

North Eastside Mobility Project FAQ

Background

Beginning in March 2020, King County Metro will change bus routes in Bothell, Kirkland, Kenmore, Redmond, and Woodinville. Routes 234, 235, 236, 238, 243, 244, 248, 277, and 540 will be removed and replaced with new, more efficient routes 225, 230, 231, 239, 250, and 544. Instead of going directly to downtown Seattle, Route 255 will run to the University of Washington light rail station where riders can take the light rail through downtown. To complement this service, new route 544 will run from Overlake Transit Center (to become Redmond Technology Station in March) and South Kirkland Park and Ride to South Lake Union, with peak hour service running both directions. Route 930 will run throughout the day and into the evening. All other current service will remain unchanged. Finally, Metro will create new Community Ride and Community Van services to complement fixed-route service. All these changes will occur on March 21st, 2020. Twice a year in late March and late September, King County Metro and Sound Transit adjusts routes, timing, and general service for continuous improvement of the region's transit network.

This field trip covered a small portion of these changes and was held on a moving bus traveling between Kirkland and Bothell. The trip began at Kirkland City Hall, traveled up the new 230/231 route line, visited the UW Bothell campus, and traveled back to Kirkland City Hall by way of the new 239 route line.

Questions & Answers

Many Kirkland residents rely on the 255 service to Downtown. Why is it changing?

Sound Transit and Metro are focusing on connecting riders with the light rail system to take advantage of reliable, high-capacity transit that will manage demand more efficiently. The 255 will be connecting to the U-District light rail at a new improved transfer point. This shortened route will provide greater reliability by avoiding traffic on Seattle surface

streets that contribute to bus delays. The service hours saved by not traveling between UW and downtown Seattle will be reinvested to provide higher service levels on the 255 and other routes in the North Eastside. One of the routes will be the new 544 that will run from Overlake and South Kirkland Park and Ride to South Lake Union. Additionally, all 255 trips will end at Totem Lake, so the new 230 and 231 services will provide shorter, more reliable service connections to Juanita, Bothell and Woodinville.

Riders are concerned about the transfer between the 255 and the U District light rail station. How is Metro and Sound Transit working to make this easy?

Instead of dropping riders off on NE Pacific Place—on the other side of the street from the light rail where many buses pull up—changes will be made to bus shelter and bus stop areas right in front of the light rail system so that Kirkland-to-UW travelers will not have to cross the street at all. People traveling in the opposite direction can safely and conveniently cross the street using stairs and elevators at the light rail station connecting to a Pedestrian Overpass Bridge.

Why are so many routes in Kirkland changing?

Many of the previous routes have been streamlined to provide more direct connections between key destinations and transfer hubs. Route 231 will be a direct Kirkland to Woodinville route. Route 230 will be direct from Kirkland to Bothell, and cross over to the Snohomish County side of Bothell. Meandering routes 234 and 235 will be turned into the new 250, an all-day and all-week service that will go directly between Kirkland Transit Center to Bellevue Downtown, and from Kirkland Transit Center to downtown Redmond. Route 248 will also be removed to create the 250.

What is the hour and day-of-week operation of new routes?

- Route 225 Kenmore through Totem Lake to Overlake – Weekdays 5:30am - 10:00pm, every 30-minute service; Weekends 8:00am - 9:00pm, every 60-minute service. Will serve Lake Washington Technical Institute with later service than previously.

Route 230 Kirkland to Bothell – Weekdays 5:30am - 10:00pm, every 30-minute service; Weekends 7:00am - 8:30am, every 60-minute service. This will run down 100th Ave NE and Waynita Way to Bothell, which hasn't had service on that part of the corridor before.

- Route 231 Kirkland to Woodinville – Weekdays 6:30am-9:30pm, every 30-minute service; weekends 7:00am - 9:00pm, every 60-minute service.
- Route 239 Kirkland to Bothell – Weekdays 5:30am - 12:30am, every 30-minute service; Weekends 6:00am - 12:00am, every 30-minute service
- Route 250 Bellevue through Central Kirkland to Redmond Downtown and Northeast Redmond – Weekdays 5:00am - 12:30am, every 15-minute service; Weekends 6:00am - 11:00pm, every 30-minute service
- Route 255 Kirkland to University District – Weekdays 4:30am - 12:00am; weekend service begins at 5:30am. Buses will run between every 8 and 15 minutes based upon time of day, and the buses will be aligned with Sound Transit's light rail operating hours. All buses will go to Totem Lake, compared to current set of Kirkland Transit Center, Kingsgate, and Brickyard variants.
- Route 930 Redmond to Totem Lake – Weekdays 6:00am – 7:00pm, every 30-minute service. Service expanded from current peak-only hours of operation.

What are the changes/impacts to the flexible-service Community Van program?

The Community Van is a ride-sharing service with no eligibility barriers that allows people to travel to many different destinations. Trips must begin and end in their home jurisdiction and have a minimum of two riders. The service area is a 60-mile radius from Kirkland Community Center, Kirkland City Hall, and Kenmore City Hall. The program's service area will be expanding to include residents of all of Kirkland in March. Riders may pay with an ORCA monthly pass, or by TransitGo mobile app. Metro fares apply. However, due to the use of volunteer drivers, cash payment is not permitted. Volunteer drivers are recruited and mobilized by the Community Transportation Coordinators operating

in each jurisdictional program. There must be a minimum of two riders to complete a trip.

How will the new Community Ride service work?

Community ride is distinct from Community Van. Riders order this on-demand service as soon as they need a ride, and can be picked up anywhere within its flexible service area. There will be two Community Rides: one is a weekday service (7:00am - 7:00pm) covering Juanita and South Kenmore, and the other is a weekend service (10:00am - 6:00pm) covering parts of Bothell, Woodinville, and the Woodinville tourism district. Riders will primarily use the Community Rides to connect to transit centers and bus stops that are too far from their starting or ending point, but they can also use the services to go from point-to-point when travel locally (e.g.: from their home to the grocery store, bank, pharmacy, etc.). Community Ride may operate like Lyft Super Saver in certain circumstances when encountering cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets that the shuttlebus cannot risk entering—in these cases, the rider would have to walk or roll to a close-by road to meet the van. Riders will pay standard Metro fares using cash, ORCA, or valid transfer. Even though they will be 14-passenger accessible small buses, rides could be as small as a 1-person trip and don't require multiple riders to complete a trip like Community Van. In order to schedule, Riders may use an app, or call a dispatch number.

Are there any changes expected for the 372 that connects Bothell with the University District?

Not currently, but any changes may be part of a broader restructure planning effort associated with future Sound Transit Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, expected in 2024.

Are there other major service realignments that we should expect on the Eastside?

There are no other planned network changes until the Eastside Sound Transit Link light rail in 2023. Sound Transit and Metro will introduce changes in 2024 to align with the newly-opening Stride stations (new Sound Transit BRT service) opening along I-405 and SR 522 in 2024. And, Metro's new K-Line RapidRide line connecting Eastgate Park and

Ride with Totem Lake Transit Center will launch in 2025. Eventually, the K-Line will absorb some of the pathway of the 255 and 239. However, Route 255 is expected to continue to serve Kirkland-to-UW light rail after the K-Line goes into operation.

The Connect2020 period—a series of downtown Seattle light rail station closures, starting in early January 2020 and lasting up to 10 weeks—is meant to give Sound Transit the time to align the central rail spine with the new Eastside spine. Originally, the North Eastside Mobility Project changes were supposed to happen in September 2019, but the two transit agencies decided that aligning their periods of impact was a wise decision to avoid more scattered impacts to commutes.

What can you tell us about the 900 series of routes, specifically route 930?

Routes that start with 900 are Demand Response Area Transit (DART) routes. These routes are contracted out to Hopelink Direct Operations to provide smaller, on-demand routes in suburban and rural parts of King County. Route 930 can deviate in specific areas in order to pick up or drop off riders in off-route areas. These areas are selected due to topography concerns, heavily concentrated residential areas, and specific concentrations of office parks with lots of people.

Are you considering accessibility in this process? What about pedestrian safety along NE 124th Street?

There are teams at Metro that are focused on accessibility for connections. There is existing service on NE 124th Street, and existing stops will not be changed. Schedulers at Metro must be Operators before working on restructures so that they have a concrete understanding of how the system fits together. Therefore, all of the Schedulers at Metro have witnessed varied accessibility issues while running bus routes and have expertise in making appropriate changes.

What changes are coming to Sound Transit routes in the North Eastside?

With Route 255 reoriented to the University District, Route 540 becomes redundant. Therefore, Route 540 will be deleted. All these extra service hours, along with some deleted 541 trips, will be added to the new

Route 544 service. Route 542 was given speed and frequency improvements in 2019 to prepare for the shift. Sound Transit will also be launching their own BRT lines along I-405 (Bellevue to Burien Transit Center and Woodinville to Northgate). Route 545 will operate unchanged. 255 riders can switch to 545 at Evergreen Freeway station if they want to go directly to Seattle downtown. The addition of route 544—which will run from South Kirkland Park and Ride to South Lake Union—is a huge addition since SLU has never been directly served to this degree from the Eastside.

How do people keep updated on all of these changes?

In mid-January, Metro will launch a dedicated website for this project. All agencies should inform their colleagues and clients to visit this website. If people need more support, they must contact the project representatives listed on this new site who are able to provide additional support.

Feedback

An attendee told a Metro representative: There is no ORCA reload machine at the Totem Lake Freeway station