



More bus service is needed, but funding shortage might force deletion of 65 bus routes, report finds

Another 86 routes might be reduced or changed to cut costs

Metro's latest analysis of its transit system found that about 10 percent more bus service is needed to meet demand—but instead of increasing service, Metro might have to reduce the transit system by as much as 17 percent (about 600,000 annual service hours) because of a projected funding shortage.

Metro's 2012 Service Guidelines Report found that nearly 335,000 more hours of bus service are needed annually just to meet current target service levels, reduce crowding and keep buses on time. Even more is needed to serve increasing rider demand and move toward our region's adopted goal for transit growth. The report identified 90 highly productive routes that would likely attract many more riders if funds were available to expand them.

But starting in mid-2014, after some temporary funding sources have run out, Metro will face an annual \$75 million revenue shortfall. King County is working with local and state leaders to seek sufficient, ongoing funding for transit. However, if no new funding tool is approved, Metro will have to eliminate, reduce or revise roughly two-thirds of its bus routes to close the budget gap.

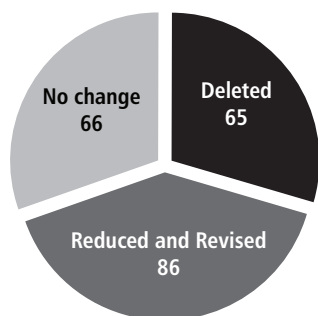
A reduction of that magnitude would have broad impacts on the public transportation network, bus riders, and communities across King County. Impacts on riders would include fewer travel options, longer travel times, more transfers, and more-crowded and less-reliable buses throughout the transit system. Traffic congestion would get worse for everyone.

Learn more about what's at risk 

Illustrative examples of potential service reductions and impacts

- **Roughly one-third of Metro’s routes (65 routes) might be deleted, and about 40 percent (86 routes) might be reduced or revised** if Metro must shrink its system by 600,000 annual service hours.
- **One-third of Metro’s routes might remain unchanged, but would likely carry more people and be more crowded.**

Number of Routes in Each Category



- **People in neighborhoods throughout King County would get less service, or would lose service entirely.** See potential reductions in different areas of the county at www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future
- **Metro would have to cut well-used service that it would not normally consider reducing.** The first routes Metro would consider for reduction would be those the report identified as the least productive 25 percent in Metro’s system. But those routes account for only about 490,000 of the 600,000

annual service hours that would have to be cut—and some of those routes would be maintained because they play critical roles such as serving low-income communities where many people depend on transit.

- **Reductions would mean longer, less-convenient trips to work and school.** Fifty-five percent of Metro’s riders take the bus to school or work, and more than 1,500 businesses, universities and other institutions buy bus passes for their employees or students. If 17 percent of service was reduced, commuters would have to wait longer, walk farther, make extra transfers or stand in the aisle more often. Some might not be able to get to their jobs or classes.
- **People who rely solely or heavily on transit would have fewer travel choices** because there would be fewer bus stops, fewer routes, and less service on remaining routes.
- **Major service reductions would force thousands of people into their cars, worsening congestion and slowing everyone’s travel, the movement of goods, and the delivery of services.** Travel costs would increase as well; public transportation in the Puget Sound Region yields more than \$365 million per year in time and fuel savings for drivers, according to the Texas Transportation Institute. Current Metro service takes about 175,000 vehicles off our roads every weekday—mainly during the busiest times of day on the most heavily used corridors.

How did Metro analyze service needs and potential reductions?

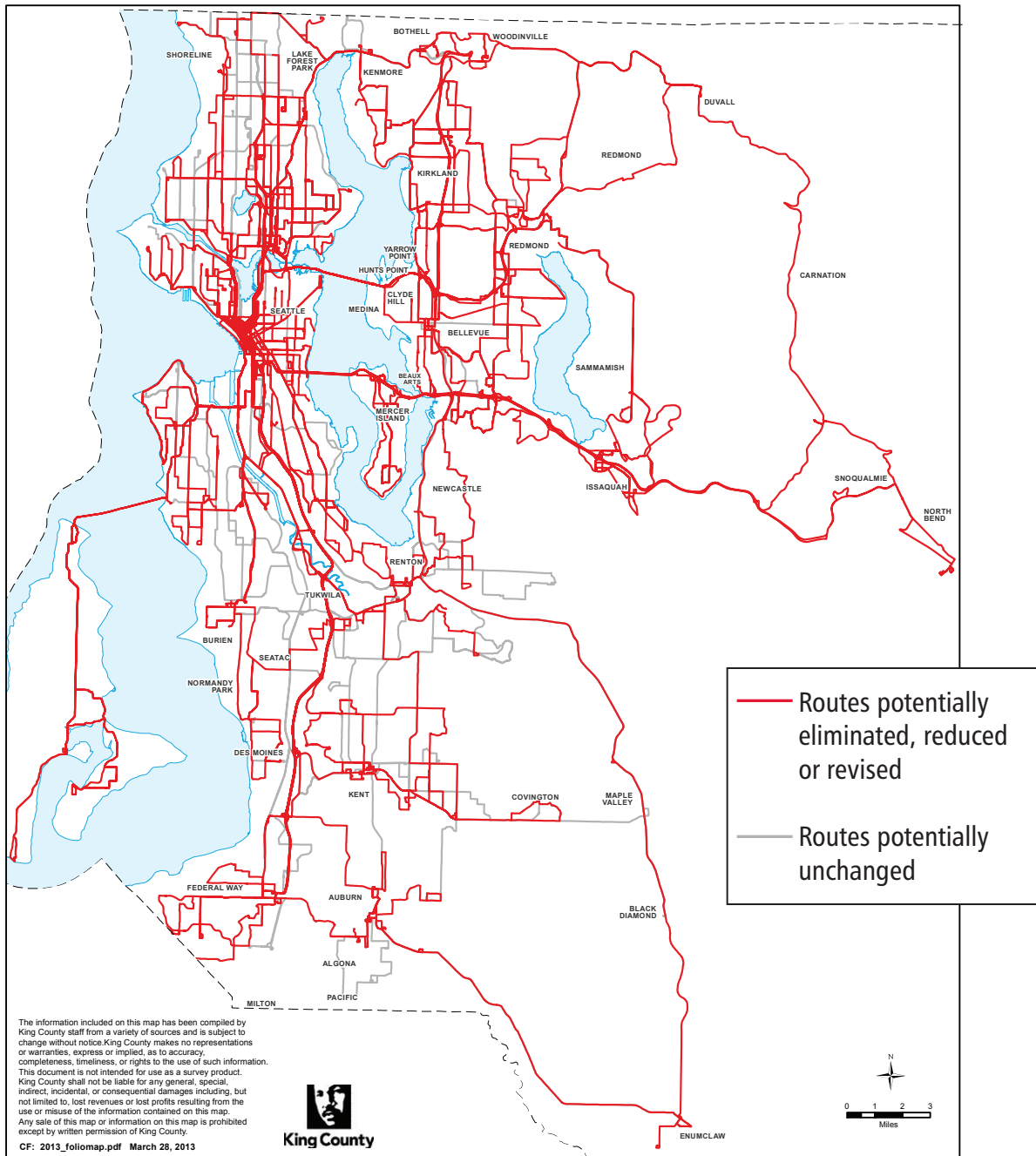
Metro’s analysis of its transit system used objective data defined in service guidelines. The guidelines were recommended by a public task force and adopted by King County in 2011.

The 2012 Service Guidelines Report identified where the transit system needs investments to improve service quality and meet demand, and where routes might be changed or reduced because they are not performing well. Metro used the findings to illustrate how routes might be deleted, reduced or revised to achieve a 17 percent system reduction.

The potential reductions described here are not proposed changes. Before making an actual proposal, Metro would do a more comprehensive analysis using recent data, public comments, and look for opportunities to restructure service to cut costs while serving as many riders as possible.

Find the full 2012 Service Guidelines Report at <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/planning>

Routes that might be eliminated, reduced or revised in a 600,000-hour reduction



Routes potentially deleted: 7EX, 19, 21EX, 22, 25, 27, 30, 37, 48NEX, 57, 61, 76, 77EX, 82, 83, 84, 99, 110, 113, 114, 118EX, 119, 119EX, 123EX, 139, 152, 154, 157, 159, 161, 173, 179, 190, 192, 197, 200, 201, 203, 205EX, 210, 211EX, 213, 215, 216, 237, 243, 244EX, 250, 257, 260, 265, 268, 277, 280, 304, 308, 601EX, 907DART, 910DART, 913DART, 914DART, 919DART, 927DART, 930DART, 935DART

Routes potentially reduced or revised: 1, 2S, 2N, 3S, 3N, 4S, 4N, 5, 5EX, 7, 8, 9EX, 10, 11, 12, 14S, 16, 21, 24, 26, 26EX, 28, 28EX, 29, 31, 36, 41, 43, 47, 48N, 60, 65, 66EX, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 106, 107, 116EX, 118, 121, 122, 125, 148, 156, 177, 181, 182, 186, 187, 193EX, 202, 204, 209, 214, 221, 224, 226, 232, 234, 235, 236, 238, 241, 245, 246, 248, 249, 255, 269, 271, 309EX, 311, 312EX, 331, 355EX, 372EX, 373EX, 901DART, 903DART, 908DART, 909DART, 931DART

Routes potentially unchanged: 13, 15EX, 17EX, 18EX, 32, 33**, 40, 44, 48S, 49, 50, 55**, 56**, 62, 64EX, 74EX, 75, 101, 102, 105, 111, 120, 124, 128, 131**, 132**, 140, 143EX, 150, 153, 155, 158, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 178, 180, 183, 212, 217, 218, 240, 242, 252, 301, 303EX, 306EX, 316, 330, 342, 345, 346, 347, 348, 358, A Line, B Line, C Line, D Line, 773, 775, 915DART, 916DART, 917DART

** Routes not reduced because we expect productivity to be above the bottom 25% threshold due to changes since spring 2012

Abbreviations: EX=express, N=north, S=south, DART=Dial-A-Ride-Transit

Without new funding, \$75 million annual revenue shortfall is ahead

Beginning in mid-2014, Metro's annual revenues are projected to fall \$75 million short of what is needed to maintain the current level of service—\$60 million for operations and \$15 million for bus purchases.

Metro's largest source of funding is sales tax revenue. Since 2008, the weak economy has caused a substantial ongoing revenue shortfall. Metro and King County have taken sweeping actions to reduce Metro's costs, increase revenue and preserve as much transit service as possible (see below).

However, some temporary funding sources will run out by next summer. Although Metro continues cost-cutting efforts and will request a fare increase in 2014, we are not able to close a \$75 million gap without reducing service.

The state legislature is considering funding solutions for transportation needs statewide, including transit. King County has joined with the Sound Cities Association and the City of Seattle to ask the legislature for local transportation funding tools.

If new funding does not become available, deep service cuts will be necessary. Metro's 2013-2014 budget assumes that Metro will cut up to 600,000 annual hours of service beginning in fall 2014 and continuing in 2015.

Metro's financial reforms

Ongoing cost reductions

- Eliminated about 100 staff positions and reduced programs
- Adopted efficiency measures recommended in a performance audit, saving about \$20 million annually
- Made modest reductions in bus service
- Negotiated cost-saving labor agreements
- Eliminated Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle
- Participates in the County's Healthy Incentives program to control employee health costs, which saved about \$10 million between 2007 and 2011



Ongoing revenue increases

- Following a previously planned fare increase in 2008, raised fares in 2009, 2010, and 2011—an unprecedented total 80 percent increase in four years
- Shifted property tax from county ferries to Metro

Temporary actions

- Dug deeply into reserve funds
- Deferred replacement bus purchases
- Deferred most planned service expansion
- Adopted congestion reduction charge to help fund transit for two years

Throughout 2012, Metro used its new strategic plan and service guidelines to make the transit system more productive and effective, to get the most value for the public's tax and fare dollars. Metro restructured major parts of the bus system and also eliminated or reduced low-performing routes and reinvested the service hours to reduce crowding on buses and improve reliability.

Learn more and play a part in Metro's future:
www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future



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