



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 5968
November 9, 2021
Study Session**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5968: Metro Long-Range Transit Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive presentation	

DEPARTMENT:	City Manager		
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Ross Freeman, Sustainability Analyst		
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
EXHIBITS:	1. King County Metro Presentation		
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	1. Prepare for the impacts of growth and change with a continued consideration on environmental sustainability.		

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

SUMMARY

Today’s presentation, delivered by staff from King County Metro, is part of a multi-city outreach, engagement, and transit planning project to prepare for the opening of East Link light rail in 2023. Metro will discuss the planning timelines, potential changes to bus routes, and future bus-rail interconnections.

BACKGROUND

In April 2021, King County Metro and Sound Transit launched the public engagement component of their joint mobility planning project (“[East Link Connections](#)”) on King County’s Eastside to prepare for the 2023 extension of Link light rail service from Seattle through Mercer Island to Bellevue and Redmond. This outreach is intended to engage with city governments and their communities, gather information on changing mobility needs, assess barriers to transit use (including connection points, availability, frequency, reliability, overcrowding, safety, etc.), and improve access for historically underserved populations.

In the summer of 2021, the agencies presented a draft proposed network of service changes to the public and gathered feedback through [online surveys](#) and virtual community meetings. The City of Mercer Island promoted these opportunities to the public through various communications channels. Maps of the proposed changes to 52 individual routes can be found under the “Background” tab at this Sound Transit [online engagement portal](#).

This fall, the agencies will revise and finalize the proposed network based on public input and recommendations from a Mobility Board. This Board is composed of individuals (such as BIPOC, disabled, low-income, unhoused, immigrant, non-English speakers) that do not represent an organization, and who can personally speak on issues of racial equity and barrier-free access.

Next summer (2022), the King County Council will vote on the final changes to bus service, and the Sound Transit Board of Directors will vote on related bus-rail connections.

Once finalized, the new network of routes and connections will launch in 2023 in conjunction with the first service change immediately following the opening of East Link light rail service to Redmond.

REGULAR METRO SERVICE PLANNING

The East Link Connections process is distinct from Metro’s standard service changes that have historically occurred in October and March of each year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many bus lines, including those that serve Mercer Island, were reduced, or suspended altogether, due to low ridership. Now that an economic recovery is underway after the peak of the pandemic, the recent October 2 service change included the return of many routes to full-service levels, such as the Route 630 commuter shuttle to downtown Seattle, the Route 204 Mercer Island circulator, and Sound Transit’s ST550 and ST554 express bus lines that stop at the Mercer Island Park & Ride. In addition, October 2 marked the opening of Sound Transit’s light rail extension from Husky Stadium to Northgate in Seattle, which triggered several routing adjustments.

STAFF-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

Beginning in February 2021, staff have met with Sound Transit and Metro to receive updates on the East Link Connections process, provide internal City feedback, suggest outreach venues on Mercer Island, help identify interested stakeholders, and identify any potential major public works projects that could impact future bus routing and bus stop locations. Staff invited Metro to present an update to the Mercer Island City Council, ultimately leading to today’s session.

PARTNER REVIEW BOARD

In addition to Metro’s individual engagement with project partners and stakeholders, a Partner Review Board (PRB) has been convened to provide feedback on service concepts developed by the Mobility Board (i.e. riders and users) and King County Metro staff. The PRB offers a formal venue to provide guidance on both engagement opportunities and implementation plans; the City of Mercer Island’s Sustainability Analyst attends these meetings. Other invited participants include representatives from jurisdictions and major institutions in the project area, leaders of community-based organizations, and representatives from partner transit agencies.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive presentation.