



June 15, 2011

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 Fifth Avenue, #800
CNK-EX-0800
Seattle, WA 98104

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
516 Third Avenue, Rm. 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Strategic Plan for Public Transportation (2011-2021)

Dear Executive Constantine and Council President Gossett:

On behalf of the Cities of Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah and Bellevue, we are writing to convey our appreciation and desired outcomes for the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation. Our three cities are home to over a quarter of a million residents and 29% of the employment within the County, with many who use and depend upon Metro's bus services. Additionally, our communities have a long-standing relationship with the County in working together to support transit.

The work of the Regional Transit Task Force and the Regional Transit Committee has allowed for a useful discussion about prioritizing service based on productivity, while considering geographic value and social equity and improving alignment between Metro's services and land use. Although each of our cities will likely see some level of reduced Metro service, we understand the need to prioritize services in a transparent and measurable manner.

However, as you look to reprioritize or add service, we believe the proposed Service Guidelines and Plan fall short of the goal of better aligning transit service with our region's growth plan, Vision 2040, in a fair manner across the County. Specifically, the underserved areas as identified in the Plan, under state the need and demand for services in East King County and we see no opportunity for future service hours to respond to the growth of our major centers. Additionally, riders impacted by service cutbacks will rely on alternative transit services and comprehensive alternative services that must be provided to fill that need.

At this time, the process and requirements proposed in the Striking Amendment provide for the promise of refining the Plan and Service Guidelines to respond to our concerns and meeting the needs of the Eastside as follows:

1. *Refine the factors in the 2013 Plan update to address the under stated need and demand for additional services in East King County.*

We found that Sound Transit routes serving largely Eastside cities were used as a proxy for Metro routes in the process of identifying underserved corridors and prioritizing service additions. Under this scenario, Eastside cities would receive no future service enhancements. Refining the factors and analysis, while considering all public transit service, is necessary to address the need and demand for additional transit service on the Eastside.

2. *Create a new category of additional service priority in the 2013 Plan Update to include service enhancements to and from, between and within VISION 2040 Regionally Designated Centers and other centers where cities have planned for transit-supportive densities and investments that increase transit market share.*

Because the Plan lacks sufficient direction for future service additions, the proposed Striking Amendment would compel development of a new, centers-based, category of service. Within our cities, the four regionally designated centers of Downtown Bellevue, Overlake, Downtown Redmond and Totem Lake, and numerous Transit Activity Centers, are key residential and employment centers within the County and transit service must meet the demand generated from these centers.

3. *Develop a comprehensive alternative services delivery Implementation Plan due by June 2012.*

The Transit Task Force developed cost-cutting measures and urged Metro to develop new practices that would enable creative and alternative solutions to serving all areas of the county. The proposed Striking Amendment outlines a scope of work and timeframe to complete this work, including identification of barriers and approaches to overcome them. We strongly support completing this work as quickly as possible, as transit riders impacted by service cutbacks will rely on these services. Furthermore, Metro's development and marketing of robust alternative services is necessary for Metro to continue to meet the demand for local services to connect to the transit system spine.

We support moving forward with the Plan so long as it includes the elements noted above and with firm assurance that the Plan will be updated to include a more robust provision of service to centers and alternative services in a manner that clearly benefits all areas of King County. To be clear, the lack of commitment to conducting this work and ensuring this outcome will affect our readiness to consider additional revenue for Metro. We believe the Eastside must see a transit service benefit from any additional revenue that is considered for Metro.

Thank you for your continued commitment to serve all of King County in a fair and principled manner consistent with recommendation from the Regional Transit Task Force. We have much more work to do, particularly with regard to Plan Updates to create a solid Smart Growth framework for future services. We are committed to continual collaboration and look forward to working with you to determine how to best position Metro's operations and services going forward, and ultimately to helping shape a more sustainable future for Metro.

Sincerely,



Joan McBride, Mayor
City of Kirkland



John Marchione, Mayor
City of Redmond



Don Davidson, Mayor
City of Bellevue



Ava Frisinger, Mayor
City of Issaquah

cc: Councilmember Reagan Dunn, Chair, Regional Transit Committee
Regional Transit Committee Members