



## RapidRide gets high marks

An independent evaluation found that Metro's RapidRide service is meeting or making substantial progress toward its goals—especially in attracting more riders, earning customer approval, and delivering frequent and faster service.

### Background

Metro started RapidRide—an arterial bus rapid transit network—with the launch of the A Line in October 2010. RapidRide was designed to provide fast, frequent, easy-to-use service in major travel corridors. Stops, buses, and amenities were planned with customer convenience, safety and comfort in mind.

Over the next four years Metro rolled out five more RapidRide lines, completing the

initial phase of program with the start of the F Line in June 2014.

With all six lines in operation, Metro asked an independent consultant to evaluate RapidRide's progress toward the 13 goals for this service. The evaluation examined both quantitative and qualitative information gathered from operations data, customer surveys, and interviews with staff members and private developers.

*See the findings* 



## Features of RapidRide

- Buses arrive every 10 minutes during weekday peak periods, every 15 minutes other times until 10 p.m., at scheduled times in late night/early morning.
- Stops are spaced so buses move more, stop less.
- Buses have low floors and three doors for fast boarding, exiting.
- ORCA readers at stations let card holders pay ahead, get on at any door.
- Proof of payment fare collection, with random inspection by Fare Enforcement Officers.
- Local jurisdictions and WSDOT partnered with Metro to install roadway features like HOV lanes, bus bulbs, queue jumps, and transit signal priority systems to keep buses moving.
- Stations have electronic “next bus” signs. Buses have signs showing the next stop, automated stop announcements, and free WiFi.
- To promote safety, stops are well-lit and designed for enhanced visibility. Buses have security cameras.
- Buses and shelters have distinctive red and yellow branding.

## RapidRide’s strong progress toward goals

### **RapidRide is recognized as an enhanced service.**

Riders are more satisfied with RapidRide than with their previous routes for all but the D Line.

### **RapidRide lines are providing frequent service as planned.**

Most peak service is every 10 minutes or better and off-peak service is every 15 minutes or better.

### **RapidRide travel times are faster than the previous service.**

RapidRide travel times have been decreasing and approaching their target levels (10 to 30 percent lower than the pre-RapidRide routes). Only the A Line had an increase—in one direction of travel during the afternoon peak period.

### **Service is reliable.**

The combined RapidRide lines are adhering to schedules and promised headways about 84 percent of the time, exceeding the 80-percent target.

### **The service is comfortable, pleasant, and easy to use.**

Over 80 percent of people surveyed on the B, C, D, and E lines said they were satisfied with their RapidRide service. On the A Line, just under 80 percent of riders reported that they were satisfied.

### **Riders feel safe and secure on and off the bus.**

When asked how safe they felt using RapidRide buses and facilities, most riders surveyed said they were satisfied with their personal safety. However, on the C and D Lines, overall satisfaction with personal safety was lower than it was with the pre-RapidRide routes.

### **RapidRide integrates well with other Metro bus service.**

Overall, customers are more satisfied with transfers between RapidRide and other routes than they were with pre-RapidRide routes.

### **RapidRide supports healthy, car-less travel; reduces pollution; and increases community connections.**

The majority of customers surveyed are satisfied with how convenient RapidRide stops are to their home or start of their trip. However, customer satisfaction with convenience of stops was lower for RapidRide compared to predecessor routes. This is a common trade-off with bus rapid transit systems, which are designed with fewer stops to achieve faster travel times.

### **RapidRide has had minimal negative impacts on the quality of existing service.**

As RapidRide lines were introduced, Metro restructured service, creating new connections, improving service, and avoiding duplication or competition with the RapidRide lines.



### Partnerships formed around RapidRide.

Metro partnered with 11 cities, Sound Transit and the Washington State Department of Transportation to develop the fiber-optic backbone of the intelligent transportation system, pedestrian access improvements, transit signal priority, and priority transit lanes. Private businesses allowed use of their property for stations and stops. Metro's In Motion program established community partnerships along the A, C, D, E and F line corridors to promote car-less travel; more than 7,500 people participated.

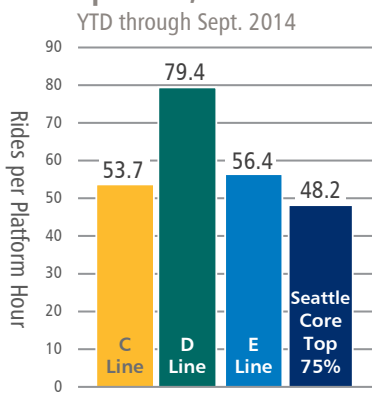
### RapidRide is encouraging private investment and development.

While still early for conclusive measurements, land-use experts and developers interviewed said RapidRide has benefited private development by increasing property values and attracting transit-oriented development along the RapidRide corridors.

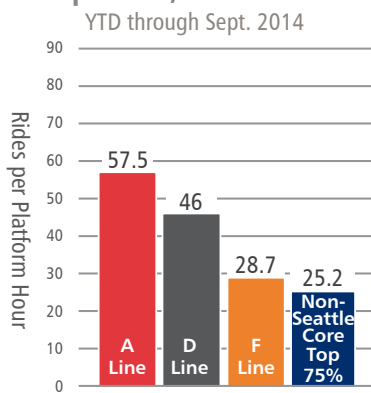
### RapidRide carries more riders per hour.

All lines are carrying more riders per hour than regular Metro buses.

**RapidRide v. Regular Service Peak Rides per Hour, Seattle Lines**



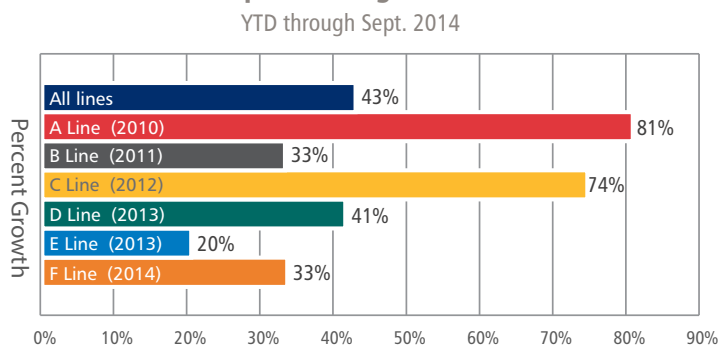
**RapidRide v. Regular Service Peak Rides per Hour, Non-Seattle Lines**



### Ridership is nearing or exceeding the 5-year goal.

Combined, all of the RapidRide lines have seen ridership grow 43 percent above the predecessor routes. The combined weekday ridership on RapidRide lines makes up 14 percent of Metro's overall average weekday ridership. In less than five years, the A and C lines have achieved over 70 percent ridership growth above the baseline, exceeding Metro's goal of 50 percent growth within the first five years. The E Line is now Metro's highest-ridership route.

**Ridership Growth Against Baseline**



### Summary Program Performance Rating

**Goal A:** Enhanced Service



**Goal B:** Frequent Service



**Goal C:** Faster Travel Times



**Goal D:** Reliable Service



**Goal E:** Comfortable and Pleasant



**Goal F:** Safe and Secure



**Goal G:** Integrated



**Goal H:** Healthy and Connected



**Goal I:** Minimize Negative Impacts



**Goal J:** Community Partnerships



**Goal K:** Private Development



**Goal L:** Increase Ridership



**Goal M:** Higher Ridership compared to other Metro routes





## Other key conclusions:

### **RapidRide capital investments—especially ORCA fare payment equipment at stations—have proven to be cost-effective.**

The capital elements are: transit signal timing systems, real-time bus arrival signs, off-board fare payment equipment, passenger facilities, unique buses, and roadway improvements such as BAT (business access and transit) lanes and curb bulbs.

### **The operating cost per rider is less for RapidRide than for regular Metro service.**

In 2013, the operating cost per rider of the A through D lines was 21 percent less than regular service.

### **Expansion of RapidRide could have clear benefits compared to simply adding frequency to existing routes.**

RapidRide attracts new riders, boosts customer satisfaction, can have a positive impact on land development, and is cost-effective.

## **RAPIDRIDE**

Find the full report in Metro's accountability center:

<http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/accountability>

Choose the "Other" tab



*We'll Get You There*

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