

2006-285

Public Involvement Report

Transit Now Proposal

***King County Department of Transportation
Community Relations and Communications
June 2006***



King County

METRO

We'll Get You There

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Introduction

On April 18, 2006, King County Executive Ron Sims announced ***Transit Now***, a proposal to fund transit service improvements with a one-tenth of one percent raise in the sales tax. Following the executive's announcement, the King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT) conducted outreach to inform the public and gather feedback on the ***Transit Now*** proposal. The following pages summarize the public outreach effort and its results.

Public Outreach

***Transit Now* Proposal**

The KCDOT did the following as part of its ***Transit Now*** community outreach:

- Mailed 20,000 copies of a four-page flyer with a feedback form to the Metro Transit mailing list, and mailed an additional 300 to agencies and organizations on the Accessible Services mailing list;
- Distributed the four-page flyer/feedback form to city halls, libraries, neighborhood service centers, unincorporated area councils, and major employers;
- Surveyed, through the Gilmore Research Group, 633 households by subarea, weighted to reflect county population;
- Presented to and collected comments from over 80 different local jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, business associations, subarea boards, city councils, chambers, and community groups;
- Distributed 5,000 copies of an eight-page brochure describing ***Transit Now***;
- Posted an announcement on Metro buses providing contact information and inviting interested parties to ask questions or share opinions;
- Posted the four-page flyer/feedback form, the eight-page brochure, and other materials on a ***Transit Now*** Web site, inviting response; and
- Produced a television segment broadcast on the executive's announcement for County Television (CTV), which was streamed on the Web and rebroadcast on seven other government channels.

Public Response Summary

***Transit Now* Proposal**

As a result of the *Transit Now* outreach, the KCDOT heard from more than 5,000 people:

- 3,723 feedback forms were returned (an 18.5 percent response rate). Of those, 317 were received via the *Transit Now* Web site;
- 126 comments were received through email messages and phone calls;
- approximately 800 attendees at 80 meetings provided feedback; and
- 633 telephone participants were surveyed by the Gilmore Research Group.

Comments received from King County residents showed strong support for the *Transit Now* proposal.

Flyer/Feedback Form: Asked whether they thought *Transit Now* represented a “reasonable mix” of investments, 66 percent of those who responded to the feedback form agreed. A strong majority indicated that the four key elements of *Transit Now* were “very” or “somewhat” important (RapidRide/bus rapid transit, 85 percent; improvements in current bus service, 91 percent; new service for developing residential areas, 79 percent; service partnerships with major employers and cities, 86 percent).

Gilmore Research Group Telephone Survey: Of those surveyed, 77 percent supported the one-tenth of one percent sales tax increase to pay for Metro service improvements. Support was seen across all subareas (83 percent in north/west; 75 percent in east; 73 percent in south).

***Transit Now* Outreach Meetings:** Those attending meetings had many questions about how their particular institution or community would benefit from *Transit Now*. Several cities and employers indicated their interest in the service partnership programs.

Other Comments: KCDOT received 66 telephone comments and 60 email comments, evenly divided among those expressing support, opposition, and having questions or comments.

Appendices
Transit Now Proposal

Public Outreach Results

Public Outreach Materials

Public Outreach Results

Transit Now Proposal

Board of Directors

James Hebert
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Industries Served

Agriculture
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King County
METRO
Transit Now
Survey Report
May 2006

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King County

METRO

*Transit Now Survey Report
May 2006*

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| <i>Reasonable</i> | 15 |
| <i>Not Reasonable</i> | 55 |
| <i>No Opinion</i> | 75 |
| <i>No Response</i> | 82 |

Special Thanks to

Pat Cleary and Marnie McGrath for their support, direction and continued availability on this project.

Hebert Research Team

Kenneth Klima, *Research Director*

Karen Marotz, *Research Analyst*

Tiffani Kaech, *IS Technician*

Demographic and Geographic Questions

| | | N | % |
|---|-----------------------------|------|-------|
| Q1 - What best describes you? | Bus Rider | 2790 | 74.9% |
| | Car Pooler | 101 | 2.7% |
| | Van Pooler | 35 | 0.9% |
| | Access Rider | 117 | 3.1% |
| | None of the Above | 680 | 18.3% |
| | Total | 3723 | |
| Q2 - How often do you use Metro Transit? | Often: 2-4 days a week | 2291 | 61.7% |
| | Rarely: once a week or less | 1137 | 30.6% |
| | Never | 288 | 7.8% |
| | Total | 3716 | |
| Q5 - Do you use a regional reduced fare permit for seniors or people with disabilities? | Yes | 1257 | 33.9% |
| | No | 2446 | 66.1% |
| | Total | 3703 | |
| Q6 - RapidRide, a "bus rapid transit" (BRT) service in five key travel corridors, providing frequent all-day service, faster trips, more comfortable vehicles and stations, advanced customer information, and traffic signal priority for buses, is... | Very important | 2292 | 61.9% |
| | Somewhat important | 858 | 23.2% |
| | Somewhat unimportant | 146 | 3.9% |
| | Not important | 256 | 6.9% |
| | No opinion | 153 | 4.1% |
| | Total | 3705 | |
| Q7 - Improvements in current bus service, increasing frequency on 35 major Metro routes where ridership is heaviest, providing all-day, two-way service between key cities and neighborhoods, and increasing night and weekend service on all-day routes throughout the county are... | Very important | 2629 | 71.0% |
| | Somewhat important | 724 | 19.5% |
| | Somewhat unimportant | 112 | 3.0% |
| | Not important | 160 | 4.3% |
| | No opinion | 80 | 2.2% |
| | Total | 3705 | |
| Q8 - New service for developing residential areas, responding to rapid growth in east and south King County, is... | Very important | 1942 | 52.3% |
| | Somewhat important | 1001 | 27.0% |
| | Somewhat unimportant | 283 | 7.6% |
| | Not important | 264 | 7.1% |
| | No opinion | 220 | 5.9% |
| | Total | 3710 | |
| Q9 - Service partnerships with the major employers and cities in the county, potentially leveraging millions in additional resources from other sources to add considerably to service in targeted activity centers, are... | Very important | 2298 | 62.7% |
| | Somewhat important | 860 | 23.5% |
| | Somewhat unimportant | 156 | 4.3% |
| | Not important | 163 | 4.4% |
| | No opinion | 189 | 5.2% |
| | Total | 3666 | |

Demographic and Geographic Questions (Continued)

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------|-------|
| Q10 - What is most useful for you and your family? | Capital Investments | 1799 | 53.8% |
| | Expanding Access Paratransit | 1290 | 38.6% |
| | Ridesharing Improvements | 253 | 7.6% |
| | Total | 3342 | |
| Q11 - Do you think that Transit Now offers a reasonable mix of investments to improve mobility, relieve congestion and improve the environment? | Reasonable | 2308 | 66.3% |
| | Not Reasonable | 602 | 17.3% |
| | No Opinion | 571 | 16.4% |
| | Total | 3481 | |

Gilmore Research Group Telephone Survey

Transit Now Proposal

Methodology

- County-wide random sample of telephone households
633 completed interviews
sampled by subregion, weighted to reflect county population
- Interviewing dates: April 19 through May 9
Conducted by Gilmore Research Group

Key findings

Support for the 0.1% sales tax increase to pay for Metro service improvements is high county-wide and in all 3 subregions.

- 77% county-wide
- 83% of respondents in the North/West subregion
- 75% of those in East King County
- 73% of South King County

Support comes from both riders and non-riders. 88% of riders and 72% of non-riders support the 0.1% sales tax increase. (36% of the respondents were riders, that is, had ridden Metro in the previous month, and 64% were non-riders.)

When asked about specific service improvements, support was high for all. Support for all specific improvements was over 50% in all subregions.

| | |
|--|-----|
| More service and improved facilities for people with disabilities | 84% |
| More Metro service in suburban residential areas with high population growth | 79% |
| More Metro service where local cities or businesses pay 50% of the cost | 79% |
| More all-day Metro service with buses running every 10-15 minutes | 78% |
| Express Metro routes to more employment centers | 77% |
| More park & ride lots and more service at park & ride lots | 77% |
| More vanpool service | 70% |
| More use of technology to improve bus service | 60% |

Respondents wanted to have more emphasis on bus rapid transit (64%) rather than concentrating on the type of bus service Metro now provides (24%).

Transit Now Outreach Community and Organization Meetings

Transit NOW Outreach- List of Organizations KCDOT met with up to June 2nd

Organizations

Eastside Transportation Choices
Downtown Transportation Association
Accessible Services- ASAC
Discovery Institute/Cascadia
Port of Seattle
Issaquah Kiwanis Club
Sammamish Kiwanis Club
Transit Advisory Committee
City Managers Meeting
Seattle School Board
UW
North Seattle Community College
Seattle University
Seattle Central Community College
City Neighborhood Council
Eastlake Community Council
Alaska Junction Association
Parent Coalition
Futurewise
Business Associations
Downtown Seattle Association
Bellevue Downtown Association
South Lake Union Network
Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
Greater Federal Way Chamber of Commerce
Shoreline Chamber of Commerce
Southwest King County Chamber of Commerce
Southwest King County Chamber of Commerce

Cities

Auburn
Bellevue
Burien
Federal Way
Kent
Kirkland
Redmond

Individual Businesses

Swedish Hospital (Seattle)
NW Hospital
Fred Hutch
Harborview
Virginia Mason
Poly Clinic
The Boeing Company (S. King County)
Microsoft (Redmond)
Adobe (Seattle)
Holland America
Rosetta
Avtech
Onvia
SBRI - Seattle Biomedical Research Institute
Macy's
Washington Dental
Puget Sound Energy
King TV
Pemco
Northwest Airlines
Horizon Airlines
Safeco
Cascade Natural Gas
UW Physicians
Getty Images
Preston Gates
Seattle Times
Sabey Development Company
Equity Properties
Unico
Vulcan Properties
Children's Hospital

Gov't Boards/Councils

ETP
SeaShore
SCATBd
ETP TAC
Seashore TAC

Renton
Sammamish
Sammamish Internal Staff
Seattle
SDOT
Tukwila Council Transp. Committee
Woodinville
Redmond TMA
Issaquah

SCATBd TAC
King County Council
Regional Transit Committee

Labor
IBEW
ATU

Community and Organization Outreach Comments

Since the Executive's announcement of the Transit NOW initiative on April 18th, KCDOT staff has met with over 80 different organizations to gain feedback on the Transit NOW proposal. In order to gain feedback on the proposal from a wide audience, staff talked to a wide range of groups including local jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, businesses associations, and community groups (see list below). While some of the groups represented interests across the county, others were particular to certain King County subareas, jurisdictions, and communities (estimate number of meetings in each subarea 14 in the east, 10 in the south, and 15 in the west). The feedback from these meetings was used to revise the proposal.

During these meetings, people mostly asked questions regarding the details of the Transit NOW proposal. Almost everyone wanted to know if Transit NOW would provide increased service to their community. Listed below, is a summary of all the comments heard during the Transit NOW Outreach meetings up to June 2nd. These are not direct quotes, but rather a summary of the issues.

Rapid Ride/BRT

- Will the BRT service hours be allocated under the current 40/40/20 policy?
- What capital investments will be made? Are these investments part of Transit NOW?
- What will be the level of service? Will the level of service be comparable to light rail?
- The BRT service on South 99 could jeopardize the possibility of LINK light rail extending south
- Why does Seattle get 3 BRT routes, and the east and south subareas only get 1 BRT route?.
- BRT routes need a dedicated right of way.
- It will be difficult to take already designated lanes away for BRT usage. Can Metro replace the parking that will be displaced? Are there shared use parking opportunities?
- Support for 5 BRT/Rapid Ride routes from the local jurisdictions.
- BRT route on Pac Highway South needs enhanced security (e.g., cameras).
- What is the route for the West Seattle Rapid Ride? How can bus service be rapid across the Spokane Street Viaduct?
- What capital investments will be made with Transit NOW?
- Run the West Seattle BRT down 1st Ave to serve the businesses in that corridor.

Improved Current Service on High Ridership Routes

- Not everyone agreed with the 35 corridors identified.
- Need to extend hours of service, employees are not all 9-5.

West Subarea:

- Need more east/west connections in west subarea.
- Limited east/west connection around the north end of Lake Washington.
- Connections are needed from Shoreline to Bellevue
- With the growth in Kenmore and Bothell, there needs to be more service to these areas.
- First Hill employees don't like to transfer.

East Subarea:

- Intra-eastside transit usage is needed to connect the urban centers- Metro needs to expand service beyond Bellevue, Redmond, and Eastgate transit centers.
- More dedicated routes to service Snoqualmie Ridge, Redmond Ridge and Sammamish.

- Important to expand peak hour times
- How does this relate to the potential changes on the Eastside- with the service change? The routes proposed to be eliminated in the Eastside Service Change should be funded with Transit NOW.
- Why no service on I-90 and SR 522? These are corridors are served by ST.

South Subarea:

- Enhanced connection between Renton and Longacres station.
- Support 168 extension to Maple Valley/Four Corners
- Support of additional service Pac Hwy South
- Neighborhood shuttle service in Auburn
- Support enhanced service to Sea Tac.
- Add bus "shadow service" to complement commuter rail, particularly from Auburn.

Service/Specific Routes:

- Keep route 291 on Willows Road. For some, this route is the only way people can get to and from work.
 - Riders are concerned about the cut of route 243 (especially businesses in downtown Bellevue)
 - Bus 70 represents a degradation in the neighborhood because it makes too many stops.
 - Express routes need to make at least one stop in the Eastlake neighborhood.
 - More service on the route 25 is needed especially in the evening.
 - Route 110 needs to have more connectivity.
 - Why add service to route 240 if ridership is quite low.
 - More service is needed to connect North Bend.
 - Service level of 237 needs to be increased.
 - Can not reduce service on 237 and 311- important connector for Woodinville.
 - Route 152 should be all day express.
 - Routes 68, 65, 372 all full to the UW.
- Support enhanced service of route 180

New Service for Growing Areas

- Support for service to previously underserved rapidly growing areas.

Partnerships

- How much will this cost? Is this a 50/50 match?
- Will only the richest business and cities be able to participate? Many cities expressed the concern that they do not have the general funds available for transit.
- Give jurisdictions credit for improved pedestrian access- sidewalks, street crossings, roadway improvements, signal timing, etc.
- Give credit to businesses that are already providing bus pass subsidies.
- Could these funds be allocated for local transit needs?
- Can cities do a shuttle service with the partnership (Auburn and Kent)?
- What are the criteria for the partnership?
- Can jurisdictions contribute services, road improvements, and/or capital investments instead of direct cash improvements?
- Are these funds only for more service? Or could they be spent on capital improvements?
- Interest from the First Hill employers because they are currently paying for their own shuttle service.

- Support for improvements in disabled services
- Need to make transit more accessible for disabled people
- Strong support for increases in Access service, filling the “donut holes”
- Can Metro eliminate the 24-hour advance reservation for paratransit?

Rideshare

- Important investment, one businesses stated they had more vanpool riders than transit riders.
- Metro should provide park and rides for vanpool riders, especially for where transit services don't exist
- More subsidy needed.
- Increase in vanpools would be a good way increase service (based on WSDOT study that vanpool could be increased to 19 times the current use).

Other:

- What is the allocation process? Will 40/40/20 be maintained? What services will fall within 40/40/20?
 - BRT should be excluded from 40/40/20.
 - The policy should be changed and better reflect the demand on transit ridership.
 - Can the 40/40/20 policy allocation be changed for high ridership routes
 - If Seattle has over 30% of the population and the employment why does it only get 20% of the service?
 - South County has approximately 1/3 of the population, but only 21% of the service.
- How dos this fit within the RTID/ST ballot? Is this consistent with Sound Transit Phase II? Are the agencies coordinating?
- ST planners stated that they have reviewed the proposal and it is viewed as complementary to STII.
- Need a greater focus on park and ride investments especially in the suburbs.
- Is Transit NOW robust enough? Metro should consider requesting more funding authority.
- Enhanced amenities, such as shelter, lighting, protection from the elements, increased safety
- Does this proposal include improvements for South Lake Union streetcar?
- Can Metro raise the transit fares instead of using the sales tax? Can Metro cover a higher percentage of their operating costs with increased fares? Suggested fare collection reform.
- Real time information should be on all Metro routes
- Trip planner is not user friendly and it does not provide the best recommendations on which bus to use.
- What is the timing for my hybrid-diesel buses?
- Can Metro make a more effective use of the current bus system- (e.g., consolidating stops and decreasing loading times).
- Enhanced public transit improves service for students going to school. It is important to address student's transportation needs.
- Concern about the tax increase and voter fatigue.
- Excited that service could be implemented as soon as Spring '07.
- Metro needs to work with the local community to address the parking issues around the transit hubs.
- What is the cumulative tax burden?
- Need for more bicycle carrying capacity on buses- All new buses increase from 2-3 bikes per bus.
- Bike rack capacity needs to be increased on SR-520.
- A specific breakdown of the budget for Transit NOW was requested.
- Could Metro purchase bigger buses for the high ridership routes?

Public Outreach Materials

Transit Now Proposal



King County
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We'll Get You There

April 2006

King County wants to hear from you about proposed *Transit Now* package

King County Executive Ron Sims announces proposal to increase countywide transit service by up to 20 percent

TRANSIT NOW

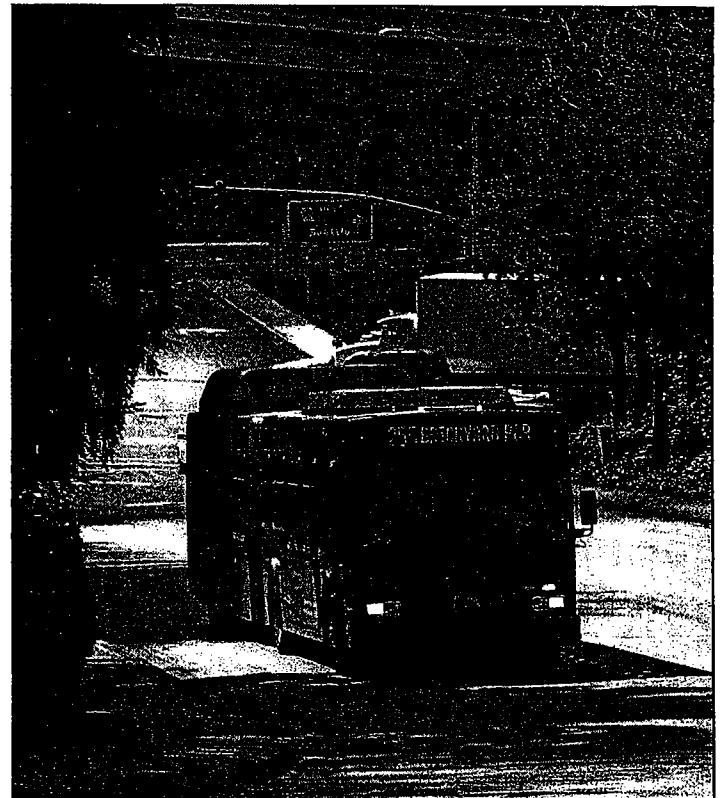
Improve mobility

King County Executive Ron Sims is proposing an up to 20 percent increase in Metro Transit service to keep up with growth over the next ten years. The new program, called *Transit Now*, would provide new and expanded transit service throughout King County. This newsletter includes information about the proposal, and a feedback form for you to fill out and return to King County. King County wants to hear what you think about the types of service improvement proposals being considered.

Keep congestion in check

If *Transit Now* is put in place, more than half a million people will have improved transit service within walking distance of their homes. Today, Metro carries approximately 335,000 riders per day; after *Transit Now*, more than 60,000 additional riders per day are expected on buses that will arrive more frequently, travel faster, and be more environmentally friendly.

Please see inside this newsletter for more details about *Transit Now*, a map showing how and where different improvements in service could be made, a feedback form, and ways for you to provide your comments. Please fill out and return the feedback form by May 10, 2006.



Metro Transit could use *Transit Now* funding to help reduce global warming through the purchase of more hybrid buses.

Why now?

Current projections say that King County will create more than 250,000 new jobs and add more than 150,000 new residents over the next ten years. This projected growth comes on top of rapid prior growth that has resulted in new neighborhoods needing more service, and more riders throughout King County standing in bus aisles during rush hours and waiting longer at transit stops for their buses. After the passage in 1999 of Initiative 695, which eliminated an important source of transit funding, Metro Transit service was reduced even as demand for it was growing.

King County voters initially responded to the impact of I-695 by voting to raise the county's transit sales tax rate from .6 percent to .8 percent (two-tenths of one percent). But keeping service near its 1999 levels has not been sufficient in the face of our region's continued rapid growth.

An overview of how the money could be allocated

Here is how an up to 20 percent increase in Metro service could be used:

- **RapidRide**, a "bus rapid transit" (BRT) service in five key travel corridors, providing frequent all-day service, faster trips, more comfortable vehicles and stations, advanced customer information, and traffic signal priority for buses.
- **Improvements in current bus service**, improving 35 major Metro routes where ridership is heaviest, providing more frequent all-day, two-way service between key cities and neighborhoods, and increasing night and weekend service on all-day routes.
- **New service for developing residential areas**, responding to rapid growth in east and south King County.

If *Transit Now* is put into operation, more than half a million people will have improved transit service within walking distance of their homes.

Metro has been working to improve transit in response to growing ridership by shifting around existing resources. *Transit Now*, with its proposed new funding, is a way to serve this growing ridership.

How we could pay for *Transit Now*, and keep pace with population and employment growth

By raising the sales tax in King County by one-tenth of one percent (.1%, or one penny on every \$10.00 in sales), King County would be able to offer a broad array of new transit services. Metro analysis shows that funding for *Transit Now* would average approximately \$25 annually per King County household. Funds raised would total \$50 million per year, beginning in 2007, growing to \$75 million per year by 2015.

- **Service partnerships** with major employers and cities in the county, potentially leveraging millions in additional resources from other sources to add considerably to service in targeted activity centers.
- **Capital investments** in improved passenger amenities at bus stops, better passenger information, and electronic bus arrival signs.
- **Expanding Access paratransit** to areas within King County urban boundaries, where gaps in the service currently exist, and enabling more seniors and riders with disabilities to use regular bus service.
- **Ridesharing improvements** designed to double participation in Commuter Vanpool programs by 2016.
- **Investment in "green" technology**, such as hybrid buses, that will help King County reduce greenhouse gases.

Transit Now Feedback Form

Please fill out and return by May 10, 2006.

About you

Which best describes you?

- Bus rider
- Carpooler
- Vanpooler
- Access rider
- None of the above

How often do you use Metro Transit, either bus, ACCESS, carpool or vanpool?

- Often—2-4 days a week
- Rarely—once a week or less
- Never

If you ride the bus, which route do you ride most often? _____

What is the ZIP code where you live? _____

Do you use a Metro Regional Reduced Fare Pass for seniors and people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

Tell us what you think about...

RapidRide, a "bus rapid transit" (BRT) service in five key travel corridors, providing frequent all-day service, faster trips, more comfortable vehicles and stations, advanced customer information, and traffic signal priority for buses, is...

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not important
- No opinion

Improvements in current bus service, increasing frequency on 35 major Metro routes where ridership is heaviest, providing all-day, two-way service between key cities and neighborhoods, and increasing night and weekend service on all-day routes throughout the county, are...

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not important
- No opinion

New service for developing residential areas, responding to rapid growth in east and south King County, is...

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not important
- No opinion

Service partnerships with the major employers and cities in the county, potentially leveraging millions in additional resources from other sources to add considerably to service in targeted activity centers, are...

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not important
- No opinion

Most useful for me and my family are (pick one)

- Capital investments** in improved passenger amenities at bus stops, better passenger information, electronic bus arrival signs, and improved passenger facilities.
- Expanding Access paratransit** to areas within King County urban boundaries, where gaps in the service currently exist; and enabling more seniors and riders with disabilities to use regular bus service.
- Ridesharing improvements** designed to double participation in Commuter Vanpool programs by 2016.

Overall, do you think that *Transit Now* offers a reasonable mix of investments to improve mobility, relieve congestion and improve the environment?
(circle one)

Reasonable Not reasonable No opinion

Why? _____

Continued on other side

To receive updates....

This newsletter and feedback form were mailed to all households on our transit mailing list. If you would like to receive further updates on *Transit Now*, please fill in the information form below.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail (optional) _____

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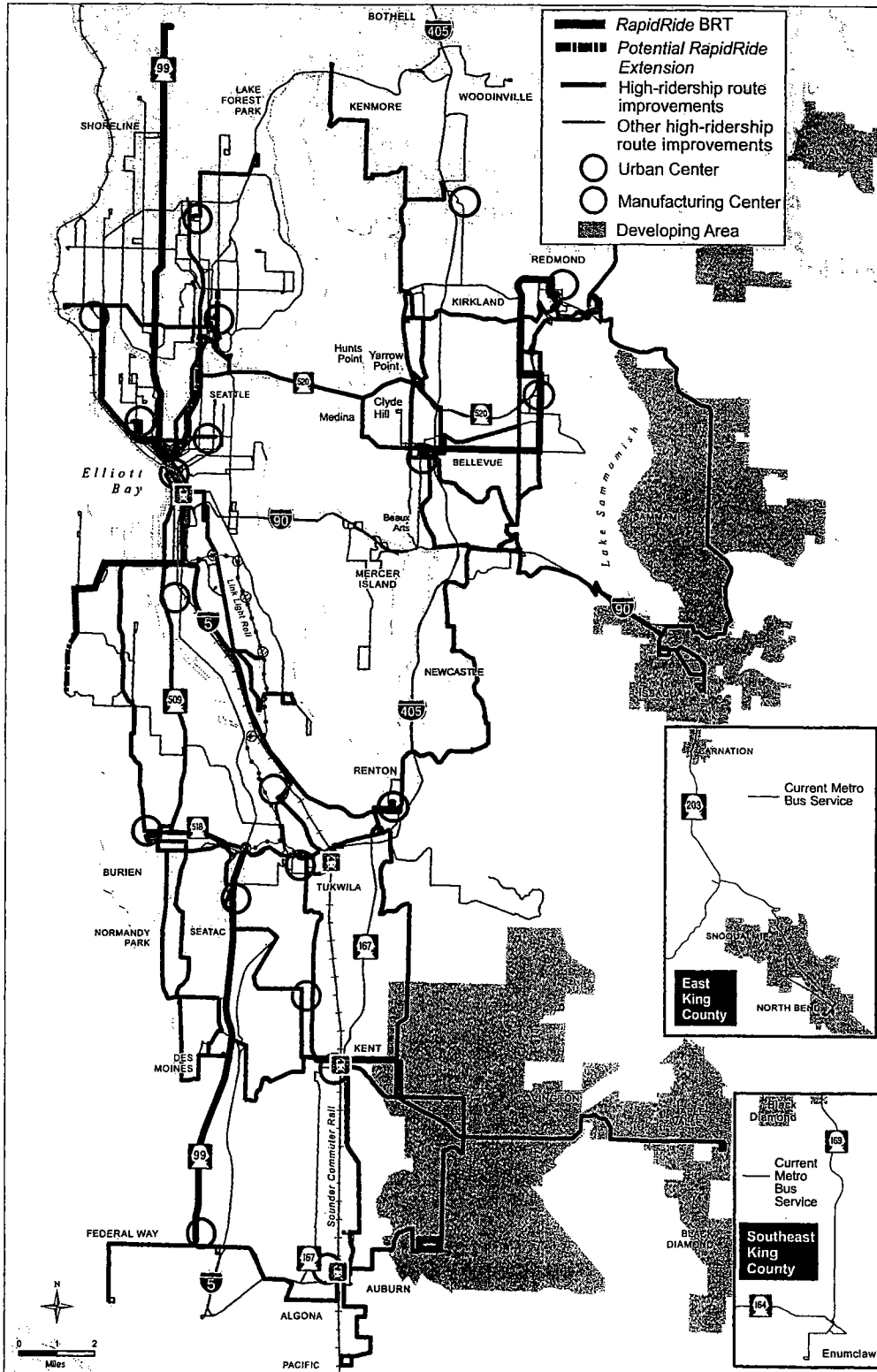


KING COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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Transit Now service improvements

This map, based on Metro Transit's analysis of current ridership and future population and employment trends, illustrates how service improvements from *Transit Now* could be spread throughout the region. Exactly which improvements would be made along which corridors would be decided only after a thorough process combining research, analysis, and extensive public outreach. The outreach would include mailings, questionnaires, public meetings, and other opportunities for comment.



RapidRide BRT:

- Aurora Ave N
- Ballard/15th Ave W
- West Seattle
- Bellevue/Redmond
- Pacific Hwy S

High-ridership routes:

- Network of all-day central/Eastside routes with 15-minute frequency
- South King County all-day 15-30-minute frequency route network
- Improved cross-town services within Seattle

Developing areas:

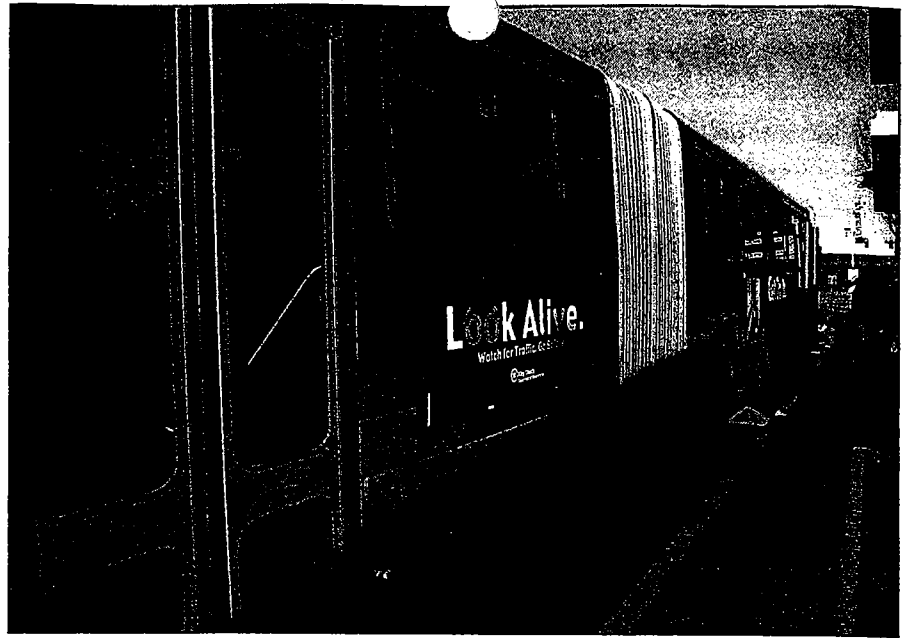
New peak service or addition of midday service to newly developing residential areas

Service partnerships:

Additional services to urban employment centers with high potential for matching resources

For further information

If you have further questions about the *Transit Now* proposal, or want to provide further comments, you can contact Pat Cleary, King County community relations planner, at 206-684-1142 (TTY Relay: 711), or by email at pat.cleary@metrokc.gov. You can also visit the *Transit Now* web site at www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/transitnow, where there is additional information about *Transit Now*, and where you can fill out the feedback form online. Please return the feedback form and other comments by May 10, 2006.



King County wants to hear from you about proposed *Transit Now*.

Alternate Formats Available

206-263-3703 TTY Relay: 711

60203jp indd  

King County considering
new *Transit Now* service
improvement proposal



Department of Transportation
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TRANSIT NOW

Transit Now includes:

- **RapidRide**—Create “bus rapid transit” (BRT) with frequent all-day service and faster travel times on five key travel corridors: three in Seattle; one connecting Bellevue and Redmond; and one serving SeaTac, Des Moines and Federal Way.
- **Improve current service**—Enhance 35 major Metro routes with the highest ridership to provide more frequent two-way, all-day service between key cities and neighborhoods.
- **New service for growing areas**—Develop new peak and midday service for residential areas in East and South King County.
- **Service partnerships**—Set aside resources for partnerships with major employers and cities, potentially leveraging millions in additional funding from other sources to add new service in rapidly expanding employment centers.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/transitnow>

“Transit Now” is a new four-point initiative that will increase King County Metro Transit service to provide up to 21 million more annual rides within ten years.

The initiative aims to get as many as 60,000 drivers off the road and into buses each weekday to keep regional congestion in check. And, the initiative provides new travel options and traffic relief to thousands of commuters who will be affected by construction of highways and other transportation projects.

This initiative will allow Metro to keep pace with employment and population growth, and will result in an overall increase of bus service by up to 20 percent systemwide—or as much as 700,000 new hours of bus service over the next ten years.

The environment will also win because more vehicles will be taken off the road—and that means less air pollution. Also, the cleanest fuels available will power Metro’s 21st Century fleet, including hybrid diesel-electric, electricity, and biodiesel.



Metro’s hybrid buses are clean and efficient.

The initiative will be funded by a one-tenth of one percent sales tax measure to be approved by voters in King County. The sales tax increase amounts to an estimated \$50 million in annual revenues for Metro. It will fund immediate transportation improvements to get the region moving through more transit service and help reduce congestion.

If approved by the voters, the initiative would cost the average household in King County approximately \$25 more a year in sales tax—less than the cost of a tank of gas.



King County
METRO

We’ll Get You There

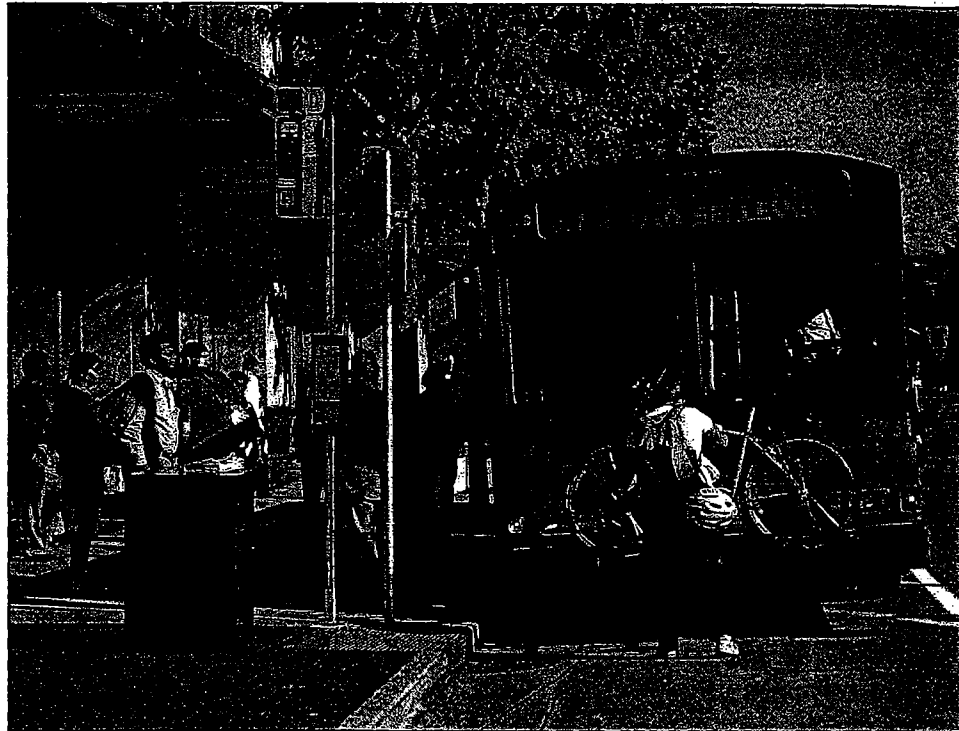
Four key areas of new transit service

RapidRide—Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a term used to describe transit services and facility improvements that achieve faster operation than traditional buses.

Recently, Metro and the cities of Shoreline and Seattle moved the Aurora Avenue North/State Route 99 corridor closer to RapidRide service levels by increasing the frequency of service throughout the day, and by moving buses to a dedicated transit lane in some sections of Aurora. Over the past five years, ridership has increased on Aurora Avenue North by almost 2,000 rides per day, more than 600,000 annually.

With the *Transit Now* Initiative, Metro will develop and implement RapidRide service on five corridors, including:

- Complete the Aurora Avenue North improvements between Shoreline and downtown Seattle;
- Ballard to downtown Seattle along 15th Avenue Northwest and Elliott Avenue West;
- West Seattle to downtown Seattle with a possible extension to the University District using the downtown transit tunnel and Interstate 5;
- Bellevue to Redmond on Northeast 8th Street and 156th Avenue Northeast via Crossroads and Overlake;
- SeaTac to Federal Way on Pacific Highway South (State Route 99); and
- Install new buses and upgraded passenger waiting areas; plus add technology to synchronize traffic signals and operate real-time bus arrival signs;



Use of Metro park-and-ride lots is increasing throughout King County.

More service—Metro is proposing more all-day, two-way core bus service that connects residential, business, and recreational centers throughout the county. These high-ridership routes are a more reliable travel alternative because they are available throughout the day rather than only during peak travel periods. Even commuter ridership improves when passengers can count on service being available at all times of day.

These route improvements will bring more frequent and more reliable service to all urban areas of King County. Types of improvements that will be made to core routes include: improved frequency during peak and midday periods; expanded night and weekend service; more trips

to provide more seats on routes that are overcrowded; and revised routes to provide better coverage to under-served areas.

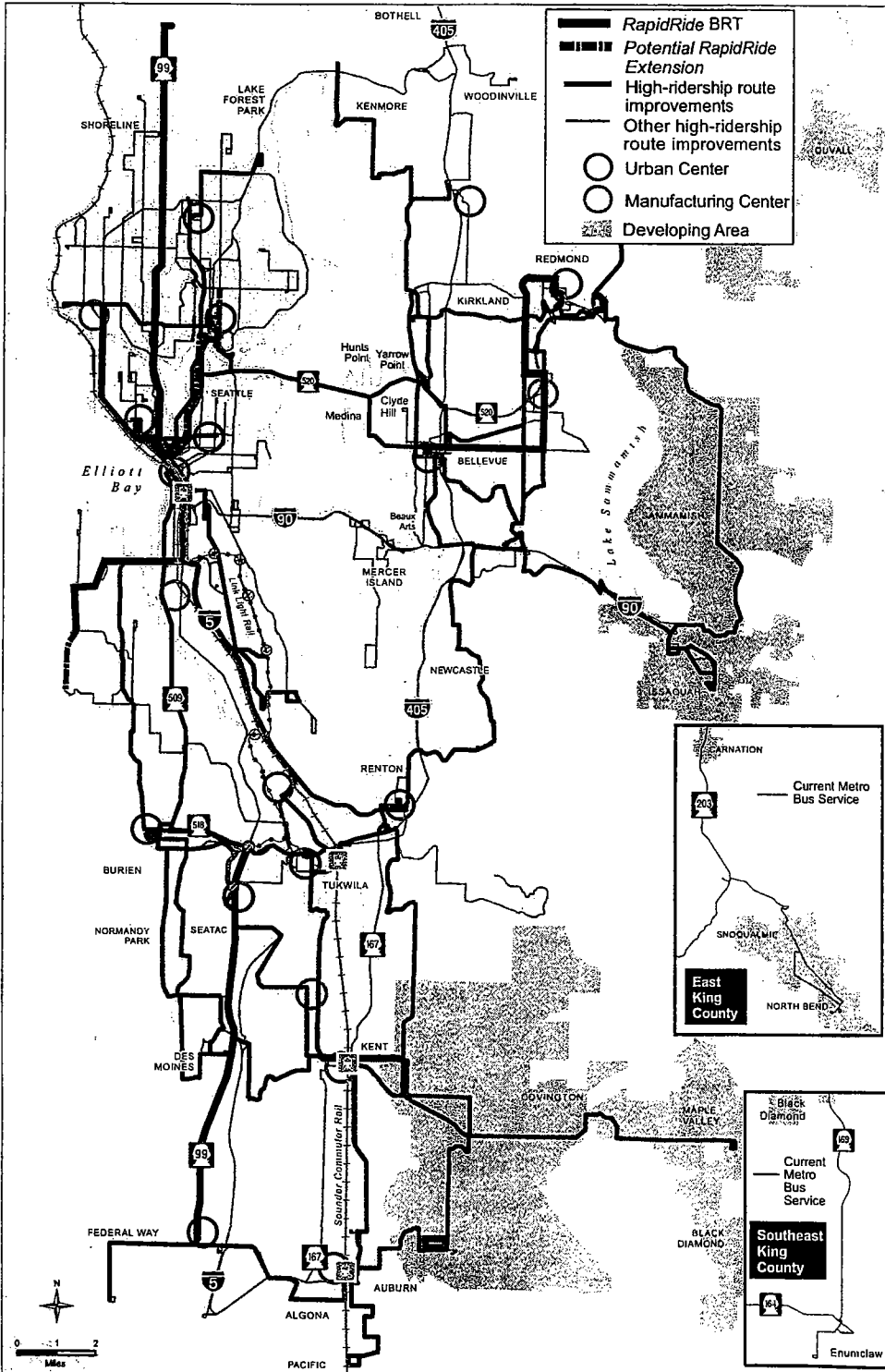
The service improvements will be tailored to specific needs in specific areas of the county. Based on public input to date, ideas include:

- A new all-day, direct route to connect Auburn, Kent, SeaTac, and Burien to improve access to employment sites in the airport area.
- Upgrade local service between Kent Station and Covington, and extend to Maple Valley.
- Develop a network of all-day, 15-minute service routes connecting most business and residential centers within the central Eastside area.

continued on page 7

Transit Now service improvements

This map, based on Metro Transit's analysis of current ridership and future population and employment trends, illustrates how service improvements from *Transit Now* could be spread throughout the region. Exactly which improvements would be made along which corridors would be decided only after a thorough process combining research, analysis, and extensive public outreach. The outreach would include mailings, questionnaires, public meetings, and other opportunities for comment.



RapidRide BRT:

- Aurora Ave N
- Ballard/15th Ave W
- West Seattle
- Bellevue/Redmond
- Pacific Hwy S

High-ridership routes:

- Network of all-day central Eastside routes with 15-minute frequency
- South King County all-day 15-30-minute frequency route network
- Improved cross-town services within Seattle

Developing areas:

New peak service or addition of midday service to newly developing residential areas

Service partnerships:

Additional services to urban employment centers with high potential for matching resources

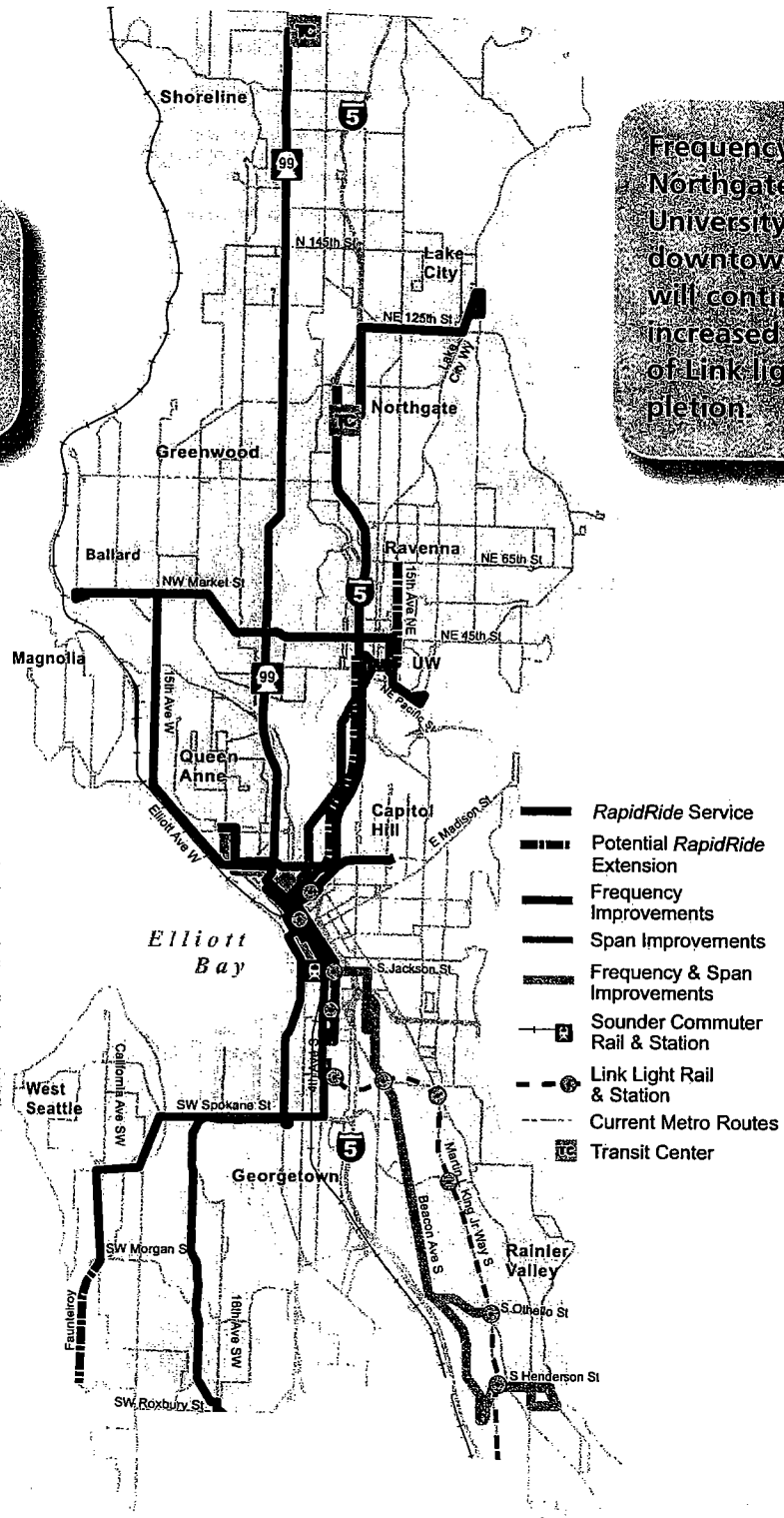
Seattle and Shoreline Metro service improvements

Much of the new investment proposed for the Seattle/Shoreline area is focused on three RapidRide BRT corridors shown in red below, and there will be improvements on other major routes as well. Examples are shown below, and each proposal will be subject to public involvement and input. Seattle and Shoreline service will increase further if locally-generated partnership resources become available, and if regional funds are provided to mitigate construction of a replacement for the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

East-west connections will be improved through Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Uptown/Lower Queen Anne.

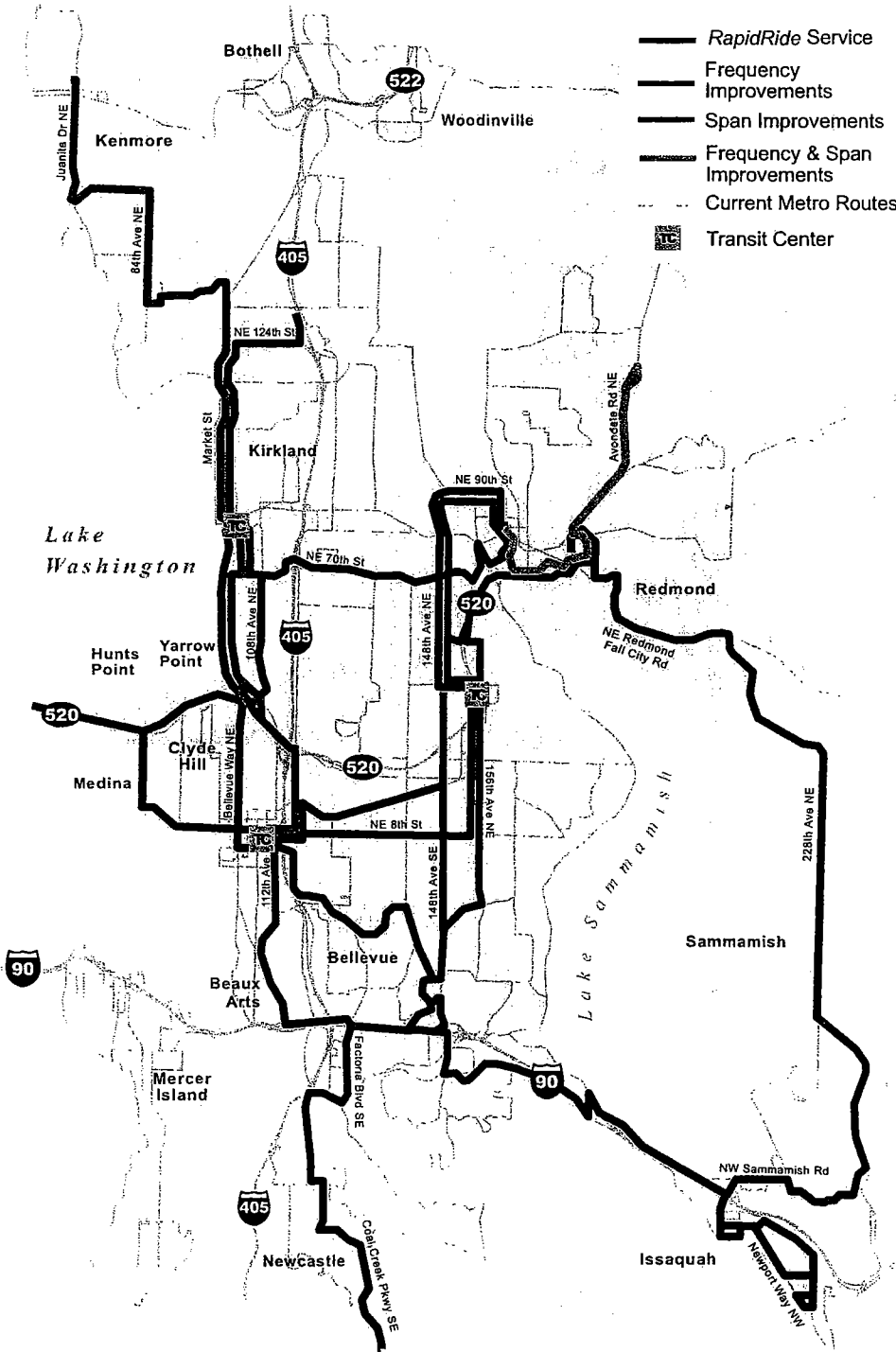
Frequency between Northgate, the University District and downtown Seattle will continue to be increased in advance of Link light rail completion.

Existing routes with heavy ridership will have new trips added, as needed to address crowding. Some routes will be revised to better connect with Link light rail at McClellan, Othello and Henderson Stations.



East King County Metro service improvements

Several potential Eastside major route improvements have been identified and examples are shown below. Proposed changes will also be subject to public involvement and input. Metro is currently conducting an outreach process in East King County, and the proposed improvements shown here are consistent with those being discussed by community stakeholders.



Using new revenue and redeployment of hours from some existing peak-only routes, develop a network of all-day routes with 15-minute service connecting most business and residential centers within the central Eastside area.

New direct connections will also be provided to major job centers on the Eastside.

Core routes connecting Eastside destinations will be improved, including Kenmore, Kirkland, Issaquah, Crossroads, Overlake, Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, Bellevue Community College, Eastgate and Factoria.

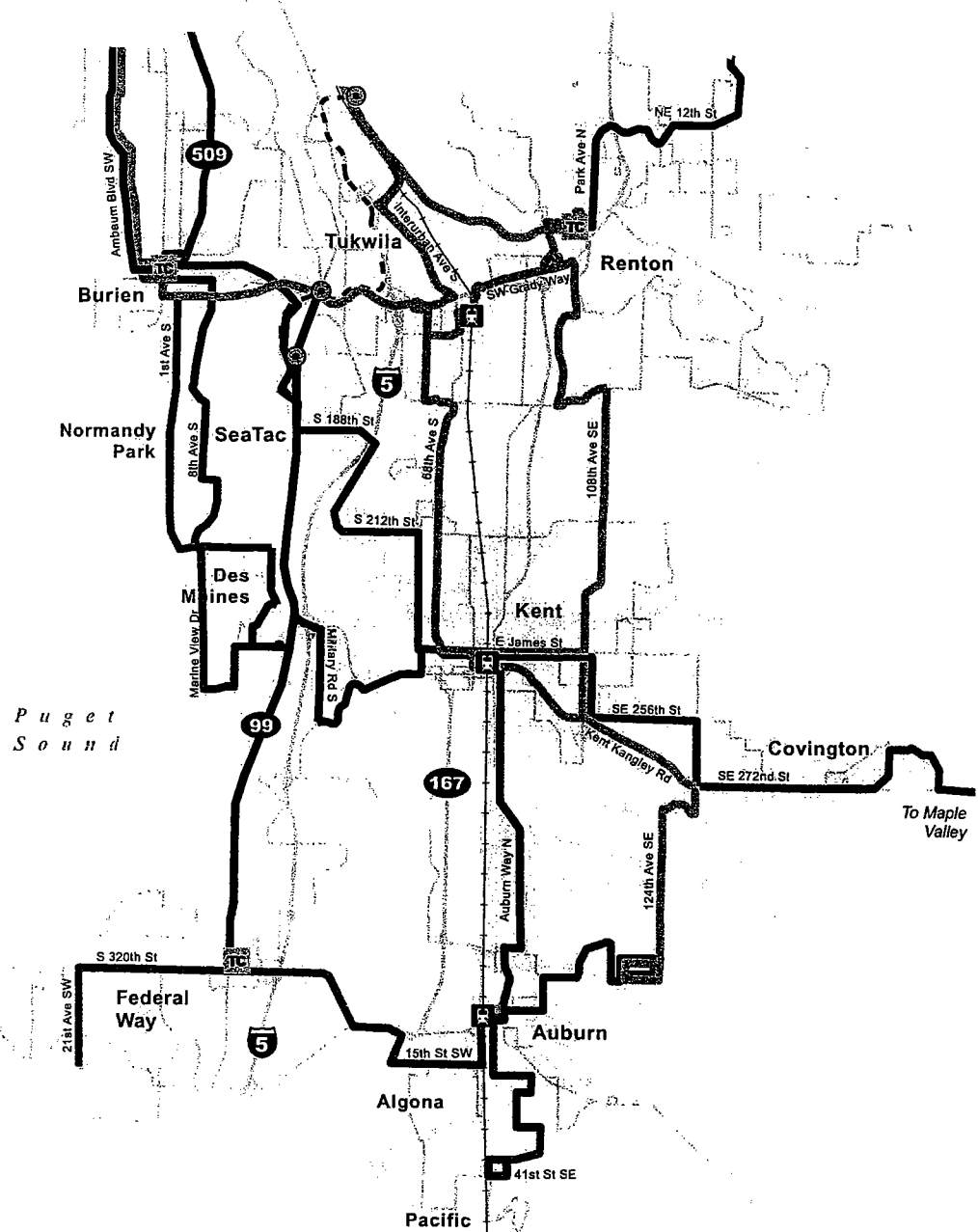
South King County Metro service improvements

The types of South King County core services called for within ten years under this proposal are shown on the map below. Changes to connect with light rail and commuter rail are also included. The public will be asked to help Metro refine these proposals to meet local needs and changing conditions.

A new full-time, direct core route will connect Auburn, Kent, SeaTac, and Burien to improve access to employment sites in the airport area.

Local service between Kent Station and Covington will be upgraded to a core connection and extended to Maple Valley.

East-west core connections will be improved to operate more frequently and/or over longer hours of operation.



- RapidRide Service
- Span Improvements
- Frequency Improvements
- Frequency and Span Improvements
- Route Extensions
- Sounder Commuter Rail Line and Station
- Link Light Rail Line & Station
- Current Metro Routes
- Transit Center
- Urban King County

continued from page 2

- Create routes to connect Crossroads, Overlake, Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, the Bellevue Community College, Eastgate, and Factoria.
- Improve east-west connections in Seattle through Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Uptown/Lower Queen Anne.
- Increase frequency between Northgate, the University District and downtown Seattle.
- Revise existing routes to better connect with Link light rail at Othello Station in southeast Seattle.



Access paratransit serves those who are unable to use regular bus service.

New service for growing areas

—Growth in the suburban areas of King County has been rapid for the past 20 years, and transit service has not kept up. Under this proposal, Metro will increase service to growing residential areas by adding peak service in areas not currently served, and offering midday service in some areas that currently have peak service only. The proposal includes:

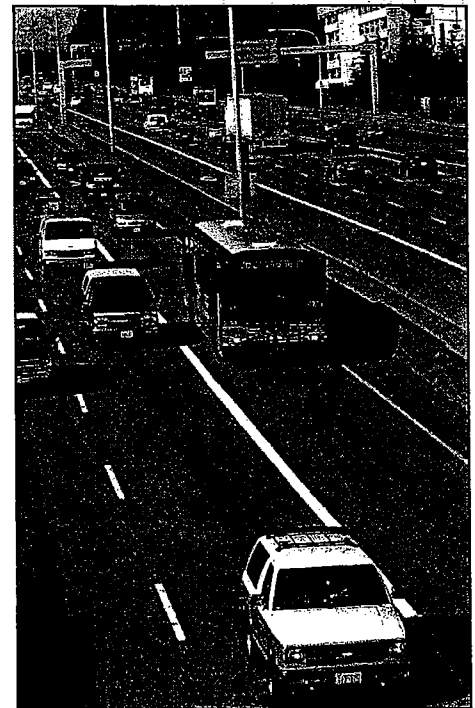
- In East King County, new or expanded service for Sammamish, Redmond Ridge, and the Snoqualmie Valley; and
- In South King County, new or expanded service for Maple Valley, Black Diamond, Auburn and Enumclaw.

Service partnerships—The proposal includes resources for developing partnerships to serve rapidly expanding employment centers in locations where transit service investments will generate the most riders. These new partnerships could

be modeled after the highly successful programs Metro has operated with partners such as the University of Washington and Microsoft. In both cases, the partners have shared a portion of the cost of new transit service and supported the investment with programs such as pass subsidies and parking management.

Additional improvements—The *Transit Now* Initiative also includes:

- Expand Access paratransit service to areas where it is currently not provided.
- Make ridesharing improvements to double participation in Vanpool and VanShare programs. Improved ridematching tools will make it easier for county residents to find carpool or vanpool riders.



Transit ridership decreases the number of vehicles on local highways.

Metro: The backbone of King County's public transportation system

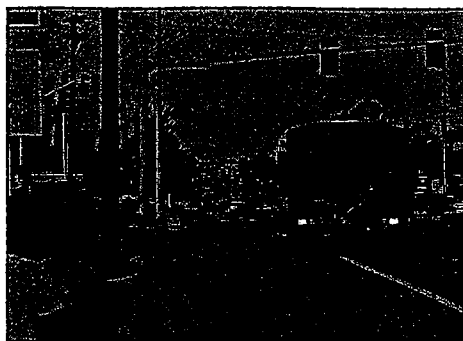
Metro is the region's largest transit service provider, carrying almost 100 million riders per year – or more than 335,000 riders every weekday. It's estimated this service is responsible for removing thousands of cars each day from already clogged highways and roads. Metro's extensive service network carries passengers to work, school, shopping, medical appointments, and meets the basic mobility needs of thousands of King County residents.

Metro provides many other services you may hear less about – including vanpools and ridematching services, a seasonal water taxi, special service to major events like ballgames and festivals, and Access van service for people with disabilities. Even when future rapid transit systems are completed, Metro buses, vanpools, Access vans, and other services will still serve as the backbone of the region's transit service by carrying most of the transit trips in the county.

Most riders feel they're getting their money's worth – more than 90 percent of Metro customers routinely surveyed report they are satisfied with Metro services. And, there is a constant demand for more service throughout all areas of King County.

The benefits of transit service for passengers and non-passengers

- **Mobility:** Not everyone can drive, but everyone needs to get around. Regular transit and Access para-transit services provide mobility for many King County residents.
- **Congestion relief:** Transit provides an alternative for those who hate to sit in traffic. But even those who drive alone benefit from transit, since every rider is one less



Transit ridership in South King County is growing.

person fighting for limited roadway space.

- **Environmental protection:** When people ride buses, they are responsible for fewer pollution-causing emissions. Metro operates one of the cleanest large bus fleets in the nation.
- **Supporting healthier development patterns:** Transit promotes pedestrian-oriented development and makes it easier for people to incorporate walking and bicycling into their travel.

Why we are falling behind on providing transit service in King County

In recent years, Metro has not been able to keep up with the growth in population and employment throughout King County. Now, with the county poised to create more than 250,000 new jobs and add more than 150,000 additional residents over the next decade, more transit will be needed just to maintain the current percentage of residents riding Metro. To achieve the region's land use, employment, and environmental goals, Metro needs to carry a growing proportion of trips to support the county's mobility, economy, and quality of life.

In 1999 following passage of Initiative 695, the state eliminated a dedicated source of funding for transit. King County voters responded by raising King County's transit sales tax rate from 0.6 percent to 0.8 percent, which prevented cuts in transit service but did not allow the system to grow very much. This new proposal to increase the transit sales tax by one-tenth of one percent will allow Metro to keep pace with growth that is happening now.

How the Transit Now Initiative will help

Ridership is increasing, with more bus riders standing during rush hours. Yet, with current revenues Metro can only grow slowly at a time when service demand is increasing. With the current level of financing, Metro will grow by only a fraction of the rate of employment growth in King County in the coming years.

Even with proposals taking shape for the investment of billions of dollars in road improvements, the need to travel will outpace our ability to add vehicle capacity in congested corridors. New bus service can be deployed more quickly than we can construct regional roadway projects and rail lines. With additional revenue, Metro can launch new service within months to provide immediate benefits throughout the county.

Alternate Formats Available

206-263-3703 TTY Relay: 711

Tell us what you think about....

TRANSIT NOW

Transit Now is a proposal to increase Metro service through a one-tenth of one percent (.1%) increase in the sales tax.

For more information or to provide comments, contact **Pat Cleary, King County Department of Transportation Community Relations planner:**

Call: 206-684-1142

E-mail: pat.cleary@metrokc.gov

Web: www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/transitnow

Thank you,

King County Metro Transit



We'll Get You There



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King County Executive Ron Sims announces major initiative to deliver 21 million more rides on Metro Transit

The following is the text of a letter dated April 18, 2006 from King County Executive Ron Sims to the residents of King County:

Dear King County Resident

You and those who ride King County Metro Transit have told us time and again that you think Metro is doing a great job and that you want more service. With our region expecting significant growth in the number of jobs and people in the next 10 years, I'm proposing we give you what you've asked for—more bus service more frequently.

I am proposing to add up to 20 percent more Metro service over the next 10 years that will take 60,000 drivers off our congested roads and highways each day. We're calling it **Transit Now** because once approved, you will see immediate results—better service in 2007. Half a million people will be within a quarter mile walk of the new service by the time we're done adding new bus service to the areas needing it most. You will be able to throw away your bus schedule for many of our most frequent routes with new **RapidRide** service guaranteeing a bus will be along every few minutes all day to take you where you want to go. And we will set aside money to create new partnerships with major employers or cities to match our money and leverage even more bus service.

This is the biggest increase in bus service in two decades, and it will be financed by a one-tenth of a penny increase in the sales tax. It will amount to about \$25 a year for the average household, less than a tank of gas.

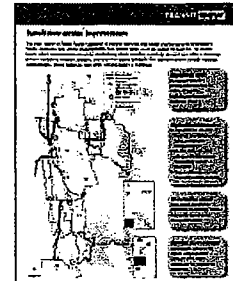
I encourage you to take part in the public process as this proposal moves to a vote of the people. Let us know what you think of the proposal, and consider taking the bus. In **Transit Now**, we are designing service that is responsive to your needs in the 21st century so that Metro will continue to excel as a people mover.

Sincerely,

Ron Sims
King County Executive

Learn more about **Transit Now**

- [Details about the initiative](#)
- [Charts and maps](#)
- [Questions and answers](#)
- [News release](#)



View a chart showing a map of the whole system (PDF, 906KB).

- Watch videos: Announcement—April 18, 2006
- [Real Media](#)
 - [Windows Media](#)

- Inside Transportation—discuss with Executive Sims, DOT Director, and Metro General Manager
- [Real Media](#)
 - [Windows Media](#)

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Last update: May 11, 2006



Always at your service

King County Executive, Ron Sims

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King County Executive Office
Ron Sims, King County Executive
701 Fifth Ave. Suite 3210
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-296-4040
Fax: 206-296-0194
TTY Relay: 711



News release

King County Executive
Ron Sims

April 18, 2006

Sims announces major initiative to deliver 21 million more rides on Metro Transit



... than ever before with a new four-point initiative announced today by King County Executive Ron Sims. The Transit Now initiative will help Metro keep up with economic and population growth by adding up to 21 million more annual bus rides within 10 years. The proposal would get 60,000 drivers out of their cars thus reducing congestion and air pollution.

"Transit Now will give people what they are asking for: more bus service more frequently," said Sims. "We will not be able to keep up with expected growth, unless we have new funding for more bus service. We have designed this proposal to include service so frequent in heavily traveled routes that more riders won't need a bus schedule, they can count on a bus arriving within a few minutes of them going to a bus stop.

Transit Now will expand Metro service by up to 20 percent systemwide over the next 10 years, and get more commuters on the bus and off the road now by launching the expansion within months of a final decision, not years. As much as 700,000 new annual service hours, or about 200 additional buses, will

print

Related information

- Watch part of the press conference available in [Windows media](#) and [Real Networks](#) format
- [Patterson commends transit plan as bold and ambitious](#)
- [Transit Now website](#)
- [Sims wants to boost sales tax to add buses](#), Seattle Times
- [Sims wants to boost bus service with tax](#), Seattle Post Intelligencer

be on the road by 2015. More than a half million people will be within walking distance of the new service.

The initiative will bring Bus Rapid Transit service to five of the most congested travel corridors in King County with buses at 10-minute intervals. Regular service on existing high-ridership routes will also be expanded to 15-minute intervals all day cutting the wait time for thousands of passengers, plus new service will be added to serve residents in rapidly growing neighborhoods.

And for the first time, Metro proposes to create innovative partnerships where other governments and businesses would match transit dollars to deliver more intensive levels of transit service to support new job growth and local transit needs.

Metro's proposed new service will give environmental benefits both by getting thousands of drivers out of their cars and adding nearly 200 clean-green hybrid buses. The cleanest burning fuels available will power the entire transit fleet. Almost half of Metro's fleet will be powered by electricity, hybrid diesel-electric and biodiesel.

Sims was joined today by King County Council Transit Committee Chair Julia Patterson, Issaquah Mayor Ava Frisinger, and Sammamish City Councilmembers Don Gerend and Kathy Huckabay to announce the initiative.

"As gas prices rise, our population grows and our roads become more congested, increasing Metro bus service becomes even more important," said King County Councilmember Julia Patterson, who chairs the County Council's Transportation Committee. "Bus service across King County and especially in the suburbs is not sufficient to meet the needs of King County's commuters and working poor. There is more road construction occurring in King County today, than in the previous two decades combined. Without additional bus service it will become more and more difficult to get around on our streets and highways."

"People in the suburban areas are clamoring for more buses, more often," said Issaquah Mayor Ava Frisinger. "The new Issaquah Highlands Park-and-Ride garage has been a big success on the Eastside – not just for Issaquah. It demonstrates that you can get people out of their cars, if you provide frequent and convenient transit service."

"The time is right now to give our residents more transit choices, more transit options, and more opportunities to protect the environment by polluting less. That is why I support the Transit Now initiative, because it gives us the opportunity to improve our communities now and into the future."

"The trend is clear. When we offer new bus service it fills with passengers," Sims said. "We are already adding more buses to the new Issaquah Highlands Park-and-Ride that opened in February with 10 new roundtrips to downtown Seattle. Most of the buses on that route are full and more than 600 cars are parked at the new garage that has a 1,000 car capacity.

"When the economy is strong and employment is up, we know people rely on Metro even more. But current funding levels will not support any real increase in Metro service."

Sims is proposing a public process to decide whether to put his proposal on the fall ballot for a vote. The new bus service would be funded by a one-tenth of one percent sales tax increase which would amount to one penny on a \$10 purchase or \$25 a year for the average family, less than the cost of a tank of gas. The proposal would generate an estimated \$50 million annually for Metro service and new buses to provide the service.

Highlights of the Transit Now initiative include:

'RapidRide' Bus Rapid Transit

If the Transit Now initiative is approved, Metro will deploy new Bus Rapid Transit Service, dubbed "RapidRide," on five of the county's most congested corridors. The service will run every 10 to 15 minutes six days a week, delivering 85,000 additional service hours each year. Proposed RapidRide routes would include:

- Aurora Avenue North (State Route 99) improvements between Shoreline to downtown Seattle;
- Ballard to downtown Seattle along 15th Avenue Northwest and Elliott Avenue West;
- West Seattle to downtown Seattle with a possible extension to the University District using the downtown transit tunnel and Interstate 5;
- Bellevue to Redmond on Northeast 8th Street and 156th Avenue Northeast via Crossroads and Overlake; and
- SeaTac to Federal Way on Pacific Highway South (State Route 99).

RapidRide would also include purchasing new hybrid buses, upgrading passenger waiting areas; plus adding the technology to synchronize traffic signals and operate real-time bus arrival signs.

More bus service more often

Metro will also deploy more all-day, two-way service on 35 existing major bus routes that connect residential, business and recreational centers throughout the county. These high-ridership routes

are available during peak and off-peak hours throughout the week, and will become even more dependable because bus service will be more frequent. In addition to improved frequency during peak and midday periods, night and weekend service will be expanded. Passengers will also see less overcrowding. These core service improvements will be tailored to specific needs in specific areas of the county.

Improved service to growing areas

Transit service has not kept up with growth in suburban King County in the past 20 years. Metro will increase service to growing residential areas by adding peak service in areas not currently served, and offering midday service in some areas that currently have peak service only. The proposal includes:

- New or expanded service for Sammamish, Redmond Ridge, Snoqualmie Valley and North Bend in east King County; and
- New or expanded service for Maple Valley, Black Diamond, Auburn and Enumclaw in south King County.

Service partnerships

Transit Now includes resources for developing partnerships to serve rapidly expanding employment centers in locations where transit service investments will generate the most riders. These new partnerships could be modeled after the highly successful programs Metro has operated with partners such as the University of Washington and Microsoft. In both cases, the partners shared a portion of the cost of new transit service and supported the investment with programs such as pass subsidies and parking management.

Additional improvements

The Transit Now initiative also includes plans for:

- Expanding Access paratransit to areas in urban King County where this service is currently not provided to increase options for users who cannot ride regular buses; and
- Making ridesharing improvements to double participation in Vanpool and VanShare programs. These improved ridematching tools would make it easier for county residents to find others who could share the ride.

During the next few weeks, Sims and his transportation staff will be asking the public and stakeholders to help fine-tune the proposed improvements. Sims will then finalize the plan and send it to the King County Council and ask that it be

placed before the voters. More information [about the initiative is available](#).

"As King County residents learn more in the coming weeks about the wide variety of transit improvements they stand to gain, I believe they will agree that we should invest in our future with new service that will help support our economy and reduce air pollution and traffic congestion," Sims said. "Metro is the backbone of the region's transit system. It's built a strong reputation as a people mover and consistently earns high ratings for customer satisfaction. It's time to continue to build on this transit system with the service people want."

King County Metro Transit is among the 10 largest bus systems in the nation. Metro buses provide almost 100 million passenger trips a year, and the agency operates one of the largest carpool and park-and-ride programs in the country. It is also recognized as a leader in reducing pollution with its use of clean-burning fuels, electric trolleys, and hybrid buses. Metro customers consistently give the agency high marks for friendly, on-time service.

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Updated: Apr. 24, 2006

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