

## Fall 2018 Open House Outreach Summary

### Overview

Sound Transit is building a new garage and improving access at Kent Station so that more people can conveniently access the Sounder train and local bus service. In 2017, Sound Transit worked closely with the City of Kent and collected community feedback to help identify a site for the new parking garage. In November 2017, the Sound Transit Board identified the site at East James Street and Railroad Ave North as the preferred location for a new parking garage with approximately 530 spaces (about 460 net new spaces).

Sound Transit held an online open house from Oct. 10 – 26 and an in-person open house on Oct. 18 to share early concepts for the new garage as well as potential bike, bus, and pedestrian improvements and gather community feedback. Overall, more than 150 people participated in-person or through the online open house, resulting in over 70 written comments. The outreach was publicized through a mailing to over 2,500 local residents and businesses, promotion on social media, handouts and signs at the station, posters at local businesses, and other methods.

The following summary includes common themes from the community feedback with responses from Sound Transit.



*October 18, 2018: Open house participants talk to Sound Transit staff about future improvements to Kent Station.*

### Outreach by the numbers



Over 150 people participated online or in-person resulting in 70+ written comments



More than 25 people attended the open house at Green River College Kent Campus



Over 130 users visited the online open house from Oct. 10 – 26



Interactions with over 400 people at tabling events and community presentations since summer 2018



More than 2,500 postcards mailed to homes and businesses within a half mile of the station



Over 300 postcards distributed to station users at Kent Station



Two project email updates sent to over 750 recipients



Two posts on Facebook and Twitter that reached over 5,000 people

# Kent Station Parking and Access Improvements

## Summary of comments received

Visitors to the online and in-person open house were asked for feedback about the early garage concept and potential options for improving pedestrian, bicycle and bus access to Kent Station. Participants completed more than 70 surveys between the online and in-person open house options.

## Parking garage

Respondents were asked if they had questions or comments about the garage concept and proposed realignment of Railroad Avenue North. Common themes are listed below, followed by example comments.

- **Requests for additional parking**, beyond the planned 530 spaces.
  - *"Make the garage hold more spots--530 doesn't seem to me to be enough when the current garage is completely full, on some days of the week, before 7:00 am."*
- **Concerns about traffic flow** as more vehicles exit/enter the area.
  - *"Getting out of the new garage during rush hour will be a nightmare. I hope there will be new traffic lights on both Railroad & Smith/James."*
  - *"Will new signaling go in at Railroad Ave to help traffic flow along E Smith Street and on E James St?"*
- **Requests to build the garage faster.**
  - *"How fast can it be completed?"*

## Sound Transit response

The amount of new parking is based on funding levels approved by voters; there is not budget available for Sound Transit to expand the number of parking stalls. Sound Transit is also building voter-approved new garages at Auburn, Sumner, and Puyallup stations.

By 2024, there will be a total of 8,400 Sounder South parking stalls. The new parking will supplement alternative options for accessing the station, such as local bus transit, drop-off, biking and walking.

Sound Transit is currently studying potential environmental impacts of the project, including traffic congestion and possible mitigation measures. We will release the results of this evaluation for public review and comment in spring 2019.

We are working with our partner at the City of Kent to advance design of the garage and complete environmental review, permitting, property acquisition, contractor selection, and construction as quickly as possible. We anticipate beginning construction in 2021 and opening the garage in 2023.

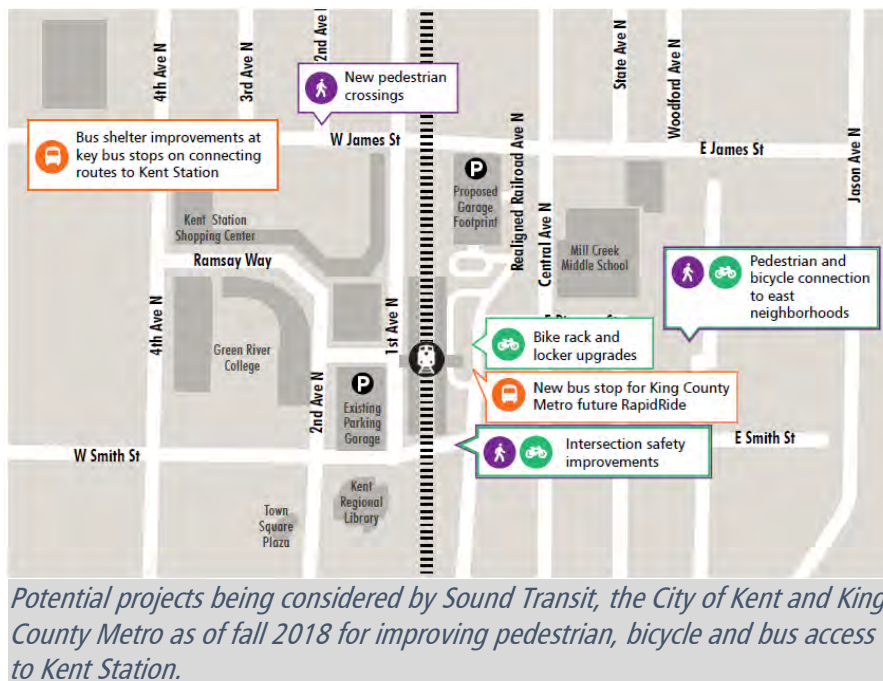


*Representative parking garage concept from fall 2018 showing access to the proposed new site at East James Street and Railroad Avenue North.*

# Kent Station Parking and Access Improvements

## Improving pedestrian, bicycle and bus access to Kent Station

Respondents were asked about their priorities for potential projects to improve other modes of access to the station.



Themes included:

- **Intersection safety improvements** should be high priority, particularly at the East Smith Street and Railroad Avenue North intersection.
  - *"I am concerned about pedestrian safety at the Smith/Railroad intersection. The current crosswalks are routinely ignored by Smith traffic, even when not impacted by Sounder passengers."*
  - *"Walking to the station can be treacherous."*
- There is a desire for **increased bike racks, bus shelter improvements and bicycle and pedestrian connections to east neighborhoods**; however, these were of less priority than improving pedestrian crossings.
  - *"I would like to see improvements for walking across Mill Creek to neighborhood to the east."*
  - *"The order I believe the projects should execute: 1. Access to the site 2. Racks and Lockers 3. Bus Stop amendments"*

### Sound Transit response

We are continuing to work with the City of Kent to refine potential pedestrian, bicycle, and bus improvements for accessing Kent Station. More information will be available in spring 2019.



# Kent Station Parking and Access Improvements

## Other comment themes

- Questions about future King County Metro RapidRide and requests for increased bus service.
- Requests for increased lighting and safety around the station.
- Questions about plans for the Sound Transit property at Railroad Ave North and East Smith Street.
- Request to move the Sounder platform north so that trains do not block traffic at Smith Street.
- General positivity about a new garage in downtown Kent.

For more information on these topics, visit the [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) on the Sound Transit website.

## Respondent characteristics

The goal of the outreach was to reach a variety of audiences, including current Kent Station users, potential users, and people who live or work near the station. When asked about their interest in the project, more than 45% of online open house participants say they currently take transit to or from Kent Station with more than 35% saying that they live nearby. Nearly 60% of respondents say they access the station by driving a car alone over walking, riding a bus, carpooling, biking, or other modes.

## Next steps

Sound Transit will consider this community feedback as we continue design for the garage and potential pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements. We are also evaluating potential environmental impacts and possible mitigation measures and will share the results for public review and comment. Stay tuned for this information and updated designs in spring 2019.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2021, and the garage will be open for public use in 2023.

## Project schedule



## To stay informed about the project:

- Contact Melanie Mayock, Community Outreach Specialist: [melanie.mayock@soundtransit.org](mailto:melanie.mayock@soundtransit.org) or 206-689-4877
- Visit the project website or sign up for project updates by email: [soundtransit.org/kent-access-improvements](https://www.soundtransit.org/kent-access-improvements)