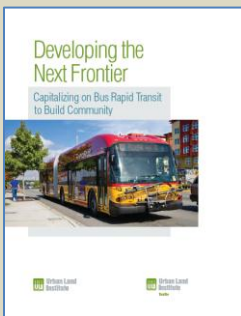


# Toolkit for Impact

## Innovations in Transit and Land Use

### ULI Seattle

Developing the Next Frontier: Capitalizing on Bus Rapid Transit to Build Community



ULI Infrastructure Initiative and ULI Seattle (now ULI Northwest) partnered with local governments to examine land use, economic development and affordable housing in RapidRide corridors. Read more at [northwest.uli.org/brt](http://northwest.uli.org/brt).

**Overview:** This project advances new approaches to transit and land use by building experience and best practices from the ground up. Through an intensive stakeholder involvement and public outreach process led by a collaboration between ULI's regional chapters and national staff, participating communities develop deeper understanding of the land use potential of their transit investments and formulate recommendations for improvement. Conclusions and lessons learned are shared throughout the global ULI network.

**Background:** Across the country, communities are innovating new ways to deploy transit technologies and endeavoring to leverage existing systems for new development. They are looking anew at bus service, experimenting with bus rapid transit (BRT), circulators, and buses in congestion-free toll lanes, and they are connecting users to real-time information via the internet and smartphone apps.

Over half of all trips on public transportation in the United States are by bus. Although current practice would seem to limit transit-oriented development to within a half-mile of rail stations, rethinking transit and land use and looking for connections to bus transit opens up a much larger field for development. Including bus and bringing land use coordination up to the level of corridors and networks have significant ramifications for effective transit service, equity considerations, and sustainability goals.

**Goals:**

- Empower communities to strengthen the connection between transit networks, including bus networks, and land development.
- Develop best practices around BRT-oriented development.
- Identify and investigate emerging issues in transit and land use.

**Role of ULI Infrastructure Initiative:** Working in partnership with the ULI District Council and project partners, the ULI Infrastructure Initiative provides thought leadership, technical assistance, and access to national networks of transit and land use experts.

**Role of ULI District Council:** The ULI District Council (regional chapter) coordinates with local partners and hosts the meetings, programs, and workshops. ULI members join the project analysis team.

# Developing the Next Frontier

## Capitalizing on Bus Rapid Transit to Build Community

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By 2013, King County Metro Transit's bus rapid transit (BRT) service, known as RapidRide, will be expanding to six lines covering 64 miles of high-use corridors. The Bus Rapid Transit and Land Use Initiative is the product of a partnership between ULI Seattle, King County Metro Transit, the city of Seattle, the city of Shoreline, and the ULI/Curtis Regional Infrastructure Project. The partnership formed a team of ULI members and transit professionals to analyze and make recommendations about connecting RapidRide and land use opportunities. The team developed case studies of similar BRT service in other cities and analyzed three station areas in Seattle and Shoreline.



From the perspectives of multimodal corridors, neighborhood design, housing, jobs/workers, marketing, and stakeholders, the team developed specific recommendations for RapidRide and initiative partners, as well as recommendations for each station area.

Three overarching themes emerged:

- Focus on corridors;
- Develop champions;
- Promote community value.

These themes can be widely applied to BRT on commercial arterials. This final report introduces RapidRide, documents the case studies, and presents the team's recommendations.

#### BRT in King County: RapidRide

Bus rapid transit comes in many different varieties. King County's RapidRide is a type of "arterial" BRT. Arterial BRT works by providing *convenient* and *priority access* to all that is available—jobs, shopping, services, housing, and friends—in the corridor.

RapidRide deploys a set of infrastructure investments and technologies to improve the speed and reliability of trips:

- Running ways in "business access transit" (BAT) lanes;
- Transit-signal-priority technologies;
- Real-time arrival information at stations;
- Low-floor, three-door buses;
- Boarding areas about every half-mile.

RapidRide will be highly visible in the corridors. Full-featured stations and enhanced stops, including lighted signs and shelters, make up over two-thirds of the system's boarding areas. Distinctive branding based on a red, black, and yellow design scheme marks the stations, stops, and buses.

Frequent service will also boost RapidRide's visibility in the corridors. The target frequency is every ten minutes, and the target service span is 18 to 24 hours a day and on weekends. Initial service will not reach the target levels but will be an improvement over existing service.

## BRT in Kansas City, the Twin Cities, and Cleveland

Because BRT is so new in the United States, this report documents brief case studies on the experience of systems similar to King County Metro Transit in Kansas City, the Twin Cities, and Cleveland. Selected conclusions include the following:

- Arterial BRT can be an important economic and community development tool.
- Project partners and champions drawn from a diverse group of public and private stakeholders, including the real estate community, are essential.
- Arterial BRT has the potential to become an *organizing catalyst* that helps focus market demand for higher-intensity development.
- When stations and stops are spaced at a half-mile or less, the corridor—not just an individual station area—becomes the economic development unit.
- Encouraging transit use makes these arterials multimodal “complete streets” in function, even when not in form. The goal should be a complete street in both form and function.
- Branding for arterial BRT can happen at three levels: the corridor, the transit line, and the neighborhood or business district, providing numerous opportunities for collaboration between the transit agency and community members.

## Recommendations

This report provides recommendations that address the transit system, corridor development, marketing, and stakeholder involvement. In addition, it examines housing opportunities, neighborhood design, and corridor development in the vicinity of three planned stations that represent a range of development conditions typical of arterial corridors in the Puget Sound region.

To realize RapidRide’s potential for both King County Metro Transit and the neighborhoods and cities that the system serves, the report recommends three significant shifts in focus:

- **Corridors instead of stations.** RapidRide can become a powerful catalytic mechanism that unifies entire arterial corridors of diverse communities and land uses.
- **Champions instead of “necessary” stakeholders.** A broad base of support can be built by seeking out and cultivating place-based advocates who take ownership of the community agenda as well as the promise of RapidRide.
- **Community value in addition to transportation value.** As it brings in new transit users and improves the transit experience, RapidRide presents an opportunity for establishing and extending neighborhood identity and branding over time. It can be the backbone of community development and green infrastructure in the corridor and for the neighborhoods.



BRT station infrastructure in Kansas City, the Twin Cities, and Cleveland.

# Toolkit for Impact

## Process

The process used for Developing the Next Frontier, the first ULI Innovations in Transit and Land Use program, combined educational programs, expert site analysis, and implementation workshops. These three program elements can be combined and structured as appropriate for each community innovation.

Findings and best practices derived from the analysis will be disseminated via ULI's global distribution network.

## Schedule for Developing the Next Frontier

January 26-27	Partners meeting: conduct group site tours; determine scope of analysis; develop site analysis questions.
Feb-March	Prepare site briefing materials; select outside case studies; form site analysis team.
March 21-24	ULI Seattle Breakfast Program; site analysis and recommendation development; presentation of recommendations to partners.
April-June	Prepare and produce written report of principles, case studies, and analysis recommendations.
June 23	ULI Seattle BRT Workshop: report release and next steps to implement recommendations.
July 21	ULI Seattle Walking Tour of one analysis site.

Dissemination: presentations to local governments, ULI Fall Meeting, ULI national webinars, and social media publicity.

For Developing the Next Frontier, ULI Seattle partnered with King County Metro Transit, the city of Seattle, and the city of Shoreline. The ULI/Curtis Regional Infrastructure Project of the ULI Infrastructure Initiative provided national-level support.

## Partners

Project partners should include local transit agencies and local governments with authority over land use. Project partners may also include national or local foundations, major employers, state agencies, non-profits, business organizations, or other stakeholder groups.

ULI recommends that all project partners contribute financially according to their ability.

## Time Frame Budget Learn More

The intensive analysis process is designed to take place within a relatively short time-frame, typically six-nine months.

\$90,000 (estimated) per community innovation.

ULI Infrastructure Initiative welcomes the opportunity to share more about the Innovations in Transit and Land Use program. Please contact Rachel MacCleery, Vice President for Infrastructure, at 202-624-7162 or [Rachel.MacCleery@uli.org](mailto:Rachel.MacCleery@uli.org).