



**Link Connections Public Engagement Summary**  
**Phase One Outreach**  
November 5 – December 5, 2014

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## Outreach Plan and Activities

### Overview

In the first quarter of 2016, Sound Transit will open Link light rail stations on Capitol Hill and next to the University of Washington's Husky Stadium. As we integrate this new asset into Seattle's transportation system, Metro and Sound Transit are considering changes to bus service that would complement the new light rail system, creating a multi-modal transit network that provides efficient, convenient, and reliable service.

King County transportation community relations planners are working with Sound Transit, in coordination with the Seattle Department of Transportation, the University of Washington, and Seattle Children's Hospital, to engage people who may be affected by service changes related to this integration of bus and new light rail service.

Our outreach is intended to proactively engage the public to help shape the final Metro service change proposal that will be transmitted to the King County Council, as well as the final amended service implementation plan that will be submitted to the Sound Transit board for approval next summer.

Our outreach will have three phases. This report summarizes the first phase, which was done between Nov. 5 and Dec. 5 of 2014. This phase had the following goals:

- Introduce the public and stakeholders to the planning process for changing bus service to integrate with Link light rail service to Capitol Hill and Husky Stadium.
- Hear from the public about how they are using transit service today—what's working, what isn't, what's most important to them about integrating bus and light rail service, and what they'd like to see improved.
- Recruit a sounding board whose membership reflects those who will be affected by the changes being considered.

We spoke with about 6,000 people during this phase of outreach, and more than 4,000 gave us direct feedback. Our next steps for outreach will include sharing our background report, which has information about current service in the project area, with the public; reflecting back what we heard during the first phase of outreach via the website and social media; and selecting and confirming sounding board members. The sounding board will begin meeting mid-January. Our second phase of outreach, when we will share two alternative network concepts and ask for feedback on them, will take place in March 2015.

## **Notifications—how we let people know they could participate**

### **Website content**

We created a Have-a-Say website with information about Link Connections outreach and how to participate. This page, viewed more than 9,400 times during the month of outreach, included a calendar of upcoming outreach events, a way to sign up to receive email or text updates on the project, an online survey, and an application to serve on the Link Connections sounding board. It also had links to the Metro Matters blog, Metro's Facebook page, and other social media outlets with related content. Contact information was provided in English and Spanish, and project information was provided in 12 languages.

### **Media and social media**

At the start of the outreach period, Metro and Sound Transit sent a joint news release ([www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/NewsCenter/NewsReleases/2014/November/nr141106\\_LinkConnections.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/NewsCenter/NewsReleases/2014/November/nr141106_LinkConnections.aspx)) to area news outlets, ethnic media, and community blogs. (See Appendix B for a list of media coverage.)

We posted information on the Metro and Have-a-Say Facebook pages before each of the five community conversation meetings. These Facebook pages have 2,570 and 507 followers, respectively. We also posted information on the Metro Matters blog about the project and opportunities to participate.

King County Metro tweets alerted more than 25,000 followers about these meetings and the opportunities to serve on the sounding board or share feedback and ideas through the online survey. Sound Transit and others got the word out about opportunities to participate using the Twitter hashtag #Bus2Link.

 **King County Metro** @kcmetrobus · Nov 24  
**#Bus2Link**: Interpretation in Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, Russian, Mandarin Chinese & Arabic will be available [ow.ly/EPy3u](https://ow.ly/EPy3u) 2/2

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 **King County Metro** @kcmetrobus · Nov 24  
 How will transit change with Link @UW? **#Bus2Link** meeting 6:30pm Tuesday, Lake City. Survey, join the conversation [ow.ly/EPxWS](https://ow.ly/EPxWS) 1/2

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 **King County Metro** @kcmetrobus · Nov 24  
 How will transit change with Link @UW? Survey, join the conversation [ow.ly/ENXqb](https://ow.ly/ENXqb) Meeting 11/25 **#Bus2Link**

**Tuesday, November 25**

**6:30pm Link Connections: Multi-Lingual Community Conversation**

**When** Tue, November 25, 6:30pm – 8:30pm

**Where** Lake City Court, 12536 33rd Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98125 ([map](#))

**Description** Join us to share how you use bus service in Northeast Seattle, the U District, and Capitol Hill today, what works well, and what you'd like to see change. Your input will help shape the future of transit in these areas. Please note: this is NOT an open house! The conversation starts promptly at 6:45 pm and should wrap up before 8:30 pm.

Refreshments will be provided. Interpretation in Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, and Arabic will be available. Other interpretation and reasonable accommodations available upon request. Please call 206-477-2825 at least 72 hours in advance of the

 [Expand](#)

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 **Sound Transit** @SoundTransit · Nov 20  
 RT @kcmetrobus: At noon today (Nov 20) we're @UW Hub to talk about how **#Bus2Link** service can work for you [ow.ly/EzdD7](https://ow.ly/EzdD7)

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 **King County Metro** @kcmetrobus · Nov 20  
 At noon today (Nov 20) we're @UW Hub to talk about how **#Bus2Link** service can work for you [ow.ly/EzdD7](https://ow.ly/EzdD7) w/ @SoundTransit

**Posters**

We put up posters with a project description and an invitation to participate at stops in the project area that average 200 or more daily boardings.

**Take-away cards on buses and in customer kiosks**

We printed 7,500 cards for drivers to put on buses coming out of Metro’s North, Central, and Atlantic bus bases. These cards were also available in customer kiosks at the University of Washington student union building, the University Bookstore, and Seattle Central College.

**Route subscriber notification**

We sent an email or text message with a description of the project and an invitation to participate to 25,332 subscribers of service alerts for 54 routes that serve the project area. Tracking data show that this notification had an open rate of 32 percent and a click rate of five percent.

**Sound Transit Rider Panel notification**

A notification went out to 2,055 members of Sound Transit SoundWaves rider panel during the week of November 10. This had information about the project, upcoming meetings, and the survey. (SoundWaves is an online community where riders can get information and share experiences, opinions, and preferences through surveys.)

**Community partner email**

We sent an email with a description of the project, an invitation to participate, and a request to help spread the word to more than 80 community-based organizations and stakeholder groups in the project area (see list of organizations in Appendix B). The email included a fill-in questionnaire and poster.

**Echo emails to stakeholder lists**

Several stakeholder organizations forwarded our initial notification to their lists. Those we are aware of include:

- Seattle Department of Neighborhoods' Northeast Seattle "News You Can Use"
- Commute Trip Reduction-affected employers in the project area
- ORCA Passport customers
- U-PASS holders
- Seattle Children's Hospital employees
- University of Washington Medical Center employees
- Eastlake Community Council's e-news
- Ravenna Community Association's e-news

**Mailing**

We mailed a cover letter, poster, and take-away cards to key locations, such as libraries, schools, senior centers, health and social service organizations, and community centers in the project area.

## Feedback methods—how people shared their opinions

During this first phase of outreach, we wanted to have a conversation with members of the public about how they use transit service today—what’s working and what isn’t—as well as what’s most important to them about bus and light rail integration, and what they’d like to see improved. We wanted to listen with an open mind, without preconceived bus change concepts on the table. It was important to create welcoming and open space for sharing and let participants shape the conversation. Using a set of open-ended questions as our guide, we provided online and face-to-face opportunities for people to share their thoughts with us.

### Online questionnaire

As of Dec. 5, 4,087 people had completed the online questionnaire.

### Community conversations

A total of 80 people joined us across five public meetings (locations, dates, and times are listed below), which were publicized on our poster and promoted on our website and via social media. The meetings started with a brief introduction by project staff. Participants then broke into small groups to discuss a set of questions for an hour or more.

- Ravenna-Eckstein Community Center, Nov. 13, 6-8 p.m.
- Seattle University Brown Bag Lunch, Nov. 17, 12-1 p.m.
- Seattle First Baptist Church, Nov. 17, 6-8 p.m.
- University of Washington, Nov. 20, 11:30-1:30 p.m.
- Multi-lingual event, Lake City Court, Nov. 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

### Street teams and information tables

Staff members distributed 2,000 take-away cards to people at bus stops and information tables during the outreach period. They also asked people what questions they could about how they’re using transit today and what they’d like to see improved. The following street team events were promoted on Metro’s website and via social media:

- Bus stops on Campus Parkway and Brooklyn Avenue NE, Nov. 6, 2:30-5:30 p.m.
- Bus stops on Stevens Way NE (on UW campus), Nov. 6, 2:30-5:30 p.m.
- Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel Westlake Station, Bay A, Nov. 12, 3-6 p.m.
- Fourth Avenue and Pike Street, eastbound bus stop, Nov. 13, 3-6 p.m.
- Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, International District Station, Bay A, Nov. 18, 7-9 a.m.
- Seattle Central College information table, Nov. 18, 10-1 p.m.
- University of Washington Medical Center information table, Nov. 19, 10-1 p.m.

### Phone and email

We received 5 emails and phone calls during this outreach period. People who were unable to make it to our outreach events provided feedback on what they would like to see improved as a result of this project.

## Equity and social justice

Our data do not indicate any languages spoken in high enough numbers in the project area to justify the expense of full translation of all project materials. However, after conversations with the University of Washington, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, and Seattle Housing Authority, we determined to translate some project information into Tier 1 and 2 languages as identified in the County's Executive Order on Translation. We have established voice message lines and provided a handout that is available online and to distribute to the public in the following languages:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Chinese - Mandarin
- Korean
- Oromo
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tigrinyan
- Ukrainian
- Vietnamese

We also held a multi-lingual community conversation at Lake City Court, with interpreters in Arabic, Chinese, Oromo, Tigrinyan, Amharic, and Russian available. This event was advertised to residents in all 11 languages. While turnout was low, we gathered good feedback from participants and interpreters about the important issues facing these populations.

## Public Feedback Summary

### Who we heard from

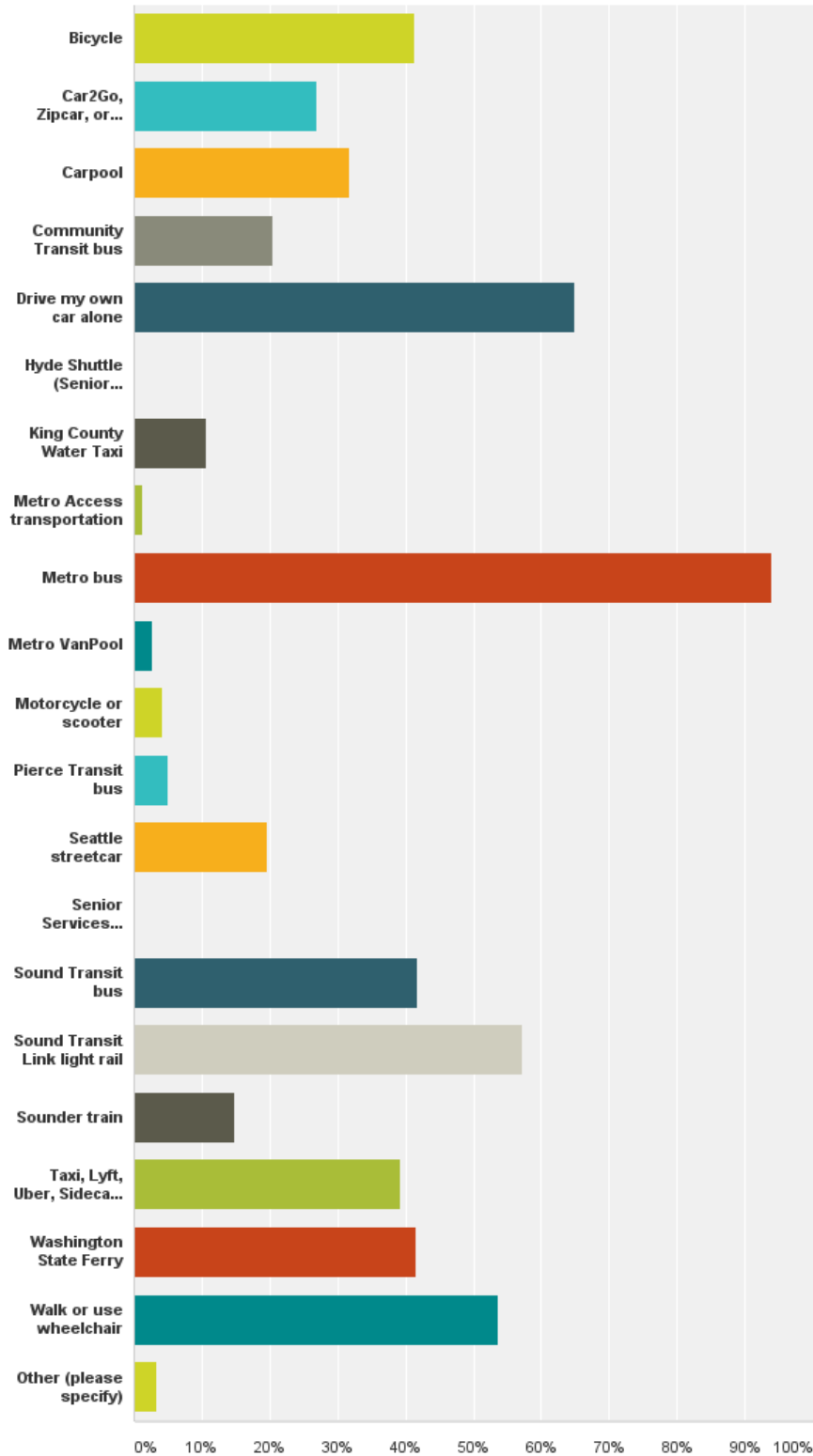
At the end of the comment period, we had heard from about 6,000 people through our online survey, community conversations, street team events, information tables, phone lines, and email.

Participants told us they use many modes to get around, as reflected in the chart below. Those who choose transit over driving do so for many reasons. For example, one respondent to our survey lives in a dense urban environment (Capitol Hill), has little to no parking available for a personal vehicle, has close proximity to groceries and amenities, and is centrally located to reach work downtown. Most respondents said they use transit to commute to work and school. Many said they would prefer to use transit more for other trip purposes if the service was more reliable, frequent, and available at night and on weekends.



**Q1 What types of transportation do you use now, or have you used in the past? (select all that apply)**

Answered: 4,082 Skipped: 5



Participants said they use the following bus routes to travel from many points outside the project area to many points within it, as well as to travel within the project area. The chart on the next page shows a response count by route, from largest to smallest.

**If you ride the bus, or have in the past, please indicate which of the following route(s) you use or have used.**

Route	Response Count
71/71X	1921
73/73X	1908
72/72X	1883
48	1658
43	1557
49	1351
44	1242
70	987
10	916
8	880
75	817
66	783
74	756
11	744
2	694
65	658
3	632
26/28	625
12	612
32	601
4	597
16	567
31	539
67	514
372	488
271	486
ST 545	479
30	466
68	465
60	436
25	408
76	361
255	345
ST 512	287
1	280
14	268
9	257
373	248
13	243
77	243
ST 542	236
64X	228
ST 540	209
ST 556	177
106	165
316	161
ST 555	156
27	128
None of these	111
242	110
ST 586	97
167	92
197	90
311	76
252	69
277	61
107	53
257	43
<b>Total who responded</b>	<b>4017</b>

## What we heard

### Where do you go, or where would you like to go, using transit?

We're mapping specific destinations and neighborhoods noted in people's answers to this open-ended question in a Google map (<http://bit.ly/1BA6wgu>). Coding these responses is resource intensive, so as of this report's publication date the map shows only about half of the survey responses. It includes destinations people told us were significant (such as cultural, religious, low-income, senior, and social service locations or parks), and should be included in the analysis of service needs. It also includes destinations or corridors identified as needing service in the evening, late at night, early in the morning, or on weekends. A legend for the symbols found on the map follows:

- Green Star = more than 100 mentions
- Blue Diamond = 50-100 mentions
- Gold Square = 15-50 mentions
- Red Circle = 1-15 mentions

When viewing the map, click on a symbol to learn more about the characteristics of each destination (e.g. whether it was indicated as a destination of cultural significance, or specific businesses or cross streets that were bunched together into one symbol)

Some key themes that came up consistently in answers to this question were:

- People come from around the Puget Sound area to the University of Washington. We heard from people in Pierce, Snohomish, and the far-reaches of King County who make this trek daily using and transferring between several different modes of transportation. As it becomes less affordable for students and staff at UW to live in the U District and surrounding neighborhoods, many are commuting from the south part of King County and Pierce County to work and go to school. Concern was expressed that the more transfers we impose on those coming from these locations, the more burden we are putting on low income populations – who suffer disproportionate impacts of unpredictable service and long travel times.
- People would like to see better East-West service, including service between the following locations:
  - Lake City and Northgate
  - Sand Point and Greenlake via 65th Avenue NE
  - Northeast Seattle and Ballard through the heart of “The Ave” (University Way NE) instead of through the south or north end
  - Northeast Seattle and Queen Anne
  - Northeast Seattle and Fremont
  - Capitol Hill and Ballard
  - Capitol Hill and Fremont
  - Capitol Hill and West Seattle
- People offered ideas for frequent and reliable service down 25th Avenue NE to connect with Link light rail.
- Many people are excited about Link connecting them to Capitol Hill, downtown Seattle, Rainier Valley, and Sea-Tac Airport.
- Some areas and travel patterns that people don't want planners to lose sight of include:
  - North Capitol Hill and Montlake communities to/from downtown Seattle and the University District

- Coming from the south (Southeast Seattle and Beacon Hill) to the south part of Capitol Hill, Yesler Terrace, and First Hill hospitals (Harborview, Swedish on First Hill and Cherry Hill, Virginia Mason, and the Polyclinic on Madison Street)
  - Eastlake community to/from downtown Seattle and University District/northeast Seattle
  - Madison Valley to/from downtown Seattle and the University District
  - Other north-south corridors of Capitol Hill—Bellevue/Summit/Belmont, 15th and 19th avenues on Capitol Hill
  - Various northeast neighborhoods, like Wedgewood, View Ridge, and Laurelhurst connecting to the University District
- People expressed desire for better service to the Sand Point corridor connecting riders to Magnuson Park, NOAA, and Children’s Hospital.

### **How do the transit options you use work for you? Do they get you where you want to go?**

A majority of those who responded to this question said their transit options work for them. The top three complaints about service are that it takes too long, buses are overcrowded, and the schedule is unreliable. Because of these experiences, a number of people said they prefer direct routes because transfers increase travel time. People expressed a desire for increased frequency of service, especially outside peak times. They also want improved network connectivity, east-west connectivity, and diagonal/cross-town connections in Seattle. There is excitement and a belief that the coming light rail service will improve transit overall in the affected communities and beyond.

Some people really like their routes and don’t want them changed. These include riders of routes 68, 74, 75, and 271.

Others miss routes that have been cut, including routes 45, 46, and 48X, because of the faster service these routes provided to connect Queen Anne, Ballard, Greenwood, and southeast Seattle/Central Area with the University of Washington. People in the Leschi, Central Area, and Yesler communities would like all-day, evening, and weekend service back that was lost when Route 27 was scaled back to peak-only service last September. Riders in the Summit/Belmont area of Capitol Hill expressed desire for a return of Route 47, which connected them to downtown all day and at night.

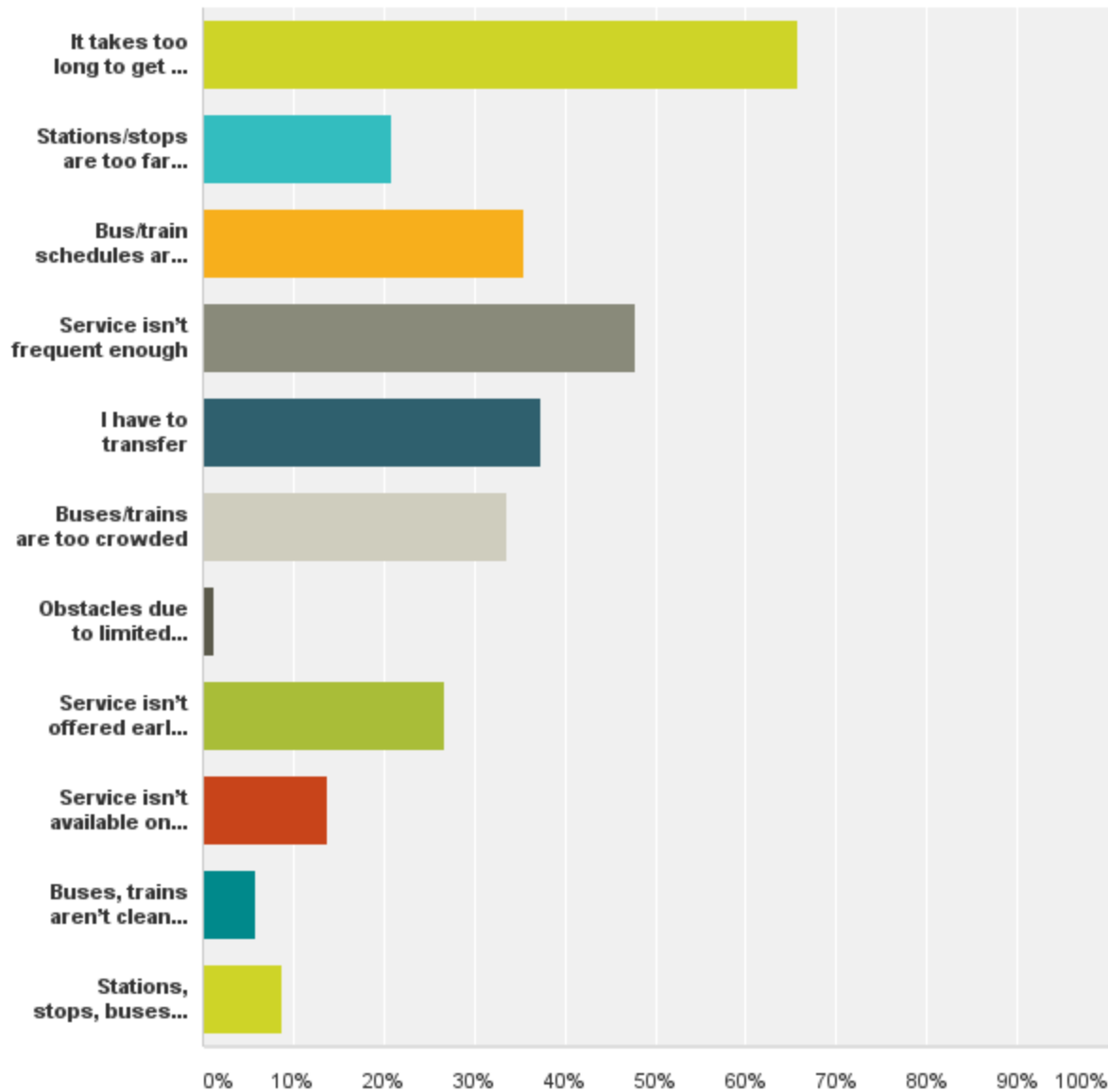
### **What’s most important to you when riding transit?**

We asked what prevents people from using transit, what would make them use transit more, and what’s most important to them about using transit. The length of time the trip takes and the reliability of the trip time were clearly the most important concerns. The more they have to transfer, the less reliable they perceive their trips to be, especially if service is not frequent. We heard countless stories from people about their transfer experiences. If one leg of a trip runs late and a rider misses a connecting trip, and it’s a half-hour wait for the next trip, transit can become too unpredictable and inconvenient. If service were more frequent and reliable, people would find transfers more acceptable.

Feedback from immigrant communities suggests that many immigrants are used to relying on a service network that is less complex and comes more frequently. Several people talked about how in their native countries, they never used any “system” to plan a trip. They could walk to a bus stop, wait no longer than 15 minutes, and make connections to other modes and services at major transfer points throughout their cities. They would find our bus service easier if it operated in more of a grid and service were frequent enough to not require the use of a schedule. The service would also be easier to use if wayfinding signs were in multiple languages, particularly at major inter-modal transfer points and where people need to know how to get to a key activity center.

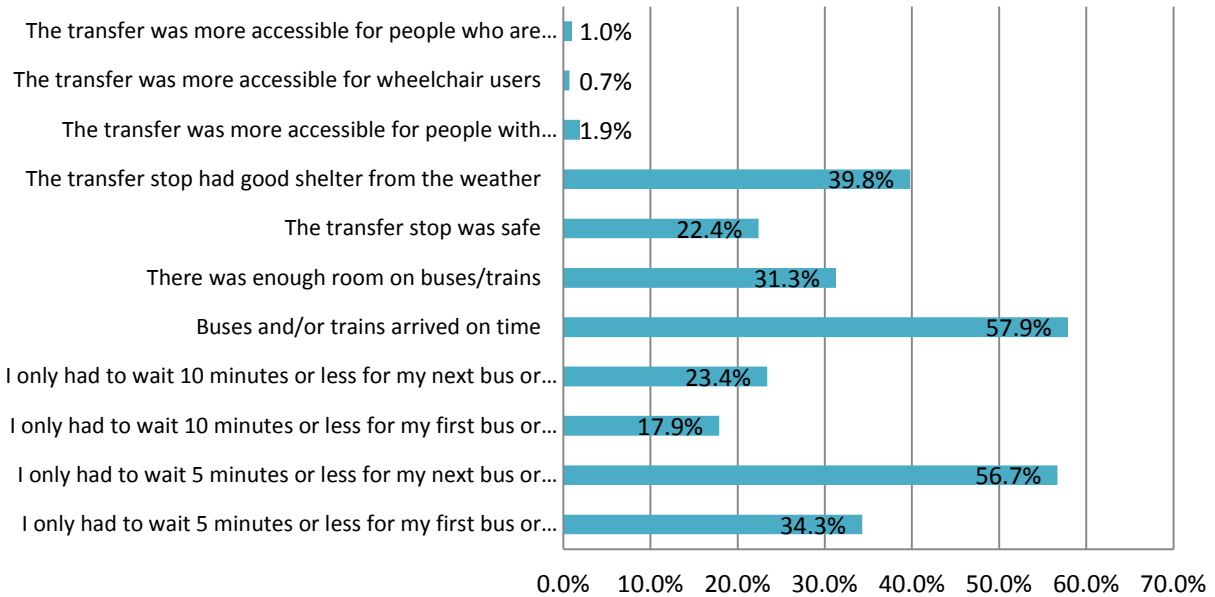
### Q6 What are the top three things that prevent you from using public transportation, or make it difficult for you to use it? (choose up to 3)

Answered: 3,751 Skipped: 336



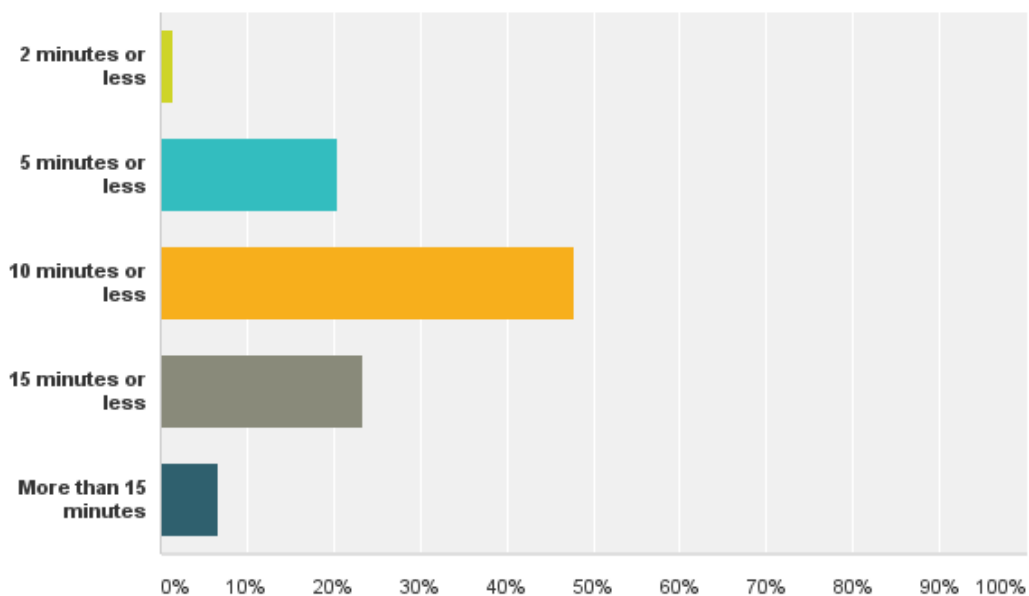
The first chart on the next page shows survey responses about which factors would make the person more willing to transfer. The second chart shows how many minutes respondents said they would be willing to spend getting to very frequent (i.e., every 10 minutes or less) service. This second chart also reflects what we heard from people in face-to-face conversations.

**A more-efficient network of service that connects more people to more places may require more transfers. What would make transfers more acceptable to you? I would be willing to transfer if (choose up to 3):**



**Q10 How many minutes would you be willing to spend getting to transit (walking, biking, or some other mode) that offered very frequent transit service (i.e., service that comes every 10 minutes or less)?**

Answered: 3,783 Skipped: 304



**Other**

Many respondents understand the connection between reliable and fast bus service and bus priority investments. Where people advocated for higher frequency service on major corridors, they also advocated for bus priority transit investments, such as transit only lanes and transit signal priority improvements.

**Feedback about our outreach process**

The top three ways participants heard about the opportunity to participate were from their employers, via a Metro transit text or email notification, or the news media or a neighborhood blog.

Nearly 90 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that the notice, advertisement, and/or invitation to learn more and share thoughts about Metro's Link Connections project was clear and welcoming.

More than 80 percent of respondents felt they were given enough time to provide meaningful feedback.

More than 80 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that taking the time to share their feedback will result in better decisions being made.

**What people appreciated**

- **That we asked for input**—Overwhelmingly, we heard people say “thank you” for giving the public an opportunity to tell us what they are experiencing and what they want so that we can shape changes based on their input.
- **Our street teams**—Our staff members who talked with people at bus stops received several compliments.
- **Metro**—We received numerous compliments about our drivers, how the agency has weathered the past several years of financial turmoil, investments we've made in new buses and technologies, and how we generally do a good job.

**Disappointments or doubts**

- Some people expressed doubt that their input will make a difference.
- Some expressed disappointment in the open-ended nature of the questions we were asking, wishing we had actual changes or ideas they could provide feedback about.
- Some people said we should stop asking for input. They encouraged planners to just make decisions that are best from a planning perspective and not to “water this down” with public input.

**Suggestions for change**

- **Posters**—People appreciated that we had them up, but suggested we put them inside buses, make them better able to stand up to the elements, and use fewer words so they would be easier to read.
- **Survey**—Make it more mobile accessible. Some people suggestions for rephrasing some of the questions we asked; some felt our survey made assumptions about who was answering (too commuter focused, focused on those who don't use transit every day, somehow not applicable to how they or their family use transit, too broad).
- **Inclusiveness of outreach**—People want to make sure we include south Seattle and do more to reach students at the University of Washington, residents in northeast Seattle and Yesler Terrace, and people at Harborview Medical Center, seniors, and people with disabilities.

- **Topics for feedback**—Some asked us to consider getting more feedback to shape connections between additional modes (e.g. bikes and transit).
- **Keep people informed**—People asked us to keep them and other stakeholders informed about the project as it moves forward, and to be more transparent about Metro’s finances, decision making, and management.
- **Keep up the good work**—Many comments expressed the sentiment that we should keep providing good and better service, and keep up this level of engagement.

**Regardless of how people felt about this phase of outreach, we received a clear message that they want to see the results of their feedback and how we reflect this in the changes we put forth.** This feedback will be taken into consideration as we plan the next phase of outreach.



## Appendix A – Media coverage

### **Capitol Hill Seattle – Bus Stop | The year ahead in Capitol Hill transit**

<http://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2015/01/bus-stop-the-year-ahead-in-transit/>

### **Capitol Hill Seattle – Metro, Sound Transit planning how best to restructure routes, connect buses to Capitol Hill Station**

<http://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2014/11/metro-sound-transit-planning-how-best-to-restructure-routes-connect-buses-to-capitol-hill-station/>

### **Capitol Hill Seattle – With eye on 2016 Capitol Hill light rail, plans readied to integrate Metro, Sound Transit service — UPDATE**

<http://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2014/09/with-eye-on-2016-capitol-hill-light-rail-plans-readied-to-integrate-metro-sound-transit-service/>

### **UW Daily – Transit agencies to discuss light rail plans**

<http://dailyuw.com/archive/2014/11/12/news/transit-agencies-discuss-light-rail-plans#.VL7dXoXR8wk>

### **UW Daily – (photo)**

<http://dailyuw.com/photo/2014/11/20/news/metro-and-sound-transit>

## Appendix B – List of Community Partners

15th Ave Community
Amazon
Bullitt Foundation
Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce
Capitol Hill Community Council
Capitol Hill Housing
Capitol Hill Triangle
Cascade Bicycle Club
Central Area Transit Coalition
Children's Home Society of Washington-North Seattle Family Support Center
Children's Hospital
City of Seattle, Department of Neighborhoods
City of Seattle, Department of Transportation
Colman Neighborhood Association
East District Council
Eastlake Community Council
Families for Lake City
Feet First
First Hill Improvement Association
Friends of Frink Park
Greater University Chamber of Commerce
Group Health Cooperative
Hawthorne Hills Community Council
Holy Names Academy
Jackson Commons
Jewish Family Services
Lake City Neighborhood Alliance
Lake Union Community Council
Laurelhurst Community Club
League of Women Voters - NE Seattle Chapter
Leshi Community Council
Lighthouse for the Blind
Madison Park Business Association
Madison Park Seattle
Madrona Moms
Madrona Neighborhood
Magnuson Park Advisory Committee
Mallard Cove House Boats
Maple Leaf Community Council
Meadowbrook Community Council
Meredith Matthews E Madison YMCA
Miller Park Neighborhood Association
MLK FAME Community Center
Montlake Community Club
NOAA Sand Point

North Capitol Hill Neighborhood Association
North County Mobility Coalition
Northeast District Council
PCC Natural Markets
Pronto Bike Share
Puget Sound Sage
Ravenna-Bryant Community Association
Ravenna-Bryant Senior Center
Roosevelt Neighborhood Association
Roosevelt Neighbors' Alliance
Seattle Central College
Seattle Commission on People with Disabilities
Seattle Deaf-Blind Center
Seattle Floating Homes
Seattle Housing Authority: Lake City Court
Seattle Neighborhood Greenways
Seattle Preparatory School
Seattle University
Senior Services - Transportation Program
South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
Squire Park Community Council
Sustainable Northeast Seattle
Swedish Hospital
The Northwest School
The U District Partnership
Thornton Creek Alliance
Transit Riders Union
Transportation Choices Coalition
U District Conversation on Homelessness
U District Farmers Market
United Indians of All Tribes
University District Community Council
University District Food Bank
University District Rotary Club
University Family YMCA
University Greenways
University Heights Center
University of Washington
University of Washington Medical Center
University Village
View Ridge Community Council
Virginia Mason
Wedgewood Community Council
Yesler Community Council