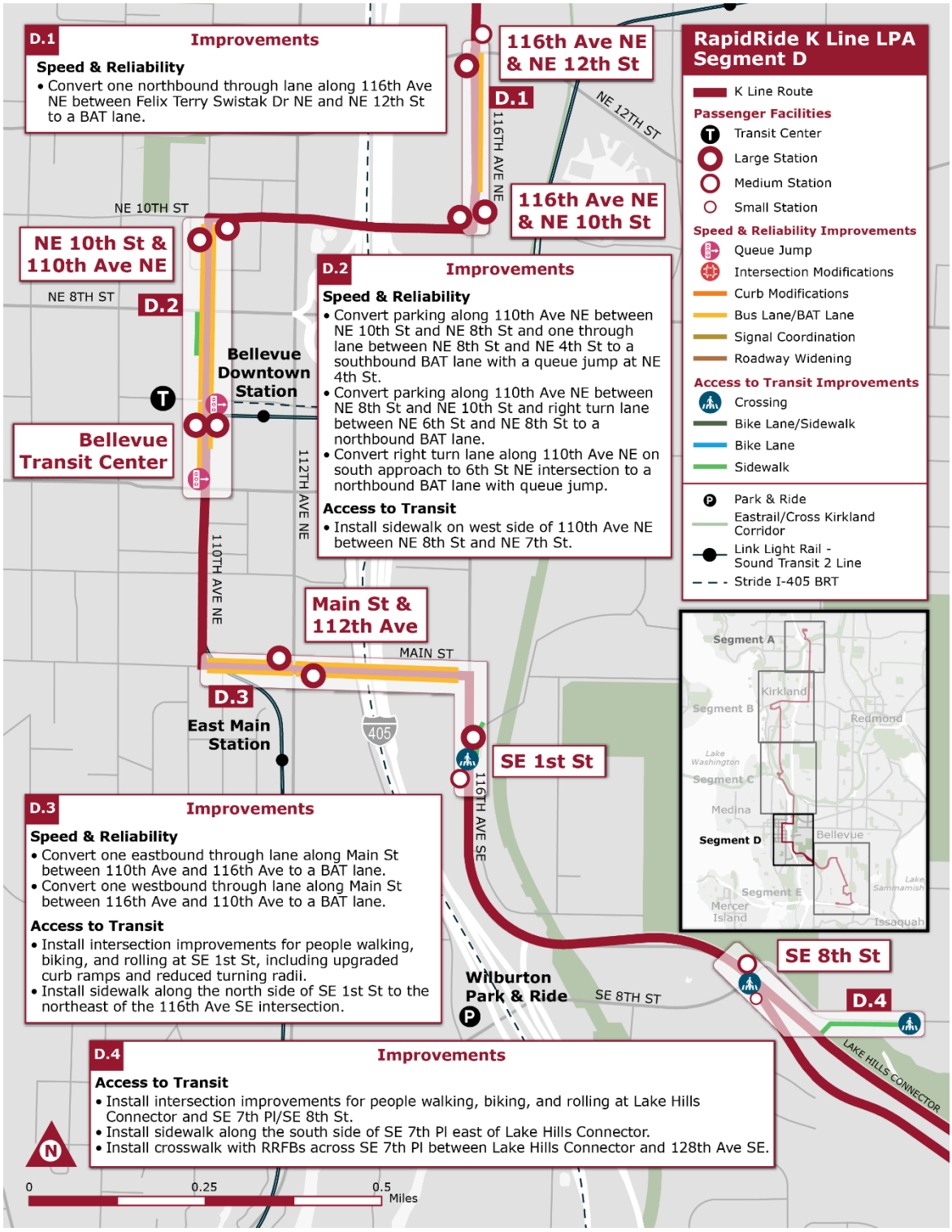
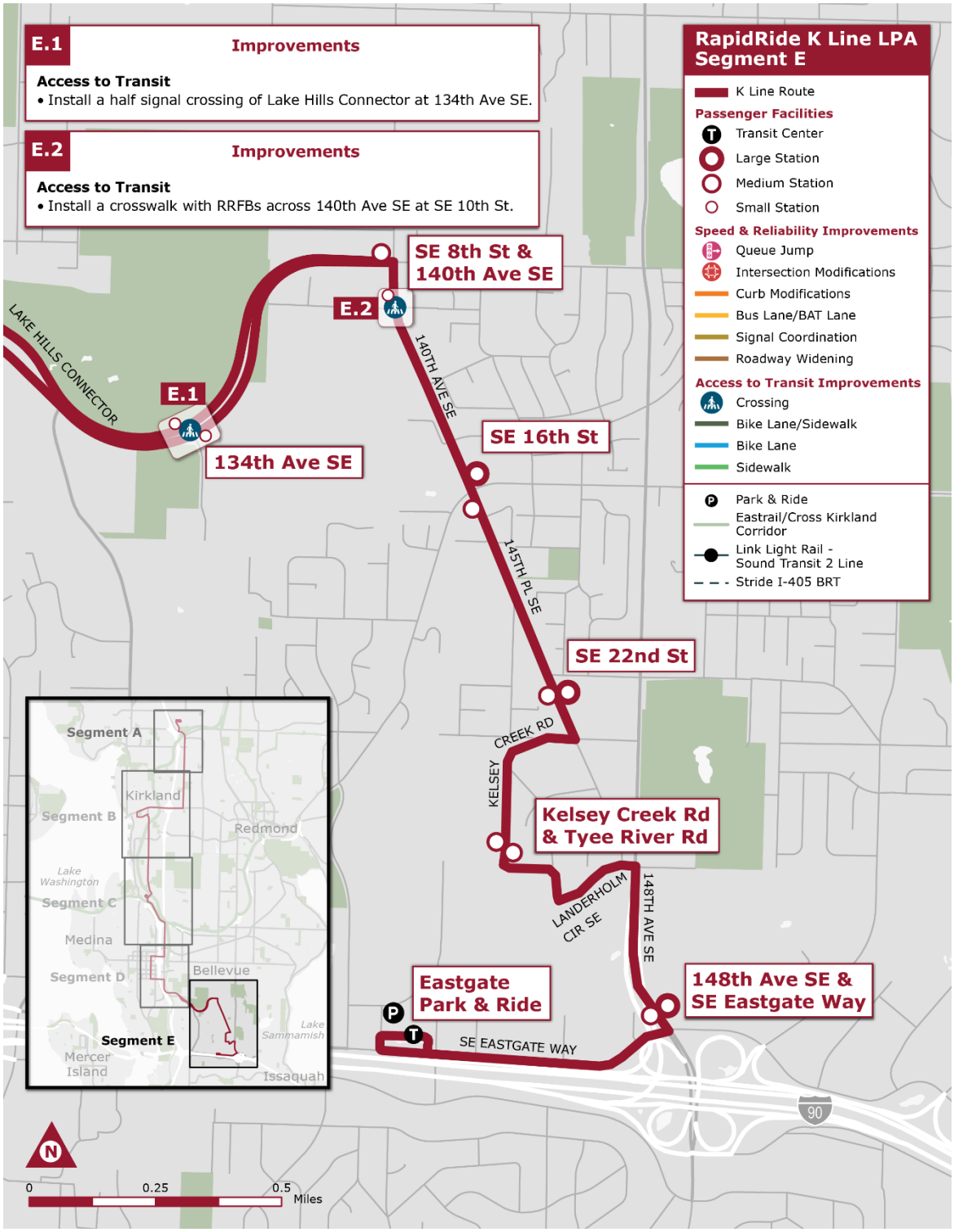


Figure 4-9. K Line LPA transit improvements: Segment E



4.4.1 Stations

RapidRide K line is proposed to have 35 station pairs adding up to 16 new stations and upgrading or consolidating another 50 stops/stations, which is the terminology used by the RapidRide Program. A total of 35 general station pair locations are proposed within the corridor: 18 locations in Kirkland and 17 in Bellevue. This includes stations at five transit hubs (Totem Lake Transit Center, Kirkland Transit Center, south Kirkland Park-and-Ride, Bellevue Transit Center, and Eastgate Park-and-Ride) and stations on-street along the corridor. General station areas located on-street include two station platforms (one in each direction) while station areas in transit centers may include one shared station platform.

Stations typically provide transit service to northbound and southbound riders at separate bus stops near each other. The project is proposing construction of new passenger facilities for the majority of station locations. Major investments at existing transit centers and park-and-rides are not proposed because existing passenger facilities meet RapidRide standards. Minor investments are planned at these locations, such as RapidRide branding and service flags. Further coordination is anticipated for passenger facilities with unique urban design requirements, such as within the Village at Totem Lake and near the Bellevue Transit Center. Compared to Metro's local service routes, RapidRide stations feature enhanced passenger amenities, as shown in Figure 4-10.

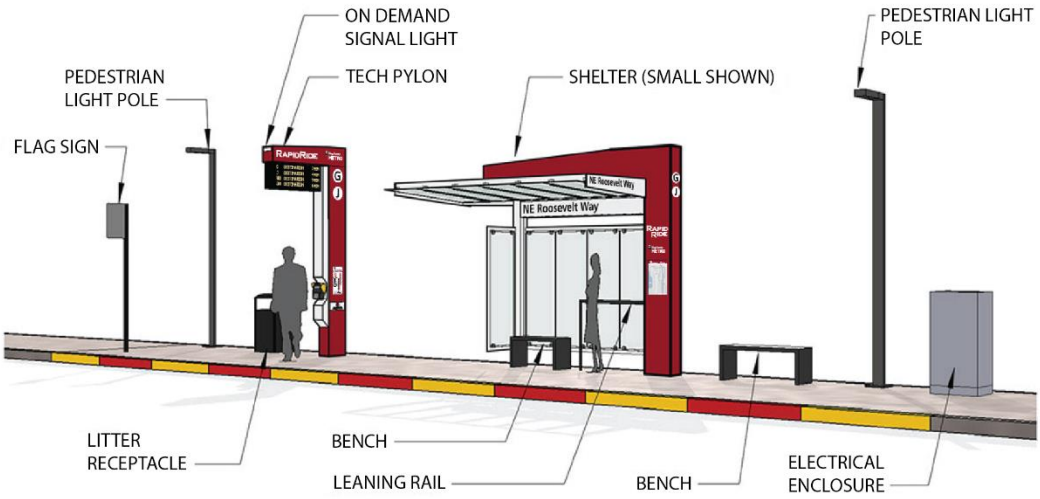
Figure 4-10. RapidRide station passenger amenities

Figure 4-11 illustrates a typical RapidRide station. RapidRide Standards direct development of stations using Metro's RapidRide Kit of Parts, which includes all typical station elements and facilitates a modular approach to station design. RapidRide stations include unique signage that reinforces the RapidRide brand, provides information to passengers, and distinguishes the stations from standard bus stops. Station areas can include weather-screening shelters and benches and are designed for all-door vehicle boarding and alighting. Additionally, where needed and feasible, Metro aims to provide better lighting, trash and recycling receptacles, real-time arrival information signage. Metro will pursue opportunities for partnership with City of Kirkland and City of Bellevue to provide sidewalk and street crossing enhancements for safety and access.

Several streets on the K Line alignment have on-street bicycle facilities and/or have planned facilities. For these locations, the project team considered traffic volume, right-of-way space, and land use density to determine the preferred station/bikeway treatment to minimize conflicts between buses, passengers, and people biking. Plans include in-lane cycle track and transit boarding island treatments at several K Line stations.

While the RapidRide Kit of Parts includes all elements of a typical RapidRide station, each station will have a final layout to meet site context and urban design considerations while maintaining minimum standards for RapidRide station elements. Metro plans further discussion with Bellevue and Kirkland on station amenities to be provided during future design efforts.

Figure 4-11. Typical RapidRide station



4.4.2 Speed and Reliability Improvements

The K Line project proposing speed and reliability improvements at 19 locations, as noted in Figure 4-13. The locations for these improvements are presented in Figure 4-5 through Figure 4-9. The improvements include bus and BAT lanes, queue jumps, and other channelization changes to provide benefits to transit operations along the route at locations that see significant transit service delays and operational challenges. The improvements have been developed in partnership with local agency partners and evaluated in detail for implementation potential, including extensive traffic modeling efforts. Local agency partners have reviewed the improvements proposed for delivery by the K Line project. Metro will continue to pursue opportunities for partnership with City of Kirkland and City of Bellevue to provide identified speed and reliability improvements.

King County Metro's RapidRide program goal is to seek a 15 to 30 percent travel time reduction when implementing new lines, with a focus on delay reduction in high ridership areas. The K Line improvements are expected to reduce roundtrip travel times by approximately 25 percent

when compared to running a local transit service route on the same corridor without these improvements during the PM peak. A summary of these travel time reductions can be seen in Figure 4-12. As the design of the RapidRide K Line project continues, the project team will work with jurisdiction partners to further refine the recommended improvements.

Figure 4-12. K Line estimated travel time benefits (minutes)

Travel Time Savings Category	Bellevue	Kirkland	Total
Capital improvements	-10.0	-8.7	-18.7
Transit Signal Priority implementation	-4.3	-3.2	-7.5
Station spacing	-9.2	-10.4	-19.6
Total	**-23.5**	**-22.2**	**-45.7**

Note: Values represent roundtrip travel time reduction in the PM peak.

Figure 4-13. K Line speed and reliability improvements

Location of Speed and Reliability Improvement	Description
Kirkland 120th Avenue NE through Village at Totem Lake	Curbing adjustments to bring 120th Avenue NE up to standards to support bus operations
Kirkland Totem Lake Blvd at NE 124th Street (SB)	Convert curb lane into bus-only approach lane
Kirkland NE 85th St from 122nd Ave to 124th Avenue NE (EB)	Signal coordination
Kirkland Central Way from 4th to 5th Street with queue jump at 6th Street (EB)	Convert right through lane to BAT lane, with queue jump signal in right turn lane at 6th Street
Kirkland 3rd Street at Kirkland Ave (SB)	Convert left turn lane to bus only; right turn lane becomes through/right
Kirkland 6th Street S from 9th Street S to NE 68th Street (SB)	Add BAT lane
Kirkland 108th Avenue NE from north of NE 62nd Street to NE 68th Street (NB)	Add BAT lane
Kirkland (South Kirkland Park and Ride Area) 107th Lane NE from NE 38th Place to NE 37th Court	Widen roadway to allow for two-way bus operations.
Bellevue 108th Avenue NE at Northup Way (SB)	Add left turn from right lane (with widening)

Bellevue Northup Way at 116th Avenue NE (EB)	Add right turn lane
Bellevue 116th Avenue NE at Northup Way (NB)	Add dedicated bus left turn lane with receiving lane
Bellevue 116th Avenue NE (NB) from Felix Terry Swistak to NE 12th Street	Convert right lane to BAT lane
Bellevue 110th Avenue NE (NB) from NE 6th to 10th	Convert parking lane and outside travel lane to BAT lane
Bellevue 110th Avenue NE (SB) from NE 10th to 6th	Convert parking lane and outside travel lane to BAT lane
Bellevue Main Street (EB) from 110th to 112th Avenue NE	Convert right lane to BAT lane
Bellevue Main Street (WB) from 112th to 110th Avenue NE	Convert right lane to BAT lane
Bellevue Main Street (EB) from 112th Avenue to 116th Avenue NE	Convert right lane to BAT lane
Bellevue Main Street (WB) from 116th to 112th Avenue NE	Convert right lane to BAT lane
Bellevue 110th Avenue NE and NE 6th Street	NB queue jump
Bellevue 110th Avenue NE and NE 4th Street	SB BAT lane and queue jump

4.4.3 Access to Transit Improvements

"Access to transit" refers to the various ways people get to transit service. All transit riders start and end their trip on foot or with a mobility device. For this reason, Metro includes access to transit improvements as part of each RapidRide project. As noted in Figure 4-14, Metro is developing access to transit improvements at several locations. These improvements are intended to enhance safety and convenience to walk, roll, or bike to the K Line. These improvements were selected for inclusion in the overall project based on a technical ranking evaluation, jurisdictional input, available budget, equity considerations, and community input. As the design of the RapidRide K Line project continues, the project team will work with jurisdiction partners to further refine the recommended access to transit improvements.

Figure 4-14. Access to transit improvements

Location and Improvement	Description
Kirkland 120th Avenue NE between NE 130th Lane and Totem Lake Village - protected bike lane and sidewalks	Reconstruct sidewalks and add raised protected bike lanes on 120th Avenue NE from NE 130th Lane to Totem Lake Village for access to Totem Lake Transit Center.
Kirkland 124th Avenue NE between NE 115th Place and NE 112th Place – sidewalk improvements	Reconstruct the east side of 124th Avenue NE to add sidewalks connecting to the future 124th Avenue NE and NE 116th Street K Line station.
Kirkland 7th Ave/NE 87th Street between 6th Street and 116th Avenue NE – bike lanes and sidewalk improvements	Fill sidewalk gaps along 7th Avenue/NE 87th Street between 6th Street and 116th Avenue NE. Install buffered bike lanes on 7th Avenue/NE 87th Street between the Cross Kirkland Corridor and 116th Avenue NE,
Kirkland 3rd Street and Park Lane – crossing improvement	Install RRFBs and modify the existing median at the crosswalk at 3rd Street and Park Lane within the Kirkland Transit Center.
Kirkland 6th Street S between Kirkland Way and 1st Avenue S – bike and crossing improvements	Upgrade crossing across 6th Street S at Kirkland Avenue with RRFBs to create a safer crossing for people walking and biking. Install southbound protected bike lanes between Kirkland Way and Kirkland Avenue.
Bellevue 110th Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and NE 7th Street – sidewalk improvements	Install sidewalk on west side of 110th Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and NE 7th Street.
Bellevue 116th Avenue SE and SE 1st Street – crossings and sidewalk	Install bicycle and pedestrian improvements at the 116th Avenue SE and SE 1st Street intersection, including upgraded curb ramps and reduced turning radii. Install sidewalk along the north side of SE 1st Street east of the intersection.
Bellevue SE 7th Place between Lake Hills Connector and SE 8th Street station and 128th Avenue SE – sidewalk improvements	Install sidewalk along one side of SE 7th Place connecting to existing residential sidewalk. Install a crossing of SE 7th Place with RRFBs.
Bellevue Lake Hills Connector and SE 7th Place/SE 8th Street – crossing improvement	Install bicycle and pedestrian improvements at the Lake Hills Connector and SE 7th Place/SE 8th Street intersection.

Bellevue Lake Hills Connector and 134th Avenue SE – crossing improvement	Improve pedestrian crossing across Lake Hills Connector at 134th Avenue SE to include a half signal, sidewalks, and ADA improvements to connect the future northbound and southbound K Line stations to existing pedestrian facilities.
Bellevue 140th Avenue SE and SE 10th Street – crossing improvement	Improve crossing in the vicinity of SE 10th Street with RRFBs and median refuge island to improve pedestrian visibility and connectivity. Install cross bike markings across SE 10th Street. Install curb extensions and curb ramps at all corners.

4.4.4 Communication System Investments

The K Line project is proposing investments in communication systems and Intelligent Transportation Systems to improve rider experience and transit system performance.

Proposed Transit Signal Priority (TSP) Investments

TSP is proposed for implementation at 42 signalized intersections in the corridor. Metro has been developing a Next Generation (NextGen) TSP system to replace the legacy TSP system and to be deployed on new RapidRide corridors.

TSP Implementation at Kirkland Signalized Intersections

The K Line LPA includes project support for NextGen TSP system implementation at 19 signalized intersections within the city of Kirkland, along with upgrades to existing signal traffic controllers and associated central management system for all signalized intersections along the corridor to maximize the benefits of TSP for the K Line. The project also includes installation, setup, and licensing for LYT to provide NextGen TSP functionality at City of Kirkland intersections, and budget for Metro to lead in the development of TSP timings. Metro understands the City of Kirkland is interested in working with Metro to implement TSP within the city, including transit service provided by other KCM routes.

TSP Implementation at Bellevue Signalized Intersections

The City of Bellevue has been implementing NextGen TSP system within the city of Bellevue on the B Line RapidRide corridor and will lead the implementation of NextGen TSP at an additional 22 intersections on the K Line alignment. Within Bellevue, the NextGen TSP system will be implemented for all signalized intersections on the K Line corridor outside of downtown Bellevue. Within downtown, TSP will only be installed at proposed queue jumps locations to provide advanced transit detection for the queue jump phase. The K Line project will include funding for the City of Bellevue to develop TSP signal timings and licensing fees for each signalized intersection within Bellevue.

TSP Implementation at WSDOT Signalized Intersections

The K Line project will include development of TSP timings and installation and LYT intersection setup and licensing fees for the one signalized intersection on the K Line corridor operated by WSDOT.

Proposed Communication System Investments at Stations

The K Line project proposes communication systems investments at all future K Line stations in alignment with current King County Metro RapidRide standards. The K Line station conceptual design assumes communication system investments including:

- Tech Pylon with real-time information signs (RTIS) and one-regional-card-for-all (ORCA) standalone fare transaction processor (SAFTP) readers at transit centers (4) and large ridership station platforms (7) that meet ridership thresholders for raised platform treatments.
- Tech Pylon with RTIS at 14 large and 24 medium station platforms.
- Solar 13-inch RTIS installations at 17 small station platforms.

5 Decision Process

King County Metro selected the K Line Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) after completing:

- Multiple years of planning efforts and local agency collaboration.
- Three rounds of community engagement.
- Extensive stakeholder engagement.
- Project implementation and funding review.
- Environmental screening.
- Equity evaluation.

Material below highlights activities that supported the LPA decision-making process.

5.1 Community Engagement

Engagement with the people who live, work, and visit along the K Line corridor is critical in delivering a project that meets the needs and addresses the concerns of the community. King County Metro is leading an inclusive and equitable engagement process with a goal of meeting community priorities. Feedback received from the community has directly influenced the K Line planning process, including recommended investments, routing decisions, and station locations. Metro conducted three phases of community engagement during the project's planning phase:

- **Phase 1:** Needs and Priorities Assessment (Fall 2019)
- **Phase 2:** Conceptual Planning (Summer 2024)
- **Phase 3:** Draft LPA Engagement (Winter 2025)

5.1.1 Phase 1: Needs and Priorities Assessment

Between October and December 2019, Metro engaged Eastside communities to determine needs and priorities for RapidRide service between Kirkland and Bellevue. The project team gathered feedback from community-based organizations (CBOs), businesses, and community members on their current transit use, how and where they need to travel, and proposed routing through Kirkland and Bellevue.

The **key goals** in the needs and priorities assessment engagement phase were:

- Select route options that reflect the needs of the community.
- Conduct and document an intentional, inclusive, and equitable community engagement process.
- Ensure CBOs, large employers, and community members are aware of RapidRide and understand how RapidRide will impact and benefit them.
- Establish and nurture positive relationships between Metro and community organizations, businesses, cities, and community members in Kirkland and Bellevue.

Phase 1 Approach

Phase 1 of Metro's initial community engagement efforts consciously built on the relationships and communication approaches used during the North Eastside Mobility Project (NEMP) engagement process, which occurred in the late 2010 and focused on long term integrated mobility planning for east lake Washington Communities.

To hear from communities historically underrepresented in transit planning, the project team led an inclusive engagement campaign. The team interviewed CBOs, businesses, service providers, and other partners; held in-person engagement events, such as briefings, tabling, and transit center and onboard bus outreach; and conducted an online survey. The team translated materials and the survey into the languages most spoken in the area: Spanish and simplified Chinese. Key Phase 1 community engagement metrics are shown in Figure 5-1.

What We Heard

The project team received valuable feedback about the communities' needs and priorities for future transit service in Kirkland, Bellevue, and surrounding areas during Phase 1 of engagement.

Figure 5-1. Key Phase 1 Community Engagement metrics

Community member priorities

- Transit that will get them where they need to go.
- Service that will ensure improved speed of travel.
- Certainty that the bus will be there when they need it.

Existing Route 255 service

- Many transit riders expressed concerns about planned changes to Route 255 expected in March 2020 and the resulting lack of direct connections to downtown Seattle.
- People unfamiliar with using light rail expressed concern about the process of transferring from the bus to light rail at the University of Washington station.
- Some Route 255 riders expressed concern that the faster, more reliable service promised by RapidRide would be negated by the additional time it would take them to transfer to light rail or other transit modes.

RapidRide K Line Station Locations, Amenities, and Accessibility

- Some people said Metro needs to better serve people with mobility, vision, hearing, or other challenges.
- Community members stressed the importance of safety at stations, including lighting and crosswalks, as well as sidewalks leading to stations.
- Community members prioritized locating bus stations near community resources, such as medical centers, community centers, and grocery and shopping locations.

Barriers to Transit Use

- Difficulty getting to and from the bus stop can make it hard for people to use transit.
- People are less likely to rely on buses when they come infrequently.
- People are unlikely to use transit if it does not serve the places they want to go.
- People are less likely to use transit when it takes significantly longer than other transportation methods.

How Feedback Shaped the Project

- K Line routing within Bellevue and Kirkland, including bus pathways and termini locations.
- K Line station locations, speed and reliability treatments, and access to transit improvements.
- Future engagement planning.

The feedback Metro collected during Phase 1 helped inform how and where the project team sought to engage with community members and groups as planning efforts advanced. Throughout this project, the team intentionally sought to hear from people and groups who have been historically underrepresented or overlooked in transportation planning. The team continued to focus engagement efforts on meeting people where they are, hosting events in the community, partnering with CBOs, attending regularly scheduled meetings, and engaging people in the languages they prefer to use.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Conceptual Planning

During the summer of 2024, Metro executed Phase 2 of community engagement, which reintroduced the project and gathered feedback on community priorities and plans for RapidRide K Line, which Metro developed in partnership with local agencies to address project and agency goals.

Specific areas of conversation included:

- Proposed RapidRide K Line station locations.
- Priorities and barriers to accessing transit, to inform projects to make it easier for people who walk, roll, and bike to get to the station.
- Priorities for people who travel in the area, to inform roadway improvements to make the bus faster and more reliable.
- Additional ways to share information and gather input from Eastside communities.

The **key goals** for Phase 2 of RapidRide K Line community engagement were to:

- Reengage key partners and community members on the RapidRide K Line project.
- Gather input on proposed RapidRide K Line plans to help shape the draft LPA, including:
    - Station locations
    - Changes to make the bus faster and more reliable
    - Changes to make the transit service easier to access
    - Investment priorities

Phase 2 Approach

In this phase, Metro reintroduced the project and gathered feedback on community priorities and the RapidRide K Line project vision. Metro developed the project vision in partnership with local agencies and addressed project and agency goals. Specific areas for conversation included:

- Proposed RapidRide K Line station locations.
- Priorities and barriers to accessing transit.
- Priorities for people who travel in the area, to inform roadway improvements, which make the bus faster and more reliable.
- Additional ways to share information and gather input from Eastside communities.

Phase 2 community engagement efforts included:

- Postcards to people living and working within half a mile of the project area.
- Letters to property owners within a half mile of the proposed K Line route who may have property use changes near the right-of-way due to K Line project construction.
- Online survey.
- Nine tabling events and two street team events.

- Two virtual meetings.
- In-person and virtual briefings with CBOs, neighborhood groups, and employers.
- Paid advertisements in local and culturally relevant media.
- Posting information on RapidRide K Line website, social media, and Metro Matters blog.
- Rider alerts at high-ridership bus stops.
- Emails and e-newsletters to community partners and transit riders.
- Partnering with Cities of Bellevue and Kirkland.
- Multilingual communication in six languages (English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese).

What We Heard

The project team received valuable feedback about the communities' needs and priorities for future transit service in Kirkland, Bellevue, and surrounding areas during Phase 2 of engagement. A summary of the feedback received is presented in

Figure 5-2.

Figure 5-2. Summary of Phase 2 Community Engagement feedback

Project awareness 	**Most respondents were not very familiar with the RapidRide K Line project**, with nearly half of respondents saying this was the first time they had heard of it. In contrast, a few said they felt somewhat or well informed.
Travel patterns 	**Driving a personal vehicle or motorcycle is the most used transportation mode** among survey respondents, followed closely by public transit. Nearly half of respondents walk or roll regularly. **Among respondents who use transit, many do so frequently**, with two-thirds using transit at least once per week and one-third saying they use transit four to five days per week or more.
Community priorities 	Speed and reliability improvements would encourage many respondents to ride more frequently, including: • Improvements to speed. • More frequent service. • Routes with fewer transfers. • Improvements to reliability. In comparison, improvements to amenities and access to transit were less likely to motivate transit use.

Access to transit: walking or rolling 	**The most common difficulties** when accessing public transit near the RapidRide K Line route when walking or rolling include: • High level of traffic, noise, or pollution. • Lack of designated crossing points or crosswalks. • Narrow pathways and sidewalks.
Access to transit: biking or scootering 	**The most common difficulties** when accessing public transit near the RapidRide K Line route when riding a bike, scooter, or other device include: • Lack of bike paths, lanes, or other infrastructure to safely get to bus stops. • Limited or no bike or scooter parking at bus stops. • Difficulty in safely storing or securing bikes or scooters while waiting for the bus.
Station locations 	Most were satisfied with the proposed station locations: • More than two-thirds of respondents agreed that the proposed station locations would help them get to and from the places they need to go. • More than half agreed that they would help people get to and from their business or property.

How this shaped the project

Feedback received during Phase 2 of K Line community engagement was used by the K Line project to shape the draft LPA including:

- Routing decisions within downtown Bellevue, including service on 110th Ave NE.
- Station locations.
- Speed and reliability improvements and level of transit priority within improvements.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Sharing the Draft LPA

During the third phase of community engagement, Metro presented the project vision as outlined in the Draft LPA. The project vision included the K Line route and station locations, in addition to recommended projects for Access to Transit and Speed and Reliability. Metro spent time connecting with communities, raising awareness about the project and listening to community feedback on elements of the project vision. Phase 3 engagement ran from January 16 through February 13, 2025. During this time Metro gathered community input on a complete vision of RapidRide K Line.

Key Goals for Phase 3 of RapidRide K Line community engagement included:

- Route and bus shelter facilities - Sharing the proposed RapidRide K Line route and station locations, including amenities provided at RapidRide stations.
- Access to transit - Gathering input to inform projects to make it easier for people who walk, roll, and bike to get to the station
- Speed and reliability - Gathering input on priorities for people who travel in the area, to inform transit priority treatment recommendations to make the bus faster and more reliable
- Providing more ways to share information and gather input from communities.

Community input will help Metro complete the RapidRide K Line planning phase and recommend an LPA for King County Council to adopt.

Phase 3 Approach

Metro developed a multilingual website to share project information and encourage community members to have a say. The website included:

- Project overview, including how people can use RapidRide K line to get where they need to go
- Information about how to get involved and a summary of what we've heard so far
- Visuals, including a project timeline, maps and graphics
- Frequently asked questions
- Resource library featuring community engagement and project reports, and informational letters sent to neighbors potentially impacted by the project.

Metro collected feedback through a number of activities, including an online survey, and more than 30 engagement activities, both in-person and virtually.

What We Heard

Metro completed the community engagement phase 3 activities in February of 2025. Key themes are noted in Figure 5-3 below. Metro published a Community Engagement Phase 3 Summary Report, including details of all engagement activities conducted, feedback received and survey data responses, in the spring of 2025.

Figure 5-3. Phase 3 engagement activities

What We Heard from Phase 3 Engagement Activities

Metro engaged with community members across both in-person and virtual forums, collecting feedback on all elements of the project. A few key themes emerged from the survey and other community engagement activities including:

- Communities want faster, more reliable, and more frequent bus service.
  - Interest in more bus service, both in support of RapidRide K Line and more frequent service on existing transit routes.
  - Survey respondents (64%) agree fast and reliable transit should have priority over low-occupancy vehicles.
  - Community members are split over whether Metro has planned the right amount of speed and reliability improvements (i.e. transit signal priority and transit priority lanes).
- Requests for transit service linking more key destination with fewer transfers.
- Interest in how draft LPA routing decisions were made.
- Support for access to transit improvements, and questions about how RapidRide K Line improves access for transit riders with disabilities.
- Questions and concerns related to existing routes, particularly route 255, and how RapidRide K Line may change existing bus service.
- More education on how RapidRide differs from existing local service.
- Interest in how Right-of-Way would be acquired from adjacent properties.

Metro has also updated the project website's Frequently Asked Questions to respond to community interest and will continue to add materials to the website throughout subsequent project phases. Metro will also focus further design efforts toward points of interest identified by community members and local agencies.

5.2 Decision Points and Local Jurisdictional Coordination

The K Line will provide service and deliver capital improvements in the cities of Kirkland and Bellevue. Delivery of the K Line project is not possible without local agency support. Bellevue and Kirkland agency and elected officials have worked with Metro to develop the LPA. This collaboration will continue in future design and construction phases of the project.

Active and ongoing coordination between the K Line team and municipal partners helps to ensure the successful implementation of the K Line project.

5.2.1 Coordination Prior to COVID-19 Project Pause

Early project-specific planning technical coordination with Kirkland and Bellevue occurred in late 2019 and early 2020, including six virtual workshops in April 2020 to review:

- Points of transit service delay and known speed and reliability challenges.
- Communication system infrastructure and proposed upgrades.
- Transit station locations.
- Routing options, including north and south termini locations.
- Access to transit challenges and potential improvements.
- Agency internal vision and capital improvement plans.

This early coordination work helped shape project scope, routing preference, and potential station locations while building partnerships with the local agencies.

Kirkland and Bellevue were included in Metro Connects long-term planning efforts before the start of the K Line standalone project. The K Line vision was identified through the Metro Connects planning process.

5.2.2 Coordination Since Project Restart

Metro resumed detailed K Line planning in the fall of 2023. Since the restart of the K Line project, the team has held more than 20 virtual coordination meetings with the cities of Bellevue and Kirkland to advance planning efforts and refine the overall project vision. Metro staff have presented the K Line project to the city councils of Bellevue and Kirkland several times to build project awareness and partnership. Bellevue and Kirkland staff provided detailed feedback on:

- Speed and reliability investments and implementation considerations.
- Station locations.
- Communication system needs.
- Access to transit investments and implementation considerations.
- Community engagement plans.
- Traffic modeling expectations and data presentation.

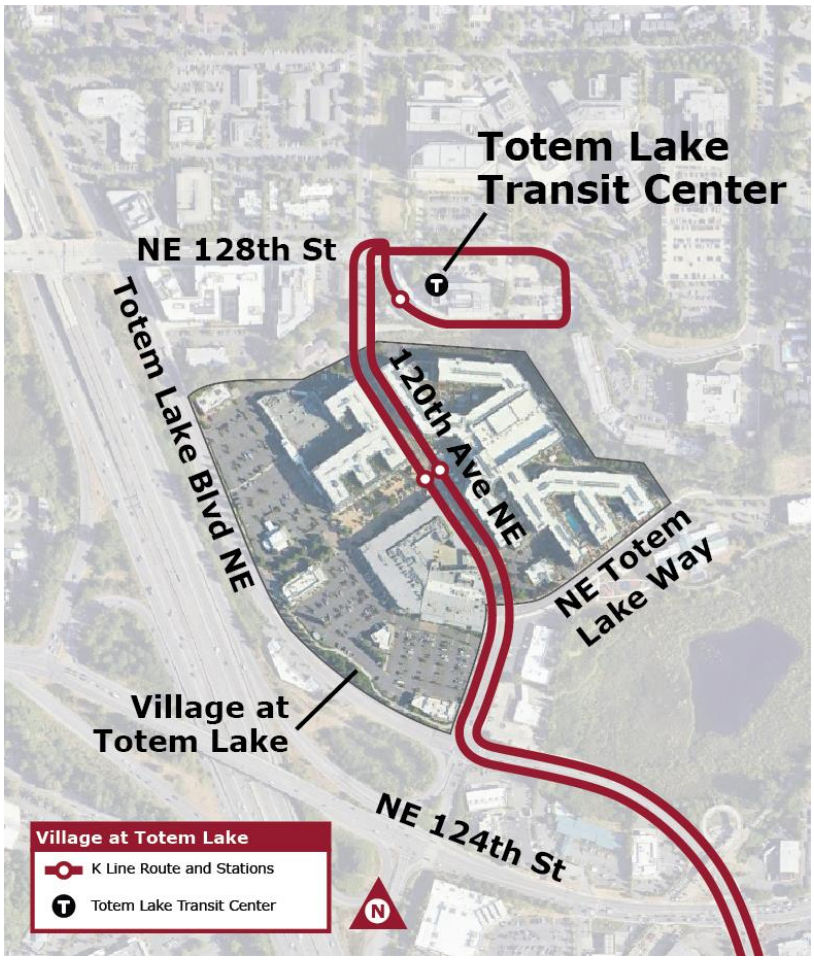
Metro used feedback from local agencies to shape the project vision and create the LPA. It was Metro's goal to build as much support from local agencies as possible before completing the LPA.

Major project decisions are noted in the following sections.

5.2.3 Totem Lake Routing

As shown in Figure 5-4, the K Line project's proposed routing is along 120th Avenue Northeast through the Village at Totem Lake. Factors leading to this recommendation included providing transit service within the Village at Totem Lake, travel time savings, reliability of service, and a desire to terminate the line at Totem Lake Transit Center.

Figure 5-4. Recommended K Line routing through the Village at Totem Lake



Planning efforts required extensive evaluation and collaboration on where the northern terminus of the K Line route would be located due to significant operational challenges on 120th Avenue Northeast within a recently constructed development in Kirkland, known as the Village at Totem Lake. The team evaluated more than 10 different routing and termini locations and made presentations to Kirkland staff as part of the planning process.

This routing requires physical modifications to the existing roadway. The K Line project will move forward assuming capital investments will be required to address existing "pinch points" and conflicts with existing parking stalls by buses traveling through the village on 120th Avenue Northeast. Metro and Kirkland will try to remove these operational challenges before K Line delivery; however, the K Line project will deliver the improvements if still required. The City of Kirkland has supported this decision with written concurrence.

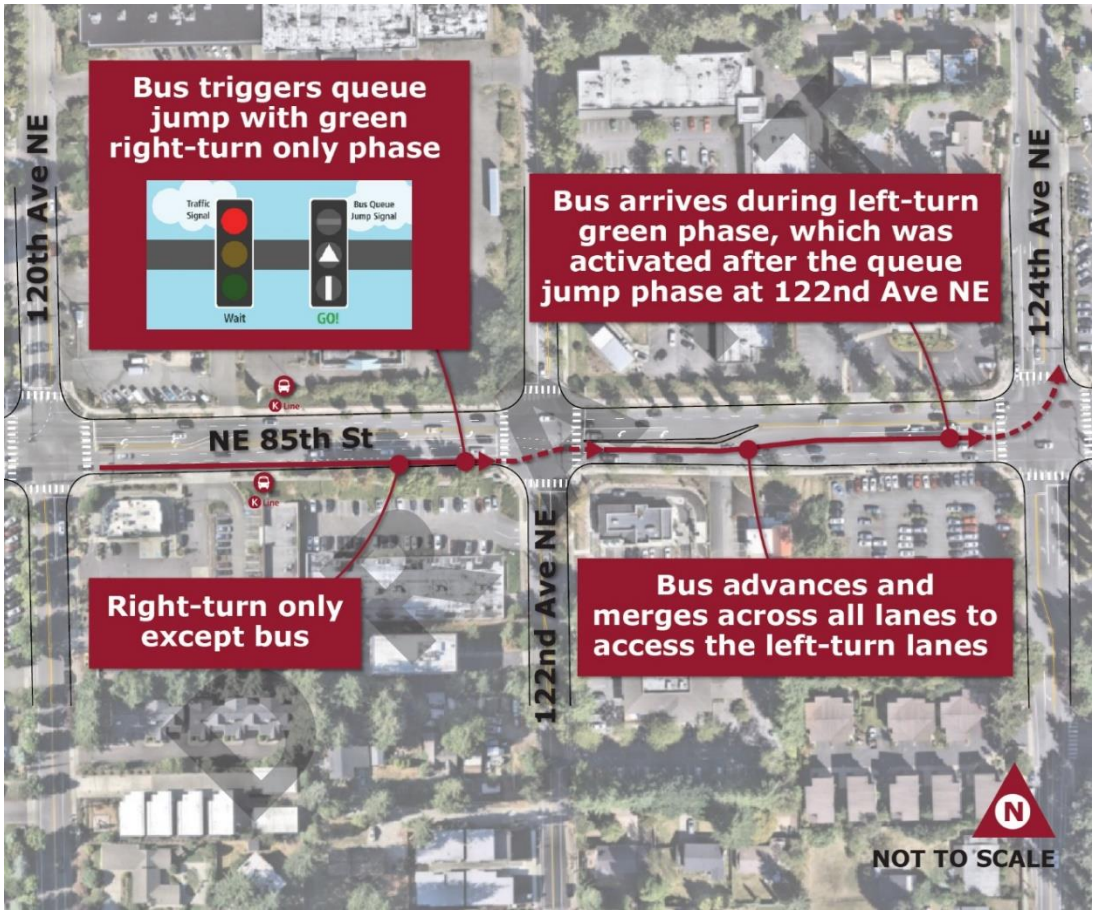
5.2.4 NE 85th Street and 124th Avenue Treatments

The K Line project proposes treatments near the intersection of Northeast 85th Street and 124th Avenue Northeast, including:

- An eastbound station between 120th Avenue Northeast and 122nd Avenue Northeast in the curb lane See Figure 5-5.
- Curb lane conversion into a right-turn-only lane at 122nd Avenue Northeast. Buses will use a dedicated queue jump phase at 122nd Avenue Northeast to advance in front of eastbound through traffic to merge across the lanes to access the left turn lanes at 124th Avenue Northeast. See Figure 5-6.
- Traffic signal operational updates so the left turn signal at 124th Avenue Northeast will be coordinated with the queue jump signal at 122nd Avenue Northeast, allowing a K Line bus to make the left turn onto 124th Avenue Northeast without stopping and with minimal delay. See Figure 5-6.

Figure 5-5. Stations near NE 85th Street and 124th Avenue NE

Figure 5-6. NE 85th Street to 124th Avenue NE Operations



The treatments have been developed collaboratively with Kirkland staff to address needs within the corridor, including consideration of future growth in the area and the city's subarea plan.

5.2.5 Kirkland 108th Avenue NE Treatments

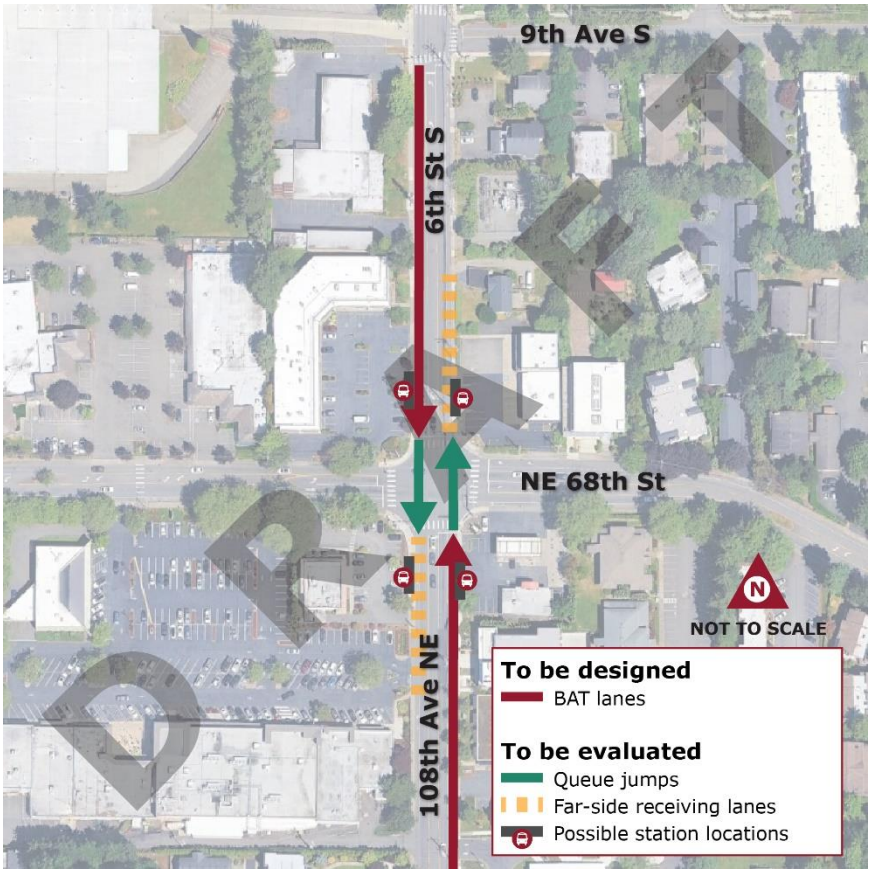
Significant capital improvements along 108th Avenue Northeast are proposed to reduce future K Line delay and improve transit reliability. The K Line project is proposing:

- BAT lane southbound on 6th Street South from 9th Avenue South to Northeast 68th Street. See Figure 5-7.
- BAT lane northbound on 108th Avenue Northeast from approximately Northeast 62nd Street to Northeast 68th Street. See Figure 5-7.

Preliminary design will consider several alternatives. They will be evaluated on the benefit to transit travel time, impacts to general-purpose traffic, considerations for access management, accommodation of safe bicycle facilities, construction cost, and impacts to adjacent property. The alternatives will consider the following both northbound and southbound:

- Near-side or far-side RapidRide station locations.
- Far-side receiving lanes for the BAT lanes.
- Queue jumps.

Figure 5-7 108th Avenue NE/6th Street S at NE 68th Street Concept

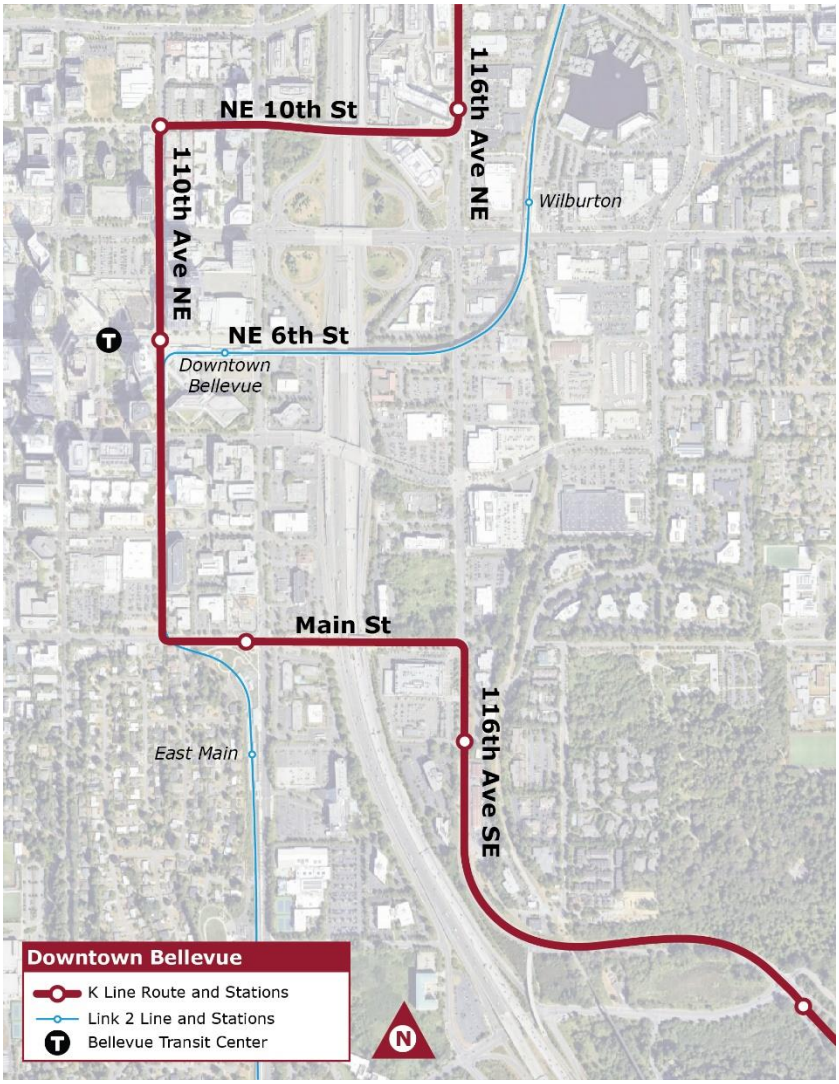


The City of Kirkland began design efforts to address existing transit delays in this corridor through a city-led effort prior to the start of K Line planning. That effort is evaluating northbound BAT lanes on the approach to Northeast 68th Street. During coordination meetings between Metro and the City of Kirkland, both parties determined it was mutually beneficial for the K Line project to deliver these changes, with the City transitioning design responsibility to Metro upon completion of the LPA process.

5.2.6 Downtown Bellevue Routing

The proposed route of K Line through downtown Bellevue runs north-south along 110th Avenue Northeast, as shown in Figure 5-8.

Figure 5-8. Recommended K Line route in downtown Bellevue



Metro selected this option based on a combination of community input, technical modeling efforts, and local agency collaboration. Benefits include:

- Alignment with the Bellevue City Council adopted K Line RapidRide Guiding Principles.
- Public input requesting K Line stations be located for easier transit transfers to regional light rail, RapidRide B Line, and future I-405 Stride Bus Rapid Transit service.
- Opportunities for implementation of transit priority treatments.

5.3 Equity Considerations

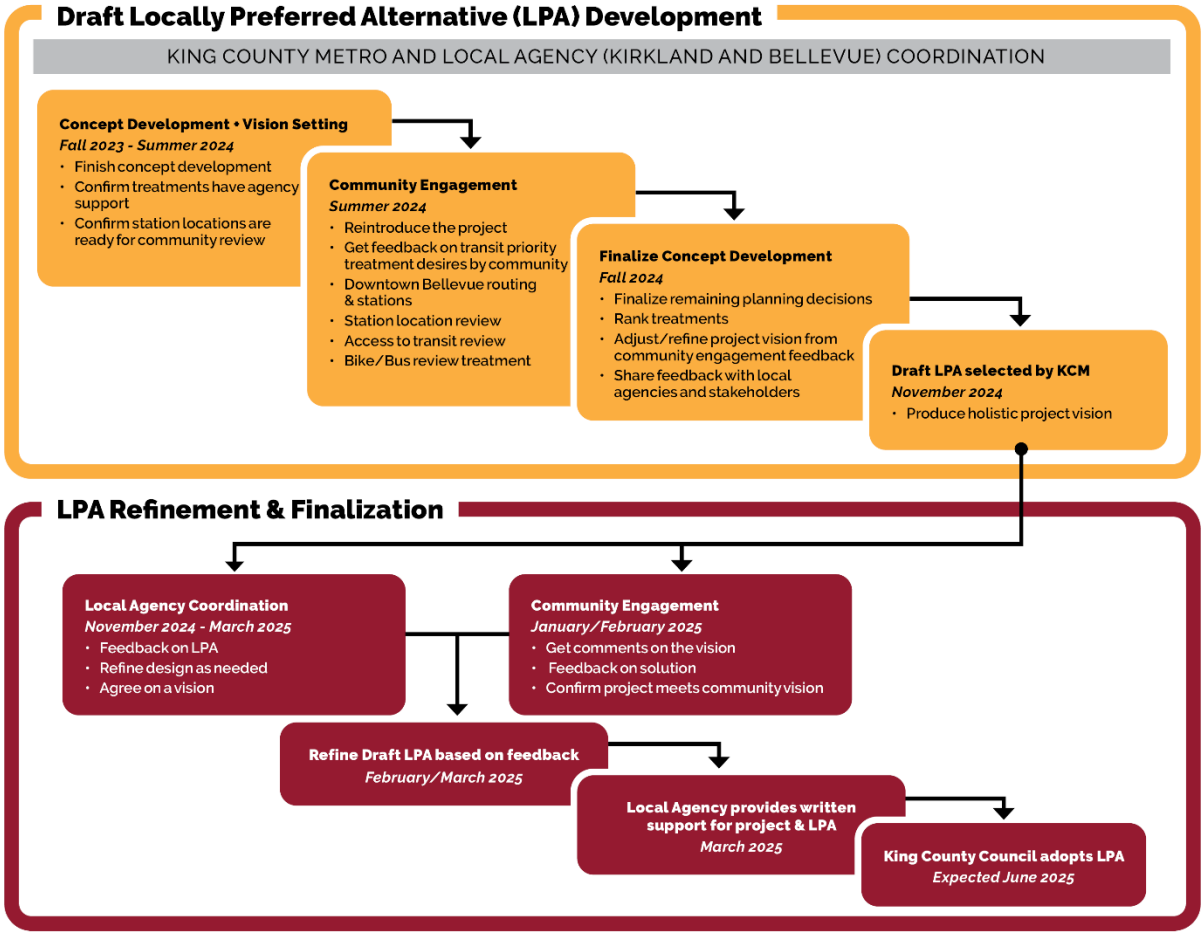
Applying an equity lens through extensive stakeholder engagement with marginalized and underserved communities, the project team engaged the community, implemented agency long-term planning, and used demographic data to inform project investment choices, station placements, accessibility improvements, and K Line routing decisions. These efforts will reduce disparities in access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential services for all community members, including those most dependent on transit service. Additional equity considerations and applications as part of the K Line Project are detailed in the Community Engagement Summaries for each Phase.

5.4 LPA Selection Process

Metro has established a holistic and comprehensive K Line vision considering a wide range of factors including community values, existing plans and policies, engagement findings, equity, local agency implementation support, technical findings, available budget, and project grant funding competitiveness. This vision was shared with the public and stakeholders as a draft LPA, including a community engagement process. Based on feedback from the community and local agency partners, the draft LPA has been refined. The cities of Kirkland and Bellevue provided formal letters of support in March 2025. King County Council is expected to adopt the LPA in June 2025, completing planning activities on the project. Figure 5-9 displays the LPA development process.

King County Metro will begin final design activities upon King County Council adoption of the LPA, with a goal of constructing capital improvements and launching service on the RapidRide K Line in 2030.

Figure 5-9. K Line Locally Preferred Alternative process



6 Capital Costs

The estimated capital cost to construct the LPA is $105.9 million in 2025 dollars. It includes:

- Passenger facilities and amenities.
- Speed and reliability treatments (roadway and signal investments).
- Access to transit improvements.
- Communication system improvements (including NextGen TSP deployment in Kirkland).

Vehicle costs are not included in the project capital costs.

6.1 Funding Plan

Metro has developed a funding plan to implement RapidRide K Line with a combination of local, regional, and federal sources, as outlined in Figure 6-1 below. Costs cover construction implementation.

Figure 6-1. RapidRide K Line funding plan

Funding Source	Amount
Metro and Local Funding Partners	$45.8 million
FTA Small Starts Grant	$51.9 million
Other Federal (CMAQ)	$8.2 million
Total	**$105.9 million**

Kirkland, Bellevue, and Metro have all provided significant investments in planning, coordination, and community engagement to date.

7 Project Information and Contact

For project updates and community engagement opportunities, please see the project page at:

https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/travel-options/bus/rapidride/k-line.

For questions or more information please contact Ryan Whitney, P.E., King County Metro RapidRide K Line Lead, at rwhitney@kingcounty.gov or (206) 477-2607.

8 References

King County Metro project webpage

https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/travel-options/bus/rapidride/k-line