Service Guidelines Draft Principles and Recommendations

Draft Principles

During the course of task force deliberations, members have discussed a number of potential changes to the Service Guidelines and the process Metro uses for making service decisions. The group's discussions have also identified several broad principles that frame the more specific recommendations, and will provide guidance to Metro as it works to implement the task force recommendations. The following draft principle statements will guide the development of policy changes to the Service Guidelines, Strategic Plan, and other Metro planning efforts:

- **Different parts of the county have different travel demands**: The Service Guidelines Task Force recognizes that transit mobility needs take different forms throughout King County and acknowledges that a different structure of services types may help align transit service solutions with these needs. This will require a more refined recognition of the different land uses patterns in of the county and the purposes of that transit service.
- **Measure performance of routes against similar services**. The current guidelines have two service types, and all services within those two service types compete are evaluated equally against each other. However, the cost and demand characteristics of different types of service are inherently dissimilar.
- **Right-size service and seed new markets**: While the current system values appear to be about right, sConsider athe range of service types to enhance services to lower density communities and seed new markets. Some greater emphasis in alternative services could be placed on supporting new markets where land use patterns, job and population growth, infrastructure investments suggest opportunities for an emerging transit corridor. and serving transit-dependent riders who do not have access to all-day fixed-route services. [Since Metro has a broad suite of products and services and is industry-leading in its alternative services program; the alternative services program should be further expanded to better meet mobility needs of King County. The recent budget action adding new resources for alternative services for 2015/16 was a good start.
- **Create better connections between centers**: Transit services should help support mobility between non-Seattle centers and to connect people to jobs, particular for low-wage job centers throughout King County. To accomplish this goal there needs to be a better understanding about the origins and destinations of both current and potential riders.
- **Maintain and improve services that meet productivity of the systemobjectives**. Making adjustments to the Service Guidelines will create some tradeoffs in the level of service provided throughout the system. Changes to the Guidelines must continue to focus on making each of the different service types more productive. Productivity will result in higher ridership and fare revenues, and lower cost per rider.

- **Maintain and improve services that meet social equity objectives.** Find opportunities to better serve transit-dependent riders who do not have access to all-day fixed-route services.
- **Maintain and improve services that meet geographic value objectives.** Each part of the county should feel value for the transit services it receives. Those services will not always be in the form of fixed route scheduled service. Metro may deploy a variety of service types to create value throughout the county.
- **The demands for transit service far outweigh current available resources**. There are considerable unmet needs across the transit system – both as defined by the Service Guidelines in the near term and as identified by the PSRC and addressed in the King County Metro Long Range Plan now under development. While Eeach part of the county should feel value for the transit services they receive, those services will not always be in the form of fixed route scheduled service.
- **Value all forms of partnerships, including direct financial, improved transit speed and-reliability and with cities that make land use and infrastructure decisions that would support transit access and ridership.** Land use and traffic operations are critical to transit success, and jurisdictions control both. Jurisdictions should incorporate transit-supportive land use and transit operating priorities in planning and **d**evelopment. Metro/King County should emphasize partnership opportunities and consider funding to incentivize.

Draft Recommendations

Therefore, the Service Guidelines Task Force recommends that Metro: (NOTE: There was strong consensus among the members for the strategies with an asterisk (*). Those strategies *italicized* are being suggested by Metro staff, consistent with task force discussions.)

- Make changes to the Service Guidelines: (Note: Additional analysis of likely outcomes will be completed on service type alternatives, minimum service levels, and creating a scaled point system before the task force reaches a recommendation. At this point, potential recommendations include:)
  - Modify service types to create an express category; to move DARTcreate a to new alternative services category or categories (that may include DART); and to consider different service types (e.g. express, rural, suburban).
  - Develop minimum service standards for each service type.
  - Create aRevise the point system thatto allows for a scaling of points for geographic value. *
  - Create aRevise the point system thatto allows for a scaling of points for social equity. *
- Make changes to the planning process:

- o Use the service planning and community engagement process to more thoroughly and explicitly address issues regarding origin and destination, including frequency of service. Discussions about origins and destinations should be part of ongoing community outreach (see recommendation below), not just when service reductions or additions are being planned. *
- o Use the planning process to better identify the needs of ~~those taking the~~ transit riders and potential riders~~trips~~, including traditionally ~~hard-to-reach~~isolated or disadvantaged communities, such as those with limited English proficiency, low-income and homeless populations, people of color, people with disabilities, elderly people, and those ~~with~~who are currently unserved or underserved by transit. *
- o Use the planning process to explicitly address needs of youth, disabled and elderly populations. *
- o Increase transparency of guidelines process by conducting outreach ~~holding planning/guidelines workshops~~ throughout the county each year and integrate the Service Guidelines with the findings of Metro's Long Range Plan.
- Enhance the alternative services Program:
  - o Since Metro has a broad suite of products and services and is industry-leading in its alternative services program; the alternative services program should be further expanded to better meet mobility needs of King County. The recent budget action adding new resources for alternative services for 2015/16 was a good start. Alternative services may be used to address several system needs not being met by current transit services: 1) replace poorly performing, fixed-route services under certain circumstances, 2) provide better connections between centers, 3) ~~in~~serve rural communities and 4) ~~in~~ serve emerging markets to "seed" potential new routes.
  - o Significantly ~~I~~increase funding support to plan and deliver more alternative services where fixed-route service is not cost effective. The range of alternative services could include Dial-a-Ride (DART), community shuttle, van pool, car pool, ride share, bikeshare, partnerships with private transportation providers.~~, …~~
  - o Enhance the planning for alternative services by facilitating discussions between municipalities, employers and residents to identify unmet needs and opportunities for alternative services and partnerships.
  - o Create a new metric for measuring performance of alternative services and differentiate the types of alternative service in evaluating their performance.
  - o ~~Consider using~~Explore opportunities to further integrate private service providers as a way to augment the Metro-provided alternative services.
  - o Expand and enhance the van pool program as part of the Alternative Services program. Consider modifications to increase the subsidy for van pool services that extend transit services. Metro should explore whether a lower fare could increase

the demand for vanpools. Increase promotional efforts including short term fare incentives to expand van pool program.

- Make changes to partnerships and land-use initiatives:
  - Identify potential new community partnerships that would support transit options for low income workers. Work with employers to identify service options.*
  - Develop and implement a strategy which utilizes Park and Ride resources more effectively and adds capacity. Increase management of Park and Rides, including better utilization of current facilities through parking permit programs, increasing enforcement, as well as making modest near-term investments (e.g. re-striping and/or evaluating effectiveness of currentadditional leased parking lots/spaces and considering additional spaces). In addition, develop plans for and future investments in new or expanded park and ride capacity in concert with other partners (FTA, WSDOT, Sound Transit, local jurisdictions, or private companies).*
  - Others (depending on discussion at June 16 meeting)
  - Work with jurisdictions to create investments that improve service, attract transit riders, and achieve land use goals that support transit services.
  - Continue and expand engagement with private transportation operators (employee and residential shuttles, transportation network companies, taxis, and other commercial transportation entities) to enable complementary use of Metro services and facilities with those operators.
- Support new funding and continued operational efficiencies:
  - There is a need for new resources to support the growth of transit services. To achieve this goal Metro must continue its work focused on transparency, efficiency and accountability.*