

Eastside Easy Rider
COLLABORATIVE

July 28st 2026
1:00pm – 2:30pm

EERC Welcomes Everyone

The EERC welcomes and values all communities. We value, respect, and honor the identity and experience of all members. We encourage everyone to participate, regardless of ability. We are committed to listening, learning, and improving in this process.

We acknowledge that the work we do takes place on the traditional land of the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie and other Coast Salish peoples, as the first people of this county. We honor with gratitude the land itself and past, present, and future of these tribes

Agenda

Time	Topic
1:00 – 1:10	Welcome and announcements
1:10 – 1:30	Disability Empowerment Center – Mandy Wes
1:30 – 2:20	City of Kirkland Transit Needs Study – Thomas Valdriz
2:20 – 2:30	Roundtable
2:30	Adjourn

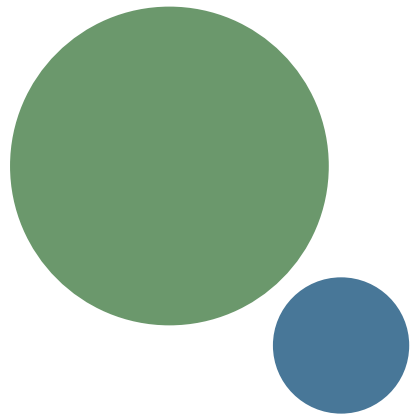
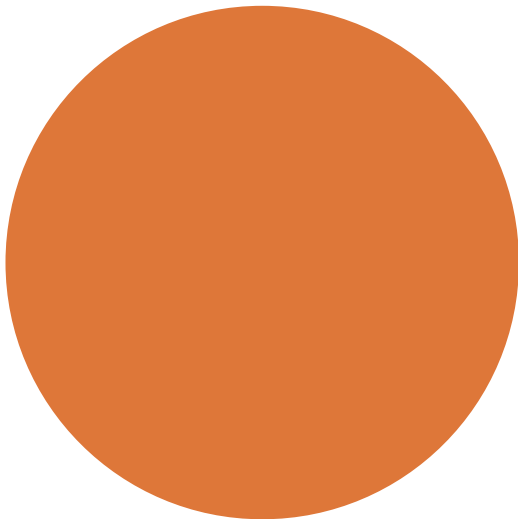


Our Community Presence

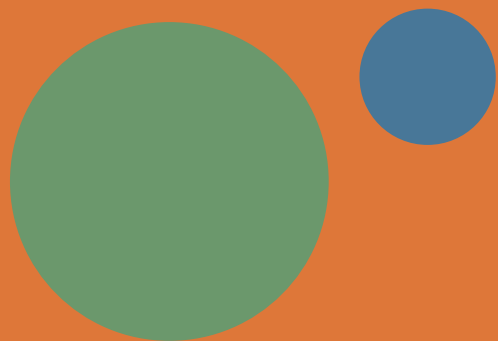
**Presenter: Mandy Wes, CPC, ILS
Independent Living Specialist**

We Believe

We believe everyone deserves to be treated with equity, to be included and to have choices.



**Worldwide, 1
billion people live
with some form of
a disability.**



**In King County,
it's 1 in 5.**

**Sources: World Health Organization,
Communities Count**



**Nearly everyone
is likely to
experience a
disability at some
point in life.**

**Anyone can be
made a member
of the disability
community.**

Source: World Health Organization

Why we exist



Disability Empowerment Center exists because discrimination exists...

- Before the 1980s, many people with disabilities were segregated to living in institutions and disabled people had little autonomy or choice.
- People with disabilities **continue** to experience discrimination and obstacles in the workplace, in housing, in schools and many other areas of life.



Vision & Mission



Our Vision: People with disabilities are guaranteed equity, inclusion and choice.

Our Mission: Empowering people with disabilities to have the freedom to live with autonomy and choice.



Who we serve



Everyone is welcome:

- We work with people with all types of disabilities: physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, mental health +
- Serving people throughout King County
- People ages 14 to older adult
- No referral or diagnosis is needed to receive services
- To receive services, all you need is a goal



What we do



Free Individualized Services:

- Information and referral
- Independent living skills training
- Peer groups
- Transition support
 - From young adulthood to adulthood
 - From institutional living to community-based living
- Advocacy
 - Individuals learn how to advocate for their needs and tell their story
 - Systemic change on the city, county, state and national level



Our approach



We have a unique model:

- Our staff and volunteers have disabilities, too
- We work peer to peer
- People we serve make all their own choices
 - "Nothing about us without us"

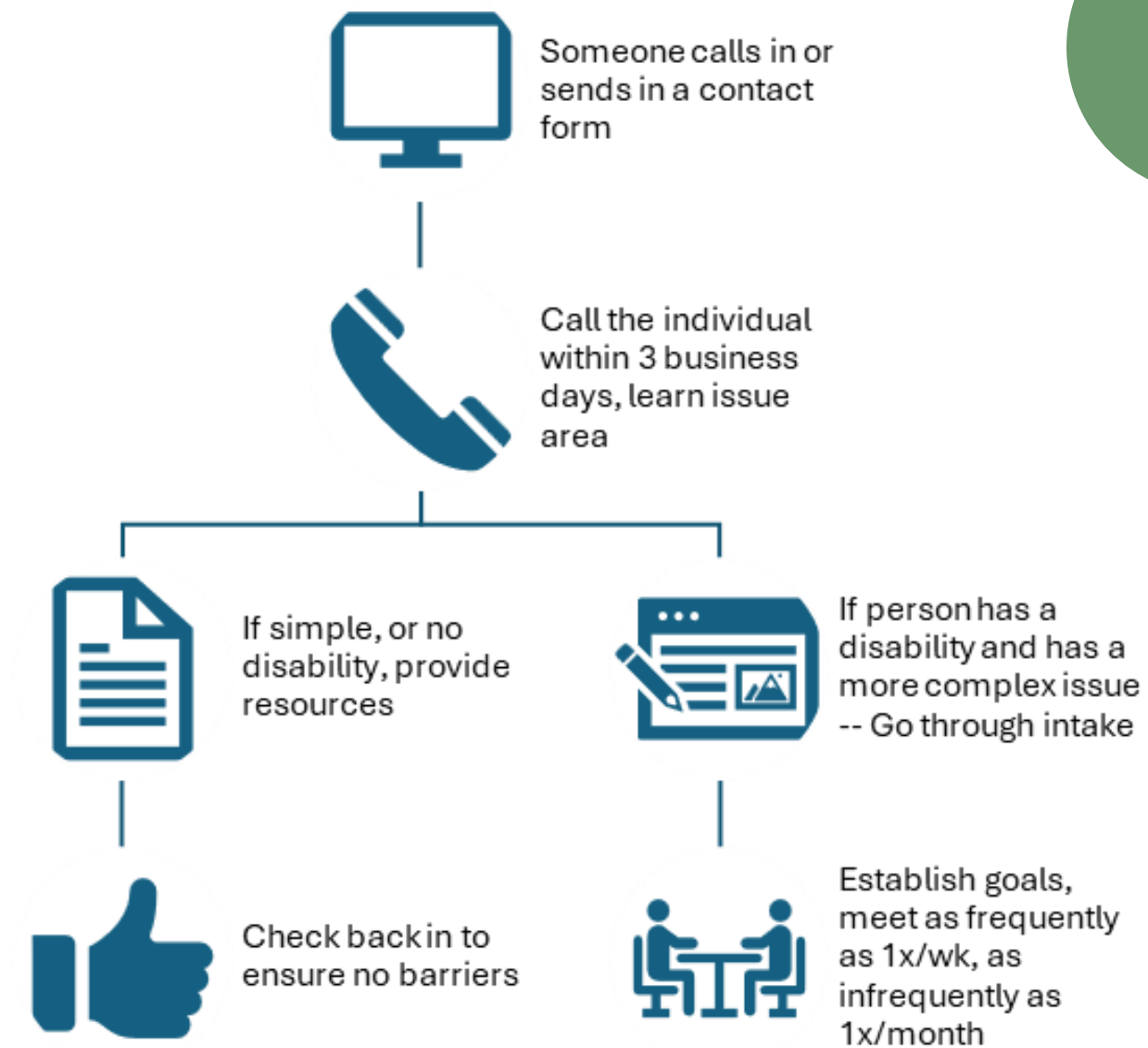


Participants might set goals in areas like:

- Finding affordable accessible housing
- Navigating benefits
- Transition to living in the community
- Job search and resume writing
- Transportation options
- Recreation and social activities
- Assistive technology
- Healthcare and social services
- Budgeting, cooking, energy management
- Other services based on your individual needs and goals



How it works





**There is no age,
race, or gender
discrimination to
who becomes
disabled.**

**Everyone is
welcome at Disability
Empowerment
Center.**

How to access services



Contact us:

- disabilityempowerment.org/contact
- 1-866-545-7055 (leave a voicemail)
- Visit us in person:
 - Seattle office on First Hill
 - Redmond office in the Together Center
 - Auburn office on Main Street



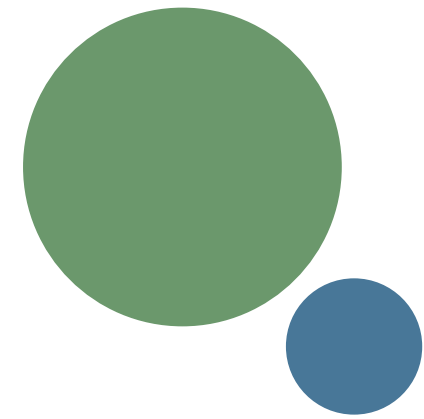
How to get involved



Connect:

- Find us on Facebook and Instagram @
- Watch our Understanding Ableism webinars on YouTube
- Sign up for our e-news:
disabilityempowerment.org/join-our-cause
- Donate or volunteer
- Attend a free event:
disabilityempowerment.org/events





Contact

**info@disabilityempowerment.org
866-545-7055 / 206-545-7055**



City of Kirkland Transit Needs Study (TNS)

JULY 28, 2026 | EERC

THOMAS VALDRIZ, PRINCIPAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNER

Presentation Agenda

- Study Overview
- Kirkland's Transit Service Today
- Community Engagement: Barriers and Opportunities
- Feedback Requested
- Next Steps

Transit Needs Study

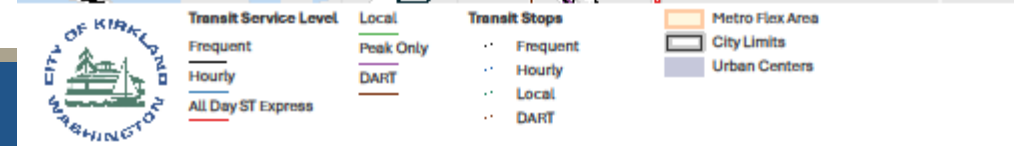
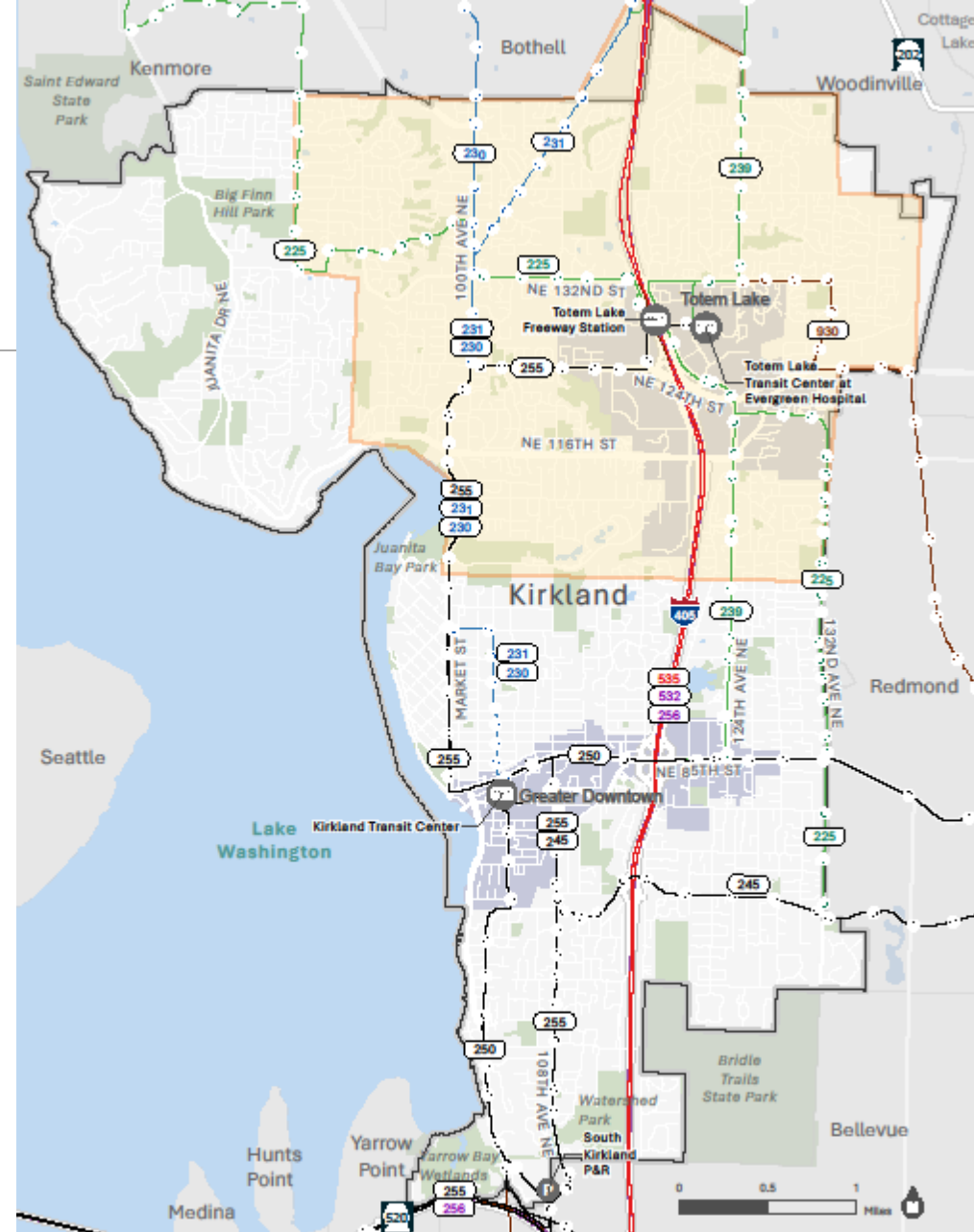


- Timeline: Q1 2026- Q2 2027
- Identify **gaps in Kirkland's transit service** and **barriers to accessing transit**
- Determine what **actions the City of Kirkland can take** to address gaps and reduce barriers to accessing transit.



Transit Service Today

- **Fixed-Route:**
 - King County Metro (9 routes)
 - Sound Transit (2 routes)
 - Community Transit (1 route)
- **On-Demand Microtransit:** Metro Flex
- Access Paratransit
- Other Specialized Transportation Services



Kirkland's Current Fixed-Route & On-Demand Transit Service

1. **Transit Ridership**

- Weekday Transit Ridership is lower (~24%) than pre-COVID levels
- Weekend ridership is higher (~55%) than pre-COVID levels

2. ***Weekday Travel (all trips including transit, driving, biking, walking, etc.):***

- 46% are within Kirkland (K to/from K)
- 54% are outside Kirkland city limits (Outside to/from K)

3. ***Additional Transit Service Investments Are Warranted****

- 28% of residents live in areas where additional transit service is warranted
- 32% of residents will live in areas where additional service is warranted by 2044, based on planned growth projections and transit service adjustments

*Per King County Metro Service Guidelines

Shared Themes Heard from Community: Barriers to Transit

Limited or No Service

North Kirkland
neighborhoods, especially
Finn Hill and Evergreen
Hill (FKA Kingsgate)

First- / Last-Mile
connections & needing to
make multiple transfers

Desire for Direct Regional
Connections
(Redmond, Bellevue,
Downtown Seattle)

Desire for additional local
service options, such as a
local circulator route or
flexible/on-demand
solutions

Speed, reliability & service
quality concerns with
some existing routes /
services

Safety & security concerns

Concerns with wayfinding
& information access to
help riders navigate

Preliminary Suggestions: Opportunities to Improve Near-Term Service



Support transit service providers in improving riders' perceived safety, security, and comfort.



Increase and amplify messaging about existing transit services to help riders and potential riders feel confident navigating the system.



Explore ways to foster a broader culture of transit ridership within the community.

Preliminary Suggestions: Opportunities to Improve Future Service



Pursue improvements to the speed and reliability of public transit services.



Advocate for or pursue ways to increase total transit service hours to make transit a more convenient alternative to driving.



Advocate for or pursue new local transit options to improve connections for neighborhoods currently without transit service.



Advocate for or pursue new direct (no-transfer) transit options connecting Kirkland to Downtown Seattle or other major regional destinations when such routes significantly improve travel time or overall convenience.

Feedback Requested

Of the communities you serve, what unique needs do they have that current transit services are not addressing or not addressing well?

Are there additional opportunities to improve transit services that are not reflected in the preliminary suggestions list?

What creative, community-driven, or other solutions should we be thinking about, beyond trying to improve fixed-route transit services?

Next steps

- Continue engagement efforts
- Draft Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment Report
- Continue researching ways that the City of Kirkland can address gaps and reduce barriers to accessing transit services



Thank you!

Thomas Valdriz

Principal Transportation Planner

tvaldriz@kirklandwa.gov





Eastside Easy Rider

COLLABORATIVE

EERC FY2027 Workplan

EERC FY2027 Priorities

- **Increase accessibility and inclusion** across all EERC activities
- **Refresh the EERC name and branding** to better reflect our mission and improve public recognition
- **Develop a "How to Ride the Light Rail" video** for older adults
 - Accompanied by a community speaking series to build confidence using transit

“How to Ride Light Rail” project

Current Partners

- Choose Your Way Bellevue
- Bellevue Network on Aging
- Kirkland Senior Council
- Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative (EERC)

Current Roles

- Choose Your Way Bellevue:** Script development, filming, editing, and production
- Bellevue Network on Aging & Kirkland Senior Council:** Recruit older adults to participate in the video and provide feedback
- EERC:** Coordinate the project, provide outreach, and lead the speaker series

Immediate Priorities

- **Select a project name**
- **Finalize the video script** and begin production planning with Choose Your Way Bellevue.
- **Recruit older adult participants** with support from Bellevue Network on Aging and Kirkland Senior Council.
- **Identify senior organizations**
- **Develop a speaker toolkit** using the video and supporting educational materials.
- **Launch and promote the video** through partner organizations and community networks across the Eastside.

Eastside Easy Rider
COLLABORATIVE

Next Meeting
September 29th (Zoom)
1:00pm - 2:30pm



FIND A RIDE

FindARide@hopelink.org

1-888-697-9080

Erin Funk
Eastside Mobility
Coordinator
efunk@hopelink.org
425-495-3191

Heather Clark
Program Manager of Coalitions
hclark@hopelink.org
425-625-6784