15963

Strategic Plan for Public Transportation

2007 - 2016

TRANSIT NOW

King County Department of Transportation
Metro Transit Division
November 2007

King County METRO
We'll Get You There

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Appendices

(to be added in final printed version to incorporate the adopting ordinance)

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Section One:
Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2007-2016 ("strategic plan") describes how the Transit Division of the King County Department of Transportation (King County Metro) will implement the goals, objectives and policies included in the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation over the next ten years. Strategies in this strategic plan build on previous six-year transit development plans to make transit more relevant to changing travel needs at all levels—regionally, locally, and among the numerous cities and neighborhoods of King County. The plan sets forth strategies for transit, paratransit, rideshare services and supporting capital facilities in King County, and guides annual operating and capital program decisions that define Metro Transit services.

This document continues the strategies included in the Six Year Transit Development Plan for 2002-2007, and incorporating the improvements adopted by ordinance and voter approval as the *Transit Now* ballot measure. This plan, as well as the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation, will be more thoroughly updated during 2008, subject to a comprehensive public outreach and involvement program, and will be published together as a single document. Many of the issues that may be addressed in the 2008 update are discussed in Section 2.

Since the mid 1990's, King County Metro public transportation services have been evolving. Sound Transit began service during that timeframe, providing all-day regional transit connections in selected corridors. King County Metro continues to provide many regional connections and maintains peak-period express services to major centers as it has since Metro Transit service was initiated in the 1970's, but the focus of new Metro Transit services over the past decade has been primarily to improve connections to and between activity centers within the county. Given limited resources, King County Metro aims to develop and deliver new services efficiently, putting the greatest investment into improving the frequency and span of service for high-ridership routes, and consolidating parallel or redundant services where possible.

The proposed program is consistent with King County Metro's financial plan through 2015 and adopted budget assumptions through 2012. When this strategic plan is updated in 2008, it will be revised as needed to reflect new budget and financial plan assumptions.

The financial plan reflects a baseline program that is augmented by the voter-approved 0.1% sales tax that will be dedicated to funding the construction and implementation of improvements identified in the *Transit Now* proposal. Funding from the 0.1% sales tax will be used to fund additional transit service starting in 2007. In addition, funds will be used to purchase vehicles and construct bus rapid transit improvements and other capital investments. By the end of the 10-year period, all of the additional 0.1% sales tax will be used to support transit service added from 2007-2016.

Improvements to public transportation service incorporated in this strategic plan include the services described in the *Transit Now* voter initiative, which will increase transit service by up to about 800,000 annual hours by 2016, including *Transit Now* service investments, local service partnership contributions, and added hours to maintain reliable schedules through congested traffic. *Transit Now* included these major initiatives:

- More service (greater frequency or increased span of service) on high ridership routes throughout King County. These are described in Strategy S-3, "Core Service Connections."
- Implementation of RapidRide bus rapid transit service in five corridors. These are described in Strategy S-5, "Bus Rapid Transit."
- A service partnership program to leverage investment by other public or private entities in transit service or street improvments that provide improved transit speed and reliability. This program is described in Strategy S-9, "Partnerships."
- New or improved service in rapidly developing areas, as described in Strategy S-6, "Transit Access in Rapidly Developing Areas."
- Expanded service area for Access paratransit service, as described in Strategy S-8, "Specialized Transportation Services."
- Improved ridesharing services and capacity to double the vanpool program, as described in Strategy S-14. "Vanpool and Ridesharing Services."

The strategies and priorities in the strategic-year plan are consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation (formerly known as the Long-Range Policy Framework), the King County Comprehensive Plan, the King County Countywide Planning Policies and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan "Destination 2030" adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council. The plan also takes into account other regional planning efforts completed or underway in the region including Sound Transit's regional transit system plan, and state and local plans for major transportation facility investments.

Consistent with the State Growth Management Act requirement that transportation planning be coordinated with local comprehensive plans, this plan focuses the improvement of transit services and facilities in the designated Urban Growth Area (UGA) of King County. The plan also establishes strategies to make development as well as transit services and facilities more efficient. The continued support of development within the UGA with higher levels of transit service is a central component of the region's growth strategy and of this plan.

Strategic Plan Strategies for 2007 to 2016

Thirty-four plan strategies provide the direction for service and system development from 2007 to 2016. These strategies fall into five categories, each of which is described in a separate section of this strategic plan:

- Monitoring and Management (described in Section 3)
- Service (described in Section 4)
- Capital (described in Section 5)
- Implementation (described in Section 6)
- Financial (described in Section 7)

Monitoring and Management Strategies

The plan's monitoring and management strategies provide methods to assess the success of plan implementation and the development of service and system improvements through ongoing performance and outcome measurement.

Strategy M-1: Measuring Plan Progress

> Establish a series of targets for measuring success in meeting the objectives of the Strategic Plan in each of four long-range policy areas, as shown in Exhibit 3-1. Evaluate progress using these targets periodically and at the time of Strategic Plan updates.

Strategy M-2: Customer Satisfaction

> Regularly monitor customer satisfaction using measures that assess system changes and improvements through regular surveys of riders and non-riders.

Strategy M-3: Service Performance Evaluation

Regularly monitor and report bus service performance and ridership system-wide and at the route level to identify services that may require modification, expansion or termination based on their performance. Develop and recommend to the RTC an approach to peer agency comparison that identifies:

- The appropriate measures of performance;
- The major factors, internal and external, that vary among transit agencies and affect performance;
- The extent to which those factors can be tracked for a small group of peer agencies to inform the performance comparisons, and
- A list of five peer agencies considered to be most comparable to King County Metro Transit based upon agency characteristics and the ability to track major performance-related factors.

Service Strategies

The plan continues the service direction of the previous Six Year Transit Development Plan, 2002-2007, and identifies strategies that were strengthened through passage of the *Transit Now* measure. The plan continues to emphasize efficiency and improved service design; increases service levels on a core network of routes connecting major activity centers, implements bus rapid transit, enhances service in developing areas, and provides dedicated resources to a service partnership program. New or improved services in each subarea will be provided consistent with local priorities that will serve the highest ridership demand; and improve connections to employment areas. King County Metro will continue efforts to integrate bus, vanpool and rideshare services with new Sound Transit services, and to offer innovative and complementary services and programs to increase HOV use and establish commute partnerships with public and private partners. The paratransit program will continue efforts to provide and develop the most cost-effective transportation options for people who are transportation disadvantaged due to age, disability or income, and vanpool and ridesharing programs will be expanded.

Strategy S-1: Service Consolidation

Pursue efficiencies in existing services in major transit corridors including, but not limited to, those listed in Exhibit 4-1. Reinvest savings from these efforts within the planning subarea in which they are generated.

Strategy S-2: Service Design

Improve transit on-time performance through: adjustments in routing, splitting of unreliable through-route pairs, adding of recovery time between trips, moving routes between operating bases, and adding time or trips to schedules to account for slower travel speeds or recurring overloads.

Schedule maintenance hours shall be reserved in amounts equal to one-third of new service investments up to 0.5% of total annual service hours with the remaining two-thirds of new service hours allocated according to Strategy IM-3. The schedule maintenance hour allocation shall be achieved in accordance with the timetable established in Strategy IM-3 without regard to subareas. Schedule maintenance hours that are not used for schedule maintenance in each year shall be used for new service. To the extent that schedule maintenance requirements exceed the service hours available under this policy, reduction of existing services within the same subarea will be used to fund schedule maintenance needs.

In the event that schedule maintenance hours are proposed at a level exceeding 0.5% of total annual service hours by the Department of Transportation, the Regional Transit Committee shall review this proposal and recommend any change in allocation policy to the Metropolitan King County Council.

Strategy S-3: Core Service Connections

Improve service levels on existing routes and create new routes serving established urban and manufacturing/industrial centers and urban areas where, because of population or employment clusters, ridership and transit use is projected to be the highest. Improve frequencies as listed in Exhibit 1-2 and shown in Exhibit 4-4 to support existing demand and attract more riders on a core network of key connections. Improvements in core services will be made consistent with *Transit Now* program.

Strategy S-4: Transit Improvements and Land Use

Identify areas of urban King County to become eligible for enhanced transit service when they meet the following criteria:

- By meeting or exceeding prorated established housing and population targets, or
- By encouraging higher density development and pedestrian activity through adopted regulations and policies that promote mixed-uses, reduce parking requirements, and carry out other efforts that support transit supportive development.

Preference will be given to areas that realize community or neighborhood development consistent with these criteria.

Strategy S-5: Bus Rapid Transit

Design, develop and implement RapidRide, a Bus Rapid Transit system identified in Exhibit 4-6. Pursue grant funds and work with local jurisdictions to leverage additional funds to enhance the service frequency, speed, reliability, amenity and identity of RapidRide services funding by the *Transit Now* program.

Strategy S-6: Transit Access in Rapidly Developing Areas

Expand service coverage in areas with rapidly developing population growth of sufficient density to support transit service, and with a street network that accommodates non-circuitous transit routing and pedestrian access. For developing areas that do not meet these criteria, provide service capacity at newly built, expanded or leased park-and-ride lots as warranted by ridership demand at those locations. When identified as a subarea priority, make a portion of the new service investment available for innovative vanpool programs to support park-and-ride lot based transit service.

Strategy S-7: Community Mobility

Improve community mobility options through increase in service levels on existing routes or through the creation of new service in transit-supportive higher household and/ or employment density areas. Within each subarea, develop service proposals to serve residential and employment areas with the highest ridership demand and to promote circulation within communities. In the communities where flexible service and other King County Metro mobility products and services connecting to the all-day service network can be provided more cost-effectively than fixed-route service, those services should be expanded in conjunction with modifications and improvements to the existing system.

Strategy S-8: Specialized Transportation Services

Provide complementary paratransit services that comply with federal regulations to people who have disabilities that prevent use of regular public transportation.

Develop cost-effective alternatives to supplement federally mandated paratransit service and to provide transportation services to persons who are transportation-disadvantaged due to age, disability or income in the service area shown in Exhibit 4-8. Explore ways to include paratransit-eligible persons and other persons with disabilities and seniors on mobility services available to the general public, such as vanpools.

Strategy S-9: Partnerships

Develop partnerships with local jurisdictions, employers and institutions to increase public transportation services and improve service effectiveness.

- *Transit Now* partnerships: Solicit and enter into partnership agreements with public or private entities to mutually fund new or improved transit services, where the partner contribution may be in the form of direct funding or investment that results in transit speed or reliability improvements. Dedicate a portion of new service hours for this purpose.
- Commute Partnerships: Enter into partnerships to improve public transportation use and reduce single-occupant commuting by developing and promoting

alternate commute programs; and by managing parking and traffic to make public transportation options more attractive.

Strategy S-10: Streetcar System

Consider opportunities for system integration when planning improvements to the existing King County streetcar line, identify the factors contributing to successful streetcar service and develop criteria to guide decisions to initiate or participate in future streetcar projects or, where necessary, to authorize other entities to provide streetcar service. Criteria should address land use, economic, environmental and social equity considerations along with transportation impacts and other factors.

Strategy S-11: Regional System Coordination and Integration

Work with the appropriate agencies to achieve integrated, cost-effective and efficient operation of public transportation services in King County addressing the needs of current and potential riders. Participate in transportation system planning efforts including state and regional projects of countywide significance to identify potential transit service and capital elements and funding.

Strategy S-12: Student Mobility

Ensure that the mobility requirements of student passengers are recognized on a par with those in school districts that choose to participate in Student Transit programs. Participating districts will reimburse King County for all student transit expenses.

Strategy S-13: Special Events

Work with private and public agencies to develop strategies for using public transportation services to offer alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel to special events. Strategies may include street use, transit priority, and other strategies under the jurisdiction of King County Metro or local governments.

Strategy S-14: Activity Center Circulation

> Enhance circulation within activity centers through changes in transit service design and other programs to encourage transit use including, but not limited to, proposals for consideration of ride free areas. Preserve existing revenues and encourage financial partnerships with others to cover additional expenses associated with the provision of new services and programs for this purpose.

Strategy S-15: Vanpooling and Ridesharing Services

> Provide vanpool, vanshare and ridematch services; especially for trips that are not accessible or convenient by fixed-route transit service. Provide services to help form and maintain carpools and vanpools, and develop or promote other innovative and/or customized ridesharing services that provide alternatives to driving alone.

Capital Strategies

The plan's capital strategies provide for the necessary maintenance, expansion and improvement of transit facilities and equipment to support the objectives of the plan. The strategies provide for capital infrastructure and operating environment improvements integrated with the delivery of service, including the ongoing maintenance of transit assets and the expansion of maintenance base capacity. Investments in facilities and systems will take advantage of opportunities to improve efficiency by using cost-effective technology as projects for electronic fare collection, radio system replacement and integrating on-bus systems are completed. The plan also calls for investments in an environmentally friendly fleet and capital facilities.

The plan directs capital resources to expanding passenger facilities through more shelter installations and construction of passenger waiting and boarding areas along the bus rapid transit corridors. Investments are identified to improve transit speed and reliability while making route and passenger facility improvements on corridors with higher service levels and ridership.

Strategy C-1: Maintenance, Replacement and Upgrade of Transit Capital Assets

Maintain, replace, and upgrade current facilities, equipment and systems based on ongoing condition assessments, industry standards and King County policies and procedures.

Strategy C-2: Passenger Facilities

Improve transit passenger facility access, shelter, lighting, bus stop locations and other amenities to enhance the waiting environment. In addition to general improvements throughout the system, focus a portion of resources on RapidRide and Core Service Connection corridors identified in Exhibit 5-2, through cooperation and coordination with local jurisdictions.

Strategy C-3: Transit Speed, Safety and Reliability

Partner with state and local governments to improve transit operating efficiency, and to create speed, safety, and reliability improvements on important transit corridors. In cooperation with local jurisdictions, focus on the target corridors identified in Exhibit 5-2.

Strategy C-4: Park-and-Ride Facilities

Expand park and ride capacity in congested corridors with full or overcrowded park and ride facilities as identified in Figure 5-2. Support development of a series of small owned or leased park and ride lots along low density suburban routes in order to create artificially higher densities to enhance the ridership base. Use the Transit-oriented Development (TOD) program to further expand park and ride opportunities through joint use of new parking capacity and financing partnerships. Where these lots have unused capacity, encourage their use by vanpools and park-and-pools.

Strategy C-5: Replacement and Expansion of the Transit Fleet

Replace and expand the transit bus fleet so that the size, fleet mix and fleet age are consistent with service projections and operating characteristics of the regular bus system. Replace and expand Vanpool fleet to maintain the appropriate mix of vehicle sizes to encourage and support vanpool program participants. Replace and expand Access paratransit vehicles to support efficient operations. Achieve more efficient and energy-friendly operations with features including efficient propulsion systems and non-traditional fuels.

Strategy C-6: Operating Base Expansion

Expand transit operating base capacity in the areas identified and described in an adopted King County Metro Transit Operating Facilities Strategic Plan to support transit fleet growth projected to occur through the year 2030.

Strategy C-7: Terminals and Layover

Work with local jurisdictions to secure long-term agreements for use of on-street layover spaces. Coordinate with other transportation agencies and private developers to incorporate layover space and turnaround facilities into transit stations, transit centers, transportation projects and new development proposals where needed to support or improve current transit service. Consider off-street facilities for layover when on-street layover capacity is not available, and when dedicated layover space would result in significant operating savings, improved routing and/or operator safety.

Strategy C-8: Transit-Oriented Development

Encourage and support transit-oriented development at or near transit facilities to increase transit ridership by increasing activity and density in centers, and by increasing affordable housing and an appropriate mix of other land uses. Reduce transit facility development costs through joint development and/or public-private partnerships.

For the purpose of establishing benchmarks by which to later measure the impacts of a project, estimate the anticipated benefits of each proposed TOD including:

- expected ridership increase attributable to the project
- existing and potential residential and office density
  - within the project, and
  - within reasonable walking distance of the transit facility
- amount of affordable housing
- amount of retail that supports nearby resident and transit user needs
- design elements that facilitate transit operations
- design elements that promote walking and bicycling
- partner participation
  - city
  - developer
  - other transit agencies
- project contribution to reduced greenhouse gas emissions

Assess the extent to which each existing TOD, and future projects two and five years after completion, provide the anticipated benefits and other project specific benefits related to transit operating or facilities enhancements, local jurisdictional goals and other transportation goals identified in this plan.

Implementation Strategies

The implementation strategies of the plan provide a phasing timeline and establish priorities for the use of new service resources.

Strategy IM-1: *Transit Now* Program

King County Metro's priority is to implement the *Transit Now* program passed by voters in 2006 and shown in Exhibit 1-1, which includes service and capital support for these initiatives:

- RapidRide BRT. Use a target of 100,000 annual service hours between 2007 and 2016 to implement RapidRide BRT service in five corridors, consistent with service strategy S-5. The RapidRide corridors are:
  - Shoreline/Downtown Seattle via Aurora Avenue North

- West Seattle/Downtown Seattle via West Seattle Bridge
- Ballard/Seattle Center/south downtown stadium area via 15th Ave Northwest and West Mercer Street with service or frequent connections to Ballard High School and the Ballard business district.
- Federal Way/Tukwila via Pacific Highway South
- Bellevue/Redmond via Crossroads and Overlake

- High Ridership Routes. Use a target of 350,000 annual service hours between 2007 and 2016 to improve service frequency and/or span of service on high ridership corridors on the core connections network, consistent with service strategy S-3 and shown in Exhibit 1-2.
- Service Partnerships. Enter into partnerships with public and/or private entities to serve established or emerging ridership markets, consistent with service strategies S-9 and F-3. A sustained fund supporting up to 90,000 annual service hours will be provided for this purpose, to be implemented between 2007 and 2013, matched by an additional 30,000 to 45,000 annual service hours funded by partner direct financial contributions, and by partner investments that will result in quantifiable transit speed and reliability improvements.
- New Service for Developing Areas. Add new service or improve existing services in rapidly developing areas in East and South King County within the Urban Growth Area, consistent with service strategy S-6. A target of 50,000 new annual hours of service will be deployed for developing areas between 2007 and 2016.
- Expanded paratransit service. Expand the service area for paratransit service to cover gaps within the fixed-route coverage areas as shown in Exhibit 4-3 and provide service to disabled users not served by Access through the Community Access Transportation Program.
- Expanded ridesharing and the vanpool program. Expand outreach efforts and provide incentives to increase program participation and facilitate ridesharing opportunities; promote ridesharing to smaller employers in King County, and in areas not served or underserved by the fixed-route transit system.

Exhibit 1-1
Transit Now Program

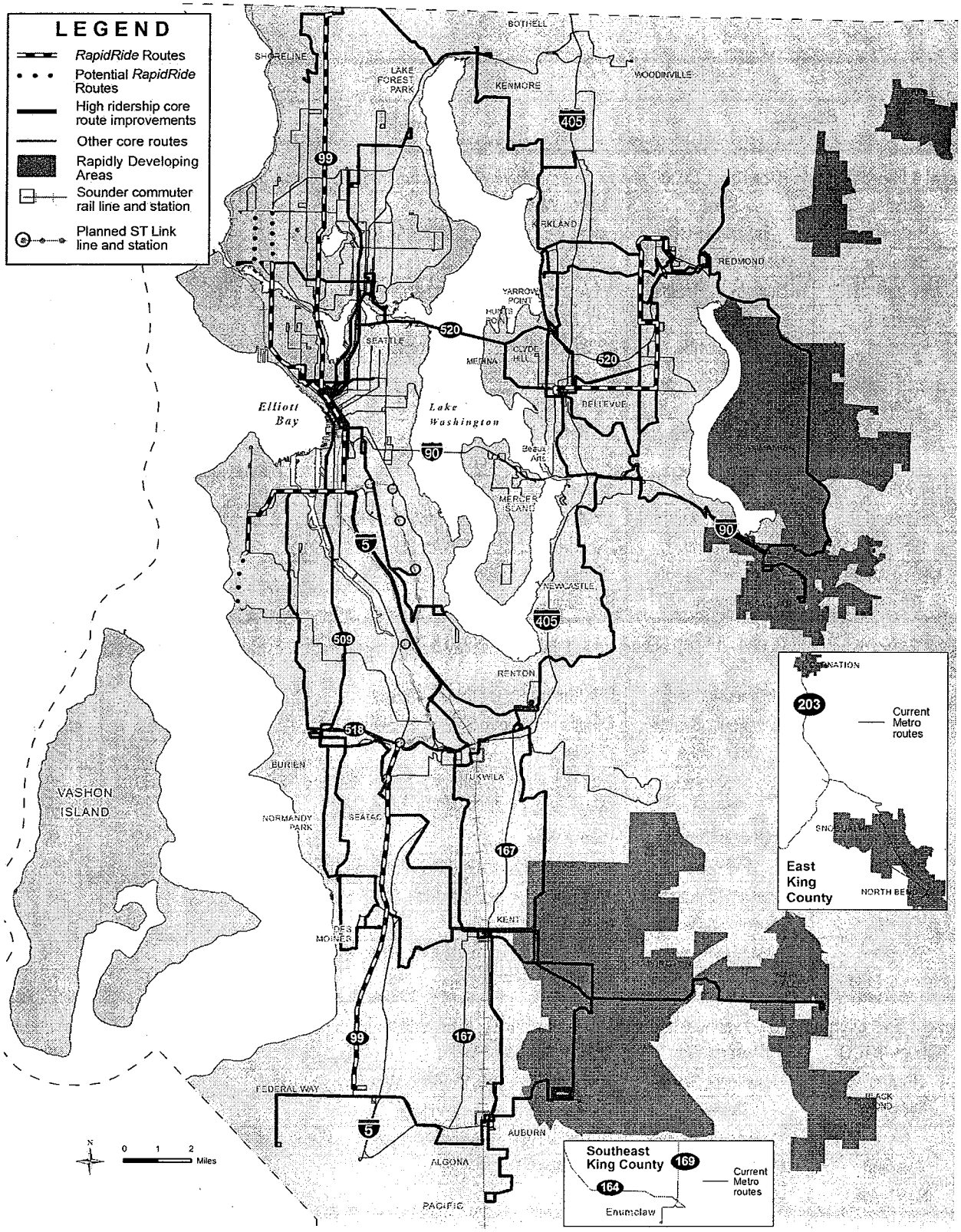


Exhibit 1-2

Transit Now Investments for Core Service Routes

Between		Corridor	2016 Target Frequency		
			Peak	Midday & Sat	Eve & Sun
Level 3 Improvements (More than 15,000 annual hours): Major weekday frequency upgrades, new bus routes and/or route extensions					
Auburn	Kent	Auburn Way	30	30	30
Bellevue	Eastgate/BCC	Lake Hills Connector, 148th Av SE	10-15	15	30
Bellevue	University District	SR-520	10-15	15	30
Des Moines	Downtown Seattle	1st Ave S, SR-509, E Marginal Way	30	60	60
Issaquah	Bellevue	I-90, BCC	30	30	60
Issaquah	Redmond	228th Av SE, NE Sammamish	30	30-60	60
Kent	GRCC	E James St, 124th Av SE	30	30	60
Kent	Burien	KDM rd., S 240th St, 1st Av S	30	30	60
Kent	Four Corners	SE Kent Kangley Rd	30	30	60
Kent	Renton	Smith St., Benson Rd, Carr Rd	15	15-30	30-60
Kent	SeaTac	Orillia Rd, S 212th St	30	30	30
Kirkland	Eastgate/Factoria	156th Ave, Overlake, Crossroads Mall, BCC, Eastgate	15	15	30
Kirkland	Redmond	Avondale Rd NE, NE 85th St	30	30	30
Queen Anne	Downtown Seattle	Queen Anne Ave N	5-7	10-15	30
Renton	Burien	SW Grady Way, S 154th St	15	15	30
Level 2 Improvements (5,000 - 15,000 annual hours): Minor weekday frequency upgrades, expanded weekday hours of operations and/or added weekend service.					
Ballard	University District	NW Market St, N and NE 45th St	10	15	15-30
Beacon Hill	Downtown Seattle	Othello/New Holly Station, Beacon Av S	5-7	10-15	15-30
Bellevue	Bear Creek	Overlake	15	15-60	60
Bellevue	Kenmore	Finn Hill, Juanita, Kirkland, South Kirkland P&R	30	30	60
Bellevue	Renton	Coal Creek Pkwy, Factoria, Newcastle	15	30	30
Capitol Hill	Seattle Center	Denny Way	15	15	30
Kirkland	Bellevue	Lake Washington Blvd NE, Bellevue Way NE	15	30	60
Redmond	Eastgate/Factoria	148th Ave, Crossroads Mall, BCC, Eastgate	15	15	30
Renton	Downtown Seattle	MLK JR Way S, I-5	5-10	15-30	30
Redmond	Eastgate/Factoria	148th Ave, Crossroads Mall, BCC, Eastgate	15	15	30
University District	Downtown Seattle	Eastlake Ave E, Fairview Av N	12	15	15-20
Level 1 Improvements (5,000 annual hours or less): Added trips, expanded hours of operation and/or weekend frequency upgrades					
Auburn/GRCC	Federal Way	15th St SW, Lea Hill Rd	30	30	30
Burien	Downtown Seattle	Ambaum Blvd SW, Delridge Way SW	7-10	15	30
Kenmore	Shoreline	Ballinger Way, Aurora Village	15-30	30	60
Kent	Downtown Seattle	W Valley Hwy, Southcenter Blvd, Interurban Ave S, I-5	15	15	30
Kirkland	Downtown Seattle	108th Ave NE, SR-520	15	30	30-60
Northgate	Downtown Seattle	I-5	4-15	15	30

Strategy IM-2: Service Implementation Phasing

Provide a predictable schedule of service expansions that expand all elements of the *Transit Now* program concurrently and in all subareas, as show in Exhibit 1-3.

Strategy IM-3: Service Resource Allocation

The implementation of transit service hours as stated in strategy IM-1 and IM-2 above shall use the following framework for transit service allocation. Service hours used for service partnerships, schedule maintenance, contracted services or partnership agreements are exempted from subarea allocation requirements.

With the implementation of each 200,000 annual hours of service investments that are subject to the subarea allocation requirement and at the end of the 2007-2010 *Transit Now* program investments, each King County Metro planning subarea would receive a share of actual service hours implemented: East 40%, South 40% and Seattle/North King County 20%.

Exhibit 1-3

***Transit Now* Phasing Plan –**

Targeted Increases in Annual Service Hours by Program

(In Thousands of Annual Hours)

Hours Categories	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Developing Areas		13	8	4	5	7	13				50
RapidRide				34	42	19	5				100
High Ridership/Core	45	9	8	4	9	38	43	68	86	40	350
Total 40-40-20 Adds	**45**	**22**	**16**	**42**	**56**	**64**	**61**	**68**	**86**	**40**	**500**
Service Partnerships	5	23	12	35	6	5	5				90
TOTAL	**50**	**45**	**28**	**77**	**62**	**68**	**66**		**86**	**40**	**590**

***RapidRide* Implementation:**

Pacific Highway S. in 2010, Bellevue-Redmond & West Seattle in 2011, Ballard/Uptown in 2012, and Aurora in 2013.

Measurement of the resulting share of hours will be based on the baseline bus route allocations that assign one-way routes that originate in a subarea or two-way routes that operate wholly within a subarea to that subarea. Further, all-day, two-way routes that operate between two subareas will be attributed in hours at 50 percent to each subarea. Any system-wide reduction in service investment shall be distributed among the subareas in proportion to each sub area's share of the total service investment.

Strategy IM-4: Subarea and Community Based Planning

Conduct a community planning process in which transit riders, local jurisdictions, unincorporated area councils, employers, and educational institutions participate in the design and implementation of significant changes to existing service. Use service and capital strategies consistent with the service priorities described in Strategy IM-1. Involve the community, local jurisdictions and subarea groups in the development of recommendations for updates of the Strategic Plan at least every two years or more frequently if changing conditions or priorities dictate. Utilize overall roles and responsibilities as shown in Exhibit 6-3 and the service change process shown in Exhibit 6-4.

Plan updates shall address significant operating changes and capital improvements anticipated in the next ten years as well as any revision to adopted strategies necessitated by significantly changed circumstances affecting the transit program.

Financial Strategies

A central goal of King County Metro's financial planning activities is stability of the transit system and financial integrity of the Public Transportation Fund. This goal is accomplished through prudent planning that uses reasonable economic assumptions along with specific programmatic plans to project future revenues, expenditures and resulting fund balances.

The financial strategies of the plan include pursuit of available state and federal grant sources and continues the long-standing policy of pursuing financial partnerships and economic development with local jurisdictions and other public and private entities.

Strategy F-1: Revenue-to-Operating Expense Ratio

Pursue a combination of farebox and other operations revenue to maintain a target bus operating revenue-to-operating expense ratio of at least 25 percent.

Strategy F-2: Grants

Pursue grants to fund projects that have been identified as necessary to support system service priorities or maintain the system as outlined in this plan.

Strategy F-3: Financial Partnerships

Pursue opportunities for partnerships and economic development with communities, employers, other transit agencies, federal and state governments and vendors to expand resources to support transit services and supporting capital facilities. Explore the use of advertising to support shelter program expansion and enhancements.

Strategy F-4: Financial Management

Ensure the maximum benefit is derived from available transit revenues by:

- Focusing capital expenditures on projects that directly support service investments;
- Refining capital improvement program expenditure assumptions to improve annual accomplishment rates;
- Revising lifespan assumptions to reflect actual experience when planning for the replacement of the transit fleet and other equipment and facilities;
- Increasing the amount of service in the operating program by reducing annual underexpenditure levels, and
- Replenishing the Transit Fare Stabilization and Operating Enhancement Reserve to enable the operating program to respond to unforeseen revenue or expenditure circumstances.

Section Two:
Planning Context

The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, 2007-2016 identifies King County Metro's strategies for providing reliable, convenient and safe public transportation services throughout the region. It builds on the goals, objectives and strategies of prior plans while also recognizing new challenges and changing conditions King County faces over the next decade. This section discusses the many factors that affect King County Metro's priorities and constraints, divided into the following topics:

- Policies affecting Metro Transit services and facilities
- Transit system trends
- Projected changes in the transit operating environment
- Emerging trends that will receive more attention in the 2008 update to this plan

Policies Affecting King County Metro Services and Facilities

The Strategic Plan is founded upon the King County Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation which establishes the long-range policy framework for transit, discussed further in Section 3.

Metro Transit service is also governed by a body of state, regional and county policies and legislation that affect the services and facilities offered and the methods used to deliver them. The strategies contained in this Strategic Plan have been developed to respond to the legislative framework and are consistent with state and federal law. Key legislation and policies are identified below.

- **Growth Management Act:** The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires state and local governments to manage growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, preparing comprehensive plans and implementing them through capital investments and development regulations. Higher levels of transit service are central to the region's growth strategy to support the continued development within King County's Designated Urban Growth Area.

- **Commute Trip Reduction Act**: Enacted in 1991 as part of Washington's Clean Air Act, the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law requires major employers to provide employee transportation programs that encourage more employees to not drive alone to work every day. In 2006, the legislature created the concept of Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTEC) as part of the CTR Act extending CTR programs to a broader range of employers in designated corridors and activity centers. GTEC designation is an ongoing process and King County Metro will further address the impact of these designations in the 2008 strategic plan.

- **King County County-wide Planning Policies**: The King County Countywide Planning Policies were developed by the Growth Management Planning Council to serve as the framework for jurisdiction comprehensive plans. They guide implementation of the Growth Management Act and address a range of issues, including transportation, land use development, affordable housing and economic development. The transportation policies promote a coordinated multi-modal transportation system, with an aggressive transit component.

- **Vision 2020**: This plan establishes the long-range growth management strategy for the region, produced by the Puget Sound Regional Council. The vision promotes the development of compact urban areas connected by high-capacity transportation. The Vision 2020 plan is currently being revised and updated to extend the planning horizon to 2040.

- **Destination 2030**: The four-county regional plan addresses growth management and transportation coordination. It promotes compact urban areas supported by high-capacity transportation; and the development of integrated, multi-modal transportation systems. It places priority on preservation and the development of a balanced transportation system.

In addition to existing legislation, King County has developed a Climate Change Plan. The King County Climate Change Plan identifies goals and actions in strategic focus areas including Climate-Friendly Transportation Choices; Clean Fuels, Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency; and Land Use, Building Design and Materials. Many of King County Metro's current practices support and promote goals in these areas. The 2008 update to this strategic plan will allow further opportunity to explore additional measures to support goals related to climate change.

Transit System Trends

King County Metro's previous plan, the 2002-2007 Six-Year Transit Development Plan, was developed in the context of rapid change for transit. When the plan was under development, both transit ridership and new transit service were increasing rapidly due to a strong economy, and a significant expansion was envisioned over the six-year planning period. An unexpected economic downturn, along with employment and investment decreases, brought about a decline in transit ridership and transit revenue. Transit revenues were further reduced due to repeal of the state motor vehicle excise tax, which provided state funding for transit service. An increase in the King County transit sales tax partially offset this loss in revenues.

With the limited resources available, service expansions focused on improvements to peak express service from newly developed park-and-ride lots in the east and south county areas, and on the network of core service routes discussed further in Section 4 of this plan. Service changes during this period focused on improving service reliability and efficiency through service restructures as well as integration with Sound Transit services.

These improvements continue to produce positive results. Ridership levels, which slowed early in the 2002-2007 period, have continued to grow since 2004, reaching a record-setting 103 million riders in 2006. A recovering economy and increasing gas prices have contributed to this ridership increase. Operational efficiencies gained through service restructures and consolidations also helped spark ridership growth. Access to the system was increased by the addition of more than 5,000 spaces to the park-and-ride system through new construction and expansion.

New Challenges, New Opportunities

Amidst continued successes, new challenges are also emerging. Ridership is at a high, but there are also more riders standing and on-time performance is down. With the county poised to gain more than 250,000 new jobs and add more than 150,000 additional residents over the next decade, more transit will be needed to maintain and increase the current percentage of residents riding Metro Transit. To achieve the region's goals for land use, employment, and environmental, King County Metro needs to carry a growing proportion of trips to support the county's mobility, economy, and quality of life.

To boost its ability to respond to increasing demand, King County Metro developed the *Transit Now* program to expand transit service by 15 to 20 percent over the next decade. Approved by voters, *Transit Now* provides new revenue for transit and creates an opportunity to make significant investment in King County Metro services. Funded by a one-tenth of one percent sales-tax increase, *Transit Now* identifies a program of transit investments to be implemented over 10 years. It includes major bus, paratransit and vanpool improvements, including implementation of RapidRide bus rapid transit; more frequent service in high-demand corridors; new service for rapidly developing areas; and service partnerships with other agencies. The implementation of the *Transit Now* program will be the primary focus of this Strategic Plan, along with continued delivery of King County Metro's existing services. The shift from a six-year transit plan to a ten-year plan coincides with the ten-year investment plan identified by *Transit Now*.

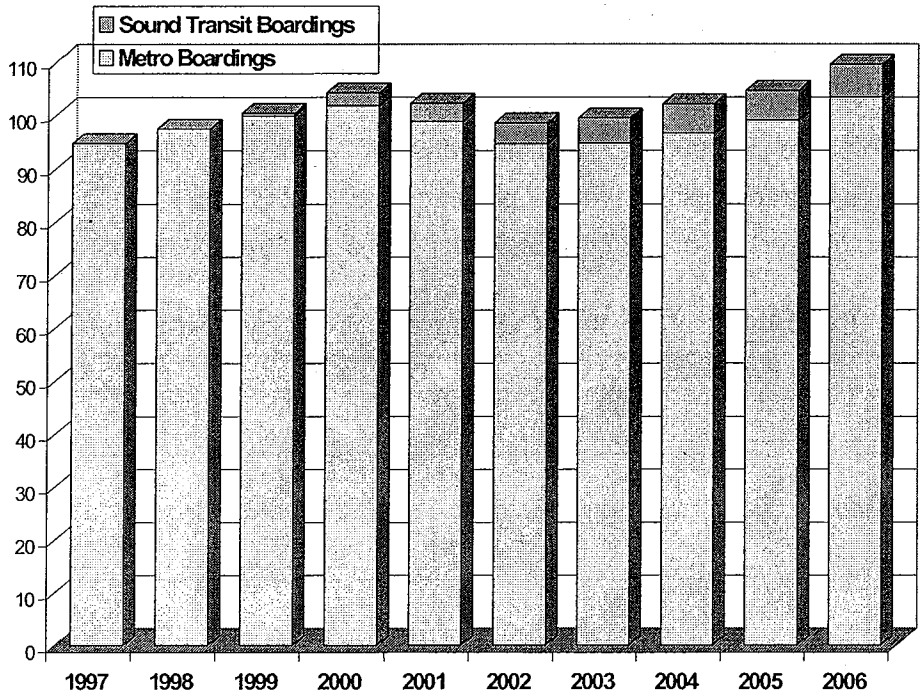
In the coming decade, one of the most significant challenges may be related to freeway construction. Major freeway construction projects in the core of the region have potential to create significant traffic congestion during the construction period, creating both challenges and opportunities for transit. The challenge will be to maintain transit speeds and reliability in the face of increased congestion, but if that challenge can be met, the opportunity is to expand the transit market by providing a competitive alternative to waiting in construction-related traffic. Additional transit fleet and service hours will be required for this opportunity to be realized.

Transit Successes

- **Transit Ridership:** Metro Transit ridership continues to grow steadily with over 103 million riders in 2006. Combined Metro Transit and Metro-operated Sound Transit boardings were 109.4 million. Ridership trends over the past ten years are shown in Exhibit 2-1. Metro Transit ridership increased by 4.3 percent in 2006, compared with the average increase of 1.9 percent among large transit agencies reporting to the American Public Transit Association.

  Many factors have contributed to recent ridership increases including:
  - Higher gasoline prices
  - Healthy employment growth
  - Changes to service
  - Route promotion activities

Exhibit 2-1
Transit Boardings on King County Metro and
King County-operated Sound Transit Routes
(in Millions of annual boardings)



Boardings for all years calculated as though the 2006 methodology had been in place.

[1] Total Transit Boardings for Metro Transit and Sound Transit service provided by MetroTransit, including ride free area boarding.

- **Vanpool ridership.** Vanpool use has increased at a rate even faster than fixed-route service in the past two years. Ridership on vanpools jumped 9 percent in 2006, to about 1.96 million annual riders. At year-end there were 801 vanpool groups and 133 vanshare groups for a total of 934 commuter vans in service.

- **Transit Use Per Capita.** The number of boardings per capita and the number of households using transit has remained mostly steady since 2000. The total percentage of households with residents reporting to have used transit is 26 percent. Overall usage of the system, measured by boardings per capita was 56.3 in 2006[1].

[1] King County Metro data- 2006 Rider/Nonrider Survey

- **Commuting and Mode Split.** Transit is drawing an increasing share of commuters, while the share of those driving alone is decreasing. Exhibit 2.2 identifies the share of commuters driving alone, carpooling and taking transit to key employment centers in King County. All the business districts have seen a growth in transit market share since 1990. Nearly 37 percent of work trips being made by transit into the Seattle Central Business District (CBD) are made by transit. The Bellevue CBD draws the biggest transit share of the east King County business districts with 8.0 percent of work trips made by transit[2]. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Journey to Work data, Seattle residents report the highest transit usage, with 17 percent of residents commuting to work by transit. 6.6 percent of Bellevue residents take public transportation to work.

Exhibit 2-2: Year 2000 Commute to Work by Destination[3]

	Drove Alone		Carpool		Transit	
Destination	1990 Share	2000 Share	1990 Share	2000 Share	1990 Share	2000 Share
Seattle CBD	46%	41%	13%	13%	34%	37%
Bellevue CBD	82%	77%	12%	13%	5%	8%
Denny Regrade	56%	50%	16%	14%	21%	25%
Overlake CBD	84%	78%	11%	14%	2%	4%
Redmond CBD	86%	81%	8%	12%	1%	2%

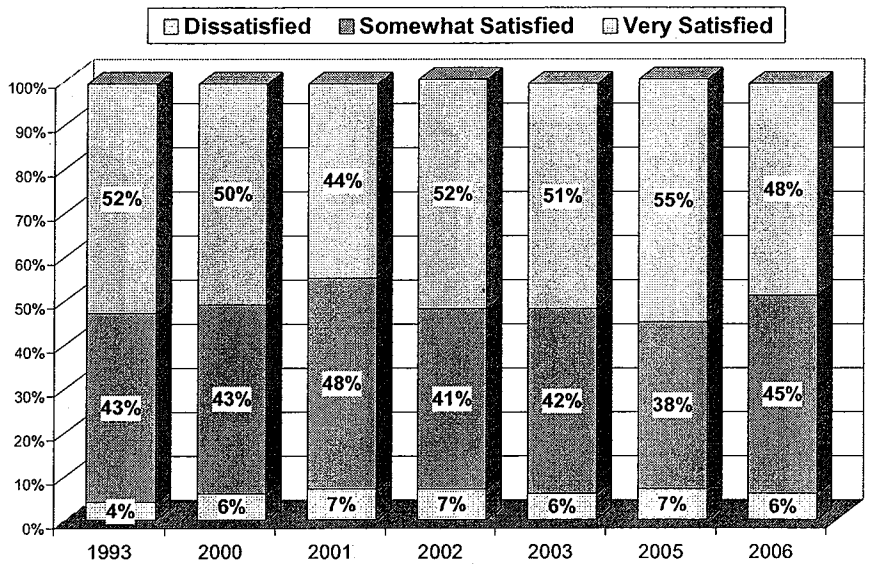
Note: not all travel mode categories shown

- **Customer Satisfaction.** King County Metro samples rider and non-rider perceptions about transit annually. Customer satisfaction remains high, with 93 percent of riders expressing satisfaction with Metro Transit services. Exhibit 2-3 shows the portion of riders who report being very satisfied, satisfied, or dissatisfied over the past ten-year period.

[2] Puget Sound Regional Council. *Puget Sound Trends.* March 2004.

[3] Puget Sound Regional Council. *Puget Sound Trends.* March 2004

Exhibit 2-3
Rider Satisfaction between 1998 and 2006



Base: Regular and Infrequent Riders 2006 (n=1,373, n_w=714); 2005 (n=1,381, n_w=692); 2003 (n=1,355, n_w=762); 2002 (n=1,368, n_w=735); 2001 (n=1,418, n_w=765)

Challenges

- **Operating Costs:** Transit operating costs have grown at rates higher than revenues. Since 2001, diesel fuel prices have more than tripled. Employee benefits have been growing at annual rates in excess of 10 percent. Since 2003, costs per platform hour have risen more than 14 percent.

- **On-time Performance.** The improving economy is a double edged sword –it is also resulting in increasing traffic congestion, which is moving King County Metro's on-time performance and accident rates back towards levels experienced in the late 1990s. During the 2006 fall service change, on-time performance decreased slightly, showing 74.8 percent of all trips operating no more than one minute early and no more than five minutes late. Overall speed of service is also decreasing, making it necessary to adjust schedules to keep service on time. Since 2004, the average speed of service has dropped from 13.2 miles per hour to 12.8 miles per hour. Prior to that, the average speed of service held steady at roughly 13.2 miles per hour between 2000 and 2004. Exhibit 2-4 shows trends in on-time performance between 2002 and 2006. Each bar shows performance during the four-month period between September and January.

Exhibit 2-4

On-time Performance between 2002-2006 for Fall Service Change

(On-time = no more than one minute early or five minutes late)

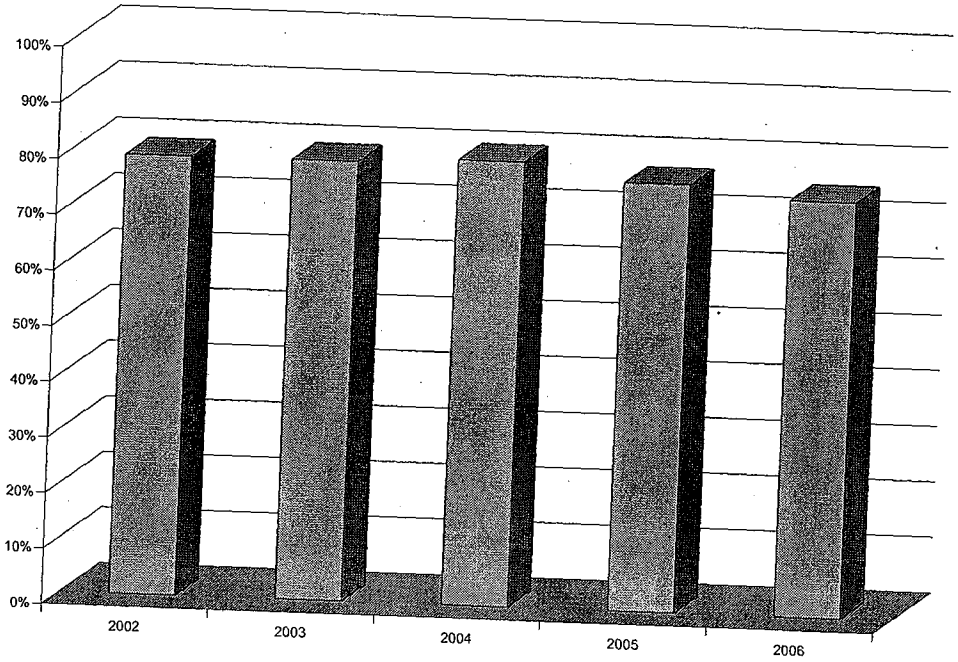
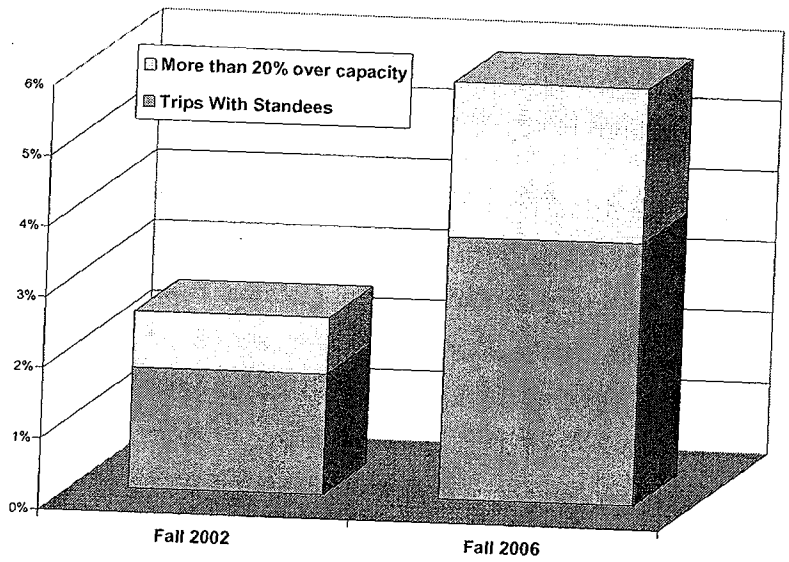


Exhibit 2-5

Percentage of Bus Trips that are Overloaded or have Standing Passengers



- **System Constraints.** Service capacity is currently limited by the number of operators and transit vehicles available for service. This issue is discussed further in Section 5. Base capacity could potentially impact service if there is growth in bus fleet beyond what is identified by *Transit Now*.

- **Overloads.** With rapid ridership increases due primarily to employment and gas price increases, the number of bus trips experiencing standing passengers has been an increasing problem. Exhibit 2-5 shows the number of bus trips with loads more than 20 percent over seated capacity and standees between 2002 and 2006.

Projected Changes in the Transit Operating Environment

External factors impact Metro Transit service and affect King County Metro's strategic planning process, including demographics, traffic, transit financing, and proposals and plans to change the region's transportation system.

Economics and Demographics

- **Population and Urban Growth Trends.** King County's population is expected to grow to over 2 million by 2022, a 13 percent increase over 2004, as shown in Exhibit 2-6. According to these projections, the West subarea will add the greatest number of people - 89,800 - while the East subarea will grow by the highest percentage, (16 percent). As a result of the growth patterns, the proportion of people living in the South will dip slightly.

Exhibit 2-6[4]
Projected Population Growth

Subarea	2005		2022		Growth	
	Persons	% of Total	Persons	% of Total	Persons	% of Total
West	638,200	35%	728,000	36%	89,800	37%
East	501,700	28%	584,000	29%	82,300	34%
South	668,300	37%	736,000	36%	67,700	28%
King County	1,808,200	100%	2,048,00	100%	239,800	100%

[4] Population and employment data source: Countywide Planning Policies, Puget Sound Regional Council and King County Office of Management and Budget; latest official forecasts available

- **Employment Growth.** Employment is also projected to grow to 1.4 million in King County by 2022, a 26 percent increase over 2004, with 250,000 of the total added over the next ten years. King County has already seen a 3 percent increase in employment from 2005 to 2006, one of the largest increases in the nation[5]. Exhibit 2-7 shows employment growth between 2004 and 2022 by subarea.

Exhibit 2-7
Projected Employment Growth

Subarea	2004		2022		Growth	
	Jobs	% of Total	Jobs	% of Total	Jobs	% of Total
West	476,000	45%	614,000	43%	138,000	37%
East	295,000	28%	410,000	28%	115,000	31%
South	298,000	28%	419,000	29%	121,000	32%
King County	1069,000	100%	1,443,00	100%	374,000	100%

- **Other Demographic Changes.** The average age of King County's population is projected to increase over the coming decades. As of 2006, 10 percent of the King County population was age 65 and older[6]. As this percentage grows, the aging population will likely demand more transit services and an increasing share of specialized services.

Regional Freeway and Arterial Congestion

As population and employment grow, traffic congestion is projected to increase. Operating conditions for transit deteriorate as congestion grows. Traffic congestion is reported to cost the average Seattle-Everett area commuter 46 hours of delay per year, which translates to a cost of $792 annually in excess fuel and lost time.[7]

The amount that people drive, measured as vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) has increased significantly. During the 1980's, there was a dramatic rise in total VMT in King County

[5] United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 2007.
[6] State of Washington, Office of Financial Management. State and County Population Age 65 and older: 1980-2006.
[7] The 2005 Urban Mobility Report, Texas Transportation Institute, May 2005; http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/

due to more dispersed work site locations and the increase of 2-worker households. Between 1980 and 1992, vehicle miles traveled increased 78.5 percent in the region while population increased by 28.9 percent and employment increased 39.4 percent. Since 1990, the rate of increase in VMTs has leveled off to a rate comparable to the increase in population and employment. From 1992 to 2005, vehicle miles traveled increased 24.1 percent, more closely aligned with the population increase of 19.8 percent and employment increase of 22.5 percent.[8]

While total VMT continues to increase, in part because more people are driving as population increases, the average VMT per person has recently declined. In 2003, the reported VMT per capita was 9,124 miles per year, the lowest miles traveled per capita reported since 1995. This decline may be related to a rise of the cost of gasoline.

Changes to the Region's Transportation System

There are many plans and proposals for improvements and expansions to the transportation system. King County Metro actively participates in regional transportation planning and the development of transportation system changes to ensure coordinated efforts that include transit-supportive elements. King County Metro also participates in regional planning efforts to make certain that transit service implications of regional transportation projects are integrated into King County Metro's strategic plan.

Changes to the transportation system prompt King County Metro to make adjustments in order to take advantage of new opportunities and avoid negative impacts. Responding to these changes can be a challenge, since King County Metro has a fixed revenue stream and requires a lead time to add new fleet or base capacity. Changes can also create new opportunities however, as some changes such as expanded Sound Transit services enable redeployment of service hours.

King County Metro's *Transit Now* measure, passed in2006, funds a defined investment plan for the next ten years. It authorized an additional sales and use tax of one-tenth of one percent for operations, maintenance and capital needs of King County Metro. *Transit Now* will provide funding for transit improvements defined for an initial ten-year period through 2016. *Transit Now* creates an opportunity to make significant investment in Metro Transit services to allow the system to expand by 15-20 percent.

[8] PSRC Trends: no. T2, September 2006

Other funded projects that will impact Metro Transit service include:

- **Sound Transit (ST) Services.** As Sound Transit begins to operate light rail service in King County, Metro Transit services will be adjusted to reduce parallel services and to provide better feeder connections to the light rail line. ST will open a Link light rail line between downtown Seattle and Sea-Tac Airport in 2009, and from downtown Seattle to the University District in 2016. ST will also implement its full service levels on Sounder commuter lines to Tacoma and Everett, and will continue to complete new bus facilities.

- **Joint Bus-Rail Use of Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel.** The retrofitted Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel reopens for bus service September 2007. Although only buses will operate in the tunnel until Link LRT start-up in 2009, buses will run under joint bus/LRT operating rules. Joint operation limits the peak number of buses per hour to sixty per direction, and King County Metro will observe this limit when the tunnel reopens in 2007. Once LINK light rail begins operations, King County Metro will maximize the use of the tunnel up to allowable limits based on operating experience with joint bus and rail use, and continue to utilize transit priority measures on 3rd Avenue and throughout downtown Seattle to promote efficient and reliable transit.

- **SR-99/ Alaskan Way Viaduct Early Construction Projects.** Projects to improve segments of the Alaskan Way Viaduct have been funded by the state Legislature and are in the design process. These projects may provide improved transit access into downtown Seattle when completed, but may also have significant impacts on service during construction, including extended closures or delays in the Battery Street tunnel, on SR-99 south of Seattle and First Ave S.

- **South Lake Union Streetcar.** The City of Seattle is implementing a streetcar service between downtown Seattle and South Lake Union. The project is under construction and is scheduled to open in December 2007. King County Metro will operate the streetcar, and the city will pay for a portion of the operating cost.

Major Transportation Corridor Projects

There are numerous large-scale transportation projects planned for the region that are not yet fully funded. Many of these would be implemented if the joint Sound Transit/Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) roads and transit ballot measure passes in November 2007. Many of the investments in the proposed package would have an impact on transit service when complete.

During the ten-year horizon of this strategic plan, the impacts that the construction program would have on both traffic and transit may perhaps be a more important issue. With extended construction underway on multiple corridors concurrently, maintaining mobility through the construction period may be one of the region's more significant transportation challenges.

Implications of these construction projects for King County Metro are multi-layered. Foremost, Metro will be faced with the challenge of keeping buses moving through construction-related congestion that will affect the whole region. Secondly, King County Metro service could potentially be an important part of efforts to mitigate construction-related congestion. King County Metro's role in mitigating construction traffic impacts will be considered further in the 2008 update to this strategic plan.

Some of the major transportation projects and proposals include:

- **Alaskan Way Viaduct (AWV) Replacement, or a Streets and Transit Alternative.** No decision has been reached about how the middle mile of the Alaskan Way Viaduct will be replaced. When this decision is made, it will have a strong impact on Metro Transit services, influencing overall accessibility into downtown Seattle, transit operating speed and costs into and through downtown, and the amount of transit service needed in the affected corridors during and after project construction. Since a majority of Metro Transit service passes through downtown Seattle, small increases in travel speed or reliability have a large impact on both ridership and the cost of operation.

- **SR-520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.** State and local governments continue to work with neighborhoods and local organizations to refine designs for a bridge replacement and decisions about freeway options through the Montlake area. Although construction is not scheduled to begin until 2013, King County Metro will

work actively with local groups and the state to maintain transit-friendly features of the project and address potential impacts to transit.

- **Urban Partnership.** Related to the SR 520 project, and in partnership with the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Washington State Department of Transportation, King County is one of the metropolitan areas selected for federal funding and technical assistance for planning innovative approaches to congestion reduction. The proposal would implement tolls on SR-520 subject to legislative authorization, and fund transit improvements in the corridor. Experience gained from the urban partnership program could affect plans to implement tolls on other freeways, providing increases in ridership demand and, potentially, in revenues for transit.

- **Roads and Transit Ballot Measure.** In November 2007, the roads and transit package proposed by the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) and Sound Transit (ST) will go before voters in Snohomish, King and Pierce Counties. The proposal includes the addition of 0.6 percent sales tax to fund Sound Transit Phase 2 (ST2) which includes 50 miles of light rail construction and expanded regional bus and commuter rail services; and the RTID program of improvement projects on state highways, bridges and local roads.

  - The ST2 program will extend Link light rail north into Snohomish County, south to Tacoma in Pierce County, and across the I-90 Bridge to Bellevue and Overlake. Most of this investment would be completed after the ten-year horizon of this strategic plan, but preliminary plans for service integration are already beginning.

  - The RTID package includes $100M in funds that could be used by Sound Transit and King County Metro to mitigate traffic congestion related to the major freeway construction projects also included in the package. This program will be considered further in the 2008 update of this strategic plan if the RTID package passes.

Emerging Issues

There is increasing interest in how transit can play a role in several emerging and related issues, some of which will be a focus for King County as a whole and will be addressed in King County's 2008 update to its Comprehensive Plan. The 2008 update to this Strategic Plan will identify additional transit actions and strategies that will have a positive impact on each of these issues.

- **Global Climate Change.** King County Executive Ron Sims has developed an action plan and set goals to address the issue of global climate change. King County Metro will be expected to play an important role in regional efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The King County Climate Plan finds that "Climate change is real, but we have an opportunity now to prevent its worst impacts. If we act effectively during the next ten years —to take these steps to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and to prepare our region for the physical impacts of climate change—we will be able to limit the severity of climate change consequences for 21st century and beyond." The 2008 update to this strategic plan will confront transit's role in responding to that challenge as well as address how King County Metro will meet the goals established in emerging plans such as the King County Energy Plan.

- **Community Health.** King County has identified the health impacts of an automobile-captive lifestyle to be a significant public health issue, and concluded that the county must regionally coordinate and integrate its decisions in transportation, land use, environment and health to bring about approaches to community design that consider multiple environmental and health factors. Transit is a part of developing walkable communities and healthier lifestyles. Transit's role to develop healthier communities will be developed further in the 2008 update.

- **Transportation System Pricing and Management.** King County supports further exploration in conjunction with federal, state and local governments of congestion mechanisms for the region. Road pricing can play an important role in managing congestion, raising revenue and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Road pricing has been successfully implemented in other areas of the world, such as the City of London. Freeway management, possibly including pricing, will also be needed to maintain the speed and reliability of freeway HOV lanes and the buses that use them.

Section Three:
Plan Objectives, and Monitoring System Performance

This section describes the policy framework that defines King County Metro's goals and objectives for public transportation, and how the service concept will advance them. It also addresses the strategies King County Metro will use to monitor achievement of its objectives, performance of its services and satisfaction of its customers in order to manage the public transportation system effectively. King County Metro uses several quantitative methods applied over time to assess how well its services are performing and perceived, and uses this information to direct investments and adjust services to improve the quality of public transportation and it impacts on the communities we serve.

Policy Framework, Plan Concept and Consistency

King County Metro's long-range goals and objectives are defined in the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation (formerly known as the Long-Range Policy Framework). King County Metro's goals are to improve mobility, economic vitality and environmental quality; to support growth management; to be a responsible regional partner; and to work with other jurisdictions to ensure that land use and transportation planning and implementation are coordinated.

Twelve objectives are established to further these goals, shown in Exhibit 3-1. These objectives drive King County Metro's plans and priorities and are reflected in strategies included elsewhere in this strategic plan. These objectives also inform the performance measures developed to assess the implementation of the plan.

System Development Concept

The improvements implemented by this strategic plan are enabled by the voter-approved *Transit Now* program. This program continues a shift toward a more multi-destination network. The concept maintains the quality of existing investments, and adds new resources to programs that have the greatest potential to achieve King County Metro's objectives: high ridership core service connections, RapidRide bus rapid transit, service partnership programs, and transit access in rapidly developing areas.

Exhibit 3-1
King County Metro Objectives Defined in the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation

Market Share

- Increase the portion of trips by people using transit and ridesharing within King County.

Mobility

- Reduce average HOV travel time relative to SOV travel by increasing HOV speed and reliability.
- Improve transit access to jobs and other activities
- Increase travel opportunities on public transportation by developing a range of integrated and complementary services and facilities, and making the system easier to use and understand.

Cost and Efficiency

- Provide the most efficient and effective services and facilities possible within available resources.

Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits

- Provide improved HOV services that support local and regional comprehensive plans and policies consistent with the Growth Management Act.
- Encourage creation and enhancement of pedestrian-friendly and HOV-supportive communities.
- Increase transportation options that use less energy, consume less land resources and produce fewer air pollutants.
- Reduce the average miles and hours traveled per day per person in single-occupant vehicles.
- Provide services and facilities that benefit all socio-economic groups.

Financial Feasibility

- Develop a system that is affordable to build, run and use with available funding.
- Identify new funding sources through cooperation with public jurisdictions and the private sector.

In the mid-1990's, King County Metro participated, along with other transit operators in Pierce and Snohomish counties, in development of a regional transit system plan which led to the creation of Sound Transit and high capacity transit connections throughout the three-county region. Development of regional services has given King County Metro the opportunity to invest in improved local service connections in all areas of the county. While Metro Transit service was historically considered "Seattle-centric," over time both Metro Transit and Sound Transit services have evolved to serve activity centers throughout the county consistent with the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2020 and growth management goals.

A key element of this transition to a more multi-destinational system was King County Metro's development of a network of high-ridership core service connections, and these constitute the largest service investment in *Transit Now*. Core connection routes are primary two-way, all-day connections between activity centers throughout the county. Because core routes have transit attractions at both ends, they are productive in both directions.

The development of RapidRide bus rapid transit service complements Sound Transit rail and regional express bus by providing fast and frequent intermediate capacity transit services that serve more local trips of all sorts using arterial streets. RapidRide has potential to increase ridership for the shorter-distance trips that constitute the majority of trips by providing faster speeds, more frequent service, and a more convenient and comfortable experience.

The service partnership program provides an opportunity for King County Metro to work with public and private organizations to share the costs and responsibilities of providing additional transit service. The program also provides an opportunity for local jurisdictions and employers to provide a higher level of transit service than is possible through regular transit revenues, or to provide service in advance of new development, allowing jurisdictions a new tool to use transit service to help address transportation and land use coordination requirements under the Growth Management Act.

As part of *Transit Now* implementation, King County Metro plans to increase service to growing residential areas within the Urban Growth Area (UGA). King County Metro has previously been able to expand service to respond to rapid development in both the East and South areas of the county only to a limited extent. Investment in park–and-ride lots and service capacity on major corridors has been a priority over the past six years.

Transit Now enabled an additional boost of service to areas where development and population growth have out-paced service growth. The transit system currently provides extensive service coverage to people who live within King County, particularly within the designated Urban Growth Area (UGA). As shown in Exhibit 3-2, nearly 94 percent of all households within this area fall within one-quarter mile of a bus stop, within one and one-half miles of a permanent park-and-ride lot, or within the service area of Metro DART dial-a-ride service.

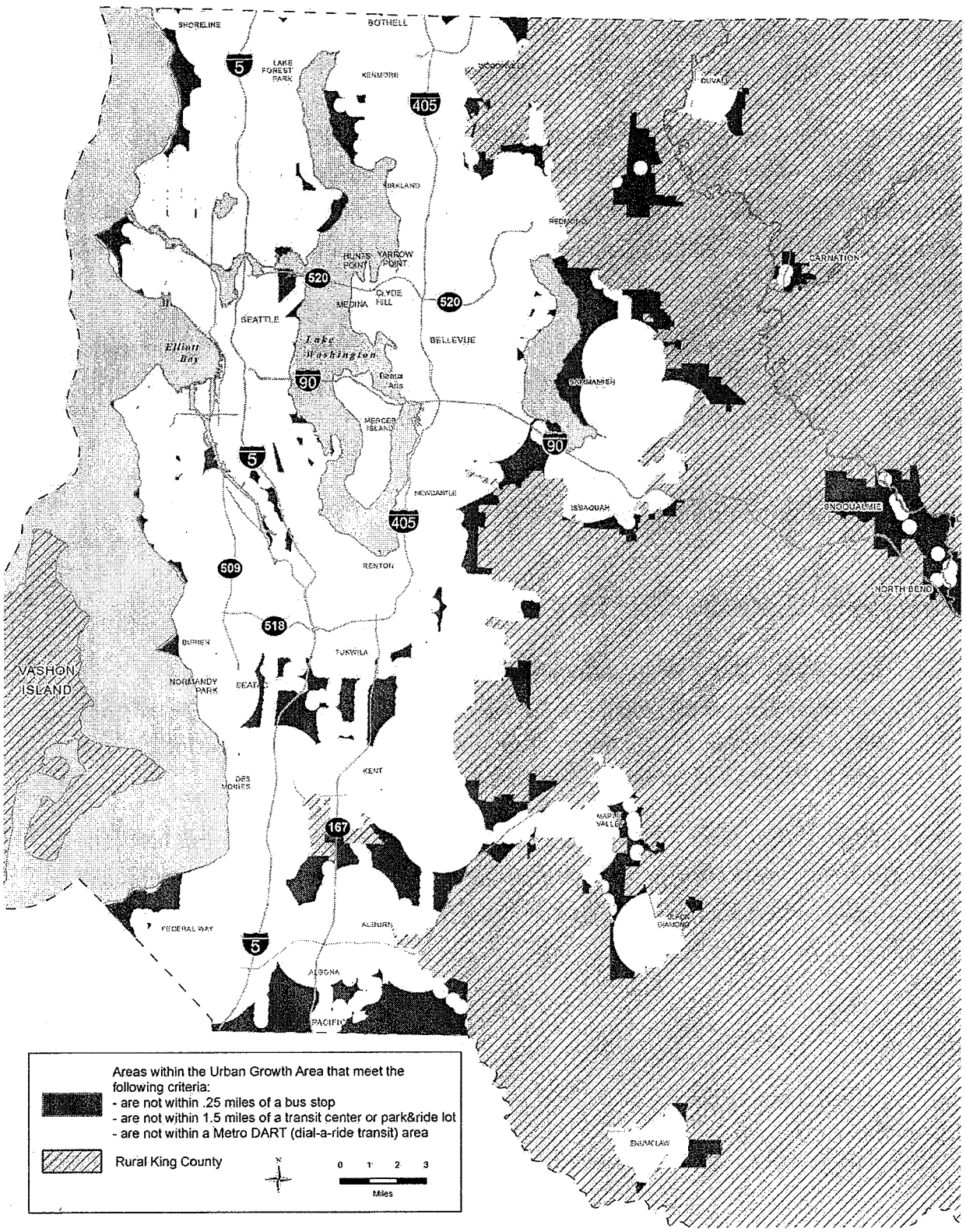
Additionally, King County Metro extends other transit and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) services and products, including vanpool, rideshare services, and employer partnership programs, to all King County residents in order to provide them with options to driving alone. Paratransit service that meets or exceeds federal requirements is provided to qualified persons with disabilities in a service area comparable to King County Metro's non-commuter fixed route service.

Supporting Growth Management

King County, in accordance with the Washington State Growth Management Act and in coordination with local jurisdictions, has implemented growth management policies to strengthen the link between transit service levels and land use. Development that creates higher concentrations of people and jobs provides economies of scale in the delivery of service. Implementation of related policies, such as limiting parking supply and establishing parking fees, increases the demand for transit alternatives. Within King County, areas where growth and growth management policies have combined to create strong, transit-supportive conditions include downtown Seattle and environs, the University District, and downtown Bellevue. These areas are the strongest transit ridership destinations in the county.

In recent years, policies directing growth into the Urban Growth Area (UGA) have begun to show results. Rapid growth in many cities and in urban, unincorporated King County is increasing pressure on the transportation system to provide additional bus and other transit services within the UGA.

Exhibit 3-2
Metro Transit Service Area, and Locations that are Accessible to Transit Service



The concept of a "transit-supportive area" developed by the Transportation Research Board[9], is used in the plan to more closely link land use and transit investment where higher population, employment density and potential ridership support a higher level of transit service operating all day. In areas where land use is not transit-supportive, attempts will be made to work with jurisdictions to improve land uses, and to design and provide service most appropriate to the transit market.

Transit-oriented, more densely developed areas can sustain higher levels of transit service. This is especially true of areas that are on track to successfully reach their housing and employment targets established by the Countywide Planning Policies and those areas with limited parking supply, parking charges and/or good pedestrian environment.

By using the concept of a "transit-supportive area", King County Metro can better work with local jurisdictions to identify how best to provide transit-supportive environments and land use to foster the development of convenient and well-used public transportation.

Monitoring and Management Strategies

Strategy M-1: Monitoring Plan Progress

Establish a series of targets for measuring success in meeting the objectives of the Strategic Plan in each of four long-range policy areas as shown in Exhibit 3-1. Evaluate progress using these targets periodically and at the time of Strategic Plan updates.

This strategic plan does not establish measures or targets for plan achievement between 2007 and 2016. The 2008 update to this strategic plan will re-evaluate the measures and targets used to assess plan progress, as well as the frequency and mechanism used for reporting.

[9] Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, Second Edition. Transit Cooperative Research Program, Report 100. 2003

The following measures have been developed and assessed periodically to evaluate plan progress, based on plan objectives and targets established for 2002 through 2007.

Cost and Efficiency

- **Ridership.** Transit ridership is defined as the number of annual boardings on the bus system at the countywide level. The changes and improvements proposed in the plan are expected to increase ridership over time, as both existing and new customers benefit from more and improved travel choices.
- **Bus Cost.** The cost of service per platform hour (relative to inflation) provides an overall measure of system cost efficiency. Various factors influence the labor, capital and administrative cost of service delivery. This indicator measures the average cost of the service supplied to the public per unit of service.
- **Bus Service Effectiveness.** Two measures of service effectiveness are boardings per platform hour of service and total bus passenger miles traveled. The measure of boardings per platform hour indicates transit's effectiveness in the number of travel occurrences served per unit of service. A measure of total passenger miles indicates transit's effectiveness in limiting the private vehicle miles that might otherwise be driven on limited roadway space.

Growth Management

- **Service Orientation.** Shifts in service orientation show how the overall system structure is changing. Service orientation shifts are measured by changes in the amount (total annual platform hours) of service investment during the plan period made for core connections, peak-only services and local/other services.

Market Share

- **Work Trip high occupancy vehicle (HOV) Mode Split.** The state Commute Trip Reduction Act is intended to increase the portion of commuters who use public transportation. Efforts are targeted at commuters to make their trips to and from work at designated sites within employment target areas where CTR requirements apply. King County Metro will focus resources to capture a higher percentage of total trips taken and reduce reliance on the single-occupant automobile. Progress toward meeting CTR targets to increase the percentage of HOV work trip is expected to occur over time.

Mobility

- **Market Penetration.** The changes and improvements proposed in the plan are intended to increase market penetration by increasing service levels (frequency and span of service) in transit markets with strong ridership or indicators of strong demand. If the changes are effective, the number of households with people who have used transit in the last month will increase over time.
- **Overall Use.** The usefulness of public transportation to people throughout King County is increasingly important. An upward trend in transit boardings per capita is expected over time and is indicative of how well public transportation is capturing all kinds of travel demand.

Strategy M-2: Customer Satisfaction

Regularly monitor customer satisfaction using measures that assess system changes and improvements through regular surveys of riders and non-riders.

Customer satisfaction provides a measure of service quality and acceptance of system changes and improvements. It is particularly important in retaining riders who have other transportation options (almost 75 percent of current riders) and in attracting new riders to the system.

Rider/Non-Rider Survey

King County Metro's Rider/Non-Rider Survey will be used to assess satisfaction levels with system changes and improvements overall and at the subarea level in areas including:

- Directness of travel
- Wait time between transfers
- Safety, comfort, and convenience
- On time performance
- Service frequency (headway) - the time between buses

Additionally, customer satisfaction should be considered in the context of service evaluation, as an element of each area that is evaluated. This approach will utilize the information gained from regular customer surveys to link the evaluation of service with a corresponding evaluation of the customer's viewpoint under Strategy M-3.

Strategy M-3: Service Performance Evaluation

Regularly monitor and report bus service performance and ridership system-wide and at the route level to identify services that may require modification, expansion or termination based on their performance. Develop and recommend to the RTC an approach to peer agency comparison that identifies:

- **the appropriate measures of performance;**
- **the major factors, internal and external, that vary among transit agencies and affect performance;**
- **the extent to which those factors can be tracked for a small group of peer agencies to inform the performance comparisons, and**
- **a list of five peer agencies considered to be most comparable to King County Metro Transit based upon agency characteristics and the ability to track major performance-related factors.**

King County Metro monitors service performance on an ongoing basis, incorporating detailed route characteristics and data as well as system level indicators such as the customer satisfaction research described in Strategy M-2. The service evaluation process looks at both existing and new services and should include the following:

- Selection of reliable long-term data sources
- Consistent monitoring, evaluation, and reporting procedures
- High performance threshold(s) above which services should be improved to serve more riders
- Minimum performance threshold(s) below which service will be modified or eliminated
- Use of both traditional service performance indicators, customer research data and comparison with peer agencies

Section Four:
Improving the System – Service Strategies

King County Metro provides an array of services to meet the many different travel needs of passengers, and supports the varying land uses throughout the county. All-day, limited stop express services operated by Metro and Sound Transit are supplemented by Metro's additional express service during peak periods, local services to and between activity centers, vanpools and ridesharing for trips that are less convenient by bus and *Access* service for citizens that are ADA eligible.

The backbone of Metro Transit service is a network of high ridership "core service connections;" transit routes with frequent, two-way, all-day service that connect concentrations of activity throughout King County. Local routes support the core network by extending transit coverage to residential areas, connecting more areas to transit hubs and activity centers. Peak-only routes, which include many express services, provide additional speed and capacity to expand the county's transportation options during commute periods. These services, along with vanpool, rideshare and *Access* paratransit, are designed to meet a variety of user needs that are the focus of service strategies within this section.

Planned improvements to Metro Transit service over the next ten years were funded by voter approval of the *Transit Now* initiative in November 2006. Service improvements are a core component of the *Transit Now* plan, which will increase the frequency and span of service on many core service corridors, implement five RapidRide bus rapid transit routes, and provide new service in developing areas. *Transit Now* also initiates a service partnership program that provides public and private partners an opportunity to improve specific services by contributing a portion of the cost, either financially or through speed and reliability investments that improve service and reduce costs.

The following fifteen service strategies describe how King County Metro plans to address the many public transportation service needs within King County. While these strategies describe discrete actions, in practice King County Metro attempts to advance multiple strategies whenever a service change is proposed. The process King County Metro uses to implement service and capital improvements is described in Section 6.

Strategy S-1: Service Consolidation

Pursue efficiencies in existing services in major transit corridors including, but not limited to, those listed in Exhibit 4-1. Reinvest savings from these efforts within the planning subarea in which they are generated.

Reducing or eliminating poorly performing routes can free up service hours to improve more productive routes and address unmet service needs. And by consolidating services on parallel routes into a single route, it is often possible to create corridor service that is more frequent, productive and reliable. Service consolidation describes the continual improvement to service that results from using each service change as an opportunity to shift resources to stronger routes and more productive uses.

Recent experience implementing the service consolidation strategy points to principles that contribute to successful consolidations. First, the main segments of routes must be as direct and frequent as practical. Frequent service mitigates the inconvenience of transferring by minimizing wait time and facilitating convenient connections to other markets. Secondly, sufficient capacity must be provided on the main segment of routes so those riders can avoid having to stand for extended periods. And, finally, trips should be more evenly spaced throughout the day as is the case with a headway-based system rather than the "work start-quit time" system that was historically used by King County Metro. The earlier system had emphasized the arrival and departure times at major centers at presumed shift change times.

A recent example of a successful service consolidation was demonstrated in the Ambaum-Delridge corridor, where a restructure of core service provided higher frequency service in the corridor. Other service in the area was also restructured and connections between bus routes were improved through higher frequencies. The higher frequency service achieved through consolidation resulted in increased ridership and more efficient operations. Following the restructure, ridership along the Ambaum-Delridge corridor increased by over 40 percent on weekdays and the overall ridership in the area increased by 8 percent, notably higher than the system ridership growth of 2-3 percent for the same period.

King County Metro will continue to consider service consolidations for areas where there is a positive impact on service efficiency and transit ridership. The service consolidation strategy is considered for all Metro Transit service changes. Exhibit 4-1 summarizes key corridors for consolidation.

Exhibit 4-1

Major Consolidation Corridors

Corridor	Corridor	Corridor
Northgate to Seattle CBD via I-5	Twin Lakes - Seattle CBD via SE. 320th St/I-5	Lake City - U. District via Lake City Way/25th Ave NE.
SR-522	NE 45th St	Broadway Avenue E
Rainier Ave. S	SR-520	Roosevelt Way NE
Ambaum Blvd. SW	Delridge Ave. SW	West Seattle Bridge
California Ave. SW		

Strategy S-2: Service Design

Improve transit on-time performance through: adjustments in routing, splitting of unreliable through-route pairs, adding of recovery time between trips, moving routes between operating bases, and adding time or trips to schedules to account for slower travel speeds or recurring overloads.

Schedule maintenance hours shall be reserved in amounts equal to one-third of new service investments up to 0.5% of total annual service hours with the remaining two-thirds of new service hours allocated according to Strategy IM-3. The schedule maintenance hour allocation shall be achieved in accordance with the timetable established in Strategy IM-3 without regard to subareas. Schedule maintenance hours that are not used for schedule maintenance in each year shall be used for new service. To the extent that schedule maintenance requirements exceed the service hours available under this policy, reduction of existing services within the same subarea will be used to fund schedule maintenance needs.

In the event that schedule maintenance hours are proposed at a level exceeding 0.5% of total annual service hours by the Department of Transportation, the Regional Transit Committee shall review this proposal and recommend any change in allocation policy to the Metropolitan King County Council.

This strategy addresses the role of route design and planning in improving service reliability. The capital elements of transit speed and reliability are addressed in Strategy C-3. Many factors impact service reliability including traffic congestion and changes in ridership. As traffic and ridership change, schedules must be adjusted to maintain on-time performance, and sometimes routes must be changed to maintain or restore reliable service.

Transit operates in increasingly congested traffic conditions throughout King County, especially in the urban centers, on freeways approaching urban centers, and on arterial roads approaching freeway interchanges. Traffic congestion slows transit and does so in an irregular manner that causes trip times to vary – so schedules need constant adjusting. Poor on-time performance discourages transit ridership by increasing the risk that trips will take longer to complete, that connecting transfers will not be made, or that a scheduled bus will not arrive on time or at all. Riders respond to this risk by catching earlier trips, increasing overall trip time, or by reducing their use of transit.

When traffic congestion delays a specific service on an ongoing basis, schedule maintenance resources may be added to the route. Time is added in between bus trips in work assignment to ensure that each bus begins its next trip at the scheduled time. At any given time, traffic congestion affects many routes in the system, and these resources are added where and when they are needed most. These adjustments provide increased reliability for riders on currently scheduled service.

Route design also impacts service reliability. Longer routes have a greater cumulative exposure to traffic incidents, wheelchair lift deployments, and other sources of intermittent delay that become more severe as traffic worsens. Unreliable service also tends to be unevenly loaded, since a bus that is delayed starts to pick up passengers who were intending to take the following bus, while the following bus now has a lighter load causing it to operate ahead of schedule. When this occurs, buses bunch together, decreasing the effective frequency of the service.

Bus trips that enter downtown Seattle as one route and leave as another (known as "through-routing") are especially susceptible to reliability problems, because the combined trip covering two routes can be very long. Many downtown-oriented all-day routes are through-routed, and the practice does also have advantages, it: reduces operating costs, uses fewer buses to provide the same amount of service, distributes passenger loads from both routes throughout the central business district, and it provides

one trip access for riders to go from one side of the city to the other. Through-routing also reduces downtown bus volumes and the need for layover space in downtown areas where curbspace is difficult to obtain. Most trolley routes and many diesel routes operate this way. This practice works well as long as traffic congestion does not unduly delay service. But as traffic congestion worsens, through-routes become more difficult to operate reliably.

Schedule reliability is an important factor in the quality of transit service. The implementation of *Transit Now* will provide an increase in schedule maintenance hours, providing expanded resources for King County Metro to improve service reliability. These resources will be used to adjust schedules as congestion or overloads makes trip times longer, and to redesign routes when they can no longer operate reliably.

Strategy S-3: Core Service Connections

Improve service levels on existing routes and create new routes serving established urban and manufacturing/industrial centers and urban areas where, because of population or employment clusters, ridership and transit use is projected to be the highest. Improve frequencies as listed in Exhibit 4-2 and shown in Exhibit 4-4 to support existing demand and attract more riders on a core network of key connections. Improvements in core services will be made consistent with the *Transit Now* program.

The largest service investment in *Transit Now* in this strategic plan is dedicated to improvements to the high ridership core service connections. Core routes are primary two-way, all-day connections between activity centers throughout the county. Because core routes have transit attractions at both ends, they are productive in both directions. Core routes are strengthened by the service consolidation strategy, which aims to consolidate parallel routes to develop a stronger and more frequent all-day connection. By providing service to and between the county's activity centers, the core connection network advances the land use and transportation objectives of local and regional comprehensive plans.

Transit Now high ridership core service investments target routes serving and connecting urban and manufacturing centers. Service improvements include added trips, frequency upgrades and expanded hours of operation. When service is frequent, it is more likely to be available when customers need it and reduces wait time between buses for riders who transfer. When service becomes very frequent, some riders will find they can use it spontaneously, without having to consult a timetable.

Service frequency is an important factor in ridership levels. National research on travel behavior suggests that, in decision-making regarding whether to use the bus, time spent waiting for the bus is twice as important as time spent getting to or riding the bus[10]. Ridership levels are typically more responsive to changes in service frequency[11]. The target frequency for service on routes selected for *Transit Now* investment is every 15 minutes, seven days a week. Improvements funded by *Transit Now* are shown in Exhibit 4-2, and illustrated in Exhibit 4-4. All other core corridors are listed in Exhibit 4-3 and shown in Exhibit 4-5.

King County Metro investments in core service routes support land use and growth management objectives by focusing transit service improvements on routes that serve transit and pedestrian-friendly activity centers. Improved transit service levels can also promote complementary actions by local jurisdictions and private developers to make transit service more attractive and effective, and to make improvements to pedestrian access and walkability. Local jurisdictions can improve transit by promoting density near transit lines, by providing queue jumps or transit signal priority at intersections to improve the speed and reliability of service, or by improving the pedestrian environment that help transit users get to and from their bus stop. Local jurisdictions and employers can make transit more effective through commute trip reduction programs and by managing the supply of parking. By identifying corridors where transit improvements will occur, local jurisdictions can adopt comprehensive plans that will focus development and improvements in places that will complement and support planned transit services.

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[10] Patrick Mayworm, Armando Lago, and J. Matthew McEnroe. *Patronage Impacts of Changes in Transit Fares and Services.* Urban Mass Transportation Administration, Washington D.C., 1980.

[11] John E. Evans *Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes.* Transportation Research Board, 2004.

Exhibit 4-2

Transit Now Investments for Core Service Routes

Between		Corridor	2016 Target Frequency		
			Peak	Midday & Sat	Eve & Sun
Level 3 Improvements (More than 15,000 annual hours): Major weekday frequency upgrades, new bus routes and/or route extensions					
Auburn	Kent	Auburn Way	30	30	30
Bellevue	Eastgate/BCC	Lake Hills Connector, 148th Av SE	10-15	15	30
Bellevue	University District	SR-520	10-15	15	30
Des Moines	Downtown Seattle	1st Ave S, SR-509, E Marginal Way	30	60	60
Issaquah	Bellevue	I-90, BCC	30	30	60
Issaquah	Redmond	228th Av SE, NE Sammamish	30	30-60	60
Kent	GRCC	E James St, 124th Av SE	30	30	60
Kent	Burien	KDM rd., S 240th St, 1st Av S	30	30	60
Kent	Four Corners	SE Kent Kangley Rd	30	30	60
Kent	Renton	Smith St., Benson Rd, Carr Rd	15	15-30	30-60
Kent	SeaTac	Orillia Rd, S 212th St	30	30	30
Kirkland	Eastgate/Factoria	156th Ave, Overlake, Crossroads Mall, BCC, Eastgate	15	15	30
Kirkland	Redmond	Avondale Rd NE, NE 85th St	30	30	30
Queen Anne	Downtown Seattle	Queen Anne Ave N	5-7	10-15	30
Renton	Burien	SW Grady Way, S 154th St	15	15	30
Level 2 Improvements (5,000 - 15,000 annual hours): Minor weekday frequency upgrades, expanded weekday hours of operations and/or added weekend service.					
Ballard	University District	NW Market St, N and NE 45th St	10	15	15-30
Beacon Hill	Downtown Seattle	Othello/New Holly Station, Beacon Av S	5-7	10-15	15-30
Bellevue	Bear Creek	Overlake	15	15-60	60
Bellevue	Kenmore	Finn Hill, Juanita, Kirkland, South Kirkland P&R	30	30	60
Bellevue	Renton	Coal Creek Pkwy, Factoria, Newcastle	15	30	30
Capitol Hill	Seattle Center	Denny Way	15	15	30
Kirkland	Bellevue	Lake Washington Blvd NE, Bellevue Way NE	15	30	60
Redmond	Eastgate/Factoria	148th Ave, Crossroads Mall, BCC, Eastgate	15	15	30
Renton	Downtown Seattle	MLK JR Way S, I-5	5-10	15-30	30
Redmond	Eastgate/Factoria	148th Ave, Crossroads Mall, BCC, Eastgate	15	15	30
University District	Downtown Seattle	Eastlake Ave E, Fairview Av N	12	15	15-20
Level 1 Improvements (5,000 annual hours or less): Added trips, expanded hours of operation and/or weekend frequency upgrades					
Auburn/GRCC	Federal Way	15th St SW, Lea Hill Rd	30	30	30
Burien	Downtown Seattle	Ambaum Blvd SW, Delridge Way SW	7-10	15	30
Kenmore	Shoreline	Ballinger Way, Aurora Village	15-30	30	60
Kent	Downtown Seattle	W Valley Hwy, Southcenter Blvd, Interurban Ave S, I-5	15	15	30
Kirkland	Downtown Seattle	108th Ave NE, SR-520	15	30	30-60
Northgate	Downtown Seattle	I-5	4-15	15	30

Exhibit 4-3
Other Core Service Corridors

Between		Corridor	2016 Target Frequency		
			Peak	Midday & Sat	Eve & Sun
Other Core Corridors served by Metro Transit					
Admiral	White Center	California Ave SW	30	30	30
Aurora Village	Downtown Seattle	Aurora Ave N	10	15	30
Ballard	Northgate	24th Ave NW, Holman Road	30	30	60
Ballard	Downtown Seattle	15th Ave NW	10	10	30
Bellevue	Factoria	112th Ave NE, South Bellevue P&R	30	30	60
Bellevue	Redmond	Crossroads, Overlake	15	15	30
Capitol Hill	Downtown Seattle	15th Ave E, Pine St.	10	15	30
Capitol Hill	Downtown Seattle	Broadway E, Pine St.	10	10	15-30
Capitol Hill	Downtown Seattle	Madison St.	10	15	30
Central Area	Seattle CBD	Jefferson-James	7-8	10	15
Federal Way	Downtown Seattle	I-5	30	30	30
Federal Way	SeaTac	SR-99	20	30	30
Fremont	Downtown Seattle	Dexter Ave N	10-15	15	30
Greenwood	Downtown Seattle	Greenwood Ave N	15	15	30
Kirkland	Totem Lake	124th Ave NE, Kingsgate P&R	30	30	60
Loyal Heights	University District	NW 85th St, 15th Ave NE	10	15	30
Madrona	Downtown Seattle	Union St	15	15	30
Northgate	Downtown Seattle	Wallingford Ave N, Aurora Ave N	20	20	30
Northgate	University District	Roosevelt Way NE, 5th Ave NE	10-15	15	30
Queen Anne	Downtown Seattle	5th Ave N, Taylor Ave N	10-15	20	15-30
Rainier Beach	Downtown Seattle	Rainier Ave S	10	10	15-30
Sea-Tac Airport	Downtown Seattle	I-5	15-30	15	30
University District	Downtown Seattle	Pine St. 23rd Ave NE	10-15	15	30
University District	Downtown Seattle	I-5	5-8	7-10	--
University District	Columbia City	23rd Ave NE, MLK Jr Way S	10	15	30
University District	Woodinville	SR-522, Bothell	30	60	---
West Seattle	Downtown Seattle	Fauntleroy Ave SW, W. Seattle Bridge	15	15	30
White Center	Southcenter	Military Rd, S 144th St	30	30	30
Core Service Connections in King County served by Sound Transit					
Redmond	Kirkland	NE 85th St	30	30	60
Bellevue	Downtown Seattle	I-90, Bellevue Way NE	5-8	15	30
Issaquah	Downtown Seattle	I-90	30	30	60
Bothell	Bellevue	I-405	15	30	30
Lynnwood	Bellevue	I-405	15	30	60
Bellevue	Sea-Tac	Renton, I-405	30	30	30
Bellevue	Auburn	Renton, Kent	15	30	60
Redmond	Downtown Seattle	SR-520	10-15	30	30
Woodinville	Downtown Seattle	SR-522, I-5	30	30	30
Federal Way	Sea-Tac	I-5	15	--	--

Exhibit 4-4

Transit Now Investments in Core Service Routes

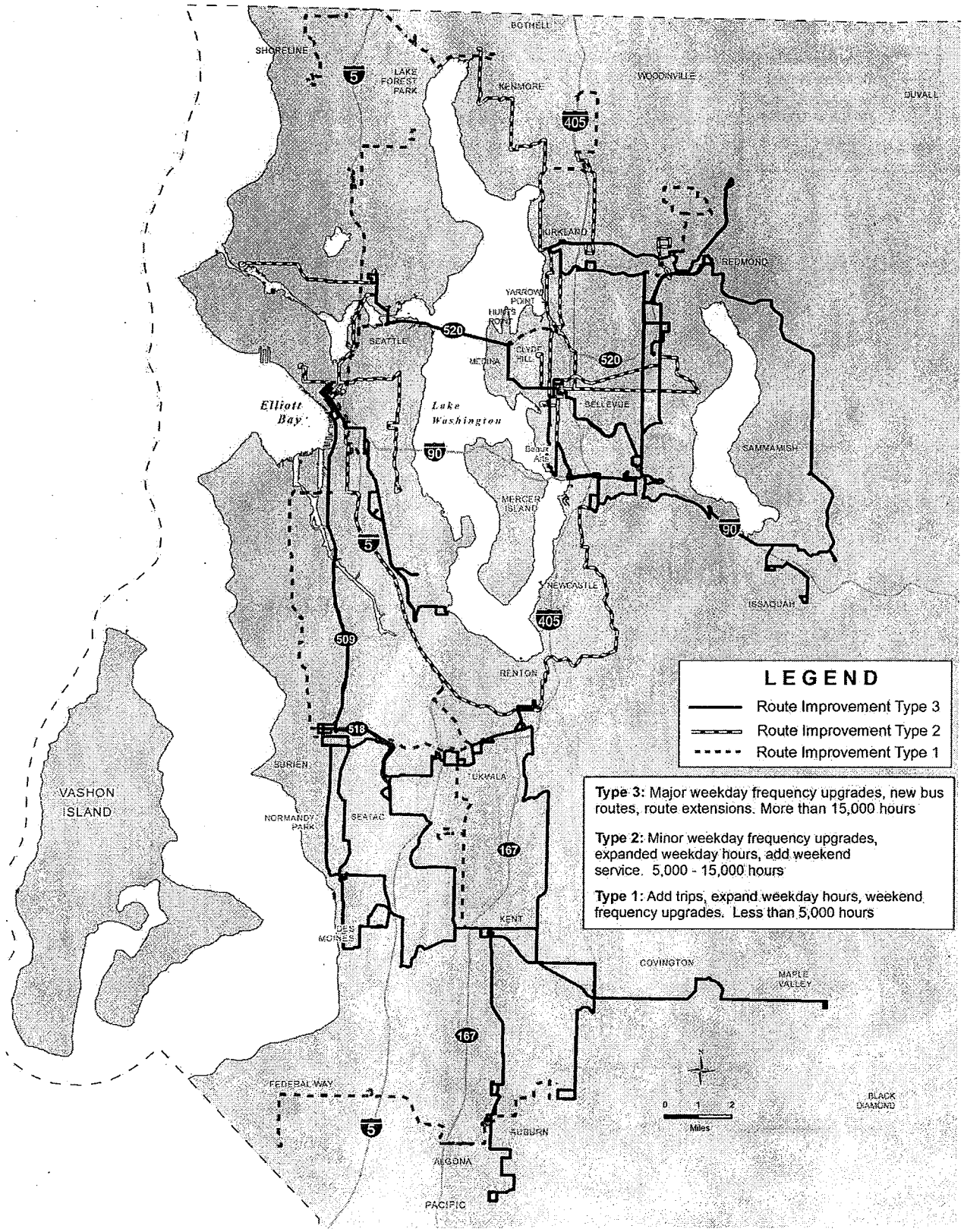
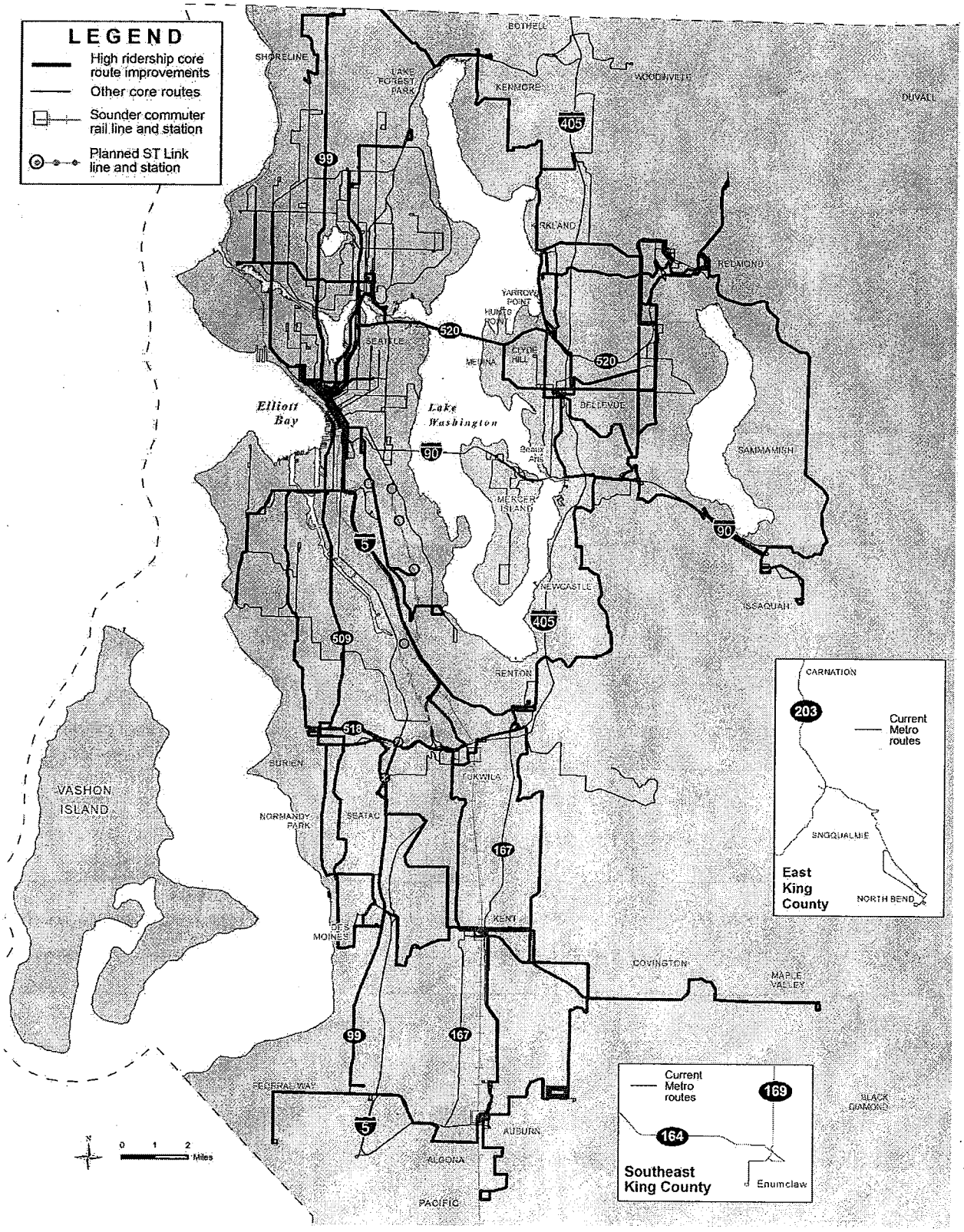


Exhibit 4-5
Core Service Corridors



Strategy S-4: Transit Improvements and Land Use

Identify areas of urban King County to become eligible for enhanced transit service when they meet the following criteria:

- **By meeting or exceeding prorated established housing and population targets, or**
- **By encouraging higher density development and pedestrian activity through adopted regulations and policies that promote mixed-uses, reduce parking requirements, and carry out other efforts that support transit supportive development.**

Preference will be given to areas that realize community or neighborhood development consistent with these criteria.

A major cornerstone of the Growth Management Act (GMA) is that transportation planning be consistent and complementary with local comprehensive plans, which include neighborhood plans for some cities. More densely developed areas require higher levels of transit service, and areas of contiguous urban development emerge as significant transit markets. This is especially true of those areas that will reach or exceed housing and employment targets as established by the Countywide Planning Policies.

Consistent with Destination 2030, additional transportation infrastructure and service is to be targeted to those areas that are accepting an increased share of the region's growth. In support of Destination 2030 and the GMA, *Transit Now* service improvements are targeted on core connection and RapidRide bus rapid transit routes that serve and connect centers and concentrations of population or employment in the Urban Growth Area (UGA). Additionally, transit service will be offered as an incentive to those jurisdictions that promote areas of higher density development, reduce parking requirements, and improve the pedestrian environment of their communities.

As transit investments are made to implement the *Transit Now* program, or as additional resources are freed up due to route consolidation or efficiency improvements, areas meeting the criteria cited in Strategy S-4 will be considered for enhanced transit service along with other criteria, such as strong ridership demand. Those areas that are able to satisfy many criteria simultaneously, such as strong ridership demand, meeting or exceeding targets, and promoting higher density development will be given the greatest preference for additional transit service if additional resources become available.

Strategy S-5: Bus Rapid Transit

Design, develop and implement RapidRide, a Bus Rapid Transit system identified in Exhibit 4-6. Pursue grant funds and work with local jurisdictions to leverage additional funds to enhance the service frequency, speed, reliability, amenity and identity of RapidRide services funding by the *Transit Now* program.

King County Metro is developing RapidRide in five corridors over the next ten years as part of *Transit Now*. RapidRide will provide improved frequency and a high quality of service that will significantly improve the customer's transit experience and make the transit system easier to understand and use. RapidRide incorporates transit service and facility improvements that achieve higher rider satisfaction than traditional bus services and will be designed to reduce travel times by 10-30 percent. Key features of RapidRide include:

- High frequency operation (target of 10 minutes or less during most hours of weekday operation)
- Faster, more reliable trip times obtained through HOV or Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes, and/or priority at intersections through transit signal priority and queue jumps
- Improved shelter waiting areas with real-time information at stations
- Low emission hybrid diesel-electric buses
- Branded buses and facilities with a unique look and feel

Since the approval of *Transit Now* by King County voters, King County Metro has worked to further define further key attributes of RapidRide. This interdisciplinary planning work has including evaluation of other bus rapid transit projects elsewhere and multiple analyses evaluating how common attributes will affect Metro Transit service delivery. Planning and design work is currently underway to efficiently incorporate additional attributes of bus rapid transit, including:

- The option of three passenger doors and possible changes to the configuration of the coach interior in order to reduce delay caused by passenger turnover
- A potential change in fare payment policy to reduce dwell by allowing full utilization of passenger doors on inbound and outbound trips

- A potential proof-of-payment policy associated with changes in boarding, that enhances passenger security
- Stations and stops spacing similar to rapid transit systems elsewhere which allows for improvements of RapidRide to speed and reliability as well as to passenger safety and comfort

Further development of the RapidRide program will be a key focus of the 2008 update to this strategic plan.

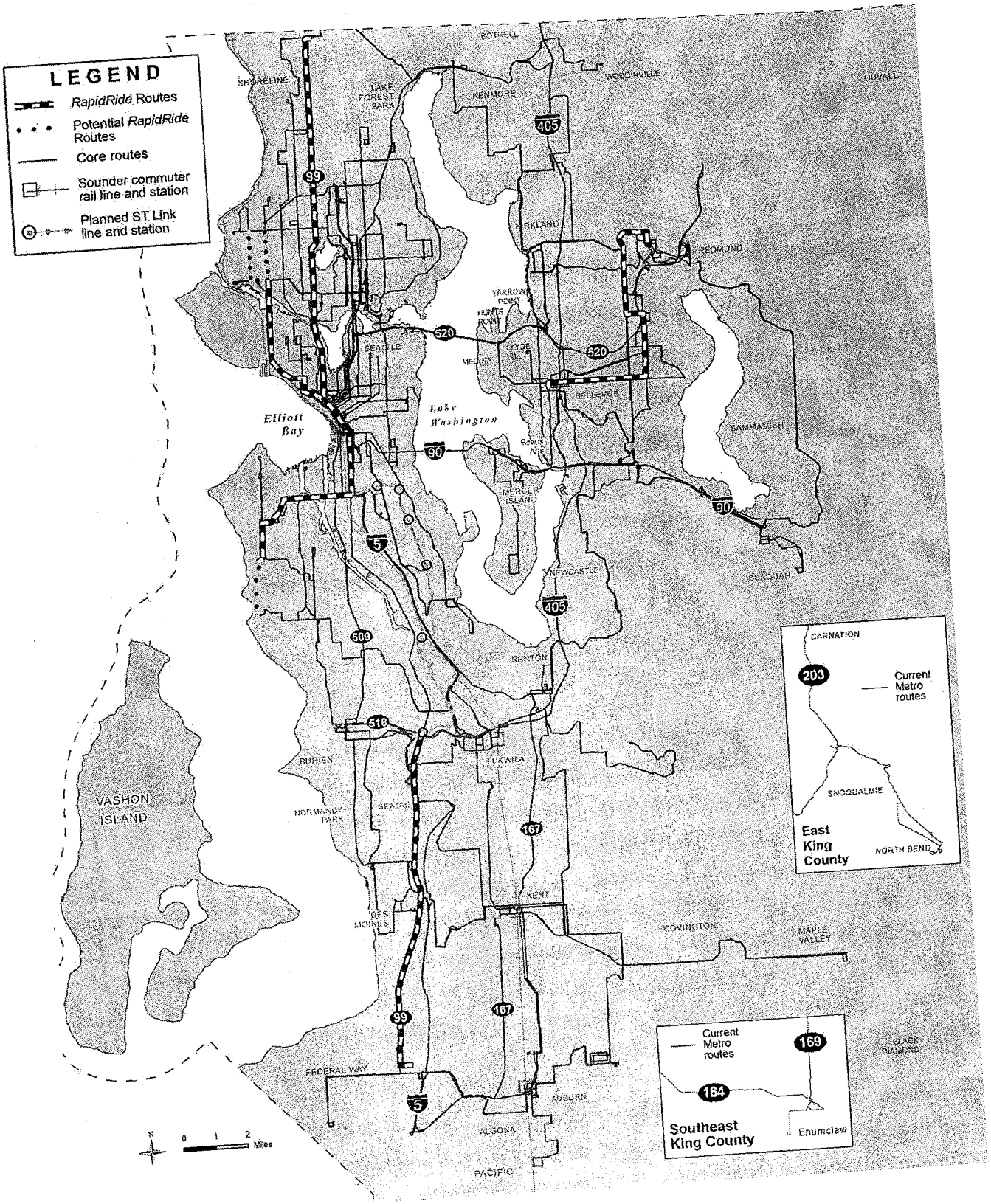
As identified in Exhibit 4-6, the five Metro Transit RapidRide corridors are:

- Aurora RapidRide, connecting Shoreline, north Seattle and downtown Seattle
- Ballard/Uptown RapidRide, connecting Ballard to downtown Seattle along 15th Ave NW and W Mercer Place
- Pacific Highway South RapidRide, connecting Federal Way, Midway, SeaTac and the South 154th Street Link light rail station.
- Bel-Red RapidRide, operating on Northeast 8th Street, 156th Avenue Northeast and 148th Ave NE, connecting downtown Bellevue Crossroads, Overlake and downtown Redmond
- West Seattle RapidRide, connecting West Seattle to downtown Seattle via the West Seattle Bridge

Besides numerous national and international examples of the benefits of bus rapid transit, King County Metro already has experienced the positive benefits of implementing some of the attributes of bus rapid transit. Enhancements in the Aurora Avenue N corridor have already provided more efficient bus service through the area in preparation for RapidRide implementation. Frequency improvements to popular routes serving the corridor have increased ridership in the area. The addition of transit signal priority technology at some intersections along Aurora Ave N and consolidation of stops has also improved transit speed and reliability. The provision of Business Access and Transit (BAT) Lanes on portions of the corridor will provide opportunities for implementing RapidRide services.

The Pacific Highway South RapidRide line is scheduled to be the first RapidRide line in operation, with implementation targeted for early 2010. RapidRide implementation in other corridors will continue throughout the ten-year period of *Transit Now*.

Exhibit 4-6
RapidRide Corridors



Generally, RapidRide will provide enhanced service in corridors already served by Metro Transit, though modifications to existing transit route paths are expected. The financing and staging plan has assumed that existing service investments will go towards RapidRide implementation. Because in most cases this means changes to existing routes, King County Metro is undertaking a planning process with community members in advance of final approval of RapidRide route paths and station/stop locations. An affirmative and advanced recognition of these basic corridor-specific attributes is a pre-requisite for applying specific capital investments in each corridor that will improve the speed, reliability and passenger interface of RapidRide.

Beginning in Fall 2007, King County Metro and jurisdiction staff will establish advisory panels and technical advisory groups to consider technical and public feedback associated with route design attributes. Current work is focused on RapidRide lines that are scheduled for earlier implementation, namely Pacific Highway South, Bel-Red, and West Seattle. King County Metro will seek King County council approval of the specific RapidRide line travel alignment and stop/station locations for these three corridors by early 2008 in order to begin necessary capital improvements in these corridors.

RapidRide implementation for each route will occur in two phases. The first phase will establish the final route, street and facility improvements that require a significant lead time to complete. The second phase will occur between 12 and 18 months prior to implementation of each route, and will consider potential restructures of other Metro Transit routes in conjunction with RapidRide service startup, following King County Metro's regular service change process and public outreach process.

Strategy S-6: Transit Access in Rapidly Developing Areas

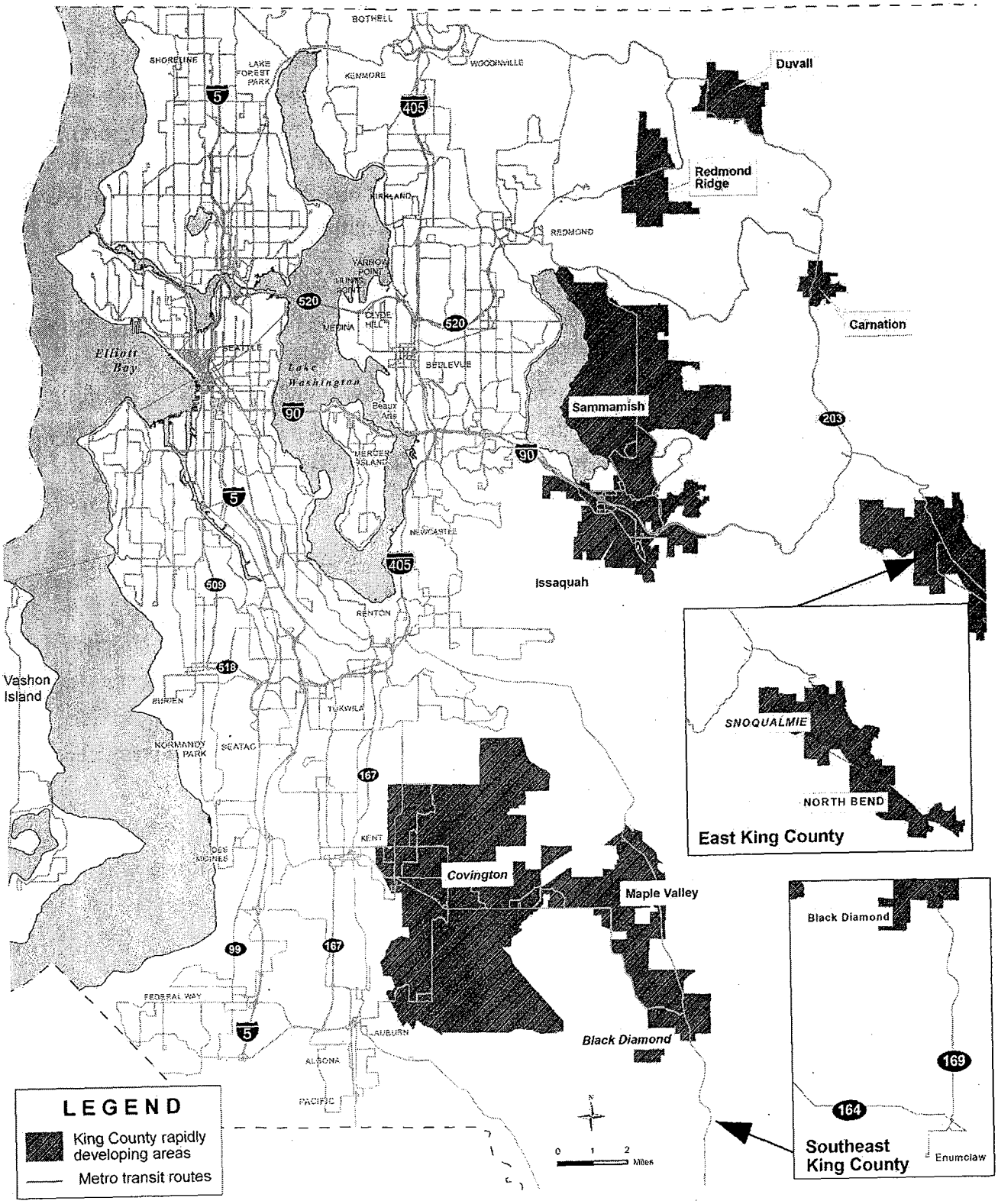
Expand service coverage in areas with rapidly developing population growth of sufficient density to support transit service, and with a street network that accommodates non-circuitous transit routing and pedestrian access. For developing areas that do not meet these criteria, provide service capacity at newly built, expanded or leased park-and-ride lots as warranted by ridership demand at those locations. When identified as a subarea priority, make a portion of the new service investment available for innovative vanpool programs to support park-and-ride lot based transit service.

As part of *Transit Now* implementation, King County Metro plans to increase service to growing residential areas within the Urban Growth Area (UGA). These developing areas are illustrated in Exhibit 4-7. The addition of peak service in areas not currently served and the expansion of midday service in some areas with peak only service will provide developing areas with increased transit service. Specific improvements in developing areas will be developed as part of the 2008 update to this Strategic Plan.

King County Metro operates service to 130 permanent and leased park-and-ride lots containing over 23,000 parking spaces. From 2002 - 2007, park-and-ride capacity in King County was expanded by nearly 7,000 spaces. Park-and-ride locations provide access to the bus system for people who do not live near a bus route or who might otherwise commute by auto. These lots also serve as a meeting place for carpool and vanpool partners.

In 2007, park-and-ride system-wide utilization reached 68 percent of capacity. Peak period demand for service and/or parking still exists in some regional corridors where there are overcrowded trips or park-and ride lots at or over capacity. The park-and-ride facilities with the most frequent service are filled beyond capacity. New service hours were added to serve park-and-ride lots throughout 2004-2006. Further improvements to park-and-ride transit service will be evaluated as needed as a result of ridership trends.

Exhibit 4-7
Developing Areas



Strategy S-7: Community Mobility

Improve community mobility options through increase in service levels on existing routes or through the creation of new services in transit-supportive higher household and/or employment density areas. Within each subarea, develop service proposals to serve residential and employment areas with the highest ridership demand and to promote circulation within communities. In the communities where flexible service and other King County Metro mobility products and services connecting to the all-day service network can be provided more cost-effectively than fixed-route service, those services should be expanded in conjunction with modifications and improvements to the existing system.

Aside from core routes and peak services, King County Metro provides a network of local transit routes that provide broader service coverage and connect neighborhoods to nearby activity centers. The effectiveness of fixed-route transit in attracting local trips is dependent on several factors, including population and employment density, the design of the street and sidewalk grid, and the number of common destinations people want access to. Typically, fixed-route transit serves trips better in urban areas where people and destinations are more concentrated.

In lower density areas where people and destinations are more dispersed, fixed route service is often difficult and expensive to provide. In some areas of the county fixed-route service is impractical because the street network does not allow a non-circuitous transit pathway, or because a lack of pedestrian connections makes transit access difficult. Alternative public transportation options, such as flexible local bus service, vanpooling services or carpooling services often provide a more cost-effective method to serve low-density areas.

Strategy S-8: Specialized Transportation Services

Provide complementary paratransit services that comply with federal regulations to people who have disabilities that prevent use of regular public transportation in the service area shown in Exhibit 4-8.

Develop cost-effective alternatives to supplement federally mandated paratransit service and to provide transportation services to persons who are transportation-disadvantaged due to age, disability or income within King County. Explore ways to include paratransit-eligible persons and other persons with disabilities and seniors on mobility services available to the general public, such as vanpools.

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 mandated that public transit agencies make transportation services for the general public accessible to persons with disabilities as well as provide "complementary paratransit" service for those whose disability prevents use of the fixed route service some of all of the time.

In 1999, King County Ordinance 13441 defined two programs: The ADA Paratransit Program and the King County Community Transportation Program (KCCTP).

ADA Paratransit Program

The ADA Paratransit Program, also called *Access* Transportation, contains those minimum elements required of a complementary paratransit program by federal regulations. This service must be comparable to non-commuter, fixed route service for the general public in several ways, including service area, response time and fares. The program serves persons who are unable due to a disability to use accessible non-commuter, fixed route transit service some or all of the time.

Because the ADA paratransit program is tied to transit availability and service levels, "islands" have existed where *Access* service has not been available. *Transit Now* includes funds to extend service to these areas, shown in Exhibit 4-8.

A registration process evaluates under what conditions the applicant's disability prevents use of regular bus service. An eligible individual can be 'fully' eligible for all rides or 'conditionally' eligible, meaning they qualify for a rider only when certain conditions exist. Regional agreements extend ADA-eligibility to neighboring counties. Private contractors operate the call center and use vehicles owned by King County.

Exhibit 4-8
Specialized Transportation Service Areas

King County Community Transportation Program

The King County Community Transportation Program provides service that supplements the ADA Paratransit Program, as well as additional services for persons who are transportation disadvantaged due to age, disability or income, whether or not they are registered for the ADA Paratransit Program. Program components include:

- **ADA Paratransit Program** enhancements for ADA-eligible riders that exceed federally-required minimum service criteria, such as subscription service for recurring trips, limited door-to-door and hand-to-hand service, and an expanded weekday service area;
- The **Taxi Scrip program** which provides subsidized taxi scrip to low-income King County resident who are ages 18 to 64 and have a disability or who are 65 and older;
- **Bus travel training**, volunteer transportation and transportation information and referral.
- The **Community Access Transportation (CAT) Program**, which provides transportation options for seniors and people with disabilities. The program provides lift-equipped vans and small operating grants to agencies that serve seniors and those with disabilities.

Service Enhancements

Between 2002 and 2007, King County Metro implemented the following service improvements, technology enhancements and other initiatives:

- Implementing a more comprehensive eligibility process, including referring a greater percentage of applicants for an in-person evaluation of their ability to perform the tasks needed to ride the bus and re-certifying active riders every three years;
- Applying conditions of eligibility to routine trips. A 'path of travel' review is conducted to determine if there are any barriers that will prevent the rider from taking the specific trip by bus. King County Metro has received national recognition for the design and effectiveness of this process;
- Installing Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) on all *A*ccess vehicles and support infrastructure in the dispatch center. The MDT's are equipped with Global Positioning Systems, digital text and voice communication and on-board

mapping. This technology has greatly improved our ability to manage the service in real time as well as providing detailed information to allow for system adjustments to maximize efficiency;

- Increasing the availability of bus travel training to teach paratransit riders the skills needed to ride the bus. State grant funds have supplemented this effort;
- Providing high-quality retired King County Metro vans, as well as new vans, to non-profit agencies and local government entities to provide program-specific transportation to seniors and people with disabilities. A specific number of ADA-eligible rides must be provided. As of 2006, 47 vans have been provided to 20 eligible entities; an estimated 129,500 rides will be provided annually, with 40 percent going to *Access*-eligible riders.
- Implementing a one-year Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab demonstration project in 2007 to evaluate the demand for accessible taxis within the county. King County Metro, the King County Licensing Division and the City of Seattle were partners in the project, which may be extended through 2008. A more permanent solution may be in place by 2009.

During the 10-year plan 2007-2016, King County Metro will continue to invest in technology to increase the efficiency and reliability of *A*ccess service while also supporting better connections with fixed route service and increased community transportation options. These changes are anticipated to occur over the next six years:

- As part of *Transit Now*, Access service will be provided on weekdays during the midday in several rural areas of the county that are not currently served, as shown in Exhibit 4-8.
- King County Metro will continue to refine the ADA-paratransit eligibility process to more accurately evaluate each applicant's level of eligibility while educating applicants and their support systems (family, caregivers, etc.) about other community transportation options;
- Investment in technology solutions to improve paratransit efficiency and timeliness will continue;
- Also, starting in 2007, the Community Access Transportation (CAT) program will provide additional vans over 4 years to eligible entities. By 2010, over 75 CAT vans will be in service. By 2013, this program is projected to carry 184,400 trips annually at less than the average cost of an *Access* ride.

Strategy S-9: Partnerships

Develop partnerships with local jurisdictions, employers and institutions to increase public transportation services and improve service effectiveness.

- ***Transit Now* partnerships: Solicit and enter into partnership agreements with public or private entities to mutually fund new or improved transit services, where the partner contribution may be in the form of direct funding or investment that results in transit speed or reliability improvements. Dedicate a portion of new service hours for this purpose.**

- **Commute partnerships: Enter into partnerships to improve public transportation use and reduce single-occupant commuting by developing and promoting alternate commute programs; and by managing parking and traffic to make public transportation options more attractive.**

Transit Now Partnerships

Transit Now partnerships are one of several ways in which service hours will be added as part of the *Transit Now* package. These partnerships provide an opportunity for King County Metro to work with public and private organizations to share the costs and responsibilities of providing additional transit service.

Two types of service partnerships are defined under *Transit Now*:

- **Direct financial participation:** Public and/or private partners will contribute one-third of the fully allocated cost of a new Metro Transit route or new service hours on an existing Metro Transit route for at least five years. King County will contribute the other two-thirds of the cost.

- **Speed and reliability partnerships**: One (or more) of 20 eligible cities commit to improving traffic operations on one or more Metro Transit RapidRide corridors or core service connections (see Exhibit 4-2 and 4-3) so that buses move at least 10 percent faster throughout the day. In return, King County Metro will increase bus service in the city by 5,000 annual hours for each route on that core connection that has gained and maintains a 10 percent transit speed improvement.

Transit Now allocates 90,000 annual transit service hours for these partnerships that will be phased between 2008 and 2013. King County Metro will select from among partnership proposals by potential partner entities. Final proposals for service partnerships are expected in late 2007.

King County ordinance 15756 directs that direct financial partnerships will have priority over speed and reliability partnerships, and establishes a set of criteria for prioritizing funding opportunities. The following pass-fail criteria for entering into *Transit Now* partnership agreements, in priority order:

1. The partnership service will improve access to, from or between designated Urban and Manufacturing Centers.

2. The partnership service will improve service on the network of core service connections as defined in Service Strategy S-3, which include RapidRide corridors.

3. The partnership service by a public agency will improve access and circulation within designated Urban and Manufacturing Centers or will provide service consistent with Service Strategy S-13. A circulator or ride-free service partnership with a public agency also will provide service in a manner that supports enhancement of existing transit centers by providing frequent connections between a transit center and major destinations within the urban center.

4. The partnership service will improve other services that support the goals and objectives of this strategic plan.

5. The partner or partners will commit to continue the partnership for more than five years.

6. The partner or partners will agree to fund more than the minimum one-third share of the fully allocated service cost.

7. The partner or partners will commit to implementation of additional actions that are likely to increase ridership on the new services, such as:

   - Conducting promotional activities,
   - Providing incentives to employees and riders,

- Establishing limits on parking supply or price for single occupant vehicle parking within the area served by the new service,
- Implementing parking management to increase the attractiveness of transit and ridesharing,
- Taking other policy actions that support the new service, or
- Taking other actions that are likely to increase ridership on the new services.

8. Projected ridership gain in annual boardings over the term of the agreement.

Proposals for speed and reliability partnerships that meet the eligibility requirements above will be evaluated according to the following criteria, in priority order:

1. The partner's capital investment or traffic operations change will create a transit speed and reliability benefit along a continuous RapidRide bus rapid transit corridor;

2. The partner will commit to additional traffic operations management actions that achieve transit priority in excess of the required projected ten percent travel time savings;

3. The improvements can be completed within five years; and

4. The partner will commit to provision of complementary actions that improve transit operations or ridership, such as:
   - Implementing innovative transit signal phases and timing,
   - Providing the infrastructure, preferably fiber, required to support communication between transit signal priority equipment in the field and from the field back to the applicable agency and to King County Metro,
   - Adding curb space for transit terminal or layover,
   - Establishing limits on parking supply or increasing prices for single occupant vehicle parking within the area served by the new service,
   - Implementing parking management to increase the attractiveness of ridesharing,
   - Implementing pass subsidy and promotional programs that achieve higher ridership, or
   - Taking actions that improve the pedestrian environment.

Commute Partnership Programs

Employers, educational institutions, and other organizations choose to participate in King County Metro commute partnerships for a number of reasons. These include managing limited parking supply and increasing parking costs, complying with requirements of the state Commute Trip Reduction Law, and providing a highly valued benefit to employees in the form of subsidies for alternative commuting. Many employers find the ease of participating in King County's commute partnership programs to be an effective means of reducing drive-alone trips.

Described below are some of the commute partnership programs that the King County King County Metro Market Development group is involved with:

- **Downtown Transportation Alliance (DTA)**: a partnership between King County Metro, the City of Seattle and the Downtown Seattle Association. The DTA has set a goal to increase transit's share of downtown trips by 6 percentage points by 2015, and works on varied fronts including street operations, transit service improvements, parking management, building outreach, incentive programs and land use and parking regulation to reach this goal.

- **Construction Mitigation**: a partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation to develop and implement mitigation strategies as part of major highway construction activities. Initial efforts on I-405 have included adding transit service, park-and-ride management and vanpool promotions.

- **Commute Trip Reduction**: partnerships with local jurisdictions to achieve their commute trip reduction goals, including support for the development of Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers.

- **Residential Outreach and Incentives**: includes In Motion, a community-based program providing residents with incentives to try travel options and the Residential Transportation Coordinator program, providing transportation information to neighborhoods and populations with limited English skills.

Expanding the Public Transportation Market for Current Products

Historically, efforts focused on increasing ridership and participation by larger employers in funding employees' commuting by modes other than single occupant cars. However, much of the employer market remains untapped. The following will be pursued in order to reach new markets:

- Ensure the transition to Smartcard operations will provide customers attractive employee pass and incentive programs.
- Coordinate the definition and operating rules for implementation of the service partner program. Additional efforts include coordinating on the definition of RapidRide corridors, and facilitating future partnerships to support the new service in these corridors.
- Expand market outreach beyond major employers to smaller employers, developers and property managers.
- Continue to simplify the provision of mobility products and services and financial partnering packages.

Strategy S-10: Streetcar System

Consider opportunities for system integration when planning improvements to the existing King County streetcar line, identify the factors contributing to successful streetcar service and develop criteria to guide decisions to initiate or participate in future streetcar projects or, where necessary, to authorize other entities to provide streetcar service. Criteria should address land use, economic, environmental and social equity considerations along with transportation impacts and other factors.

Strategy S-11: Regional System Coordination

Work with the appropriate agencies to achieve integrated, cost-effective and efficient operation of public transportation services in King County addressing the needs of current and potential riders. Participate in transportation system planning efforts including state and regional projects of countywide significance to identify potential transit service and capital elements and funding.

King County Metro participates in ongoing coordination and planning with other agencies. King County Metro is active in the Transit Integration Group (TIG), a committee of the region's transit operators that coordinates policies, practices and services to provide a more consistent transit experience for customers traveling throughout the Puget Sound region. TIG committees coordinate service, fare payments, technology, service for transportation disadvantaged riders, and other matters.

Seven transportation agencies are collaborating to plan and implement a regional fare collection program which enables customers to use one fare card on multiple systems throughout the four county Central Puget Sound area. Smart card fare collection technology will be used to allow linked trips between transit, ferries and rail and to significantly expand each agency's strategic fare policy capabilities. Called the "One Regional Card for All" (ORCA) smart card, the new multi-agency fare media is expected to be introduced in 2008.

King County Metro also participates in local, regional and state projects to ensure that transit and roadway investments are coordinated and that transit customer and operation needs will be met as the roadway system is improved. The Puget Sound region is currently facing many potential transportation system changes, each of which is likely to impact transit service. Over the life of this strategic plan, changes in the transportation environment will require King County Metro to respond flexibly and to revise service to minimize impacts and maximize opportunities to improve service to customers. Responding to changes in the transit environment will be an important focus of the 2008 update to this strategic plan.

Some of the changes that will impact transit service include the following:

- The downtown Seattle transit tunnel will reopen in September 2007 when construction needed for future light rail is completed. King County Metro will adjust several routes serving downtown Seattle.
- Sound Transit's Link Light Rail is scheduled to begin operation between downtown Seattle and Sea-Tac Airport in 2009. Local routes, including some electric trolley routes will be changed to reduce redundant service and improve local feeder connections. King County Metro will begin joint bus-rail operation in the downtown Seattle tunnel.
- Sound Transit and the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) plan to place a measure on the November 2007 ballot that would initiate a major transit and freeway construction program. If it passes, King County Metro will need to adjust services to avoid construction impacts, and add new service to reduce construction traffic impacts.
- Major arterial and freeway projects are also in planning or design including the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project, State Route-520 bridge replacement and HOV project and construction projects on I-5 and I-405. Each has potential to change transit service and effectiveness in both positive and negative ways.

Other Coordination Efforts

In jurisdictions adjoining or straddling other counties, there is the challenge and opportunity to coordinate local services with other operators locally and in adjacent counties. Transfer facilities are provided in Auburn, Federal Way, Bothell, and Shoreline to integrate service between King County Metro, Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, Community Transit and other operators.

In order to encourage regional travel by rail and ferry, it is important that intermodal transfers be comfortable, convenient and safe. Bringing transit close to the facility reduces rider walk time while increasing service frequency and improving schedule coordination reduces rider wait time. Operating service reliably is also crucial.

Additionally, efforts are increasing at the state and local level to coordinate public transportation services for people who are transportation-disadvantaged due to age, income or disability.

Strategy S-12: Student Mobility

Ensure that the mobility requirements of student passengers are recognized on a par with those in school districts that choose to participate in Student Transit programs. Participating districts will reimburse King County for all student transit expenses.

King County Metro works with local school districts to meet student transportation needs. When school districts rely on public transit to transport students to school, increased demand for transit service is expected. King County Metro will review existing route capacity to determine if sufficient resources are available to serve the student population. If additional service is required, King County Metro will review existing services to determine if opportunities exist to reallocate hours to meet increased student trip needs. Improvements needed beyond what can be provided for by this strategic plan or through service consolidation can be made if school districts provide for the incremental expense, using a combination of direct payments or student pass subsidies.

As of 2007, King County Metro currently contracts for enhanced student transit services with the Bellevue and Mercer Island School Districts. The Lake Washington School District and Seattle School District have shifted some of their students to Metro Transit service. These services operate within the existing route structure. In the 2006-2007 school year, King County Metro operated pilot programs with five high schools in the Seattle school district. King County Metro plans to continue to provide service with these schools in the 2007-2008 school year. The Seattle school district continues to supplement Metro Transit service with several yellow bus routes to serve students.

Strategy S-13: Special Events

Work with private and public agencies to develop strategies for using public transportation services to offer alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel to special events. Strategies may include street use, transit priority, and other strategies under the jurisdiction of King County Metro or local governments.

King County Metro provides special service to multiple sporting events and other special events, such as Seattle Mariner and Seahawks games, the Seafair Hydroplane races and the Torchlight Parade. Overall program size depends on demand as well as the total

number of available service hours, established each year during the budget process. Specific activities are coordinated with individual event organizers and sponsors throughout the year.

In addition to services or fares subsidized by special event sponsors, King County Metro also regularly looks for opportunities to assign larger coaches or provide trips on routes that serve a special event in order to reduce traffic congestion and minimize impact to normal service. Examples include connections from the Northgate Park-and-Ride to major festivals such as the Bite of Seattle, Folklife and Bumbershoot. Adopted transit financial policies require recovery of 100 percent of the marginal operating costs of special service operations unless otherwise authorized by the Executive.

Strategy S-14: Activity Center Mobility

Enhance circulation within activity centers through changes in transit service design and other programs to encourage transit use including, but not limited to, proposals for consideration of ride free areas. Preserve existing revenues and encourage financial partnerships with others to cover additional expenses associated with the provision of new services and programs for this purpose.

Providing for circulation within activity centers extends the range of pedestrians and enhances livability of downtown areas. Streetcars, fixed route transit service, ridesharing, vanpool and *Access* services can all contribute to mobility within activity centers. Opportunities to improve circulation in activity centers will be a consideration when bus route changes are considered.

Expansion or Creation of New Ride-Free Areas

The issues and impacts associated with expansion or creation of new ride-free areas were evaluated in 2003. The 2003 analysis concluded that new ride-free areas in Seattle would not be viable without significant or costly changes to current fare collection methods. Others may be feasible, but should be assessed in comparison with other options that would accomplish the same objectives.

Expanded or new ride-free areas may be considered when:

- The likely mobility benefits outweigh impacts on existing riders and transit operators
- Routes do not serve more than one ride-free area
- Ability to understand the fare payment system will not be significantly reduced
- Consideration of all options shows that a ride free area will be the most effective
- Full incremental cost is borne by local jurisdiction or public-private partnership

Expanded or new ride free areas are more favorable when:

- Using all doors for loading will speed operation or reduce costs
- All transit agencies serving the area agree to participate
- Significant increase in transit use will result within the activity center

Shuttles and Circulators

King County Metro has had mixed experience with shuttles and circulators. Shuttles and circulators operated by King County Metro or in partnership with others have in some cases experienced low ridership and have failed to sustain partner financial participation.

Special routes that serve only a circulation function have been successful only in cases where they have been designed to do at least one thing well – they serve at least one demonstrable market need effectively. Ridership will be further enhanced if other travel needs can also be met without compromising this primary purpose.

Shuttles and circulators may be considered when:

- Services meet minimum productivity guidelines for regular transit routes
- Speed or design of regular transit service will be enhanced
- More expensive fixed-route service can be replaced or deferred
- VanShare and Flexcar options will not serve the same purpose at lower cost

Seattle's South Lake Union Streetcar is an example of an activity center circulation improvement King County Metro will provide in partnership with the City of Seattle. The new streetcar will provide service between Westlake Center and South Lake Union. Seattle has secured full funding for the capital cost and will provide full operating funding for an initial period, after which King County Metro will provide three-fourths of the operating cost and Seattle will provide for the remaining one-fourth. King County Metro's share of this cost will be reallocated from other West subarea services in conjunction with changes to achieve service integration with Link light rail in 2009.

Seattle's Waterfront Streetcar also provides circulation along the Alaskan Way waterfront. King County Metro, Seattle, and a private developer are working together to provide for a new maintenance base, and streetcar service is planned to restart when the maintenance base becomes available.

Other Options

Several other options are available to local jurisdictions interested in enhancing activity center circulation. Options to be considered as alternatives to ride-free areas and circulators include:

- A single route operated fare-free (with local funding replacing anticipated fare revenue)
- Broad application of employer transit pass incentives, making fares less of a barrier
- Residential pass programs
- Token programs providing transit fares to shoppers
- Shared-use parking programs that reduce auto trips between parking lots
- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements and incentive programs
- Privately-operated and funded shuttles and circulators using vans or taxis
- Parking for Vanshare vans at transportation terminals to shuttle commuters to worksites

Strategy S-15: Vanpooling and Ridesharing Services

Provide vanpool, vanshare and ridematch services; especially for trips that are not accessible or convenient by fixed-route transit service. Provide services to help form and maintain carpools and vanpools, and develop or promote other innovative and/or customized ridesharing services that provide alternatives to driving alone.

Transit Now also includes rideshare investments aimed at doubling the program from 2007-2016. Rideshare projects include:

- Van Technology Improvements - Identify and use technology to increase administrative efficiency, reduce vehicle-operating costs and minimize the amount of work required of volunteer commuter van drivers and bookkeepers.

- Van Distribution Center Improvements - Pave some or all of the remaining property at the Van Distribution Center in Redmond to provide additional stalls for vanpool vehicles as the program expands.
- Smaller Employer Support - Work with smaller and non-CTR-affected employers in King County to promote commuter vanpools
- Van Expansion Start-Up Support – Devote new resources to commuter vanpool rider recruitment and retention. Commuter van ridership not only increases with adding new customers, but can also be increased by retaining more existing customers.
- Simplification Strategies - Several elements have been identified to simplify and streamline current commuter van program practices. The first project to create an on-line training course for vanpool drivers and bookkeepers.
- Regional Fare Media Integration –Demonstration project that integrates vanpools with Sound Transit train and express bus service under the regional Puget Pass.

Section Five:
Building the System - Capital

The Transit capital program is integrated with the operating program, providing funds to maintain or expand the system. The level of capital investment is based on projected service levels and the age and maintenance requirements of existing equipment and infrastructure. The strategies outlined in this section provide for the maintenance, expansion and modernization of the transit system and are consistent with the service concept described in Section Three and service strategies described in Section Four.

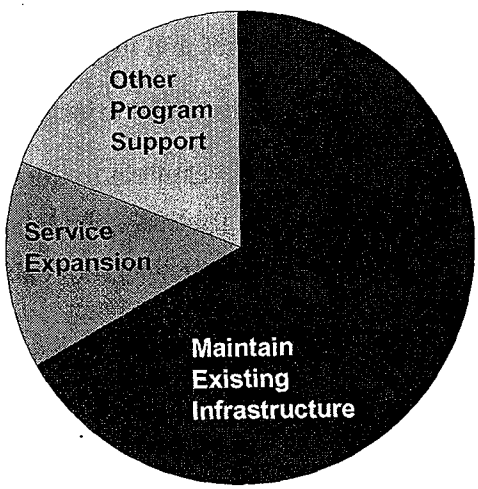
Capital Budget Overview

King County Metro's current financial plan defines a capital program for the 10-year period of 2006-2015. Exhibit 5-1 displays the capital program breakdown for the period of the financial plan, and the portion of expenses directed towards maintaining existing infrastructure, accommodating service expansion, and other program costs. The capital strategies in this strategic plan are consistent with the current financial plan, but extend though 2016.

Exhibit 5-1

2007 Budget: Capital Cash Flow by Program, 2006-2015

ADA/Paratransit	32,000,000
Asset Maintenance	151,000,000
Business Systems	600,000
Fleet	855,500,000
Miscellaneous	72,000,000
Operating Facilities	138,000,000
Passenger Facilities	33,000,000
RapidRide	59,000,000
Reimbursables	14,000,000
Speed & Reliability	22,000,000
Transit Technology Systems	98,000,000
Trolley	15,500,000
Vanpool	55,000,000
Total	$1,545,600,000



As shown in Exhibit 5-1, the single highest priority for the capital program is maintaining the existing system infrastructure with 67 percent of the program devoted to this purpose. Support for service expansion activities identified in this plan, including RapidRide, represent 14 percent of the spending over the period. The remaining funding is associated with service expansion, regional partnerships (such as TOD) and other program support.

Strategy C-1: Maintain, Replace and Upgrade Transit Facilities, Equipment and Systems

Maintain, replace, and upgrade current facilities, equipment and systems based on ongoing condition assessments, industry standards and King County policies and procedures.

Maintaining and upgrading existing capital facilities and infrastructure minimizes total program costs and maintains efficient, safe and reliable operations. Maintenance and upgrades of transit infrastructure are consistent with strategic plan objectives to design and modify services and infrastructure to be more efficient and effective. To this end, specific program elements include:

- Base expansion and modification efforts focused on the design for an expanded Operations Building at the Central Atlantic campus, mechanical and roof renovations at Ryerson Base, as well as improvements to the operator report area.
- Maintenance, replacement and upgrades of aging and outdated transit systems including replacement of the radio system, integration of on-board systems on transit coaches and implementation of an electronic fare collection system.
- Investment in signal priority improvements and real-time information technology.
- Continued investment in the transit assets maintenance program (TAMP), which provides for routine, scheduled replacement of equipment and facility infrastructure such as roofs and HVAC systems.

In addition to the items listed above, the 2007-2016 plan period will see a continued emphasis on coordinating existing and planned service investments with the maintenance, replacement and upgrade of passenger facilities, speed and reliability projects, and other

capital projects as well as an effort to match such investments with the level of cooperation from local jurisdictions.

Strategy C-2: Passenger Facilities

Improve transit passenger facility access, shelter, lighting, bus stop locations and other amenities to enhance the waiting environment. In addition to general improvements throughout the system, focus a portion of resources on RapidRide and Core Service Connection corridors identified in Exhibit 5-2, through cooperation and coordination with local jurisdictions.

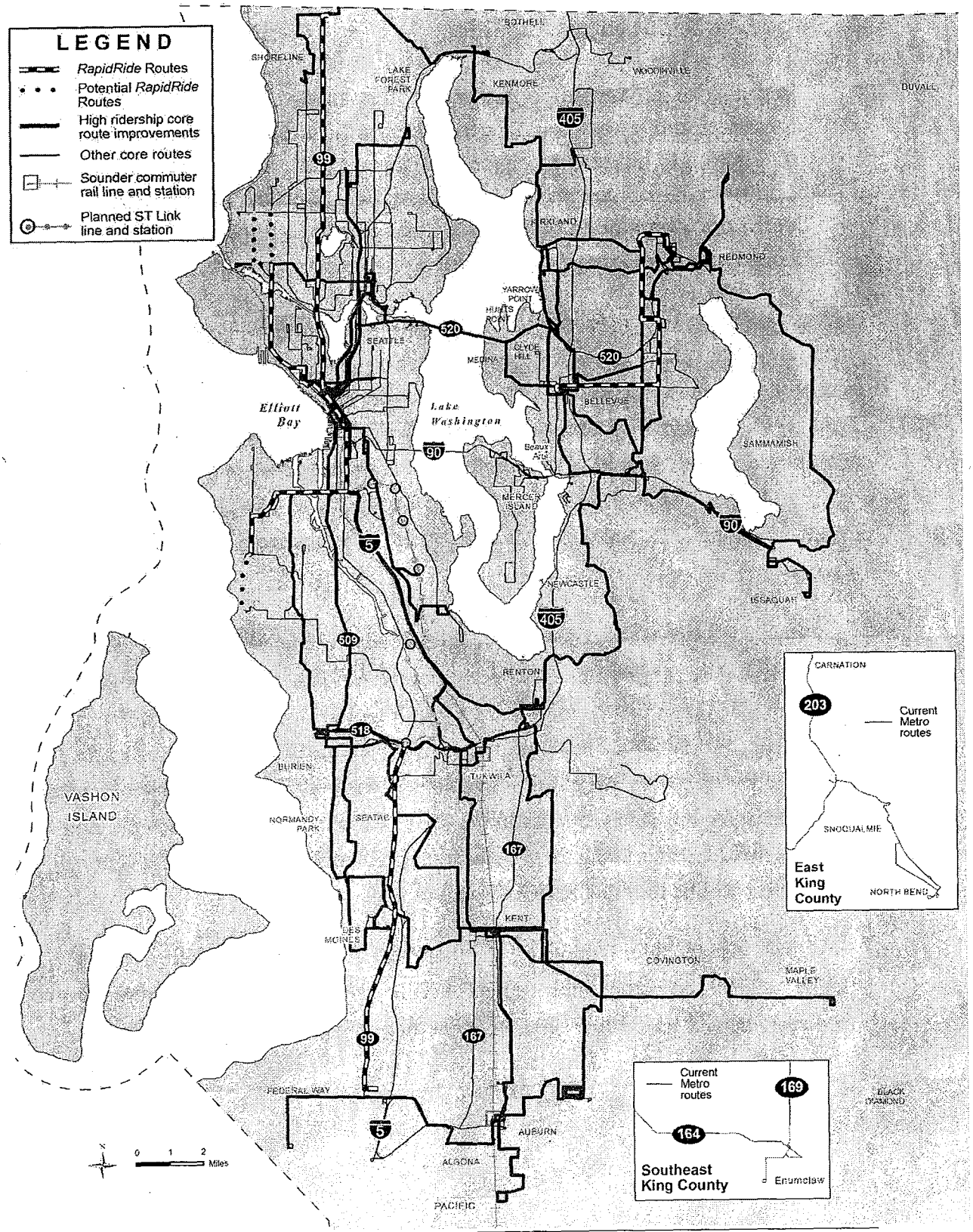
The passage of the *Transit Now* initiative to expand Metro Transit service by 15 to 20 percent over the next 10 years will require a significant number of facility improvements to support the planned service investments. A major focus of transit route and facilities efforts will be to improve passenger facilities on identified RapidRide and other core connection corridors, as well as the continuation of the on-going route facilities program. Passenger facility improvements as part of the RapidRide program include upgraded passenger waiting areas and the installation of real-time bus arrival signs at station locations.

In addition to the RapidRide stations, facilities improvements will be added along the high ridership core connections network shown in Exhibit 4-3. General improvements throughout the system will be focused on a backlog of locations that are eligible for shelters. The 2007 adopted budget provides for expanding the bus shelter program. King County Metro has committed to installing 100 shelters per year to address the backlog of shelter qualifying bus zones. King County Metro will prioritize the current backlog of eligible shelter locations along these core connection corridors so that most, if not all, of these shelters will be installed before the end of 2009.

Transit Now also includes funding for the Passenger Accessibility Project. This new program will add the capital improvements needed to facilitate access by current para-transit customers to fixed route services at bus stops along high ridership corridors.

Exhibit 5-2

Focus of Capital Investment in RapidRide and Core Service Connection Corridors



Facility Design Considerations

Design considerations incorporated into transit route facilities include pedestrian and bicycle access, efficient bus ingress and egress, and consistency with neighborhood planning efforts. King County Metro works with local jurisdictions to include transit projects with regularly scheduled maintenance and construction projects to assure transit amenities are built together with these projects, lowering costs and increasing efficiency.

Bus Stop Improvements.

Improvements to bus stops are designed to help provide transit customers with an accessible, comfortable and safe place to wait for the bus as well as to address the needs of transit vehicle operations. Locations for improvements are determined by community needs, operational requirements, ridership and service growth. Bus stop improvements include a mix of the following actions or elements:

- **Pedestrian and bicycle access.** Pedestrian access to bus stops will continue to be upgraded to meet or exceed ADA standards; particularly as local jurisdictions make sidewalk improvements. Constructing curb ramps, providing paved waiting areas, and improving sidewalk and pathway connections will improve access. Pedestrian safety issues and provision of bike racks will be addressed in coordination with local jurisdictions' programs.
- **Shelters and benches.** New passenger shelters and benches will be provided at some bus stops as warranted by ridership. Translucent roofs will be installed on existing shelters when they are upgraded and on new shelters to increase customer and operator security.
- **Lighting.** New, improved or re-directed lighting will be installed at selected locations, using solar lighting where feasible, or electric hardwired lighting where agreements are reached for maintenance by the local jurisdiction and utilities.
- **iStops.** Solar powered, customer activated lights and beacons will be installed at bus stops in conjunction with selected service improvement projects, and at other selected locations meeting safety criteria for iStop installation.
- **Signage and customer information.** Transit service routing and levels of usage at bus stops are used to determine the type of customer information or signage that will be included at each bus stop. Regularly maintained and updated information about which routes serve the bus stop, bus departure times, maps and connections to other routes is a critical aspect of operations and customer service.

- **Curb lane transit improvements.** This category generally requires a higher level of investment and also greater cooperation with local jurisdictions. Parking restrictions, extended bus stops, curb changes or bus bulbs, turning improvements and street reconfigurations are designed to improve operations at bus stops. Providing in-lane stops, for example, can help eliminate delays buses encounter when leaving and entering moving traffic.
- **Bus stop spacing.** Stop spacing–the distance between bus stops - has a direct impact on transit operations and rider comfort. Bus stops can be re-spaced, relocated or consolidated to provide smoother, faster, and more comfortable operation and can concentrate ridership to provide for bus stop improvements in a more cost-effective manner. They are pursued when the benefit to a large majority of riders can be demonstrated.
- **Minor park-and-ride lot modifications.** Adjustments to signage, bus layovers, and other minor improvements are often required to accommodate changes in service and park-and-ride utilization.
- **Other improvements.** A variety of other additions may be made at bus stops and shelters, particularly in funding partnership with local jurisdictions and others. Detailed bus schedule information, art, community information, litter receptacles, special benches or other resting and seating structures, railings, and the use of buildings or awnings for weather protection can be included.

Corridor-based Route Facility Improvements

The existing transit, pedestrian, and passenger facility infrastructure along core network corridors varies significantly. The goal of corridor facility improvement projects is to match the level of infrastructure with existing and targeted levels of transit service. Corridor facility improvements are generally coordinated with corresponding speed and reliability projects in order to maximize combined benefits.

The following factors will be considered in evaluating and advancing corridors for systematic facility improvements.

- Frequent current or planned service
- Active transit signal priority or other speed and reliability project
- Amount of ridership and projected growth
- Local jurisdiction support
- Local funding partnerships
- Potential to reduce delays through bus stop spacing
- Satisfaction of passenger access, safety, comfort and information needs

Strategy C-3: Speed, Reliability and Safety

Partner with state and local governments to improve transit operating efficiency, and to create speed, safety, and reliability improvements on important transit corridors. In cooperation with local jurisdictions, focus on the target corridors identified in Exhibit 5-2.

The primary focus of speed and reliability investments over the next ten years will be on the five RapidRide corridors, and on the network of core service connections shown in Exhibit 5-2. The new RapidRide program aims to provide faster, more reliable service trip times through transit-only, HOV, or business access and transit (BAT) travel lanes, and priority at intersections through transit signal priority and queue jumps.

To date, the Transit Speed and Reliability Program has achieved speed, safety and reliability improvements in a number of important transit corridors. Methods used to achieve program objectives include improved signal coordination, consolidation of stops, queue bypass, customer comfort and safety improvements at and around bus stops, and improved transit access/egress from key locations. Such improvements were completed on both a corridor and spot basis, in coordination with jurisdictions throughout King County. Work was advanced in a number of complex transit corridors and on projects such as transit signal priority requiring significant partnership efforts, technical review and scoping, and technology selection and integration.

Continued investment in these improvements will be needed as traffic congestion on arterials and freeways will continue to pose a major challenge to the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation services over the next ten years. The Transit Speed, Safety, and Reliability Program will continue to emphasize implementation of relatively low to moderate-cost improvements along arterial corridors with high bus volumes and high ridership.

High traffic volumes slow buses down and lengthen travel times. Variations in daily traffic flows decrease the reliability of bus schedules and result in missed connections. The ability to serve multiple destinations with convenient connections between routes relies on timed transfers and schedule coordination. This reliance increases the importance of on-time performance, particularly where very frequent service is not provided. Where frequent service is provided, improvements that enhance the speed and reliability of bus operations help maintain even intervals between buses thereby reducing overcrowding and schedule adherence problems.

Types of Improvements: Corridor and Spot-Based

Two general types of speed and reliability improvements included in this program are:

- **Corridor-based projects** improving high transit volume streets used by bus routes primarily providing core connections and operating frequently. Corridor-based speed and reliability projects support and reinforce the development of a regional system of transit signal priority. These projects are designed to be coordinated with the improvement of passenger facilities along the same corridors, with the intent to provide more pronounced benefits to riders and increases in service efficiency. This approach will be applied to all of five of the RapidRide corridors

- **Spot improvement projects** addressing problems with bus operations at specific locations, such as flow and circulation within or near activity centers and transit hubs. Spot improvements can include queue jumps, transit or HOV lanes, bus bulbs, curb radius modifications, and other forms of re-channelization of the street right-of-way. A series of spot improvements can also improve bus operations along significant route segments.

Significant support from local jurisdictions will be necessary for successful implementation of all speed and reliability projects, many of which rely on modifications to existing city-owned infrastructure such as sidewalks, streets, and curbs. The targeted corridors are served by RapidRide and high-ridership core routes with frequent service, and reflect a continued emphasis on coordinating passenger facilities, speed and reliability, and service investments to provide an improved transit-operating environment. The synergistic nature of coordinated improvements will produce greater overall improvements in comfort, speed, reliability, and convenience along core route connections and throughout the system.

Responding to a Changing Transportation Environment

In addition to the RapidRide corridors and the other core connections, additional speed and reliability projects may need to be identified in response to changing conditions or unique opportunities and challenges. Reconstruction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and other major projects that are under development by other public entities have the potential to significantly impact the quality and cost to operate transit service in this region, generally, and in the Seattle central business district, in particular. Additional mitigation funds are expected to be made available through these mega-projects to design and implement additional transit speed and reliability projects, either as mitigation during the construction period or as longer term solutions to reorient transit service to improve or maintain its performance.

Strategy C-4: Park-and-Ride Facilities

> **Expand park-and-ride capacity in congested corridors with full or overcrowded park-and-ride facilities. Support development of a series of small owned or leased park and ride lots along low density suburban routes in order to create artificially higher densities to enhance the ridership base. Use the Transit-oriented Development (TOD) program to further expand park-and-ride opportunities through joint use of new parking capacity and financing partnerships. Where these lots have unused capacity, encourage their use by vanpools and park-and-pools.**

The 2002-2007 plan called for extensive park-and-ride expansion, during which nearly 7,000 parking spaces were added to the park-and-ride system. Park-and-ride facilities often function as transit centers, incorporating bus layover areas, route terminals, bicycle

and pedestrian amenities and other transit-operating infrastructure. Expansion projects include infrastructure to support increased levels of use by pedestrians and bicyclists. King County Metro also works with local jurisdictions and the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks to improve the access to park-and-ride facilities along the pathways to and from the facility. New park-and-ride lots should be readily and safely accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists as well as by motor vehicles. Increased accessibility to non-motorized modes can stimulate greater use of park-and-ride lots without the addition of more parking spaces.

King County Metro constructed or expanded the following park-and-ride lots between 2002 and 2007:

- **Eastgate** – Added approximately 1,000 new spaces.
- **Issaquah Highlands**– Constructed a new park-and-ride lot with approximately 1,000 spaces.
- **I-90 East**– Construction of a joint use parking facility with a minimum of 80 spaces, built by the City of North Bend.
- **Northgate Transit Center** –Added approximately 500 spaces.
- **Redondo Heights** (Pacific Highway S. & S. 272nd St.)– Constructed a new park-and-ride lot with approximately 700 spaces.
- **Kenmore**- Expanded to add approximately 200 spaces.

In addition, 11 new park-and-ride lots were leased and 1 existing leased lot was expanded to create higher densities and expand the ridership base in low-density suburban areas.

Sound Transit constructed additional lots with funding partners including King County Metro:

- **Federal Way Transit Center**– A new park-and-ride with approximately 1200 parking spaces.
- **Overlake Transit Center** at NE 40th Street– A new transit center with approximately 200 parking spaces.
- **South Sammamish Park-and-Ride Lot**– A new park-and-ride with approximately 265 parking spaces.
- **Auburn Station**– A new rail station/transit center with approximately 600 parking spaces.

- **Kent Station**– A new rail station/transit center with approximately 1100 parking spaces.
- **Tukwila Station**– A new rail station/transit center with approximately 200 parking spaces.

Sound Transit also constructed direct access ramps at the following locations, allowing buses to enter and exit HOV lanes from park-and-ride lots without weaving across general purpose travel lanes:

- **Federal Way** at I-5 and South 317th Street
- **Eastgate** at I-90 and 142nd Avenue Southeast
- **Totem Lake** I-405 and Northeast 128th Street

Over the next ten years, King County Metro will place less emphasis on major park-and-ride expansion projects. King County Metro plans only to expand the Brickyard Park-and-Ride by 100-200 spaces, and to expand the South Kirkland park-and-ride by 250 spaces if funds are received through the federal Urban Partnership program. King County Metro will continue to support projects of other agencies and will participate in joint studies of park-and-ride demand for future development plans.

Planned Park-and-Ride Lots

Sound Transit and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) are the main agencies responsible for major park-and-ride and access ramp projects. Below is a list of the major projects identified for implementation over the next ten years.

- **Mercer Island Park-and-Ride**- Redevelop the existing park-and-ride lot with structured parking that will double the existing number of parking spaces for a total of approximately 450. Opening Fall 2007.
- **Issaquah Transit Center**- Redevelop the existing park-and-ride lot with structured parking. The total number of parking spaces will be approximately 820. Opening Spring 2008.

Strategy C-5: Replacement and Expansion of the Transit Fleet

Replace and expand the transit bus fleet so that the size, fleet mix and fleet age are consistent with service projections and operating characteristics of the regular bus system. Replace and expand Vanpool fleet to maintain the appropriate mix of vehicle sizes to encourage and support vanpool program participants. Replace and expand Access paratransit vehicles to support efficient operations. Achieve more efficient and energy-friendly operations with features including efficient propulsion systems and non-traditional fuels.

Fleet Procurement and Operating Facilities

The type and quantity of vehicles purchased and maintained by King County Metro is based on current and projected service levels. Service expansion drives fleet expansion plans, which in turn define the extent of the need for expanded base capacity.

During the period of the financial plan, more than 75 percent of the existing Transit fleet will be replaced as individual fleets reach the end of their useful lives. This replacement represents a significant financial commitment. For the 2006-2015 financial plan period, fleet replacement represents 44 percent of the capital program.

Projected Transit Fleet Requirements

The year 2016 network described in this plan would require about a fifteen percent increase in the total size of the King County Metro transit fleet, from 1,315 vehicles in 2007 to 1,505 vehicles in 2016. These totals reflect the projected peak coach requirements for Metro Transit service with appropriate spares and does not include DART, Paratransit, Vanpool, or Sound Transit vehicles operated by King County Metro. This number also excludes additional coaches that could be funded through the federal Urban Partnership program, or by the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) to mitigate the traffic impacts of freeway construction.

The number of coaches included in each procurement will be sized to meet the service network described in this plan and modified by the most current service projections available. Noteworthy changes in fleet during the 2007 to 2016 timeframe include:

- **More Diesel Electric Hybrids.** King County Metro will add a total of 122 more diesel-electric hybrid articulated coaches. "Hybrids" have demonstrated a savings in fuel over comparable diesels. On top of reduced fuel usage and CO_2 emissions,

hybrids have also performed well on the road, and provided a solution to operating in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel with Link light rail. In combination with the use of trolley fleets and biodiesel fuel, King County Metro will continue to operate one of the cleanest fleets in the nation.

- **RapidRide branded coaches to launch in 2010.** Of the 122 diesel-electric coaches, 100 will be used to implement RapidRide service. RapidRide coaches will be designed to be in sync with the latest in BRT amenities and features. All RapidRide coaches will be articulated, low floor, 3 door, diesel-electric hybrids. Coaches will be designed to allow all-door boarding and de-boarding. Coaches will have a unique "look" to distinguish them from other transit service. Additional electronic signage both on the exterior and interior is a likely added feature on the bus. Changes to seating areas, WiFi, and security cameras are also being considered for this service.
- **Replacement of the major 40' and 60' diesel fleets.** The largest diesel fleets in King County Metro (272 60' coaches and 395 40' coaches) will come to the end of their useful life in the 2010 to 2012 timeframe. This means that about half of Metro Transit buses will be replaced with modern low floor motor coaches in this timeframe. Because low floor coaches provide slightly fewer seats, there will be an adjustment made in procurements to buy more articulated coaches to provide additional seating on the margins where crowded trips on 40' coaches will now be accommodated with 60' bus service.
- **Replacement of the trolley bus fleets.** In the 2014 to 2016 timeframe, King County Metro will continue its commitment to the electric trolley bus system by replacing its entire trolley fleet with a new generation of electric buses. King County Metro remains one of only a handful of transit agencies in North America who have continued to operate this unique type of bus service. Trolley bus service provides service to about 20 percent of King County Metro's riders despite amounting to just over 10 percent of the bus fleet.

Projected ADA Paratransit Fleet Requirements

Rider demand, average trip length and the productivity of paratransit service affect fleet requirements for paratransit service. Demand for ADA Paratransit service is projected to increase steadily over the next ten years, due in part to providing new service under *Transit Now* to suburban areas of the county that are not currently served. Another factor affecting demand is the aging of the population, which will become a factor reflected in

ridership projections in 2011. It is projected that the fleet necessary to support the ADA Paratransit Program will increase from the present level of 291 vehicles to 407 by 2015.

Projected Vanpool Fleet Requirements

The current capital program for the vanpool fleet is projected to grow at an average rate of 80 vans per year, including assumptions for expanded growth due to the *Transit Now* initiative. During the plan period approximately 628 expansion vans will be purchased to serve over 6,100 new vanpool riders.

Replacement van purchases during the plan period represent a significant investment in the program. Replacement vans are purchased when vans have reached the end of their defined useful economic life and must be retired from active service with vanpool groups. 1,553 vans are scheduled for replacement from 2008 through 2016. In 2000, the replacement cycle for program vehicles was increased from five to six years. Eight, twelve and fifteen-passenger vans are scheduled for replacement.

King County adopted policy requires that Vanpool Program passenger fares and the resale of vans recover: 100 percent of capital costs, 100 percent of direct operating expense and 25 percent of administrative costs. Some adjustment of this target subsidy level can be considered if such a change enables simplification of fares or is used in conjunction with efforts to expand vanpool use.

Strategy C-6: Operating Base Expansion

> **Expand transit operating base capacity in the areas identified and described in an adopted King County Metro Transit Operating Facilities Strategic Plan to support transit fleet growth projected to occur through the year 2030.**

King County Metro will continue to work to complete base expansion activities at Central-Atlantic campus and continually evaluate additional base capacity needs. King County Metro's most recent "Transit Base Expansion Plan" in December 2002 indicated that projects to expand capacity at King County Metro's central base facilities (Atlantic, Central and Ryerson) will provide adequate capacity to meet King County Metro service needs until the 2020-2030 period, assuming that Sound Transit provides new base capacity for ST Regional Express service by 2013.

If additional base capacity becomes necessary due to a greater service requirement, such as a significant transit service to mitigate regional freeway construction projects, King County Metro will examine additional base expansion options in South King County. Metro Transit bus service that operates in South King County is projected to grow the most beyond its current base capacity in the next 10-15 years. Currently all South King County base capacity is located at "South Base" in Tukwila.

Bases are located to minimize "deadhead" travel time (time spent traveling between the base and the start or end of revenue service), which is the biggest cost factor in determining base location, including other factors such as variations in land or development costs. King County Metro's fleet of coaches is sized to handle peak service demands. Bus bases are built to accommodate the peak number of coaches. Buses are assigned to bases to minimize overall system deadhead costs.

Currently, King County operates about 115 coaches for Sound Transit, which represents over half of the capacity of a typical Metro transit base. The ST fleet operated by King County Metro continues to grow incrementally. If the roads and transit program is approved, Sound Transit will construct new bases for Regional Express service, and the capacity Sound Transit currently uses at Metro Transit bases will become available for expanded Metro Transit services, including for construction mitigation. If ST2 does not pass, King County Metro will need to work with Sound Transit to secure adequate base capacity for its fleet.

Strategy C-7: Terminals & Layover

Work with local jurisdictions to secure long-term agreements for use of on-street layover spaces. Coordinate with other transportation agencies and private developers to incorporate layover space and turnaround facilities into transit stations, transit centers, transportation projects and new development proposals where needed to support or improve current transit service. Consider off-street facilities for layover when on-street layover capacity is not available, and when dedicated layover space would result in significant operating savings, improved routing and/or operator safety.

Layover space - parking near the end of a route for buses waiting to begin a trip - is critical to efficient system operation and is necessary to enable increases in service levels. Layover space, especially on-street layover is increasingly difficult to establish however. King County Metro relies on curb space designated by local jurisdictions for most of its layover needs. The participation of local jurisdictions in providing layover space is essential to provide for more efficient operation of service and is necessary to enable increases in service levels. Urban development, changes in service, and local jurisdiction decisions to prioritize non-transit traffic can trigger the need to site new or improved existing layover locations. As layover space becomes harder to expand or maintain, the active identification and development of off-street layover space will become more critical as will the support and participation of local jurisdictions.

The following off-street layovers were developed during the 2002-2007 planning period:

- Atlantic/Central Base
- Bear Creek Park-and-Ride
- Aurora Village Transit Center
- Kenmore Park-and-Ride

It is likely that additional off-street layover will be required during the 2007-2016 time period as on-street spaces become more difficult to obtain or retain. This is especially true in the downtown Seattle area, but may also be true in other activity centers, as well as in neighborhood locations at the end of Metro Transit routes.

Requirements for off-street layover will be considered further in the 2008 update to this strategic plan. The following off-street layover locations have already been identified for implementation between 2007-2016:

- Redmond Park-and-Ride
- Eastgate Park-and-Ride
- Burien Transit Center
- Bellevue CBD

Strategy C-8: Transit-Oriented Development

Encourage and support transit-oriented development at or near transit facilities to increase transit ridership by increasing activity and density in centers, and by increasing affordable housing and an appropriate mix of other land uses. Reduce transit facility development costs through joint development and/or public-private partnerships.

For the purpose of establishing benchmarks by which to later measure the impacts of a project, estimate the anticipated benefits of each proposed TOD including:

- **expected ridership increase attributable to the project**
- **existing and potential residential and office density**
  - **within the project, and**
  - **within a reasonable walking distance of the transit facility**
- **amount of affordable housing**
- **amount of retail that supports nearby resident and transit user needs**
- **design elements that facilitate transit operations**
- **design elements that promote walking and bicycling**
- **partner participation**
  - **city**
  - **developer**
  - **other transit agencies**
- **project contribution to reduced greenhouse gas emissions**

Assess the extent to which each existing TOD, and future projects two and five years after completion, provide the anticipated benefits and other project specific benefits related to transit operating or facilities enhancements, local jurisdictional goals and other transportation goals identified in this plan.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Program

Transit-Oriented Development projects bring increased residential and commercial density and activity together to improve urban areas that already support high levels of transit service. The King County TOD program is intended to increase transit ridership and to meet larger growth management goals by working with jurisdictions to develop transit-supportive land uses and activities and encourage concentration of growth in centers. This concentration of growth offers alternatives to suburban sprawl, conserves natural resource lands, keeps existing city and town centers vital and allows transportation to operate more efficiently.

Through partnerships with jurisdictions and developers, the TOD program creates opportunities to leverage funding, enable transit facility improvements and increase transit ridership while increasing development of housing, jobs and other activities in close proximity to major transit facilities.

As a result of the TOD program, projects that have been completed or are in process include transit centers, park-and-ride lots, off-street bus-layover, and residential, institutional, retail, office, hotel and entertainment facilities. The TOD program also generates revenue for King County through the sale of property and acquiring TOD-specific grants.

All proposed TOD projects undergo cost/benefit analyses. The concept of "Net Transit Benefit" is the basis used to evaluate projects.

Transit benefits fall into three major categories:

- **Ridership** increases due to housing and/or additional park-and-ride stalls;
- **Facilities** upgrades such as transit center improvements and added bus layover;
- **Revenues** from sales taxes and sales of underutilized surface park-and-ride lots.

Since the inception of the program, the completed projects include:

- **Northgate North Retail Project:** Opened in 2000. Touchstone Corporation provided 60 replacement park-and-ride spaces in its parking structure until the park-and-ride lot at 5th and NE 112th is relocated.
- **Metropolitan Plan – Renton:** affordable housing and park-and-ride stalls: Opened in 2001. 150 park-and-ride stall were added, 30 of which are shared with residents in 90-unit mixed-use development constructed about park-and-ride. Each unit supplied with free bus pass for 10 years from opening.

- **The Village at Overlake**: Opened in 2001. 308 Apartments, day care and shared parking structure.
- **Olson-Myers Park-and-Ride in Seattle**: Underutilized park-and-ride lot sold to Apprenticeship Training Trust for job training facility. Now being resold for construction of 450 affordable senior housing apartments.
- **Kenmore/Northshore Park-and-Ride**: Sold to City in 2004 for construction of 100 affordable units in 2011. Sale funded 200 additional stalls and layover construction at nearby Kenmore lot. Utilization of expanded lot is now over 90 percent.
- **Kent Sound Transit Garage**: King County paid $2.1 million in 2000 for 191 replacement stalls in Sound Transit commuter rail garage in downtown Kent. Allowed DOT to surplus James Street lot now valued at $3.2 million.
- **Northgate Simon & Lorig Development**: Simon lease of 280 stalls for 20 years. Lorig lease of 350 stalls for $4.3 million. Sale of lot at 5th and 112th to City of Seattle for $9.5 million. Both leases and sale approved by County Council in May 2006.
- **Redmond Downtown Park-and-Ride**: Larger portion sold to Trammel Crow Residential in 2006. Approximately 300 condo/rental units, up to 20 percent affordable at 80 percent of median income. 400 park-and-ride stalls are to be reoriented in county-built garage on smaller, retained portion of site. Construction of new transit center, garage, and housing set for completion in 2008.

In addition, there are several projects currently being evaluated for TOD feasibility:

- **Northgate Transit Center East P&R** – Five hundred (500) stall Metro surface park-and-ride, 170,000 square feet of developable property east of existing transit center. Market studies indicate potential for housing and shared use parking. Seattle Housing Authority and other developers have indicated interest in building mid-rise affordable housing on this surface lot.

- **South Kirkland** (Bellevue/Kirkland) – County-owned, 6.95 acres, 603 parking stalls. Site has potential for large-scale residential and/or mixed use. Excellent access to adjacent freeways and potential future Burlington Northern Santa Fe trail. Site is bisected by boundary between Bellevue and Kirkland.

- **Auburn** – City and county have issued RFP for downtown mixed-use developer. Once developer is selected, County would enter into negotiations to buy park-and-ride stalls in mixed-use facility. Nearby lot on 15th Street near airport would be sold by county to pay for downtown replacement stalls.

- **Burien** – Studies indicate there is a market for mixed-use TOD in downtown. Redevelopment would include structured replacement parking at the existing Burien park-and-ride. Part of the public investment to date includes new $8 million downtown transit center to be completed in 2008. Four hundred thousand dollar ($400,000) federal grant is currently being used by county to issue a request for qualifications to determine short list of interested developers.

- **White Center** – Interest has been expressed from the County Executive in moving park-and-ride from 1.5-acre Olson/Myers lot (100 stalls) to downtown White Center location as part of mixed-use facility. TOD staff have directed consultants to conduct market and design analysis to determine if interested downtown property owner can accommodate TOD/Transit facility.

Section Six:
Developing Improvements – Implementation Strategies

The implementation strategies identified in this chapter define priorities and a phasing plan to make *Transit Now* program improvements by 2016. *Transit Now* revenues comprise most of the resource increases anticipated during the period of the plan.

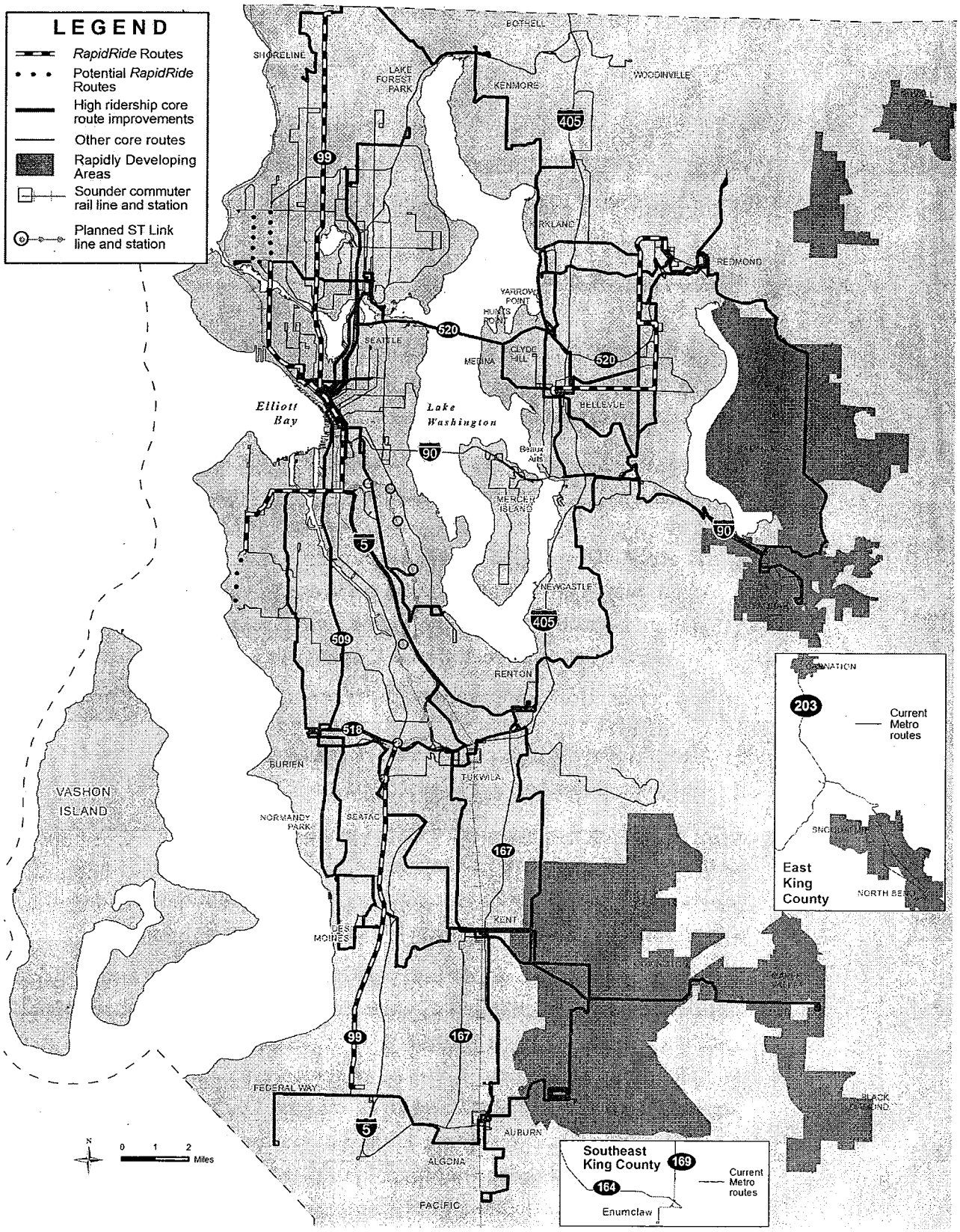
Strategy IM-1: *Transit Now* Program

King County Metro's priority is to implement the *Transit Now* program passed by voters in 2006 and shown in Exhibit 6-1, which includes service and capital support for these initiatives:

- **RapidRide BRT. Use a target of 100,000 annual service hours between 2007 and 2016 to implement RapidRide BRT service in five corridors, consistent with service strategy S-5. The RapidRide corridors are:**
  - **Shoreline/Downtown Seattle via Aurora Avenue North**
  - **West Seattle/Downtown Seattle via West Seattle Bridge**
  - **Ballard/Seattle Center/south downtown stadium area via 15th Ave Northwest and West Mercer Street with service or frequent connections to Ballard High School and the Ballard business district.**
  - **Federal Way/Tukwila via Pacific Highway South**
  - **Bellevue/Redmond via Crossroads and Overlake**
- **High Ridership Routes. Use a target of 350,000 annual service hours between 2007 and 2016 to improve service frequency and/or span of service on high ridership corridors on the core connections network, consistent with service strategy S-3 and shown in Exhibit 6-1.**
- **Service Partnerships. Enter into partnerships with public and/or private entities to serve established or emerging ridership markets, consistent with service strategies S-9 and F-3. A sustained fund supporting up to 90,000 annual service hours will be provided for this purpose, to be implemented between 2007 and 2013, matched by an additional 30,000 to 45,000 annual service hours funded by partner direct financial contributions, and by partner investments that will result in quantifiable transit speed and reliability improvements.**

Exhibit 6-1

Transit Now Program



- **<u>New Service for Developing Areas.</u> Add new service or improve existing services in rapidly developing areas in East and South King County within the Urban Growth Area, consistent with service strategy S-6. A target of 50,000 new annual hours of service will be deployed for developing areas between 2007 and 2016.**
- **<u>Expanded paratransit service.</u> Expand the service area for paratransit service to cover gaps within the fixed-route coverage areas as shown in Exhibit 4-3 and provide service to disabled users not served by *Access* through the Community Access Transportation Program.**
- **<u>Expanded ridesharing and the vanpool program.</u> Expand outreach efforts and provide incentives to increase program participation and facilitate ridesharing opportunities; promote ridesharing to smaller employers in King County, and in areas not served or underserved by the fixed-route transit system.**

The primary focus for the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan will be the implementation of King County Metro's *Transit Now* program. Approved by the voters in November 2006, *Transit Now* is funded by a one-tenth of one percent sales-tax increase and identifies a program of transit investments to be implemented over 10 years. More information about the *Transit Now* program is included in Appendix B.

While *Transit Now* defines the anticipated resources and improvement program for transit until 2016, each service change will strive to advance multiple service and capital improvement objectives. If additional resources are available beyond those anticipated by the *Transit Now* program, other investments must be consistent with the strategies contained in this strategic plan.

Strategy IM-2: Service Implementation Phasing

Provide a predictable schedule of service expansions that expand all elements of the *Transit Now* program concurrently and in all subareas, as shown in Exhibit 6-2.

Transit Now is expected to expand Metro Transit service by 15 to 20 percent over ten years. A preliminary phasing plan for the implementation of new *Transit Now* annual service hours is presented in Exhibit 6-2. The phasing plan will continue to be refined as the program is implemented.

The phasing plan is guided by three general principles.

1) All elements of *Transit Now* should be implemented concurrently.

2) Service and capital investments should match cash flow.

3) RapidRide is a service concept that should be implemented as a complete package of capital and service improvements in each corridor.

Exhibit 6-2

***Transit Now* Phasing Plan –**

Targeted Increases in Annual Service Hours by Program

Hours Categories	'02-'06	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Developing Areas			13	8	4	5	7	13				50
RapidRide					34	42	19	5				100
High Ridership/Core		45	9	8	4	9	38	43	68	86	40	350
Total 40-40-20 Adds		45	22	16	42	56	64	61	68	86	40	500
Service Partnerships		5	22	12	35	6	5	5				90
TOTAL		50	45	28	77	62	68	66		86	40	590

(In Thousands of Annual Hours)

***RapidRide* Implementation:**

Pacific Highway S. in 2010, Bellevue-Redmond & West Seattle in 2011, Ballard/Uptown in 2012, and Aurora in 2013.

The first service investments under *Transit Now* were made on select core routes in February 2007, with investments directed to off-peak service due to fleet constraints. Steady annual service growth is expected to continue over the ten-year period. No priority has been assigned to any of the elements of the *Transit Now* program, although specific factors affect when different investments are made. For example, RapidRide investments are scheduled to begin in the 2010 timeframe since RapidRide is dependent upon the purchase of special buses, and the completion of capital improvements and speed and reliability measures. Implementation of RapidRide also needs to be coordinated with plans to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

The other initiatives – core route investments, developing areas service and partnership programs as well as ridesharing, vanpool and paratransit program improvements are all expected to be deployed steadily throughout the period. Factors that affect the phasing include service needs, operating constraints and interest in the partnership program. In any one year, less than half the investment in new service hours will be devoted to service partnerships.

In addition to *Transit Now*, King County Metro will continue service integration with Sound Transit Express Bus, Sounder Commuter Rail and future light rail operations when Sound Transit service improvements or modifications are implemented.

The following list identifies some of the major investments for the associated time periods. Investments in certain programs such as the high ridership core connection services, developing area service, vanpool and paratransit will be on-going throughout the 10 year period.

2007

Reopen Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel - Return buses to tunnel and change street assignments for many routes in downtown Seattle.

Core Connections - Investment in off-peak service on core connections

Service Partnerships

- First service partnership with Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center began with 63 new trips on existing Metro Transit routes 25 and 75.
- Call for Projects issued for projects to begin in 2008 and beyond

2008-2009

Core Connections - Continued expansion of off-peak service and initial investment in peak-hour service on core connections.

Developing Areas – Continued investment in expanding service to areas experiencing growth.

Service Partnerships – Begin projects with major employers and cities to add new service.

Central Link integration - Revise routes to reduce duplication and improve feeder service when Link opens between downtown Seattle and Sea-Tac Airport.

2010-2011

RapidRide Initiation – Initiate RapidRide improvements on Pacific Highway South, Bel-Red and West Seattle corridors.

Service Partnerships – Continued investments for improvements and new service.

Core Connections – Continued investment in high ridership routes.

2012-2013

RapidRide – initiate RapidRide on Ballard and Aurora Avenue North corridors.

Core Connections – Continue to improve services on core connection routes.

Service Partnerships – Additional service partnership hours added; service will remain at current levels as long as partner funding is sustained.

Developing Areas –Make further service improvements in growing areas of South and East King County.

2014-2016

Core Connections – Additional investments in core service improvements.

University Link – Adjust service to reduce duplication and provide feeder service.

King County Metro will continue to adjust service as new Sound Transit investments are made. Some of the key activities will be the initiation of Central Link light rail to Sea-Tac Airport in 2009, North Link to the University of Washington in 2016 and the full implementation of Sounder commuter rail service.

Continued Delivery and Development of Established Metro Transit Services

King County Metro will continuously review and evaluate service structure, ridership demand, land use conditions and operating characteristics to develop proposals consistent with the service and capital strategies of this plan, local subarea priorities and to respond to changing conditions and resource availability.

King County Metro will continue to maintain and pursue new partnership initiatives that will help leverage limited public resources with additional financing from both public and private partners. Strategy S-9 summarizes initiatives that King County Metro continues to pursue with local jurisdictions, institutions, and employers to help finance alternative public transportation products and provide financial incentives for users of those products. King County Metro is also working closely with local jurisdictions and the State of Washington to maximize funding from federal grants, primarily for capital projects. However, grant funds are often restricted as to when they can be used and

typically support only one-time capital costs and/or short-term service demonstrations. Therefore, grants cannot be considered sustainable resources for service.

Strategy IM-3: Service Resource Allocation

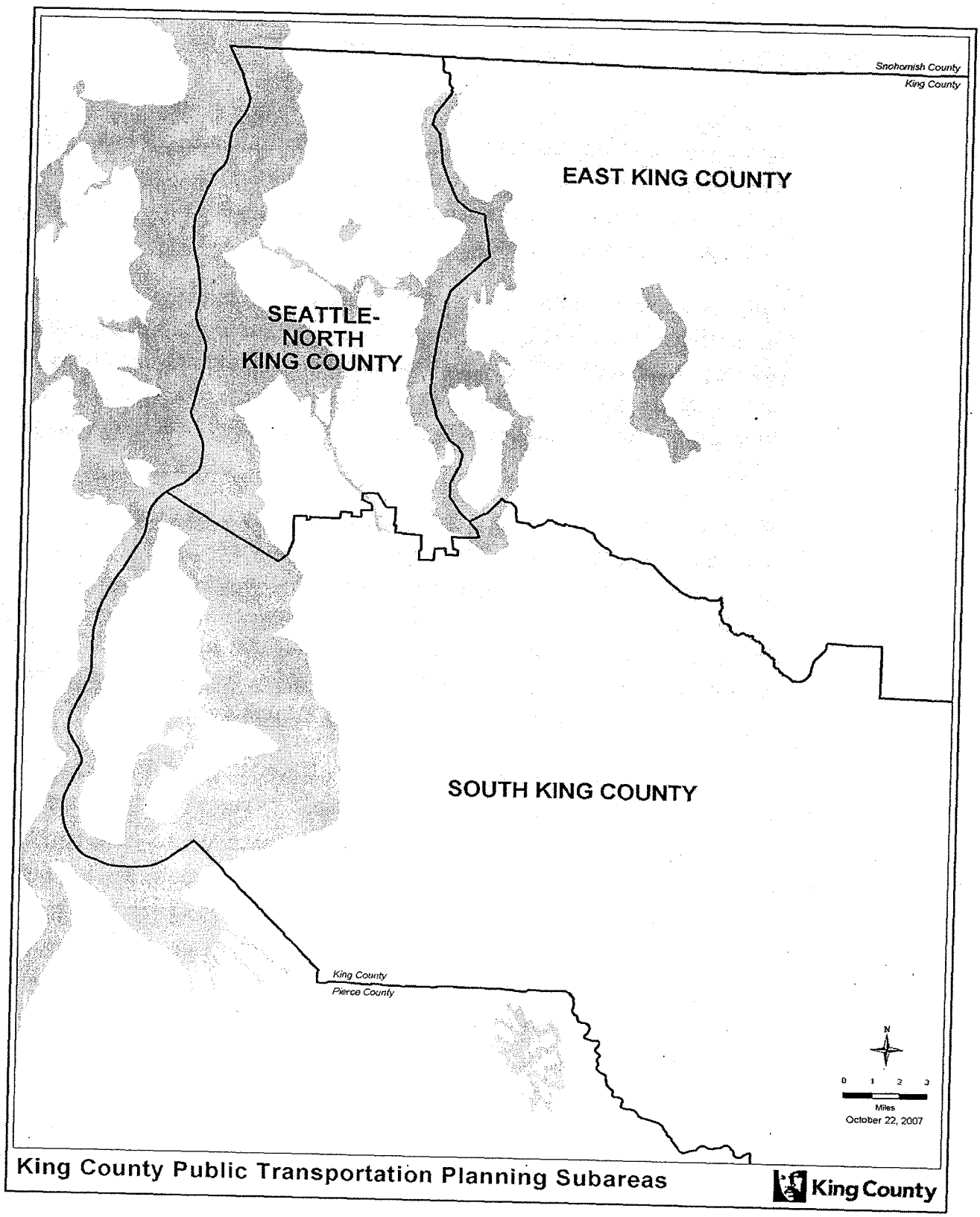
The implementation of transit service hours as stated in strategy IM-1 and IM-2 above shall use the following framework for transit service allocation. Service hours used for service partnerships, schedule maintenance, contracted services or partnership agreements are exempted from subarea allocation requirements.

With the implementation of each 200,000 annual hours of service investments that are subject to the subarea allocation requirement and at the end of the 2007-2010 *Transit Now* program investments, each King County Metro planning subarea would receive a share of actual service hours implemented: East 40%, South 40% and Seattle/North King County 20%.

Measurement of the resulting share of hours will be based on the baseline bus route allocations that assign one-way routes that originate in a subarea or two-way routes that operate wholly within a subarea to that subarea. Further, all-day, two-way routes that operate between two subareas will be attributed in hours at 50% to each subarea. Any system-wide reduction in service investment shall be distributed among the subareas in proportion to each subarea's share of the total service investment.

The subarea and community planning process described in strategy IM-4 will be used to determine service investment priorities within each subarea. This process may result in service recommendations for investments in a different subarea. When a route crosses subarea boundaries, it is possible that the improvement priorities identified in one subarea may not coincide with the priorities of another subarea. In those instances, the King County Executive will propose, and the King County Council will adopt service changes guided by the overall objectives of the plan.

Exhibit 6-3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King County Public Transportation Planning Subareas
King County

Strategy IM-4: Subarea and Community-Based Planning

Conduct a community planning process in which transit riders, local jurisdictions, unincorporated area councils, employers, and educational institutions participate in the design and implementation of significant changes to existing service. Use service and capital strategies consistent with the service priorities described in Strategy IM-1. Involve the community, local jurisdictions and subarea groups in the development of recommendations for updates of the Strategic Plan at least every two years or more frequently if changing conditions or priorities dictate. Utilize overall roles and responsibilities as shown in Exhibit 6-3 and the service change process shown in Exhibit 6-4.

Plan updates shall address significant operating changes and capital improvements anticipated in the next ten years as well as any revision to adopted strategies necessitated by significantly changed circumstances affecting the transit program.

Subarea-based Community Planning

Subarea and community-based planning play an important role in the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan. The 2007-2016 Strategic Plan is focused primarily on the implementation of *Transit Now,* a program that was founded upon significant public input. In developing *Transit Now*, transit staff connected with more than 80 stakeholder groups, including employers, community organizations and local government agencies to obtain feedback used to shape the program.

Further opportunity for community participation will be possible as part of the major update to the Strategic Plan in 2008, which will involve a comprehensive public outreach and involvement program.

Plan Implementation

Implementing the Strategic Plan also involves working closely with communities affected by possible service changes.

The subarea-based community planning process to implement the Strategic Plan will involve the following:

- Defining subarea priorities within the parameters of the Strategic Plan
- Working with individual communities to define the specific improvements to be implemented, consistent with Implementation Strategies IM-1 and IM-2

Defining Subarea Priorities

King County Metro will work with the subarea transportation groups, including the Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP), South County Area Transportation board (SCATBd) and Seattle/Shoreline (SeaShore), and other stakeholders to identify service priorities not specifically identified in this plan for each subarea. Where appropriate, King County Metro will develop community sounding boards to identify specific improvements and modifications to be implemented.

This effort will seek to establish a broad-based understanding of the priority service investments identified in Implementation Strategy IM-1 and phasing identified in Strategy IM-2 prior to the beginning of a more detailed community process identifying specific changes to be implemented. During this stage partnerships and other means of gaining additional resources will be also pursued. In the case of service partnerships, King County Metro expects to work closely with partners to develop joint recommendations that are reviewed by affected communities.

Making Changes

Formal King County Council approval of detailed service proposals concludes the annual service change process, which provides opportunities for the public to help design and implement changes. Current service will be changed, and new services will be developed through this process. Although the exact schedule of events may vary during each service change process, depending on the complexity of the changes being discussed, and the decision timeline associated with them, processes should be designed to include:

- Riders, nonriders, citizen advisory committees, elected officials, community leaders, city and county staff, school districts, social service agencies, and King County Metro staff and operators will be involved.
- Make use of information on public and community needs and preferences, research on other transit systems, and data on the performance of the current system.

Exhibit 6-4

Strategic Plan Roles and Responsibilities

Task	Recommendations to County Executive			King County Council		
	Subarea Steering Committees (ETP, SCATBd, SeaShore)	**Local Jurisdictions**	**Community Involvement**	**Regional Transit Committee**	**Transportation Committee**	**King County Council**
Select subarea priorities	Review and refine alternative service priorities for the subarea. Recommend subarea service priorities to the County Executive.	Help subarea steering committees define priorities by participating in the steering committees and at the staff level.	Use information from Six-Year Plan outreach efforts and from existing research in discussions with local jurisdictions and subarea steering committees.	Receive progress reports on subarea discussions.		System approval of system priorities and expenditure levels in annual budget.
Develop service changes	Review service change proposals developed by King County Metro, local jurisdictions and communities for consistency with defined priorities.	Work with King County Metro staff and community members to develop specific service change proposals.	Representatives from a broad range of community interests work with King County Metro staff and local jurisdictions to develop specific service change proposals.		Review and recommend service change ordinance to Council.	Final Council action on service change ordinance.
Update Six-Year Plan	Recommend Six-Year Plan modifications to the County Executive.	Help subarea steering committees develop recommended Six-Year Plan modifications.	Representatives from a broad range of community interests help develop recommended Six-Year Plan modifications.	Review and recommend Six-Year Plan update ordinance to Council.		Final Council action on update of Six-Year Plan

Working partnerships will be created between King County Metro and communities affected by service changes. This approach assumes the following:

- Public involvement occurs early in the planning process.
- The public is advised about opportunities for involvement throughout the planning process.
- An extensive public information effort uses a variety of media and communication media to keep discussion open.
- Clarity is needed as to who contributes to decisions and who is responsible for the final decision.
- Flexibility is necessary.

The goal of this approach to community involvement is to ensure that King County Metro is responsive and accountable to the community during implementation of the Strategic Plan. Depending on the complexity of a given service change proposal, the community involvement process may take up to eighteen months, including Council adoption of the final service recommendations.

Additional Factors

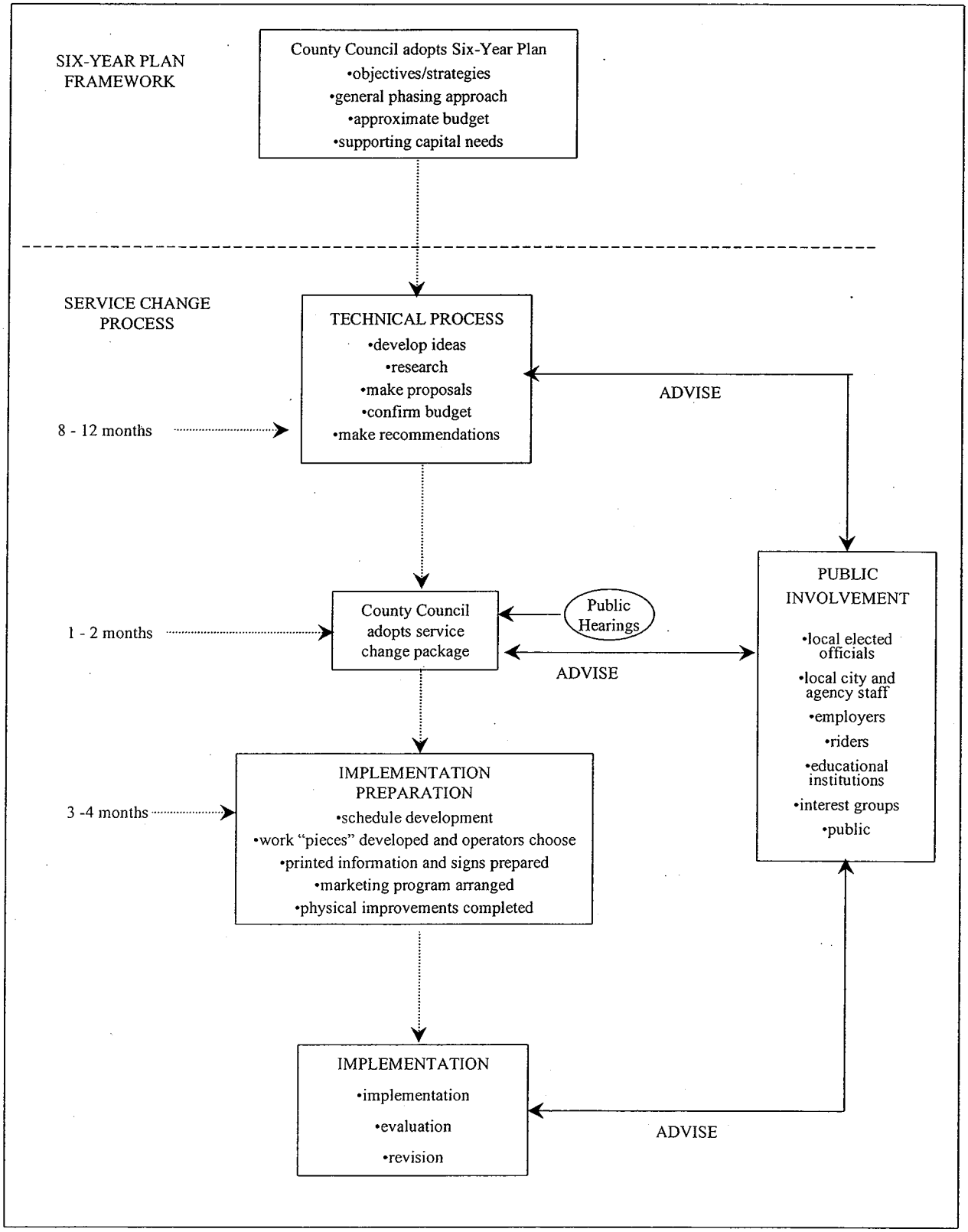
Beyond consistency with plan objectives and strategies, during any given service change process a number of factors will influence the selection of a specific set of service changes. These considerations include federal requirements, cost, capital requirements, relationship to other proposals, and subarea priorities.

Federal Requirements

King County Metro is required to comply with two federal requirements - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - that are integrated in all service proposal assessments.

Exhibit 6-5

Service Change Process



The objectives of Title VI are to ensure that the level, quality and distribution of transit services, as well as participation in transit planning, are provided to ensure equal access and mobility without regard to race, color or national origin. In anticipation of significant transit system modifications, King County Metro will identify resulting service levels and quality of service for minority and non-minority communities, and make such information available to policy makers.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requires that complementary paratransit service be comparable to non-commuter, fixed-route service for the general public in several ways, including service area, days and hours, response time and fares. The minimum complementary paratransit service area, as defined by federal regulations, is based on King County Metro's non-commuter fixed-route service. When non-commuter fixed route service changes occur, the paratransit service area is adjusted to reflect these changes as needed.

Financial Constraints

Some service changes may have to wait for implementation because of funding constraints. To the extent that additional revenues become available, the magnitude and timing of service improvement implementation will vary.

Capital Requirements—Integrating Service with Capital

The establishment of service priorities will influence the timing for implementation of critical supporting capital program elements (fleet procurement, transit hubs, speed and reliability improvements, etc.).

Relationship to Other Proposals

Different service proposals may complement each other by mutually enhancing their effect on overall mobility or system efficiency. Circumstances such as these could require that certain changes be linked.

As individual services are agreed upon, periodic reviews with the subarea groups will be made to update them on progress towards their implementation. In addition, the groups will be used as a "clearinghouse" to address issues regarding the direction of service changes and any issues resulting from the community work and affecting the overall network for the subarea in question.

Section Seven:
Paying for the System – Financial Strategies

Financial Strategies support the ongoing stability of the transit system and ensure the financial integrity of the Public Transportation Fund. These strategies build upon existing policies that result in: prudent planning using appropriate assumptions to sustain transit service, pursuit of grants and partnerships to fund system activities, and to achieve an Operating Revenue to Operating Expense (OR/OE) target.

A central goal of King County Metro's financial planning activities is stability of the transit system and the financial integrity of the Public Transportation Fund. This goal is accomplished through prudent planning that uses reasonable economic assumptions along with specific programmatic plans to project future revenues, expenditures and resulting fund balances. Planning is done on an ongoing basis, and not just as part of the county's annual budget process.

Comprehensive financial planning, combined with ongoing forecasting, allows the system to respond effectively to change in the economic environment, without detrimental impacts to existing services. Anticipation of changes in financial conditions and forecasting beyond the current year enable the transit system to project sustainable levels of transit service and to accelerate or delay new service implementations based on these changing conditions.

Relationship of the Strategic Plan to the Financial Plan

This strategic plan is consistent with King County Metro's financial plan that covers 2006-2015. While this financial plan covers through 2015, only the period of 2006-2012 reflects adopted budget assumptions. When this strategic plan is updated in 2008, King County Metro's 10-year financial plan for the period of 2007-2016 will be available and included in the strategic plan.

The financial plan for 2006-2015 includes detailed revenue and expenditure assumptions. The basis for the plan is the 2007 adopted budget that was adopted in late 2006. This plan was revised in early 2007 to include the revenues and expenditures associated with the voter-approved *Transit Now* program. The revenue and costs to implement the *Transit Now* program were layered on top of the much larger baseline program.

Financial Planning Impacts of *Transit Now*

The *Transit Now* program is funded with 0.1 percent of one percent sales tax collected throughout King County. Over the ten-year period, the funding is assumed to cover the cost of implementing the service as well as constructing and/or acquiring the infrastructure necessary to support the service. The program is staged in a manner that by year ten of the program 100 percent of the revenue from the additional sales is supporting the ongoing costs of the service that was implemented.

The Next Ten Years

Despite the addition of sales tax revenue associated with *Transit Now*, the next several years will continue to present a significant challenge to King County Metro. As mentioned previously, revenue for the voter-approved *Transit Now* program will be expended to implement the improvements leaving the underlying program without more resources.

While the region is expected to experience growth in population and employment, the resulting sales tax revenue may not be sufficient to cover expenditure growth. For the past several years, King County Metro has experienced cost growth that has outpaced both revenues and inflation. Factors contributing to this situation are not anticipated to slacken over the next several years. Many of these cost areas are ones that King County Metro has limited ability to control. The price of diesel fuel per gallon has more than tripled in cost from 2001. Medical and retirement benefits continue to outpace inflation.

King County Metro has taken steps to try to stem the growth of expenditures as a way to preserve service levels. One response was to delay the implementation of service. This may still be necessary if costs continue to outpace revenues. In looking at this issue it is important to remember that the *Transit Now* program builds upon a baseline program that had limited service expansion. The baseline program was providing 190,000 hours of service over the ten-year period.

In order to preserve the baseline program, a key factor will be fare increases. The current financial plan assumes fare increases in 2008 and 2011. These fare increases are intended to recover inflationary cost growth and are a key element of the financial plan.

Future updates of the plan will incorporate changes from the current forecast, changing the phasing, quantity and types of both service and capital projects to best meet the goals of the plan within the resources that are available.

King County Metro Financial Planning Process

Planning is done on an ongoing basis, as well as part of the county's annual budget process.

Comprehensive financial planning, combined with ongoing forecasting, allows the system to respond effectively to change in the economic environment, without detrimental impacts to existing services. Anticipation of changes in financial conditions and forecasting beyond the current year enable the transit system to project sustainable levels of transit service and to accelerate or delay new service implementations based on these changing conditions.

Future updates of the plan will incorporate changes from the current forecast, changing the phasing, quantity and types of both service and capital projects to best meet the goals of the plan within the resources that are available.

A central goal of King County Metro's financial planning activities is stability of the transit system and the financial integrity of the Public Transportation Fund. This goal is accomplished through prudent planning that uses reasonable economic assumptions along with specific programmatic plans to project future revenues, expenditures and resulting fund balances.

Strategy F-1: Operating Revenue

> **Pursue a combination of farebox and other operations revenue to maintain a target bus operating revenue-to-operating expense ratio of at least 25 percent.**

Fare revenue is a significant source of financing for public transportation. Policies regarding fare revenues influence how much resources will be available to improve existing service. In addition, the fare structure influences demand for service, impacting both ridership and revenue. Local economic conditions impact ridership and the resulting fare revenue.

The current financial plan includes the assumption that there will be fare increases in 2008 and 2011 to keep pace with inflation and respond to increasing program costs. Decisions about the exact timing and amount of the fare increase will be determined during the county's annual budgeting processes.

Strategy F-2: Grants

Pursue grants to fund projects that have been identified as necessary to support system service priorities or maintain the system as outlined in this plan.

Transit is dependent on continued funding from the Federal Transit Administration. In 2005, the Surface Transportation Act was reauthorized as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and included an increase in funding for the Puget Sound Region.

Federal funding is provided in a number of ways. The most significant funding is formula generated based on public transit services operated in the region. In addition, individual projects are submitted and receive funding through regional processes or confessional earmarks. New sources of funding are continually evaluated and when projects match with program requirements, grant requests are developed and submitted. Examples of new funding that has been explored include "Very Small Starts" funding for RapidRide implementation and the Urban Partnership program for funds to expand transit services across Lake Washington.

Opportunities for state funding of transit projects and programs has increased in recent years. This funding includes the addition of the Office of Transit Mobility that manages a statewide grant competition as well as funding for Vanpool and Access programs. Future funding awards will be contingent on appropriation levels and competitiveness of submitted proposals.

Strategy F-3: Financial Partnerships

Pursue opportunities for partnerships and economic development with communities, employers, other transit agencies, federal and state governments and vendors to expand resources to support transit services and supporting capital facilities. Explore the use of advertising to support shelter program expansion and enhancements.

The Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation (formerly known as the Long-Range Policy Framework) directs King County Metro to maximize the effectiveness of local public transportation funds by pursuing joint financing of service and capital projects. King County Metro establishes partnerships along many different avenues to leverage funds for service and capital investments. Partnerships range from cooperative efforts with jurisdictions and agencies to implement minor and major capital projects, to programs with employers to promote ridesharing and alternatives to driving alone. With the passage of voter-approved *Transit Now*, additional resources have been made available to leverage funding and improvements through partnerships.

Service Partnerships: *Transit Now*

As described under Service Strategy S-9, *Transit Now* sets aside resources to pursue partnerships with major employers and cities, potentially leveraging millions in additional funding from other sources to add new service in rapidly expanding employment centers. The King County Council has approved a set of priority criteria for selecting partnership proposals along with a process and schedule for seeking future partners. Two types of partnerships are authorized under *Transit Now*: direct financial partnerships and speed and reliability partnerships.

1) **Direct financial partnerships** - A public or private partner (or partners) contributes one-third of the fully-allocated cost of a new Metro Transit route or of new service on an existing Metro Transit route for at least five years and King County pays the other two-thirds.

2) **Speed and reliability partnerships** - One (or more) of 20 eligible cities commits to improving traffic operations on one or more of King County Metro's core service connections so that buses move at least 10 percent faster throughout the day. In return, King County Metro increases bus service in that city by 5,000 hours per year for each route that has gained 10 percent in speed.

Commute Partnerships

King County Metro also works to develop partnerships in the Puget Sound region to increase public transportation services, as described under Service Strategy S-9. Within such transportation partnerships, King County Metro works with employers, cities, neighboring transit agencies, business organizations and community groups to offer a full array of transportation services and assistance to employers. These partnerships also extend to private and public landowners that enter into agreements to provide leased land for park-and-ride use through King County Metro's leased lot program.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Partnerships

King County's TOD program, as described under Capital Strategy, C-8, creates opportunities for King County to partner with jurisdictions and developers to leverage funding, enable transit facility improvements and increase transit ridership while increasing development of housing, jobs and other activities in close proximity to major transit facilities,

The TOD program is intended to increase transit ridership and to meet larger growth management goals by working with jurisdictions to develop transit-supportive land uses and activities and encourage concentration of growth in centers. This concentration of growth is intended to slow suburban sprawl, conserve natural resource lands, keep existing city and town centers vital and allow transportation to operate more efficiently.

Strategy F-4: Financial Management

Ensure the maximum benefit is derived from available transit revenues by:

- **focusing capital expenditures on projects that directly support service investments;**
- **refining capital improvement program expenditure assumptions to improve annual accomplishment rates;**
- **revising lifespan assumptions to reflect actual experience when planning for the replacement of the transit fleet and other equipment and facilities;**
- **increasing the amount of service in the operating program by reducing annual underexpenditure levels, and**
- **replenishing the Transit Fare Stabilization and Operating Enhancement Reserve to enable the operating program to respond to unforeseen revenue or expenditure circumstances.**