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Light Rail Accessibility Project Outline

Equity in the Built Environment

As part of Redmond 2050's Equity in the Built Environment updates we are focusing on how we can improve equity and inclusiveness for under-served community members and those that are typically under-represented in planning and development review processes. When looking at our physical environment and how we build our streets and public realm, planning for community members of different ages and abilities, planning for women, and community members of all ages produces different outcomes than our traditional planning processes.

For this project, we'll be focusing on equity in the built environment and first/last mile connections from two new Overlake light rail stations. This will include looking at the public realm design standards and how we facilitate connections for community members with disabilities to the light rail stations (and connections between bus stops and light rail stations, major employers, etc.).

For the purpose of this project, we will be focusing on the 2 Light Rail stations in Redmond that will be completed first, the Overlake Village Station and the Redmond Technology Station. Observations and recommendations will be made surrounding these two stations, though they may be applicable to the SE Redmond and Downtown stations as well. We will work with Sound Transit to understand measures already taken to increase accessibility to the stops and how these can be expanded into the surrounding areas by the City of Redmond. Recommendations may include things such as wayfinding signs, sidewalk/curb adjustments, frequency of seating locations, shade allowances, lighting, and other accommodations and design elements.

This project will be completed by working with the Microsoft Supportive Employee program, as well as the Lake Washington School Districts Special Services program to talk with individuals who need accessible transit options, as well as coordinators who can inform us of what these adjustments may look like. We will also work with the Sound Transit Accessibility training team to understand how they educate the community surrounding accessible access to transit to ensure cohesivity in messaging.

The city is committed to honoring the "Nothing About Us Without Us" philosophy and engaging directly with community members to gain their specific needs to guide policy and other updates. Members from the City's existing disabilities stakeholder groups and the King County Disability Consortium will be among those asked to participate in this study and provide their direct input on how public spaces are designed and how that design impacts their ability to navigate our community and fully engage in work and other daily activities.

This project will culminate with recommendations for upgrading the public realm design standards for the equitable transit-oriented focus area surrounding the light rail stations. It will also ideally include a physical example of what some of these upgrades may look like through a temporary mock-up created somewhere in the city. This temporary installation will be utilized to demonstrate what upgrades could look like, as well as test their efficacy and to receive public feedback.

Learn more at <https://www.redmond.gov/1924/Light-Rail-Accessibility-Study>

Join this project: email Redmond2050@redmond.gov

Geographic scope of study:

For this study we will focus on the Overlake light rail stations areas since they will open first. We will be working within the walksheds surrounding the Overlake Village and Redmond Technology stations as defined through the Redmond Transit Oriented Development efforts. These include the areas that are accessible within a 10-minute walk of the stations, with the assumed walking speed of 3 miles per hour. This is a definition that may change with the project, as walkability and walking speed are both elements that may alter based on the population that we are gearing our research towards.

The outcomes of the study will not just impact Overlake, but will be considered for citywide updates and for the proposed Marymoor Inclusive Neighborhood Pilot Project.

Tentative Timeline/Scope:

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| December: | Develop stakeholder list and outreach plan, begin outreach efforts. Compile memo of background information, and map of project area(s). Assemble research documents, including a base knowledge of existing ADA minimums and current streetscape and public realm standards within the project boundary. |
| January: | Establish connections with stakeholders, including the Microsoft team, LWSD, sound transit, and focus group participants. Research other jurisdictions with accessible transit stations/public realm design. Begin public engagement, focusing initially on how current standards are received by this community and their perceptions of the walkshed definition. Focus on narrowing into problem areas and/or issues. Produce and distribute short informational video for the project and desired feedback to reach greater community audience. Establish connections with local group(s) who may be able to assist with future mock-up building efforts. |
| February: | Continue community engagement, including visits to Sound Transit sites. Complete summary memo with information gathered from community outreach regarding the infrastructure needs of the disabled community. If weather permits, conduct site walks with focus group participants to document in first-person, real-time what design elements work and what does not work for their needs. |
| March: | Formalize connection with organization(s)/volunteers who will assist with the temporary installation, begin to formulate draft recommendations and ideas. Discuss ideas with building and design experts to formalize realistic upgrade possibilities. Continue focus group/direct engagement efforts and site walks. |
| April: | Take draft recommendations and ideas back to stakeholders for continued feedback, update based on input received. |
| May: | Complete build of temporary installation and design of feedback mechanisms, conduct installation event to publicize engagement opportunity, gather feedback on options included in the installation. Report back findings to stakeholders/focus group for insight and last feedback cycle to finalize recommendations. |
| June: | Complete project summary and recommendations for upgrades to increase accessibility and usability of light rail stations in Redmond. Present to Planning Commission, Transportation Planning, and Public Works staff. |