

From: [Noll, Mark](#)
To: [Benson, Charles](#); [Kirsten Taylor](#)
Cc: [Hoffman, Jemae](#); [Lamon, Luke](#); [Crosley, Stephen](#); [Chalmers, Katie](#); [Henry, Brian](#)
Subject: RE: Website FAQs from Sound Transit
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2019 4:02:31 PM
Attachments: [19.03.12 Mercer Island FAQ.DOCX](#)

Hi Kirsten,

Metro's refined and consolidated FAQs and responses are attached for your use on the Mercer Island webpage / newsletter. Please reach out with any questions.

Thanks,

Mark Noll
206-477-5775

From: Benson, Charles [mailto:charles.benson@soundtransit.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2019 2:53 PM
To: Kirsten Taylor <Kirsten.Taylor@mercergov.org>
Cc: Hoffman, Jemae <jemae.hoffman@soundtransit.org>; Lamon, Luke <luke.lamon@soundtransit.org>; Noll, Mark <mnoll@kingcounty.gov>; Crosley, Stephen <SCrosley@kingcounty.gov>
Subject: Website FAQs from Sound Transit

Hello Kirsten,

Please find the website FAQs from Sound Transit attached; Metro will send theirs separately. Per our earlier conversation, please feel free to combine both ST and Metro FAQs as per your intended audience. The highlights in the attached document are for City of Mercer Island attention. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Charles

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1. **What is the vision for Metro service from Mercer Island to Eastside cities?**

Metro strives to provide the best regional service network to its customers, one that offers a convenient and competitive alternative to driving alone. Metro published METRO CONNECTS in 2016, laying out a preliminary plan for future regional service when East Link opens. This document was part of extensive public outreach process. To improve service when Link light rail opens, Metro will reinvest service hours that are currently used to run buses into Seattle from Eastside communities.

This reinvestment will restructure and enhance Eastside service to compliment the new light rail network. It will connect Eastside communities not served by East Link, including Issaquah, North Bend, and Sammamish, to light rail as well as jobs and services on Mercer Island. Specifically for Mercer Island, this service will aim to reduce vehicle trips and parking demand from the Eastside on Mercer Island streets and public parking facilities. It is anticipated that ST Express Bus routes currently serving Mercer Island will either be eliminated (ST 550) or terminate at South Bellevue (ST 554). There is no bus service envisioned between Mercer Island and Seattle.

For Metro service, Mercer Island was identified as the fastest and most logical westbound terminus and transfer point to light rail (i.e. the place where Metro service begins, ends, and pauses for required driver rest periods) due to its proximity and accessibility to the I-90 HOV lanes. There will be approximately 4 spaces on Mercer Island for buses to layover, which will limit non-local bus volumes to below existing levels that serve the island. In 2021, roughly 18-24 months before East Link opens, Metro will lead an extensive public engagement and planning process to make final decisions about the planned service outlined in METRO CONNECTS.

2. **How will local intra-island bus service change on Mercer Island?**

In 2021, roughly 18-24 months before East Link opens, Metro will lead an extensive public engagement and planning process to give Mercer Island residents and visitors the opportunity to provide input and feedback on transit services and routing when East Link opens. This process will guide Metro's decisions about the existing Route 204, Route 630, and other transit and mobility services on Mercer Island.

3. **When will this new service plan be implemented?**

Metro will restructure its service in conjunction with the opening of East Link in 2023. Planning and public outreach will begin in 2021, roughly 18-24 months before East Link opens.

4. **How will buses coming from Eastside communities navigate on Mercer Island?**

Westbound buses will exit I-90 from the HOV off-ramp onto northbound 80th Ave. Buses will take a left (westbound) on North Mercer Way and drop off customers at the existing bus stop of the north side of North Mercer Way. Buses will then make a 180-degree turn at the proposed roundabout at 77th Ave and travel back east to pick up customers at the existing bus stop on the south side of

North Mercer Way. Buses will then turn right (southbound) on 80th Ave to access the eastbound I-90 HOV on-ramp and return to the Eastside.

5. How will the proposed layover spaces operate on Mercer Island?

After dropping off passengers on the north side of North Mercer Way, buses will utilize the layover spaces on the north or south sides of North Mercer Way for operator rest periods and to maintain schedules. Buses will then pick-up passengers on the south side of North Mercer Way before accessing the eastbound I-90 HOV on-ramp to return to the Eastside.

Metro will need to utilize layover space on the north and south sides of North Mercer Way to meet King County Metro's operational needs. Average layover times refer to the time required for operator rest periods and are generally uniform, scheduled to be about 15 minutes. A reasonable range is 10-20 minutes. Metro has an incentive to minimize time not spent providing service.

6. How was the passenger transfer experience incorporated into the transit interchange design?

The existing bus stops on the north and south sides of North Mercer Way, located closest to 80th Avenue SE, will remain as each is within close proximity to the entrance to the future light rail station. In addition to siting the bus stops close to the light rail station entrance, the proximity of the proposed layover/flex space provides the best opportunity for coordinated light rail and bus service, resulting in quick and reliable transfers, as well as flexibility for future innovative mobility options.

7. Will these plans impact the existing park and ride lot?

No, there will be no changes to the existing park and ride lot.

8. Will any buses navigate through the Mercer Island town center on 27th St?

Only local, intra-island bus service will travel south of I-90.

9. Why is Mercer Island a better connection point to Link light rail than South Bellevue for Eastside communities?

To access South Bellevue, Metro customers would have to travel off I-90 onto Bellevue Way, north to the station, and then board Link and double back down Bellevue Way to I-90. Particularly eastbound, the merge from Bellevue Way to I-90 is extremely congested and presents safety and operational challenges for buses merging across several lanes to get from Bellevue Way into the center HOV lane. This travel time, assuming a 5-minute light rail trip from South Bellevue to Mercer Island, is 3-10 minutes longer than traveling directly from Eastgate to Mercer Island.

In addition, direct service to Mercer Island avoids out-of-direction travel and provides safer, quicker connections to/from the I-90 HOV lanes, resulting in faster bus travel times and discouraging Eastside drivers from parking on Mercer Island to reach Link light rail. Finally, Metro has already planned to completely fill the capacity for bus transfers at South Bellevue Station and cannot plan for additional routes there.

10. How will bus volumes from other jurisdictions change along North Mercer Way when Link light rail opens?

Bus volumes from off-island locations will decrease when Link light rail opens. Today, there are over 30 buses per hour serving Mercer Island from off-island locations during peak commuter periods. When Link light rail opens bus service from off-island locations is anticipated at about 20 buses per hour during peak commuter periods.

11. If bus volumes are decreasing, why is additional curb space needed for buses?

Expansion of curb space is related to layover needs. Layover is short-term parking spaces for buses that allow for mandated operator rest periods and schedule adherence. As indicated in Question 1, Mercer Island will be the westbound terminus for restructured routes, thus requiring space for short layover periods to allow for mandated driver rest periods. Some of the curb space will allow flexibility for the future as new and emerging services and technologies come into play that affect bus service as well as other modes of travel. Nearer to the opening of East Link, Metro will lead public outreach to fine-tune preliminary plans and develop a specific service plan.

12. What is impacted by allowing additional North Mercer Way layover space on the north side of the street?

The roundabout design and additional layover on the north side of N. Mercer Way is still in the conceptual design phase. As envisioned, the proposed layover may require the removal of up to five trees. The adjacent sidewalk width would be maintained or improved per the City of MI's design preference. This work would be completed in conjunction with the construction of the roundabout at 77th Avenue SE and N. Mercer Way.

13. Will there be a bus stop on the west side of 80th Ave?

A bus stop on 80th Ave would be south of the eastbound I-90 on-ramp and would be for local Mercer Island service only. This stop is optional and will only be implemented if desired by Mercer Island. If implemented, there will be no additional construction necessary for this local bus stop; Metro will install a flag (or route ID sign) at this location.