

I-90 Service Changes September 2018

Public Engagement Report

King County Department of Transportation Communications

February 2018

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Outreach Overview

King County Metro and Sound Transit partnered to provide early notification to transit users about the planned changes to service when construction begins for the Judkins Park light rail station in late 2018. The following report describes how we notified riders, the key messages in the communications, and the feedback that we received.

Project Background

Construction of the new Judkins Park Link Station requires closure of the Rainier Freeway Station and the I-90 bus ramp that connects buses to the downtown tunnel and the ramp that enters/exits I-90 at the intersection at Seattle Blvd. S./5th Ave. S./S. Dearborn St. Most routes that currently serve the Rainier Freeway Station will bypass the area and no longer use the I-90 bus ramps that connects buses to the either the downtown tunnel or the intersection at Seattle Blvd. S./5th Ave. S./S. Dearborn St. beginning in September 2018. Service changes will be necessary to continue serving customers who use those routes to get to jobs, education, services and recreation around Seattle and the Eastside.

Since the Rainier Freeway Station provides important access to the Eastside and Downtown Seattle for communities in the Rainier Valley, Metro and Sound Transit determined that bus routes need to change when construction starts to maintain service to the Rainier Valley area. When East Link opens in 2023, the Rainier Freeway Station will re-open as the Judkins Park Station.

Outreach Goals

To ensure minimal impact to the public as a result of major changes, it is crucial to inform them early of upcoming changes, so that both awareness and support are fostered. Early notification also allows time for messages to be shared and for people to plan alternatives to their normal routine. Strategic public outreach was planned and completed to ensure an equitable and effective engagement process and to set community expectations.

Outreach goals for I-90 service changes included:

- Meet riders “where they are” to increase awareness and participation.
- Provide outreach opportunities that are accessible to ESJ populations especially people for whom English is a second language including refugees and immigrants, and other transit-dependent populations including low-income and disabled people.
- Focus efforts on the Rainer Freeway Station closure to build awareness in potentially transit-dependent community.
- Inform existing customers of the reasons for changes, timeline, constraints for options, and alternatives available.

Key audiences

The outreach effort for I-90 service changes was bus focused, targeting riders who take Sound Transit and King County Metro buses that currently stop at the Rainier Freeway Station. This effort also prioritized riders who initiate travel from the Rainier Valley. This area is demographically diverse, including a higher minority make-up (51%) than the state (29%) and national (37%) averages. The community has high numbers of people who were born in another county and there are significant percentages of the populations from whom English is a second language.

Key audiences for this outreach effort include, but are not limited to:

- Riders on Metro routes 7, 9, 106, 111, 114, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218 and 219; and Sound Transit routes 550 and 554.
- Traditionally under-represented populations, and transit dependent people.
- Neighborhood, social service agencies and organizations representing ESJ populations in the Rainier Valley

Outreach methods and tools

To help riders plan for changes to transit service, Metro partnered with Sound Transit for a “plan ahead” outreach effort that included drop-in sessions, notifications at transit stops and centers in the corridor, and a comprehensive online information center/open house. Through numerous notification methods, thousands of people across the corridor were notified of opportunities to engage. Over 5,500 people actively engaged with outreach staff during this time both in person or online.

The project outreach team used several public outreach and notification methods to maximize awareness of the project and invite the public to attend drop-in sessions and visit the online open house. The outreach methods included:

- In-person drop-in sessions and street team outreach
- Online open house
- Project website
- Social media notifications and posts
- Email updates
- Advertisements including ethnic media
- Press release and earned media
- Community organization phone calls and tool kits

In-person outreach

In total ten in-person events were held at eleven different transit centers between Seattle and Issaquah. Three of these in-person events were drop-in sessions held from 3:30 to 7:00 p.m. and the other seven events were street team events held between 2:30 and 6:00 p.m. to distribute flyers to bus riders who will experience service changes in September.

The drop-in sessions consisted of a pop-up booth at key transit centers with generalized project information and detailed maps showing bus routes that will experience service changes. Attendees were encouraged to share feedback and ask questions. During street team outreach, informational flyers were distributed to notify riders of the changes they can expect.

Translated fact sheets were available in Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic at these events.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Street Team	Tuesday, January 9	Eastgate Freeway Station
Street Team	Wednesday, January 10	Issaquah Transit Center
Street Team	Thursday, January 11	Mercer Island Transit Center
Street Team	Tuesday, January 16	Rainier Freeway Station
Street Team	Wednesday, January 17	Bellevue Transit Center
Drop-in session	Thursday, January 18	Issaquah Transit Center
Drop-in session	Tuesday, January 23	Bellevue Transit Center
Street Team	Wednesday, January 24	Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel – All stops
Drop-in session	Thursday, January 25	Rainier Freeway Station
Street Team	Tuesday, January 30	Issaquah Highlands Park and Ride

Online open house

Riders and stakeholders could visit an online open house on their own time 24/7 to learn more information about service changes and what to expect when the Rainier Freeway Station closes. The Online Open House accepted comments from January 8 – February 16, 2018. The website will remain open through September in order to continue to provide customers with information about the service change and help them plan their journeys. The Online Open House is at <https://i90servicechanges.participate.online/>.

Press release and earned media

Metro and Sound Transit issued a joint news release, “Bus routes using I-90 to change in September due to East Link construction; riders encouraged to plan ahead,” on January 8, 2018 to announce bus service changes beginning in September 2018.

The project earned media attention from three sources. Media outlets that reported on or directly referenced the project and the online open house included local news television and community blogs focused on transportation and urban planning.

Seattle Transit Blog: <https://seattletransitblog.com/2018/01/19/90-bus-routes-changing-september/>

Sammamish Patch: <https://patch.com/washington/sammamish/i-90-bus-routes-will-undergo-big-change-soon>

Mercer Island Reporter: <https://www.mi-reporter.com/news/metro-transit-needs-feedback-on-possible-route-changes-to-i-90-buses/>

Online and print advertisements

Display ads advertising in-person drop-in sessions and the online open house were published in eight daily, weekly or monthly print publications from early January to early February 2018. Online advertisements linking to the online open house also appeared in thirteen online newspapers from January to February 2018. Many of the print and online ads were translated in the primary language of the publications to better communicate the project information and public engagement opportunities.

Community stakeholder phone calls, emails, and tool kit

Metro and Sound Transit targeted 60 stakeholder organizations and agencies to reach out to about I-90 service changes. Stakeholders were contacted by phone and through email. They were also sent a tool kit with translated resources to help them easily distribute information about service changes to the communities they serve.

Project website

Public announcement of the service changes coming to buses that travel on I-90 and the invitation to the in-person drop-in sessions and online open house were posted on the project website (soundtransit.org/i90buschanges) eleven days prior to the first drop-in session. Translated information was available in Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic.

Metro Matters Blog

Metro [posted](#) on the blog on January 9, 2018 notifying readers about the upcoming change and upcoming opportunities to learn more and provide comments through in-person and online outreach.

Social media notifications and posts

Social media announcements on Metro and Sound Transit Facebook and Twitter pages publicized the upcoming I-90 service changes and public engagement activities. Posts on informed followers of upcoming bus changes and directed them to the online open house for more information.

The notifications received 3,256 clicks and engagements from nearly 108,400 impressions. The feeds also included direct links to the online open house, where online visitors reviewed information about service changes and provided their feedback. They were also provided the opportunity to sign up for an email subscription for future project updates.

Electronic notifications

Metro sent electronic updates (emails and text messages) to approximately 7,300 people who subscribe to receive updates about the routes included in this project. Sound Transit sent an electronic East Link Extension project update to the project listserv of approximately 3,445 recipients, to their All Aboard Commute Trip Reduction Newsletter which was sent to a listserv of (approximately 104 recipients) on January 18, 2018. Lastly, an announcement about the SIP amendment being published online was sent to the service planning listserv of approximately 2800 recipients.

Translated Fact Sheets

Co-branded, translated fact sheets were available in Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic. They were passed out at in-person events, distributed to community stakeholders, and available on line.

Operator and Customer Service communications

Metro operators were notified about the change through the Operations Bulletin and Metro customer information staff were provided with project information. As front line staff frequently interacting with the public it was important that they be able to answer questions and provide accurate information.

Summary of Comments received

A total of 77 narrative comments were received during the online open house and 25 narrative comments were received in response to Facebook advertisements. Staff also

took note of questions and comments they received during in-person events. Overall, themes heard across the corridor included:

Familiarity with the project

- During outreach riders commented that they'd already heard about bus service changes.
- Appreciation for having information well in advance of September changes and understanding of service changes coming.

Bus frequency

- Request for increase in the number of buses traveling from the Rainier Valley to the Eastside during peak hours.
- Concern that there are not enough 554 buses.
- Concern about the increase in travel time for surface street buses.
- Expressed need to prioritize access for buses entering and exiting I-90.
- Appreciation for not making too many drastic changes to the 212 or the 550.

Outreach and information availability

- Questions about how the 550 bus route will access the I-90 tunnel.
- Call for Metro and Sound Transit to send out more information.
- Appreciation for having information about upcoming changes well in advance of September changes.
- Interest in how the project will impact the I-90 bike trail.

Access to Rainier Freeway Station

- Expressed need to clarify the timeline of the Rainier Freeway Station closure.
- Concern that the 550 will no longer stop in the Rainier Valley, the perspective being that most people who catch the bus at the Rainier Freeway Station ride the 550 bus.
- Concern about access to bus stops at Rainier Avenue S and S Charles St. due to steep hills, uneven sidewalks and dangerous crosswalks.

Origin of comments

- Over half of all written feedback came from bus route 550 and 554 riders.
- Additional written feedback came from King County Metro routes 111, 114, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218 and 219 riders.
- Most feedback came from people who ride a bus impacted by service changes and/or who are interested in the East Link project.

- The majority of people who submitted feedback understood how their bus route will change based on the materials provided in the online open house.

Equity and Social Justice

With the Rainier Freeways Station closing, Metro and Sound Transit focused outreach on riders who use this stop to travel to the Eastside and downtown Seattle, or as a connection point to routes on Rainier Ave to other locations. Outreach was focused on making the information accessible to ESJ populations and through in-language notifications and information in the following ways:

- Translated fact sheets were available online and at in-person events in Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic.
- Community based organizations and agencies serving ESJ populations were provided with a tool kit of information including translated fact sheets, a matrix of changes by routes, and a cut-and-paste email message to send to their constituents.
- Translated advertisements in ethnic media publications advertising the outreach
- Prioritized the Rainier Freeway Station for in-person outreach events which included both a drop-in session and street teams at the Freeway stops and on the surface level on Rainier Ave.

Appendices

Appendix A: Press Release

Bus routes using I-90 to change in September due to East Link construction; riders encouraged to plan ahead

Jan 8, 2018

Sound Transit and King County Metro begin public outreach to educate riders about upcoming changes

Sound Transit and King County Metro today kicked off a month of public outreach to inform Eastside bus commuters and people who ride buses that stop at the Rainier Freeway Station about changes to their routes starting September 2018 as a result of East Link construction. Opportunities to learn about the changes include an online open house and in-person drop-in sessions throughout the month of January.

Current Rainier Freeway Station bus stops are located over Rainier Avenue alongside I-90 in each direction. Buses pull to the side to serve the stops and then continue along I-90 without having to exit the freeway. These stops will be closed as part of the construction of the East Link light rail extension, and will become the Judkins Park Station when East Link begins operating in 2023. During construction the following routes will be affected:

- Sound Transit routes 550 and 554
- King County Metro routes 111, 114, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218 and 219

While these routes will continue to serve downtown Seattle, they will either bypass the Rainier Freeway Station or serve stops at different locations on Rainier Avenue. Routes that serve Rainier Avenue from the Eastside will exit I-90 at Rainier, and continue downtown via surface streets. There will be no changes to bus routing on the Eastside.

Riders are encouraged to learn about changes to their routes early and to plan ahead for impacts to their routines. Details are available through the online open house at <https://i90servicechanges.participate.online/>.

Additionally, drop-in sessions are scheduled at the Issaquah Transit Center on Jan. 18; the Bellevue Transit Center on Jan. 23; and the Rainier Freeway station on Jan. 25. All drop-in sessions run from 3:30 – 7 p.m. Sound Transit and King County Metro representatives will be available to provide information and answer questions. Details about these sessions are available on the open house website.

Sound Transit is simultaneously working to extend light rail northward, southward and eastward, opening new stations every few years to form a 116-mile regional system by 2041. Other upcoming transit expansions include the 2024 launch of bus rapid transit on I-405 and SR-522, major expansions to Sounder south line service that include longer platforms and trains, and service extensions to Joint Base Lewis-McChord and DuPont. Information on upcoming Sound Transit system expansions is available at <https://www.soundtransit.org/Projects-and-Plans/system-expansion>.

Appendix B: Stakeholder List

Stakeholders
City of Bellevue
City of Issaquah
City of Mercer Island
City of Sammamish
Community Transit
Pierce Transit
SDOT
TransManage
Cascade Bicycle Club
Lighthouse for the Blind
Feet First
ACRS
American Red Cross
Bellevue College
Casa Latina
Chinatown-International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA)
Commute Seattle
Friends of Little Saigon
Hiawatha BD
Interim Community Development Association

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International District/ Chinatown Community Center
Judkins Park Community Council
NW African American Museum
NW African American Museum
Rainier Valley Food Bank
Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDpda)
Southeast District Council
T-Mobile
T-Mobile
23rd Ave Action Community Team
BikeWorks
Center Park (SHA residence)
Central Area Neighborhoods District Council
Chong Wa Benevolent Association
Columbia Branch Library
East African Community Services
Ethiopian Community Center
Filipino Community Center
Got Green
Horn of Africa Services
Muslim Housing Services
El Centro de la Raza
Puget Sound Sage
SHA Rainier Vista
Rainier Beach Community Empoerment Coalition
Holly Park Medical & Dental Clinic
MLK Business Association
Rainier Vista - Boys and Girls Club
Southeast Youth and Family Services
Vietnamese American Economic Development Association
Refugee Women's Aliance
Hopelink
Rainier Beach Community Center
Rainier Beach Merchants Association
Rainier Chamber of Commerce
Rainier Neighborhood Greenways

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Rainier Valley Community Development Fund
Rainier Valley Historical Society
Somali Community Services of Seattle
Southeast Effective Development (SEED)

Appendix C: Online Open House

Online Open House: January 9 - February 16, 2018 Select Language
Powered by Translate



- Welcome
- Overview
- Rainier Freeway Station
- Sound Transit 554
- Sound Transit 550
- Metro routes
- Thank You

Welcome

- ESPAÑOL
- SOMALI
- 한국어
- 普通话
- TIẾNG VIỆT
- አማርኛ
- РУССКИЙ
- العربية



Service changes are coming to bus routes that travel on I-90. Beginning in September 2018 Sound Transit will start a new phase of construction on East Link, a project to bring light rail across Lake Washington. This online open house is part of our early outreach to inform you about route changes and how your ride may be impacted. Click through the tabbed pages above to find out more.

How to use this online open house

- Visit the tabbed pages to learn more about what's happening
- You can visit the site as many times as you wish
- Take notes as you go through the tabbed pages by using the comment field below
- Look for the pages with the comment bubble to know where you can share feedback
- Share this site with others who may be interested in the project

If you need information translated select your language using the "Select Language" bar at the top of this page. If your language is not available, please contact 1-800-201-4900/TTY Relay: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org for alternative formats.

Upcoming events

I-90 Service Changes Public Hearing
 Thursday, March 1, 2018 12 - 1 p.m.
 Ruth Fisher Board Room
 401 S Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104
[Add to Calendar](#)

Completed events

Issaquah Transit Center Drop-In session
 Thurs., January 18, 2018 | 3:30 – 7 p.m.
 Find us on the platform!

Bellevue Transit Center Drop-In session
 Tues., January 23, 2018 | 3:30 – 7 p.m.
 Find us on the platform!

Rainier Freeway Station Drop-In session
 Thurs., January 25, 2018 | 3:30 – 7 p.m.
 Find us at street level!



Appendix D: Project Website

SOUNDTRANSIT
RIDE THE WAVE

Mobile Site | About Sound Transit | Submit Feedback | Search Sound Transit site

Schedules | Fares & Passes | Rider Guide | Trip Planner | Maps | Contact Us | The Platform | **Projects & Plans**

Home > Projects & Plans > Service planning > I-90 Service Changes

Projects & Plans

- Find a project
- Developing regional transit
- In your community
- Contact Project & Plans
- Choosing routes
- History: what voters approved
- How it's built
- Lifecycle of a typical project
- Service planning
 - Service Implementation Plan
 - Link Connections SR 520 project
 - I-90 Service Changes**
 - I-90 Service Changes Document Library
 - System expansion map
 - Taxing districts
 - The Board's role

I-90 Service Changes

ESPAÑOL | SOMALI | 한국어 | 普通话 | TIẾNG VIỆT | АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ | РУССКИЙ | العربية

To request accommodations for persons with disabilities or for information in alternative formats, call 1-800-201-4900 / TTY Relay 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.

Introduction

As part of East Link light rail construction, the Rainier Freeway station at I-90 will close for five years beginning in September 2018. It will reopen as Judkins Park Link Station in 2023. Most bus routes that currently serve the Rainier Freeway Station will bypass the area, but Routes 554, 217, and select Route 212 trips will serve new stops on Rainier Avenue South subject to board approval. The transit-only roadway that connects the Rainier Freeway Station to Downtown Seattle will also close, leading to modest increases in travel time. Metro and Sound Transit will invest in lane and signal improvements to help with bus traffic flow.

Find out more by visiting our online open house at 90servicechanges.participate.online

Impacted routes

- Sound Transit route 550
- Sound Transit route 554
- King County Metro routes 111, 114, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218 & 219

Stay Informed

Keep up to date on the latest changes by joining our Service Planning email list at soundtransit.org/subscribe

Online open house

Plan ahead and learn more about these changes at our online open house at 90servicechanges.participate.online

Drop-in sessions

We will host three drop-in sessions where you can speak with staff about these changes and learn more about the project.

Issaquah Transit Center Drop-in session

Thurs., January 18, 2018 | 3:30 – 7 p.m.

Bellevue Transit Center Drop-in session

Tues., January 23, 2018 | 3:30 – 7 p.m.

Rainier Freeway Station Drop-in session

Thurs., January 25, 2018 | 3:30 – 7 p.m.

Contact Us

Alex Ko | Customer Outreach Specialist
servicechanges@soundtransit.org | 206-903-7269

Tristan Cook | Metro Community Relations Planner
tristan.cook@kingcounty.gov | 206-477-3842

See Also

[Document Library](#)

Key Terms



We would like to make sure you understand the following key terms that are critical to understanding the route changes described here.

Reverse Peak Direction - During peak hours most riders travel in one direction. More riders travel into Seattle in the morning, and back to the Eastside in the afternoon.

Appendix E: Fact Sheets

Translated in Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic. (available upon request)



I-90 Service Changes

East Link Construction

What's happening:
 As part of East Link light rail construction, the Rainier Freeway station at I-90 will close for five years beginning in September 2018. It will reopen as Judkins Park Link Station in 2023. Most bus routes that currently serve the Rainier Freeway Station will bypass the area, but Routes 554, 217, and select Route 212 trips will serve new stops on Rainier Avenue South subject to board approval. Metro and Sound Transit will invest in lane and signal improvements to help with bus traffic flow.

Changes by route:

Route 550
 Route 550 will bypass Rainier Avenue South and will access the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel via the I-90 mainline. No changes on the Eastside.

Route 554
 Route 554 will serve a pair of bus stops at Rainier Avenue South and South Charles Street and will access Downtown Seattle via Rainier Avenue South and South Dearborn Street. No changes on the Eastside.


Routes 111, 114, 212, 214, 216, 218 & 219
 These peak-only routes will bypass Rainier Avenue South and will access Downtown Seattle via the I-90 mainline and 4th Avenue South. No changes on the Eastside.

Route 217 and Select Route 212 Trips
 Route 217 and "reverse peak" Route 212 trips will serve a pair of bus stops at Rainier Avenue South and South Charles Street and will access Downtown Seattle via Rainier Avenue South and South Dearborn Street. These trips operate eastbound during the weekday AM peak, and westbound in the weekday PM peak.


Route 550



Route 554



Metro route



The end result
 When East Link opens in 2023, commuters will enjoy traffic-free 20-minute trips between Downtown Seattle and Downtown Bellevue. The expansion of light rail and bus service on the Eastside will be a game changer for our rapidly growing community. We thank you for your patience during the challenging construction period.

Stay informed
 Keep up to date on the latest changes by joining our Service Planning email list at soundtransit.org/subscribe.

Online Open House:
 Plan ahead and learn more about these changes at our online open house at 90servicechanges.participate.online.

Webpage:
 View the latest documents and project updates on our webpage at soundtransit.org/90buschanges.

Talk to us:
 Visit our online open house or webpage for more information about drop-in sessions at transit centers across the region.

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