



King County

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

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May 24, 2021

The Honorable Claudia Balducci
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

This letter transmits a proposed ordinance that, if enacted, would establish the recommended alignment and station locations for the King County Metro Transit (Metro) RapidRide J Line. RapidRide J Line will deliver critical north-south transit connecting Downtown Seattle with the neighborhoods of Belltown, South Lake Union, Eastlake, and the University District and represents a significant partnership between Metro and the City of Seattle.

RapidRide J Line will serve major regional growth centers, including the Seattle Central Business District, South Lake Union, and the University District as well as other dense residential neighborhoods. It will connect many other transit services, including Link light rail and frequent Metro service in Downtown Seattle and the University District; RapidRide service on 3rd Avenue; the Seattle Streetcar system; and other local and regional transit services. This project will also improve pedestrian and bicycle connections and access to RapidRide stations, and it will improve safety for both nonmotorized and motorized travelers along the corridor. Metro plans to begin RapidRide J Line service in 2026.

The RapidRide J, G, and H Lines are the first three RapidRide lines developed as a partnership between Metro's RapidRide Expansion Program and the City of Seattle's Move Seattle transportation levy. The RapidRide J Line corridor was identified and prioritized in the City of Seattle's Transit Master Plan and in Metro's long-range plan, METRO CONNECTS. Both of these planning efforts evaluated and prioritized RapidRide J Line based on several factors, including potential ridership, social equity measures, and network connectivity.

The City of Seattle is providing \$40,000,000 in funding through the Move Seattle levy and other local funds, has been awarded \$8,030,400 in Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

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grants, and is seeking a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts Grant for \$45,000,000. The Seattle City Council approved the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in July 2017.

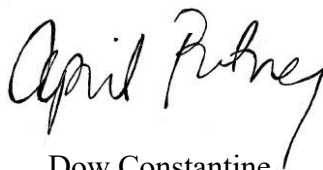
Due to revenue shortfalls, Metro is no longer able to significantly contribute to capital funding for the J Line partnership project, resulting in the City of Seattle's ability to fund a minimum operable segment of the capital project as far north as the University District, removing the previously-planned Roosevelt neighborhood alignment from the project scope. Metro will fund full operations of the RapidRide J Line once construction is complete, and Metro continues to be an active partner in support of all project planning and design efforts being led by the City.

Launching RapidRide J Line furthers the King County Strategic Plan objective to preserve and optimize the mobility system as well as the objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It furthers the sustainability goals outlined in the Strategic Climate Action Plan because it will improve the ability of people throughout King County to travel without single-occupant vehicles. The RapidRide J Line is consistent with King County's adopted values for the transit system which are to emphasize productivity, ensure social equity, and provide geographic value. The RapidRide program is guided by the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and associated adopted King County Metro Service Guidelines. Higher frequency, faster, and more reliable service on RapidRide J Line will provide equitable transportation access to major institutions, employers, and neighborhoods, in alignment with King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.

The alignment recommendations described in the attachment to this ordinance (RapidRide J Line Station Locations) are the product of collaborative work led by the City of Seattle and Metro with major employers, community organizations, and the public.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed ordinance. If your staff have any questions, please contact Bill Bryant, Managing Director of Service Development, King County Metro Transit Department, at 206-477-6456 or bill.bryant@kingcounty.gov.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff

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Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Karan Gill, Director, Council Relations, Office of the Executive

Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Terry White, General Manager, Metro Transit Department

Christina O'Claire, Mobility Division Director, Metro Transit Department

Bill Bryant, Managing Director, Service Development, Metro Transit Department