**RapidRide J Line Community Design Virtual Meetings Summary Report**

**Summary**
RapidRide J Line, formerly RapidRide Roosevelt, will connect Downtown Seattle with the neighborhoods of Belltown, South Lake Union, Eastlake, and the University District. These upgrades to the route will enhance bus speed, increase reliability between stations, and pave and install protected bike lanes, improving accessibility and safety.

As part of the RapidRide J Line Project, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) hosted two community design virtual meetings on September 14, 2022, one in the morning and one in the evening, to share information about design progress, ask for community feedback and provide live results, as well as share an updated timeline for construction and implementation.

While attending the meetings, participants were encouraged to:

- Learn more about the project and preview updated design elements.
- Share feedback about bicycle and pedestrian access, urban design, and other key design features of the project.
- Ask questions of the project team.

**Promotions**
SDOT used multiple methods to reach audiences and promote the community design virtual meetings and companion online survey. A postcard advertising the meetings was sent to 35,694 addresses in the project area. Information about the community design virtual meetings was also posted on the project webpage and sent to the project listserv.

**Methods**
In previous in-person meetings, the team received feedback suggesting that some audience members were frustrated and that minority community members felt unsafe speaking during the meetings. We also heard that the timing of meetings prevented some from attending as travel time and childcare were barriers. To address these concerns, and in accordance with our Racial Equity Toolkit, SDOT hosted the same meeting online, at two different times, to maximize accessibility. We took measures to ensure meeting materials were offered in various languages, participants had access to materials online ahead of time, and interpretation services were available for anyone requesting them.

At both meetings, the project team presented information about the project and answered questions from participants. During the presentation, the project team asked participants specific questions using Mentimeter, an online presentation and survey platform that shares live results. Participants could also submit comments and questions anonymously. The project team answered as many questions as possible during the meeting with the promise of posting responses to all questions online afterwards.

**Key Findings/Summary of Results**
Forty-six (46) people in total attended the two community design virtual meetings. This section summarizes the questions and comments submitted during both meetings.

**Comments**
Participants submitted comments during the meetings. Those comments centered around the following themes:

- **Parking:** Concerns about removing parking on Eastlake.
- **Traffic flow:** Frustrations about lane reductions slowing traffic.
- **Transit stops:** Participants shared comments about transit stop locations, connections to other routes, safety, accessibility, and lighting.
- **Bike crossing safety and education:** Participants shared comments about the challenge of educating cyclists how to wait for and use crossings.

**Questions**
Participants also submitted questions during the meetings. Many people asked clarifying questions about the design, why specific options had been selected for the different design elements/locations and how parking will be impacted. Several people asked about what kind of traffic analysis (bikes and cars) has been conducted and considered. Participants also asked about the location of the bike lanes, how the bike lane buffers will be maintained and how bike boxes function.

A complete list of the questions and their responses is included in Appendix A. Most of the questions were answered during the meeting. The questions that were not answered during the meeting and their response are also included in Appendix A.

The questions asked using Mentimeter were similar to those used in the online survey. For that reason, the results from the Mentimeter survey will be included and reported on in a separate survey report.

**APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

**Meeting #1: Questions answered during the meeting**

| | Questions | Answers |
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| 1 | Why was the decision made to end J Line at the U-District and is there a possibility of extending it further north in the future? | Because of Covid impacts to the budget, there are no longer the capital funds available for the construction to extend up to Roosevelt. Additionally, we don't have the operational support budget to service the line up to Roosevelt (with drivers and buses). For those reasons, it doesn't make sense to invest in the infrastructure at this time. The project is forward compatible, so that if the funding becomes available for both capital investment and operations costs, extending the line in the future is a possibility. |
| 2 | Regarding recaptured parking spaces on Eastlake, what is the total number of | The exact number of parking spaces isn't yet known since we are still adjusting the design to see if we've |

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| | spaces, how will they be used, and will there be future public engagement about this? | captured the maximum space. The number of spaces is also dependent on what type of spaces they are. For example, truck load/unload spaces may need to be longer than other parking spaces. Our focus for engagement will be to speak with the businesses close by and have discussions about utilization. |
| 3 | Do the lighting options give different levels of illumination? | All of these lights can provide the appropriate level of light to the area where people are waiting, it is just a matter of adjusting location, height and spacing to account for the different scatter patterns of each fixture. Option 6 can perhaps be fine-tuned more than the other fixtures, which are broader. |
| 4 | Can different barriers (for buffered bike lanes) be used for different parts of the route? | Yes, that's certainly possible. There are some areas where we need flexibility for emergency services and other areas where we can use something else. It's not going to be a one size fits all. We'll take the feedback and incorporate that into the final design as we examine where we may be able to use each type. |
| 5 | Where will the northern most station of the SLU Streetcar be located? | The streetcar location won't change. This project won't modify the streetcar station at all, but we are looking at the interface between the streetcar stop and the closest RapidRide J Line stop. |
| 6 | How do you factor in bicyclist safety when you think about physical protection of barriers for implementation? | We are looking for that protection and that's why we are putting in protected bike lanes. But there are always trade-offs that go into these decisions since we need access for emergency services, we have limited right of way, and we are looking at safety for all users. |
| 7 | Is it possible to extend the left-turn lane on Fuhrman further back so it doesn't back up the main line? (southbound across the bridge) | This essentially becomes a very long left-turn lane for option 2 where we provide the buffered bike lane south of the bridge. If we leave the bike lane unbuffered (option 1), then the left-lane turn pocket stays fairly small. |
| 8 | For southbound cyclists turning left onto Fuhrman after the University Bridge, what's the safe way to make that movement? | The way to do that is for cyclists to proceed through the intersection and then make the left turn with the light at the south leg of the intersection (Copenhagen left). There isn't anything to prohibit cyclists who want to stay in the travel lane from using the left-turn lane with regular traffic. |
| 9 | Heading southbound after crossing the University Bridge, will there be a bike box to turn left onto Harvard? | We will be looking closely at all the bike movements to determine what the appropriate facilities will be. |
| 10 | Why is NE 43rd St the preferred location to have the bike lane cross from the right side to the left side? | Cyclists are on the right coming off the bridge, and there are heavy movements to the right for the first few blocks as cyclists access the UW. The intersection at NE 45th St is very busy with buses, so we didn't want to use that. NE 43rd St is signalized, and it has low vehicle volume, so it's a good location to make the switch. |

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| 11 | At NE 43rd St, for option #3 with the bike box, how does it work when the light is green? | Bikes would be expected to stop in lane, so we'd have to look at space accommodations for where bikes can wait. There could be some friction points. |
| 12 | In option #1 at Eastlake & Fairview, do southbound cars turning right stop? | Yes, they would stop if there's a cyclist who has triggered the signal to cross. |
| 13 | In option #1 at Eastlake & Fairview do the cyclists who want to proceed southbound on Eastlake have a safe place to stop so other cyclists can proceed south onto Fairview? | The exact waiting area and dimensions are yet to be determined, but it's something we are looking to accommodate. |
| 14 | With option #4 at Eastlake & Fairview, is SDOT considering better pedestrian crosswalks? | This crosswalk would be wider than standard crosswalks because it needs to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. |
| 15 | What is the overall project timeline? | We are looking to start construction as early as 2023 if the funding is all lined up. End of 2026 for project completion is the timeline we are working with right now, but we'll have more information to come. |
| 16 | How would people access Eastlake businesses with removal of parking? Have you done any analysis into the negative impacts of removing parking? | Studies of other neighborhoods (both in and out of Seattle) have been reviewed for typical impacts of removing curbside parking and adding bike lanes. The net impacts to businesses are typically neutral to positive. People on bikes will patronize the adjacent businesses. We are also working to ensure access to businesses for load/unload. |
| 17 | Have you looked at cyclist safety when the bike lane is next to floating parking spaces? | The cars become a physical separation to protect the bike lane. There is still a 2-foot buffer provided between the parked vehicles and the bike lane. |
| 18 | Seven of the 8 island stations reduce sidewalks to 8.5 feet wide down from 12 feet wide. Can you speak to this? | There is a deviation process we follow, and the benefits and tradeoffs are considered when the deviation from standard is reviewed. |
| 19 | Will the project address the missing bike lanes between South Lake Union and the Fairview bridge? | We are tying into the Fairview bridge which has 2-way protected bike lanes on the lake side. We will be extending those bike lanes south all the way to the intersection of Fairview and Valley. |
| 20 | When will the project show commercial load zones, passenger load zones and shuttle stop zones for Eastlake Ave on the roll plots? | We will be doing a more detailed look in the future to identify these and meet with individual businesses to understand their needs. |
| 21 | Do you consider light pollution for birds, animals, buildings when considering lighting options? | Option #6 has the least light pollution because it's such a focused light and has a shield to block light from entering adjacent businesses. |
| 22 | For the transit stop options on Roosevelt, if option #3 is selected, would people with mobility issues have to go past heavy right-turning vehicles when crossing the street? | Yes, that's the movement they would need to make, but this project is putting in protected crossings and curb ramps which will improve the conditions over what is present today. |

**Meeting #1: Questions not answered during the meeting**

| | Questions | Answers |
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| 1 | With large service reductions coming this fall across King County Metro routes, is there a plan for improving bus driver hiring and retention to prevent future service reductions? A rapid ride line kind of loses its punch if it can't meet high-frequency service needs due to staffing shortages. | The minor updates in the semi-annual service change were trip-specific adjustments to improve reliability and to better meet rider needs. Currently, Metro has more than 2,500 bus operators serving our community and is looking to hire a variety of part-time and full-time operators. Information on the jobs available can be found at kingcounty.gov/MetroCareers |
| 2 | I have lived in Eastlake 20 + years and I am concerned about this being treated as a freeway and not a neighborhood. So, I had a few questions:<br><br>I drove down Eastlake this morning at 7:30 and did not see one single biker until I hit South Lake Union where I saw one. I also did not see anyone standing at a bus stop. Downtown is roughly 45% occupied with many tech companies moving to work from home. Has anyone really looked at a recent landscape? My wife is an attorney who used to take the bus, but due to safety issues she will no longer take a bus and works from home.<br><br>Can the bikes use The Cheshiahud Loop which is designed for a safe route for peds and bikes. Why do we need to negatively impact Eastlake when we already have a path for bikes?<br><br>How many parking spots on Eastlake are we losing, I am concerned our local businesses will leave.<br><br>This appears to connect the UW light rail station and perhaps the South Lake Union trolley. This is a very small section that is currently being served well with the 70, which prob (question cut off likely due to field size) | Our analysis shows significant bicycle counts on Eastlake Ave E, and we anticipate an increase as a result of this project. We also expect to see a return to regular commutes for many.<br><br>In Fall 2019, there were, on average, 9,300 daily weekday rides on Route 70. In Spring 2020, in the beginning of the COVID pandemic, there were, on average, 2,500 daily weekday rides. Since then, average daily weekday rides have been increasing. Since bus schedules were adjusted this fall (2022), the average daily weekday rides on the Route 70 increased to nearly 3,900.<br><br>From mid-July 2022 through the end of August 2022, weekly return-to-office figures were 40% or higher for seven of eight weeks the most prolonged stretch above that mark since the start of the pandemic. With that we have seen a 3.4% increase in bus ridership. With regards to Seattle's ever-growing workforce, we must consider the fact that this project is expected to be completed 4 years from now, and its benefits to commuters are projected well into the future beyond that date.<br><br>As cited in page 4-10 of our Eastlake Bicycle Facility Evaluation, Lake Cheshiahud Loop, while safe, has significant elevation, "a 15% grade on E Hamlin St and a 12% grade on E Roanoke St", and is not a direct route. Protected bike lanes on Eastlake will provide a direct connection for people riding bicycles.<br><br>We have done an analysis of impacts of similar projects. We found that adding bike lanes has a neutral-to-positive impact on local businesses, as it encourages |

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| | | people on bikes to stop and frequent the businesses along the corridor.<br><br>A primary purpose of the RapidRide J Line is to improve travel times and provide reliable neighborhood connections to the full transit network. |
| 3 | Sorry, Stephanie interpreted this the way I had intended... what I meant was, could the bike lane be kept on the right side of the road all the way up to 75th? | SDOT's design guidelines recommend having a protected bike lane on left side on one-way roads that have buses and, although this project will not extend the RapidRide J Line north of NE 43rd St, other bus routes still use 11th Ave NE. This is due to safety concerns as busy transit corridors are on the right side of the road and to provide better visibility as cyclists are closer to drivers. SDOT has a separate paving project planning to install the protected bike lane from this intersection to NE 67th St where it accesses the Roosevelt Link station which is on the left side of 11th Ave NE. |
| 4 | How does the transit queue jump lane work if there are cars waiting to turn right there? (Fairview and Eastlake?) | The traffic signal would be configured to allow the cars waiting to turn right to clear out ahead of the bus. |

**Meeting #2: Questions answered during the meeting due to time constraints**

| | Questions | Answers |
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| 1 | You mentioned the research for bike ridership and commuting was done in 2018. A lot has changed in everyone's commute in the past two years due to the pandemic, causing a lot more people to work remotely rather than commute into downtown. Updated research is needed on this. Will this be done? | The focus of the study was looking at the different alternatives and the need for bike lanes. The technical analysis of the physical constraints to be considered are the same as the findings in 2018. |
| 2 | Why is the northbound bike lane jogged over to the other side of the street north of 43rd despite RapidRide not extending further north? Left-side bike lanes are much more dangerous as drivers often forget to look for us in the left side. | SDOT's design guidelines recommend having a protected bike lane on left side on one-way roads that have buses and, although this project will not extend the RapidRide J Line north of NE 43rd St, other bus routes still use 11th Ave NE. This is due to safety concerns as busy transit corridors are on the right side of the road and to provide better visibility as cyclists are closer to drivers. SDOT has a separate paving project planning to install the protected bike lane from this intersection to NE 67th St where it accesses the Roosevelt Link station which is on the left side of 11th Ave NE. |
| 3 | Does RapidRide have a branded lighting fixture? Why would J Line be independent? | There are RapidRide lighting branded lights, however typically if we are in a jurisdiction where the jurisdiction can provide and maintain the lighting, we don't install our own lighting fixtures. This is mainly for uniformity along the corridor and ease of maintenance. |
| 4 | At Fuhrman, why retain the north to west left-turn pocket? Could that market have vehicular access from the south? | A big concern here is ensuring safe accessibility for business and residents. The easiest way to do this is to maintain the left-turn pocket at this intersection. However, the length of these turn lanes can be adjusted based on traffic analysis. |
| 5 | Have you done any sort of traffic study on making the left lane a turning lane coming off of the University Bridge? | There have been traffic studies to consider if this is a viable option. With option 2 (making the left lane a turning lane along the bridge), we are still seeing improvements to traffic operations with the project, especially related to transit benefits. This option would not be as good as option one for the transit benefits, but we are still seeing benefits to transit and no degradation of general traffic. |
| 6 | With a buffer option, would there be an opportunity in the future to add some form of barrier protection inside that buffer space? | At this time, we do not have certainty whether this will be implemented or not, however it will be considered. One of the constraints here is working with the Seattle Fire Department. SDOT will be |

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| | | meeting with them to ensure all design elements do not prohibit their need for access. |
| 7 | Why does the bike lane have to be on the left side of the street north of 43rd? | SDOT's design guidelines recommend having a protected bike lane on left side on one-way roads that have buses and, although this project will not extend the RapidRide J Line north of NE 43rd St, other bus routes still use 11th Ave NE. This is due to safety concerns as busy transit corridors are on the right side of the road and to provide better visibility as cyclists are closer to drivers. SDOT has a separate paving project planning to install the protected bike lane from this intersection to NE 67th St where it accesses the Roosevelt Link station which is on the left side of 11th Ave NE. |
| 8 | Would there be a bike signal at this intersection (11th Ave NE and NE 43rd St)? | Yes, there would be a bike signal at this intersection. |
| 9 | With any of these bike box options, will they be big enough to maneuver some of the larger bike models people ride now, like cargo/family bikes? Some of those turns looked pretty tight. | The intersections are limited in width and will be accommodating transit and other modes of travel. We will be looking to optimize the sizes of these bike boxes for users; however, the actual dimensions have not yet been decided. |
| 10 | 32 minutes into this meeting and I am concerned and confused about the amount of time being spent on explanation on bike lanes. Is this a meeting for bike lanes? Where are the solutions for parking and load zones for businesses? | Earlier in the project we identified many load zones on side streets. We are working with our curb space team. Our next step will be going to individual businesses and property owners to identify their needs and how they can best utilize load zones and parking. Note that we also identified earlier in the presentation the design revision to provide for re-adding spaces on Eastlake Ave E where there was underutilized two-way left turn lanes that allowed us to shift traffic and provide on-street parking. |
| 11 | How many cyclists go southbound to Eastlake vs. Fairview? | This is cited on page 4-14 of our Eastlake Bicycle Facility Evaluation. Eastlake Ave E and Fuhrman Ave E a total of 1070 cyclists were observed going Southbound. At Eastlake Ave E and E Lynn St, a total of 560 cyclists were observed going Southbound. At Eastlake Ave E and Fairview Ave E, a total of 600 cyclists were observed going Southbound. At Fairview Ave E and E Lynn St, a total of 120 cyclists were observed going Southbound. All this data was observed over a 14-hour period. |
| 12 | At the intersection of Eastlake and Fairview, could the bike lanes continue from Fairview with two directional lanes on one side of the | This was studied as part of the initial bike planning study in 2018 and ruled out as an option. The number of bikes isn't the limitation, it is the physical space. Directional bike lanes (one on each side of a |

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| | street, allowing for parking on one side of Eastlake? | two-way street) require the same amount of space as a two-way bike lane (same side of street) when you consider the width of curb space buffers. However, we also had to consider some of the other objectives of the project, particularly how the project interfaces with transit stops and the goal of utilizing existing landscapes medians. When those factors were considered, this option was ruled out. |
| 13 | How does University Bridge opening factor into reliability of timing? | At peak times the University Bridge does not open. However, we have studied what the impact will be. Technology that is used to manage traffic signals is focused on this, to prioritize buses that are running late due to the bridge opening. |
| 14 | If project agrees preferred stop for bus on “far side” of the intersection, why have you moved Lynn St stops to near sides? | There are several amenities that go into RapidRide station platforms that differ from the typical bus station. RapidRide stations range anywhere from 83-130 ft long depending on demand and number of riders. On Lynn St there are driveways that prohibit us from being able to fit a station in the space at the far side of the intersection. |

**Meeting #2: Questions not answered during the meeting due to time constraints**

| | Questions | Answers |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Two of the three examples of protected bike lane buffers had bike lanes on the same side? Why isn't this being done for this project? These type of bike lanes are all over town. | This was studied as part of the initial bike planning study in 2018 and ruled out as an option. The number of bikes isn't the limitation, it is the physical space. Directional bike lanes (one on each side of a two-way street) require the same amount of space as a two-way bike lane (same side of street) when you consider the width of curb space buffers. However, we also had to consider some of the other objectives of the project, particularly how the project interfaces with transit stops and the goal of utilizing existing landscapes medians. When those factors were considered, this option was ruled out. |
| 2 | Does the need for a rapid ride and bike lanes outweigh the amount of disruption and devastation to local merchants who will lose business and parking? Will there be compensation for businesses impacted by this change? | Currently, SDOT does not compensate businesses. We will continue to coordinate with the Office of Economic Development to support business throughout the entirety of the project. |
| 3 | About how many parking spots along the route were added back into this stage of design? | The exact number of parking spaces isn't yet known since we are still adjusting the design to see if we've captured the maximum space. The number of spaces is also dependent on what type of spaces they are. For example, truck load/unload spaces may need to be longer than other parking spaces. Our focus for engagement will be to speak with the businesses close by and have discussions about utilization. |