

# Seattle Districts

## Bus Routes From University District

### Area Guide

Seattle consists of many different neighborhoods each with its own unique vibe and history.

**Neighborhood Border** Approximately

Locals Should Know  
**Fun Neighborhoods**

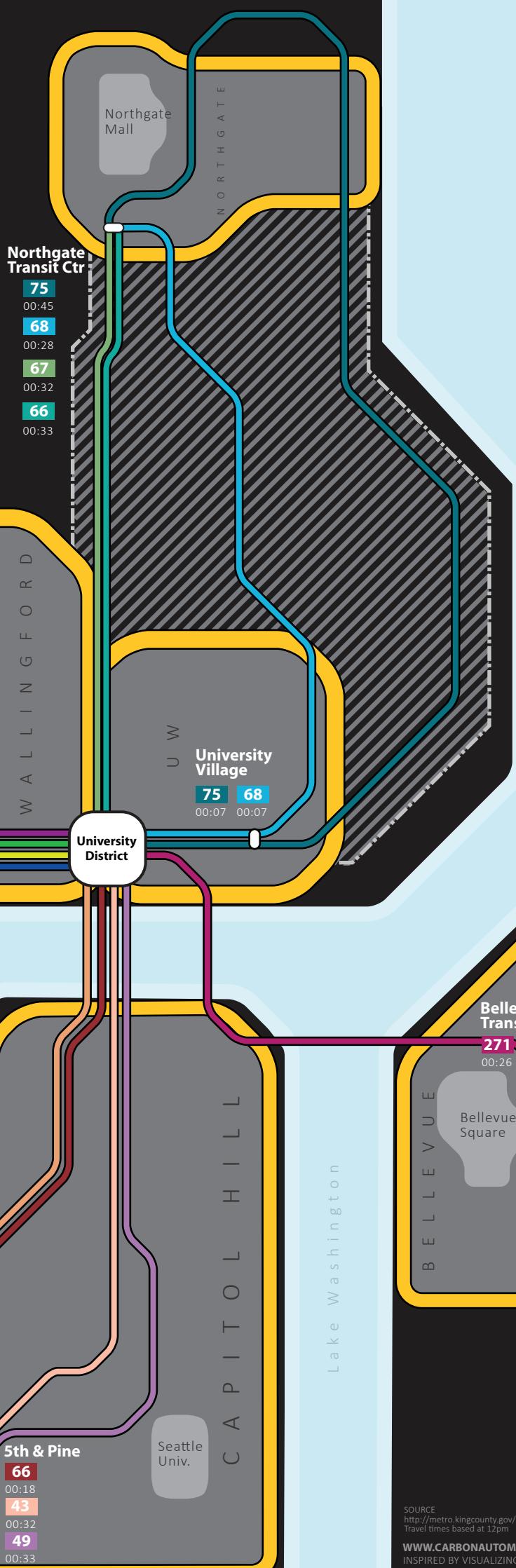
Malls and Stuff  
**Areas of Interest**

Neighborhoods You've Never heard  
Uninteresting Neighborhoods

### Bus Guide

Many of the popular neighborhoods can be reached via one bus ride without needing to transfer.

- Bus Line And Stop
- Route Number
- 00:37 Travel Time From UW



SOURCE  
<http://metro.kingcounty.gov/>  
Travel times based at 12pm

WWW.CARBONAUTOMATON.COM.  
INSPIRED BY VISUALIZINGPALESTINE.COM

# Across the Wall

## Israeli Settlement Bus Routes

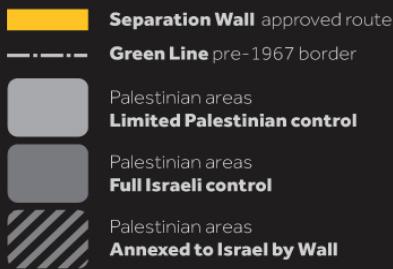
Mediterranean Sea

Jordan River

Dead Sea

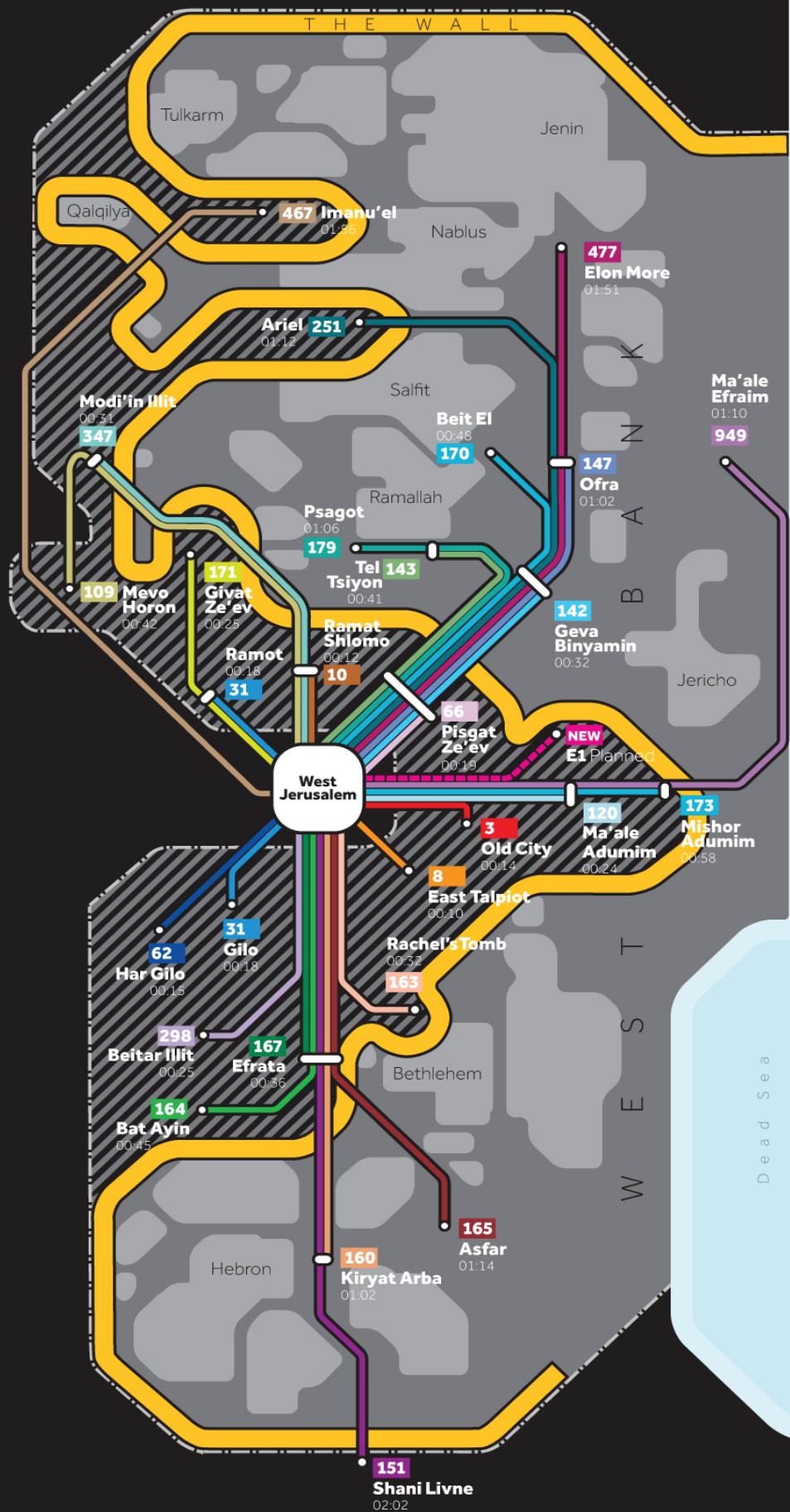
### Area Guide

Israeli bus companies operate a transport network connecting illegal Israeli-only settlements throughout the occupied Palestinian West Bank. Access to these services is barred to Palestinians living in the surrounding areas.



### Travel Information

Israeli buses use an extensive network of roads built to seamlessly connect settlements on both sides of the Wall to cities within Israel. Many of these roads are prohibited to Palestinians or require them to apply for special permits from the Israeli military authority.



# Analysis

## INITIAL IMPRESSIONS:

This design is obviously inspired by the London Subway tube style maps. Bus routes are drawn in abstraction as opposed to real world geography. Still, the paths still have some representation based in the real world based on the major location it passes by. I liked this design because the text usage was well highlighted, and the map itself was colorful. And, seeing that all the bus routes originate from a central location, namely West Jerusalem, I saw this as a parallel to all bus routes originating from the UW. Another feature of this map that I like was that the bus route numbers and travel time was included at the end of the route. Its not that I didn't already want this information represented, but this map provided a clever way of allowing people to associate the route with the actual route number. And, since its color coded, you could include a more comprehensive travel time and the color would serve as keys for looking the routes up on the map. Finally, I liked the multiple areas of light grey, dark grey, stripes, thought I didn't have any idea what I would use this encoding for in my design.

## HIERARCHY AND LAYERING

The focus of this design is based on the the Wall in Jerusalem. Hence, the title and the wall share the same highlighted color. The yellow color sits very boldly against the dark navy background. The next most highlighted color is white. As far as the map goes, the routes are drawn in clean angles. End points are designated with very clear white circles. Bold lines are used where necessary, and whitespace was also used. I think this design is in line with my own taste, so I have nothing to complain about.

Again, the visual hierarchy is based on color. Yellow (the wall) > white (annotations, content) > bus routes (rainbow) > areas (shades of grey). It makes sense that the areas are in grey since they are in the background almost. Layering is very good in this design, despite having so many colors and keys all over the place. It's quite impressive actually. If you were to lookup a particular route number, all you have to do is locate one of the colored squares with the white route number. Then underneath there is travel time. The annotation detail and key is in white / greyish text which stands out great against the dark navy background. The keys themselves are great, you can see description by region, and then how the bus routes are actually implemented (even though it might already obvious enough). Another aspect of layering is how the bus routes are separated from the areas. The areas are in shades of a color, a HUGE contrast to the bright colors of the bus routes. Furthermore, you can see that the bus routes are always on top of the grey areas, and that the routes have a black outer edge that further "pops" them up against the background.

Placement of stuff pretty typical. Column of text on the left, column for map on the right. I feel the reason the designer chose this is because of the height of the map.

What I like about this design is that it is very intuitive. You can look at it from a far distance, and you may guess that this is some kind of network originating from a central point. There are clues throughout the design this is for buses. Now, if this was actually placed at a bus stop or something, then the context itself would just be super obvious to suggest that the network is a bus network. Okay, so we know that this is a bus route map, but how is it intuitive to read and comprehend? It's pretty obvious when I looked at it that the endpoints consisted of route number, stop name, and travel time. But the key is right there, so anyone can quickly figure out how each of the stops' information is represented. What I am trying to say is that the layering and hierarchy is very self explanatory (as all designs SHOULD be right?)

## COLOR

As I said, what initially attracted me to this design was the color. It's colorful, yet still manage to keep everything tamed. The colors are very bright, and I like that too. And then there is the contrast of color. White text + dark navy background is a good win. It's actually more subtle than this, because the designer chose a slightly darker tone of white (sorta grey) such that it wouldn't hurt the eyes too much against the dark background. (The effect you might get from looking at a white screen in the dark). And the dark background also serves to tame the bright routes, as if to balance it. I was surprised that white text associated with the bus routes were so well legible when they spanned across different areas in the grey. The blue water locations were a nice touch, despite being not necessary. I feel this too was for color balance.

## TEXT

There are a few interesting things about this designers usage of text, but I don't think this design is impressive on the basis of text alone. There is a mixture of ALL-CAPS and regular capitalization throughout the design. The designer used two main types of font, something a bit bolder and rounder like Arial Black. The other font is a thinner, slimmer, and clean. I mentioned about the two column paradigm here of the key on the left, and the map on the right, emphasizing a vertical orientation. This might explain the usage of text rotated 90° spanning horizontally. The designer had huge spacing between these characters so that they span a greater vertical distance to further emphasize the height of the design. The basic highlighting and hierarchy of the text goes like this. Bold: key, not bold: details. Inside the map itself, the text contrasted well against the grey regions and terrain of all the maps. Despite spanning into the yellow wall and other regions sometimes, the text is still legible. The text in the water is similar to the vertical spanning text for region names, except the color choice makes it very subtle to read, but it makes sense since the emphasis here is on bus routes and regions of Jerusalem not water.

## REPRESENTATION STRATEGY

This map conveys two pieces of information. Areas, and who controls them. Then secondly, bus routes and their travel time originating from West Jerusalem. For a map, these two pieces of information go hand in hand and can be overlapped. But as far as infographics go, this map doesn't contain much quantitative data. I actually prefer these designs because they keep it simple and fun, and convey some interesting facts. If I wanted to know the population density of one city versus another for example, I'd go to a textbook for more accurate information than from an infographic. The London Tube style design allows simplicity for those who simply care about getting from point A to Point B. And really, most people could care less about the actual curvature of the trip. I feel these kinds of maps are ideal and suitable for my circumstances of creating a map of bus that are one bus away from the UW... it feels less cluttered. The central idea of minimalism is to keep only what is necessary, and that reflects my mindset here.

## PLACEMENT

So the two column placement of the key and the map is fine, that is just a design decision. Same with the title, bottom text, etc. One minor problem I see is in the map itself, where placement of the route info is placed arbitrarily with respect to the actual stop. Sometimes its on the left, sometimes its on the right. I don't know the designer chose what to put where, I'm guessing he based it on spacing things out and utilizing white space mostly. Indeed, there is not much cluttering on the map. Another inconsistency, is in the route information itself. Sometimes the stop name is above the route number, sometimes the travel time is above the route number. Not a deal breaker, everything still makes sense. This one I don't know why, maybe so that he can place the colored squares corresponding to the bus route further away from another? Actually yes, that is probably it.

## UNITY

The idea of clean angles of the bus routes is everywhere in this design. You can see it in the water edge, you can see it in the city outlines. Having thought about this, the right angle placement of elements in the key is also inline with this philosophy. Now, another thing is that the corners of these angles are sharp. The design rounded them off. Why? I first did my initial mockups without rounding the corners, and it looked really ugly. This is weird, but the round angles actually fits in well with the designers usage of a round Arial Black style font. By round, I mean the a square region can be drawn around the characters to bound them in as opposed to rectangles, traditionally. And back to what I said at the very beginning, the yellow title corresponds to the yellow wall, and their content is semantically the same too. It's hard to analyze unity of color here. Despite having a plethora of bright colors, the grey colors still somehow blend in perfectly together. Thinking about the layout, the two column layout actually presents some unity to the height of the map.

# The Design Process And Challenge

## THE ROUTES

After having looked at the professional design, I thought about the map itself, and what is to be included. Obviously it was going to be bus routes. But there were so many bus routes in our final. I thought it would have looked cluttered and with bad scale, if we had routes such as a 373 (super long) on the same map with something like route 44. The regions I HAD to have was definitely downtown. And then I thought about what areas I could care less about. I mostly go to Northgate, Bellevue, and Downtown, and perfectly they all happen to be approximately the same distance from the UW.

## THE MAP OUTLINE

Using the outline of the landmass in the Bus Routes illustrator final, I drew an outline in the mindset of London Tube Design. Clear angles and abstraction. (There is a lot more curvature to the real world water edge, but I simplified it). One of the things I came across was that of scaling. I had to tweak the water and land mass a bit, so that Bellevue and Northgate and Downtown all fit in, but that they are evenly spread out. A kind of distortion of you will. I then had to research which buses run in this general region. I eliminated my map down to buses that run everyday, and frequently at that. Furthermore, these are buses that take more direct from UW to the target location, as opposed to going in some giant circle (exemption being route 75, but people take it to Northgate anyways). I figured out how to round the edges of the water via effect > style > round edges in illustrator. I had to tweak with the magnitude at which to round, so that it matches well with the design. If you notice, there is a very subtle semi thick edge to the water, that is in a lighter tone of blue. I had to take the original water, and go object > path > outline stroke to get that bezel.

## THE BUS ROUTES

One of the things in the original map design is that the bus routes don't overlap. This meant I had to figure all of what my bus routes were, such that I place them at the origin spot with respect to one another so that there will be no intersection occurring. One of the annoying things is that the routes have to be some fixed thickness, and then there has to be some consistent spacing between them. It was very difficult and required a lot of drawing and redrawing to get the spacing between the routes perfect. I mean, I did use illustrator's grid system, but it was still hard then. My land mass outline is an abstraction, and there is not a one to one correspondence in terms of scale with the real map. This was hard for me to translate bus routes and their path. I had to go back and forth with google maps to see if the path I draw is remotely similar to the real thing. I used the similar technique of rounding the corners for the water edge, and I did a similar bezel but this one is black instead of blue. This process also involved tweaking the magnitude of rounding. The corners (the bus routes are much thinner than the water edge, and the angles are of a much smaller scale).

## THE AREAS

In the Jerusalem map, the designer used different shades of grey and even the grey stripe to mark different areas of Palestinian control. It took me hours to figure out what this encoding would be in my design. I finally concluded on Seattle neighborhoods, with the yellow border separation. The uninteresting neighborhood came last, that area was originally just empty with the dark navy background. I don't think there is anything interesting, especially for tourists, in Lake City or Olympic Hills. Still, I later implemented the stripe area just to show I can emulate the professional design. What I did was made a bunch of copies of the stripes, and spaced them out. Then I made a an outline shape in the general shape of the region. Then I used this outline as a mask for the stripes. The hardest part of the drawing the areas was the yellow border. As you can see, Wallingford / Ballard / U District share the same border. Now, the border in the design had a black outer and inner edge to it, it was hard for me to draw the path for the yellow border in such a way that by adding an outline stroke to it that there is no black lines crossing into the yellow fill.

## THE TEXT AND ROUTES

The text and routes was easy. I just had to draw the shape, and find the right font. I'm usually good at copying EXACTLY, whereas all the prior steps above involve taking inspiration and a general design and doing your own thing with it. Then it was just a matter of placement, and also drawing the little white markers to indicate bus stops. I also had to look up bus information and travel time as well. One of the things I had to consider was I can only have one time represented at each route info. But the buses might run 50 times a day. I just went with the travel time originating from 12pm from the UW, because this information was available for all the buses (they run during those hours) and did the math from there. There is nothing technically difficult about matching the text, and imitating the keys. It was all about finding the right font, weight, size, and then duplicating the shapes in the key. One thing is the vertical dark grey text I had for the neighborhoods. As you can see in the original design, the designer had lots of space to put the city names. Here, the Bellevue region was small for example. So I had no room to fit the text. Whereas in the original design the designer kept a consistent font size, I actually used variable font size so that the neighborhood label will fit inside the region.