

I-405 BRT Plan (“I-405 Stride”) Highlands Neighborhood Meeting Summary

Dec. 16, 2020

*“Sound Transit's ST3 Regional Transit System Plan [approved by voters in 2016] is bringing a once-in-a-generation transit investment to Kirkland with a new **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** station at NE 85th St. and I-405.”*

The purpose of this meeting was to address questions regarding **Traffic, Parking, and Noise Impacts** in the Highlands from the I-405 BRT project. (A Jan. 20 meeting will address our questions about crime.) There were staff in attendance from the City of Kirkland, the state transportation dept. (WSDOT), and Sound Transit. Here is the link to their slide presentation: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/kmlb0jj4dlb6m2k/12-16-20%20WSDOT%20Sound%20Transit%20I-405%20NE%2085th%20Presentation%20to%20Highlands%20Neighborhood.pdf?dl=0>

. Here is their contact info:

City of Kirkland:

Allison Zike

Senior Planner

azike@kirklandwa.gov

425-587-3259

Sound Transit:

Ivonne Rivera-Martinez

Ivonne.riveramartinez@soundtransit.org

206-553-3412

WSDOT:

Mary MacKie

I405SR167Program@wsdot.wa.gov

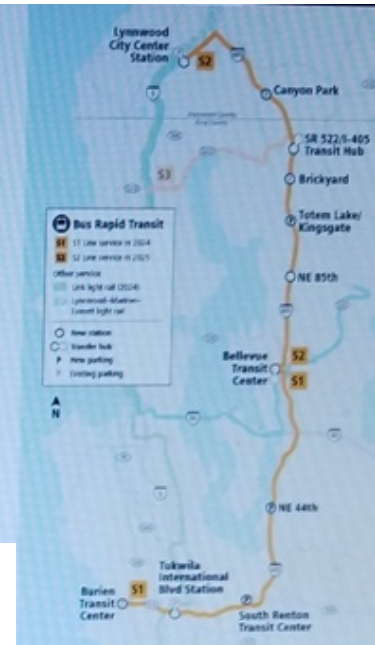
425-456-8585

It's important to understand that there are **three entities** involved in the I-405 BRT plan:

- **SOUND TRANSIT:** Builds and operates regional transit service throughout the urban areas of Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties.
- **WSDOT:** Partners with Sound Transit and owns the NE 85th St interchange.
- **CITY OF KIRKLAND:** Creating a Station Area Plan for *city* property surrounding WSDOT property. The city regulates zoning and traffic on city property. The purpose of the city's Station Area Plan is to look at how development, open space, and mobility connections in neighborhoods near the station can leverage this regional investment to create the most value and quality of life for Kirkland.

I-405 Stride

- 37-mile corridor Lynnwood to Burien
- Integrated with WSDOT's I-405 Master Plan
- 11 BRT stations across 8 cities
 - Three new/expanded parking facilities
 - One transit center
 - Connections to Link light rail in Lynnwood, Bellevue and Tukwila
- Estimated 25,800 riders daily by 2040



See the WSDOT slide presentation (link above) for a larger version of the above diagram

How to Provide Input

The **BRT plan** (WSDOT property) is a done deal. It was approved on the 2016 ballot and there have been extensive public input opportunities over the past five or so years. The Kirkland BRT stop was an alternative to light rail on the CKC.

The **Station Area Plan** (for city property) is where residents can still have input. Watch for announcements about the following opportunities:

- January 5 – Environmental impact statement released
- January 7 – Community Workshop
- January 5 - February 5 – Comment period

Learn more about the Station Area Plan here: Kirklandwa.gov/stationareaplan.

Sign up for city email updates at the above link.

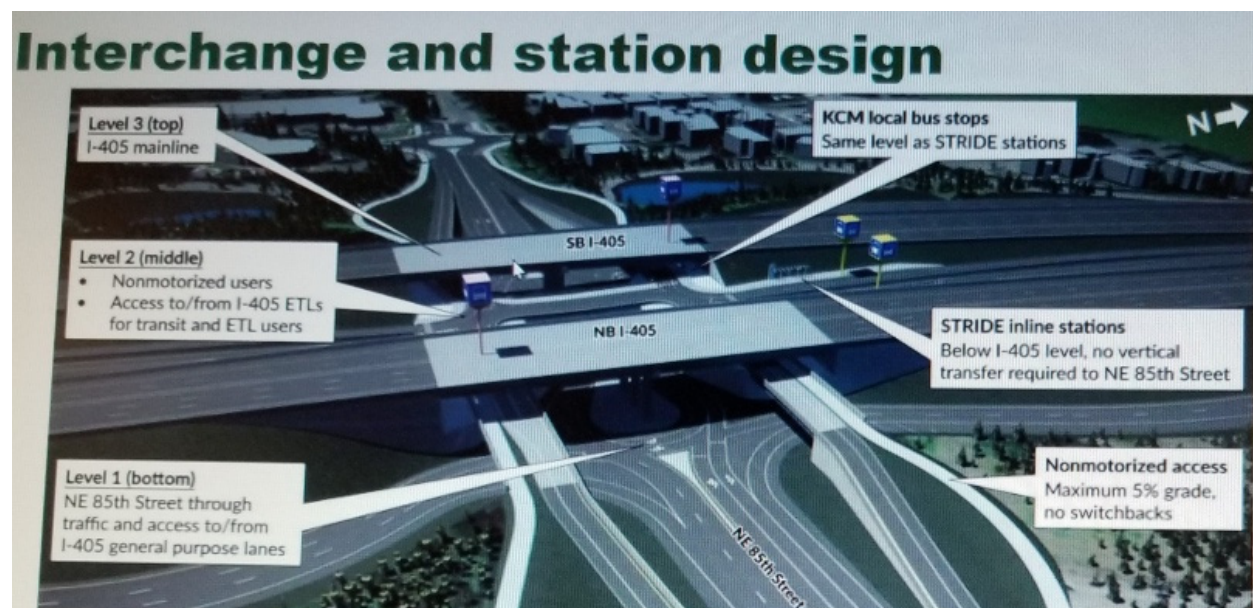
Send comments to: Allison Zike azike@kirklandwa.gov

I-405 BRT Project Timeline

Due to Covid, Sound Transit is experiencing revenue shortfalls. They will meet in July to create a new timeline for their regional projects. For the I-405 BRT project, construction will take about two years, and they do not anticipate opening the line before 2025.

What is the I-405 BRT Project?

- BRT stop at NE 85th St with 1200-1600 daily riders
- Up to 50 minute shorter travel times between Lynwood and Renton
- Direct transfer to and from local buses at the BRT stop
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements (it is now quite unsafe to cross four high-speed on and off ramps).
- Roundabout at 114th Ave NE and NE 85th St intersection reduces accidents and delays (no more southbound backups on 114th).
- Converts the outdated interchange configuration to a safer, non-cloverleaf model with fewer onramp delays.
- Direct access to 405 express toll lanes (we can't access them from current 85th onramps).
- Three-level design: NE 85th Street will be lowered by 20-25 feet. The middle level, with transit and toll lane access, will be constructed at the current elevation of NE 85th Street. I-405 will remain at its current elevation.
- Here is a link to a video rendering of the interchange design:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/n56dwbjkfealwyz/20201216_191435.mp4?dl=0.



See the WSDOT slide presentation (link above) for a larger version of the above diagram

Construction Impacts

Construction is estimated to take two years. It is anticipated that most of the construction will occur during daytime hours. If nighttime construction is necessary, a noise variance from the City of Kirkland will be required. See page 20 of the Sound Transit SEPA document for a list of the construction noise mitigation measures that will be taken (for example, no idling):

<https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/documents-reports/i-405-bus-rapid-transit-sepa-dns>.

All 405 onramps and off ramps will be open during construction.

All lanes will be open during daytime hours during the week. There will likely be some weekend lane closures.

Pick-up and Drop-off (PUDO)

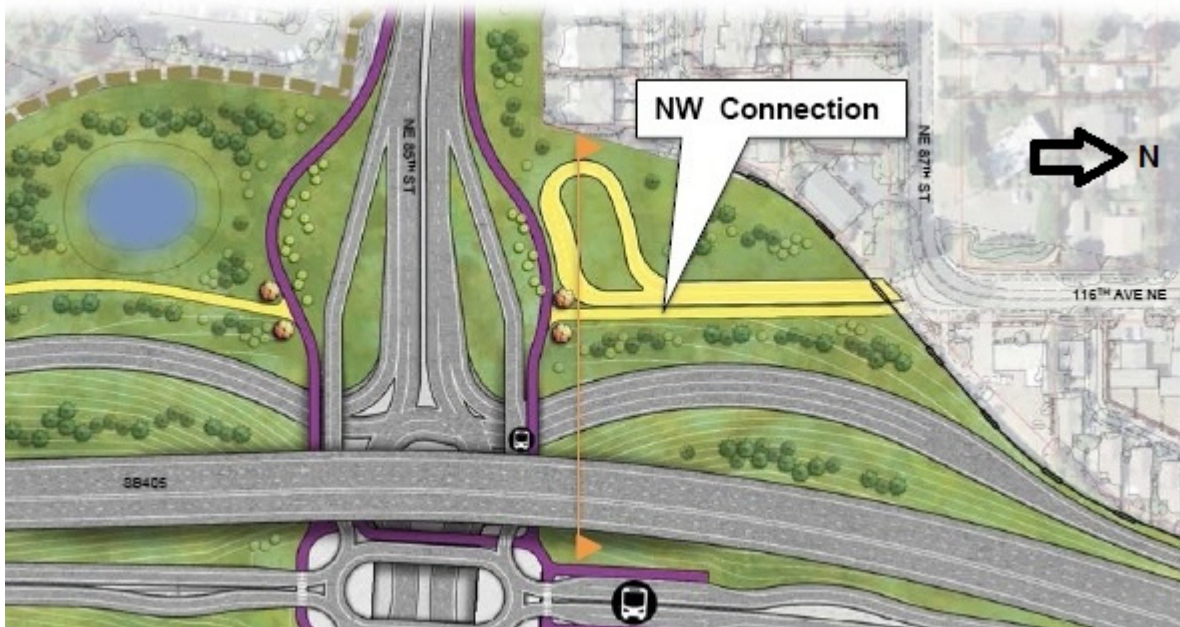
A pickup and drop-off (PUDO) is needed to prevent unsafe conditions, and delaying other vehicles, such as cars stopping in the road to drop people off or pick them up, or people dashing across the road if they're dropped on the other side.

WSDOT traffic models predict that 40 cars per day will use the PUDO: 20 during AM peak hour, and 20 during PM peak. Note that this is a fraction of the total BRT users: most users will be transferring from local buses, or accessing the station via foot or bicycle.

For context, here are the daily total traffic counts on 116th Ave NE north of NE 87th St by year:

2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2009	2007	2005	2002	2001
4233	4007	4091	4010	4069	4071	4116	4229	4516	4553

The PUDO is a WSDOT project, and is on their property, where the cloverleaf is now.



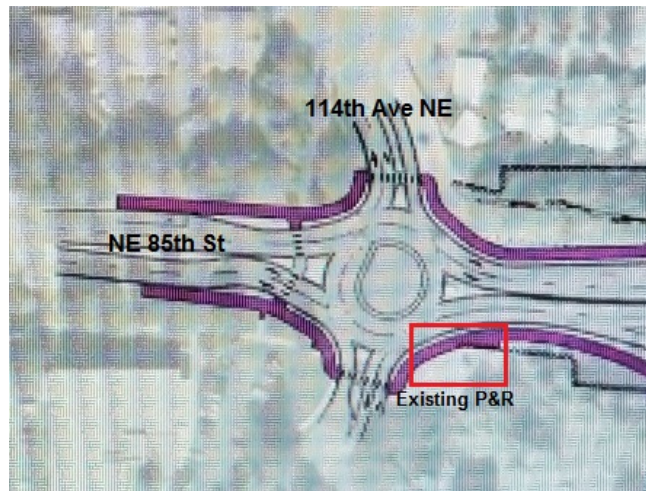
Purple is new pedestrian/bike paths. Yellow is the Highlands pedestrian/bike path and PUDO. The large bus symbol is the BRT station location. The small bus symbol is a local bus stop.

WSDOT took many factors into account when deciding where to put the PUDO, such as:

- Differences in quadrants
- Existing connections
 - Vehicular
 - Nonmotorized
- Missing connections
- Connection to CKC
- Proximity to BRT station
- Traffic and circulation patterns
- Access to/from

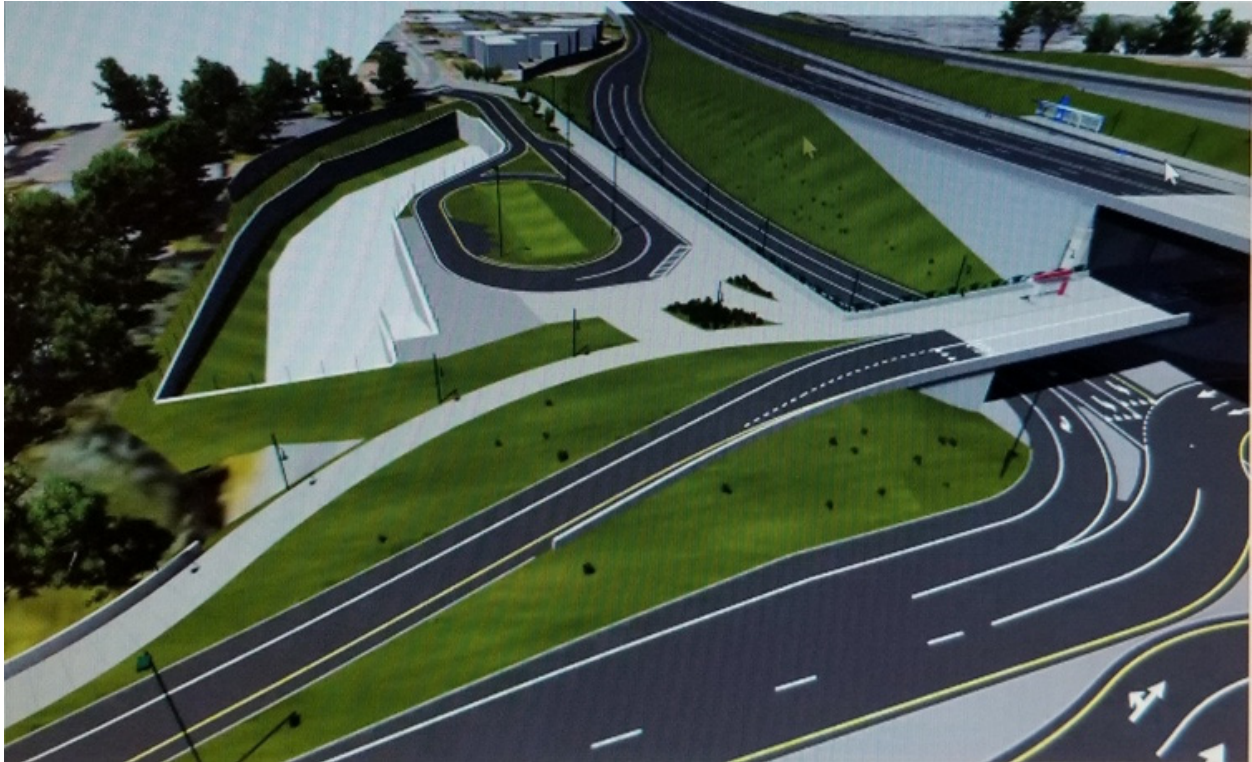
Although there are no “official” PUDOs in the other three quadrants, people from those quadrants will very likely drop off at locations such as commercial parking lots, rather than drive all the way into the Highlands.

The existing Park and Ride on the south side of NE 85th St. can't be used as a PUDO because it is too close to the new roundabout and will be decommissioned:



There are no plans to widen 116th, or to install additional stop signs.

View of the PUDO looking north:



Parking

City Transportation Manager Joel Pfundt says the city does not anticipate a lot of transit parking in the Highlands. Sound Transit believes that most users will access the BRT from local bus transfers, or by foot or bicycle. However, the city will establish baseline parking volumes, monitor parking impacts from the BRT, and work with the neighborhood to address any issues that may arise.

There are currently no permit parking zones anywhere in Kirkland because these permits are complicated to administer, hard to enforce, and residents who've used them elsewhere say they can be a hassle. Time-limited parking can also be a hassle for residents.

Noise

Homes near the existing onramp will see a decrease in noise because the new onramp will be closer to the freeway (and farther from the homes) and it will be at a lower elevation (because NE 85th St will be lower).

Some homes north of the interchange will see slightly increased noise levels of several decibels. (It wasn't clear if this was due to the new interchange, or to other factors.)

There are no plans to add or increase the height of noise walls in the Highlands.

For details about construction and other noise impacts, see page 20 of the Sound Transit SEPA checklist: <https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/documents-reports/i-405-bus-rapid-transit-sepa-dns>.

90th St. Pedestrian Bridge Not Likely to Happen

A pedestrian/bicycle bridge over 405 at NE 90th St is not funded and is unlikely to ever happen. It would also be somewhat redundant with the pedestrian improvements for the BRT at NE 85th St. If the bridge were ever built, it would not be for any vehicles, emergency or otherwise.

Crime Concerns

Kirkland Police will attend a Highlands meeting on January 20 to address our questions about whether crime (such as car prowls and home burglaries) is likely to increase around the new bus station.

Karen Story and Debbie Ohman
Highlands Neighborhood co-chairs