

Section Six:

Developing Improvements – Implementation Strategies

The implementation strategies identified in this chapter define priorities and a phasing plan to make some *Transit Now* program improvements by 2016. *Transit Now*.

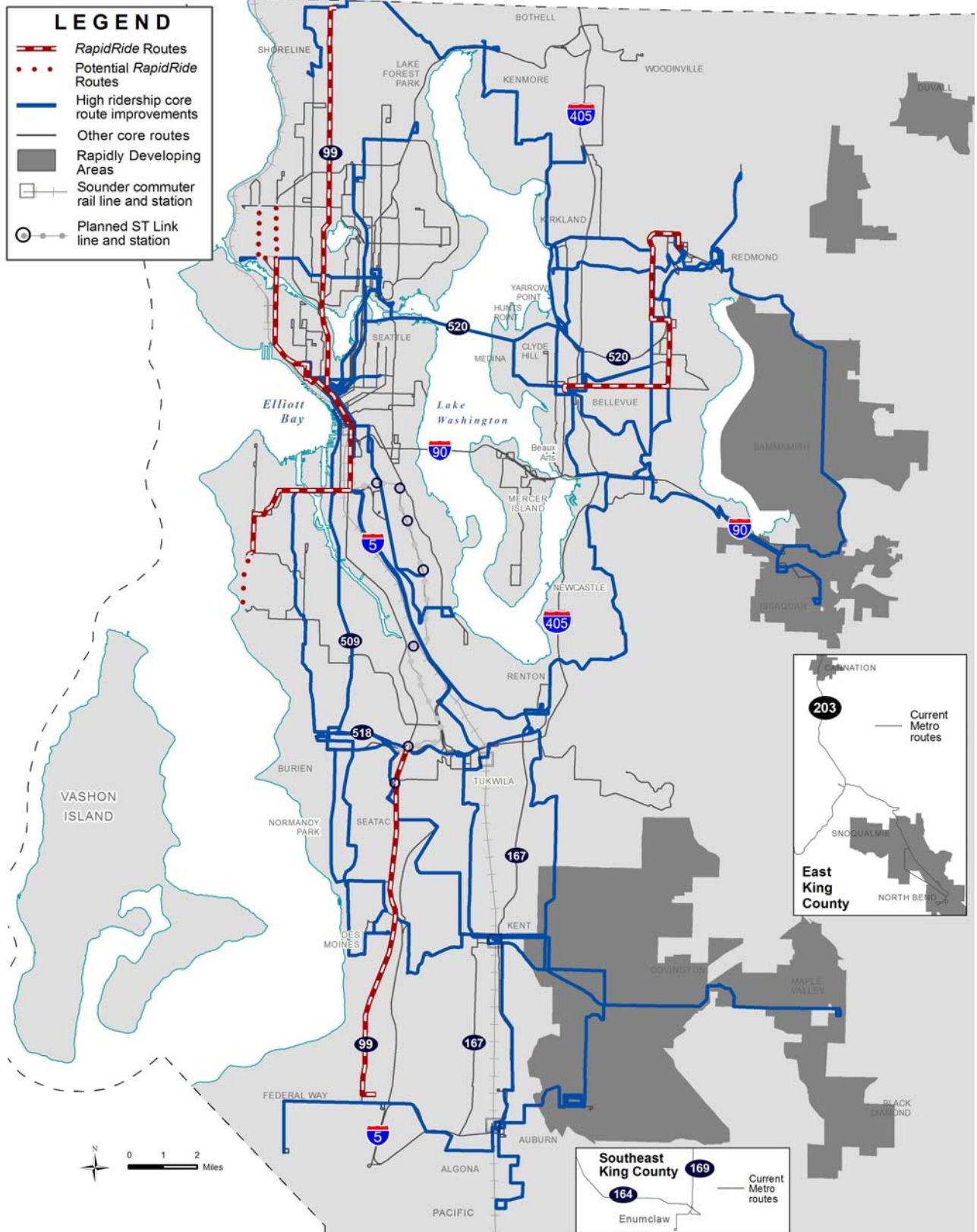
Strategy IM-1: Service Program

Transit Now

A King County Metro 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.** 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



- **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.
- **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. This expansion will be re-evaluated in response to the 2009 King County Transit Performance Audit.
- **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.

Other Projects

- **RapidRide Bus Rapid Transit.** Continue the development of RapidRide by implementing a sixth RapidRide line operating a direct east/west routing between Burien and Renton via the Tukwila International Blvd Link Station, Southcenter Mall, the Tukwila Sounder Station, and the South Renton Park & Ride.
- **Federal Urban Partnership Award.** Build upon existing SR 520 all-day, two-way and peak commuter routes beginning in late 2010 to accommodate the expected increase in transit demand caused by variable tolling planned for early to mid-2011. The Urban Partnership service will increase the current transit investment by about 25 percent during peak commute times.

A 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. More information about the *Transit Now* program is included in Appendix B.

While *Transit Now* defines the priority improvements for transit, 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.

A RapidRide corridor between Burien and Renton will provide a fast, reliable transit connection between three designated urban centers -- Burien, Tukwila and Renton. Each one of these jurisdictions has taken steps to fulfill growth targets and have adopted land use policies that support the Region's growth management plans. The RapidRide corridor between Burien and Renton will improve the connectivity of the region's transit network by providing connections to Link Light Rail, Sounder, Pacific Highway South RapidRide, South Renton Park and Ride and transit centers in each community where connections to more places are available.

The Urban Partnership service increases commute-oriented services from Seattle neighborhoods to Eastside employment; improves commute services from Eastside communities to Westside and works to provide transit service to provide transit options to those currently provided in the SR 520 corridor. The capital cost of buses for the Urban Partnership service is funded by the federal government.

Strategy IM-2: Service Implementation Phasing

Provide a predictable schedule of service expansions in all subareas, as shown in Exhibit 6-2.

The phasing plan for the implementation of new annual service hours is presented in Exhibit 6-2.

Exhibit 6-2

Service Implementation Phasing Plan

Targeted Increases in Annual Service Hours by Program by 2016
(in Thousands of Annual Hours)

| Categories | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|------|------|-------------|
| Developing Areas | | 13 | 8 | | | | | | | | 21 |
| Transit Now RapidRide | | | | 34 | 42 | 19 | 5 | | | | 100 |
| High Ridership/Core | 30 | 24 | 8 | | | | | | | | 62 |
| Burien/Renton RapidRide | | | | | | | 18 | | | | 18 |
| SR 520 Urban Partnership | | | | 7 | 20 | | | | | | 27 |
| Total 40-40-20 Adds | 30 | 37 | 16 | 41 | 62 | 19 | 23 | | | | 228 |
| Service Partnerships | 5 | 22 | 12 | 35 | 6 | 5 | 5 | | | | 90 |
| TOTAL | 35 | 59 | 28 | 76 | 68 | 24 | 28 | | | | 318* |

* Implementation of the remaining 317,000 hours of Transit Now service will be determined as resources become available.

Investment completed as planned

RapidRide Implementation

Pacific Highway South in 2010, Bellevue/Redmond & West Seattle in 2011, Ballard/Uptown in 2012, and Aurora Avenue & Burien/Renton 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. In 2008 and 2009, further investments were made in high ridership corridors, developing areas and service partnerships. Future phases of investments through 2016 will focus on RapidRide and the service partnership program.

The other initiatives – core route investments, developing areas service and partnership programs as well as ridesharing, vanpool and paratransit program improvements would be deployed as resources allow, following the restoration of each subarea’s service hours to December 2009 levels, not including hours exempted by Strategy IM-3.

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 and to integrate with Link light rail service. Other factors that affect the phasing include service needs, operating constraints and partner participation in the partnership program.

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.

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 the “A Line” RapidRide improvements on Pacific Highway South and the “B Line” RapidRide Bellevue-Redmond improvements. Implement frequency enhancements in the “C Line” RapidRide West Seattle corridors.

Service Partnerships – Continued investments for improvements and new service. Alaskan Way Viaduct Mitigation – Begin WSDOT funded mitigation service.

Urban Partnership – Initiate the Urban Partnership service on SR520.

2012-2013

RapidRide – initiate the “D Line” RapidRide in Ballard and Uptown, branding of the “C Line,” the “E Line” on Aurora Avenue North corridor, and the “F Line” connecting Burien and Renton.

Service Partnerships – Continued investments for improvements and new service.

2014-2016

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 2007-2016 *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 percent 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.

Further, any reduction of the number of total bus service hours implemented between January 1st, 2010 and December 31st, 2013 in the Metro system below the 2009 year-end service levels shall be considered a "service suspension." The future work program for the King County Regional Transit Committee shall focus on restoration of transit service suspensions/cuts, if any.

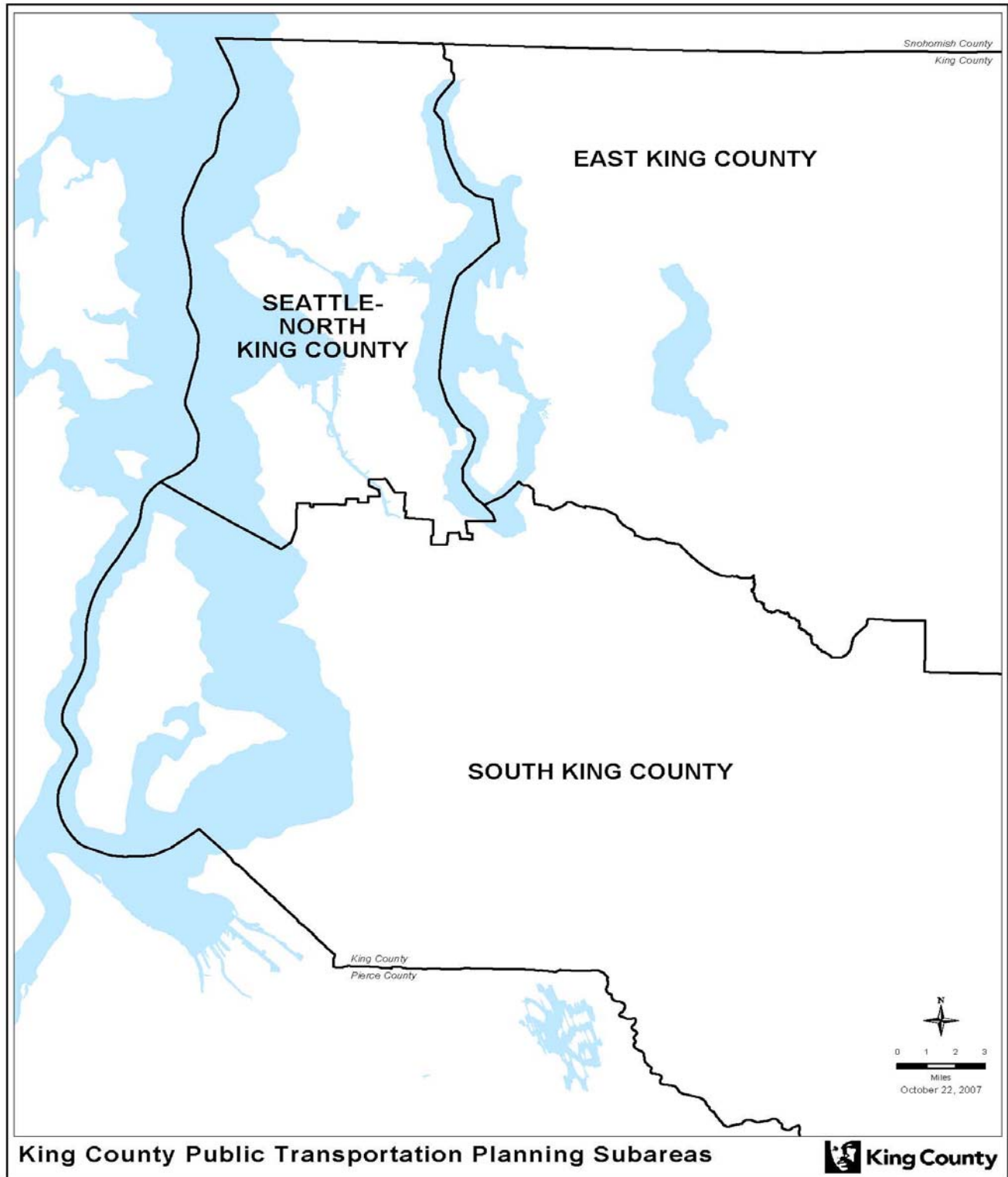
Service hours invested in RapidRide, Transit Now partnerships, the SR520 Urban Partnership, and contracted services such as construction

mitigation service are not considered part of the suspensions or restorations.

Any reductions in total bus service hours made after December 31st, 2013 or reductions made after the total hours of service in the Metro system return to 2009 year-end service levels shall be considered service cuts.

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
King County Public Transportation Planning
Subareas**



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, which was based on the *Transit Now* program. 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.

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.

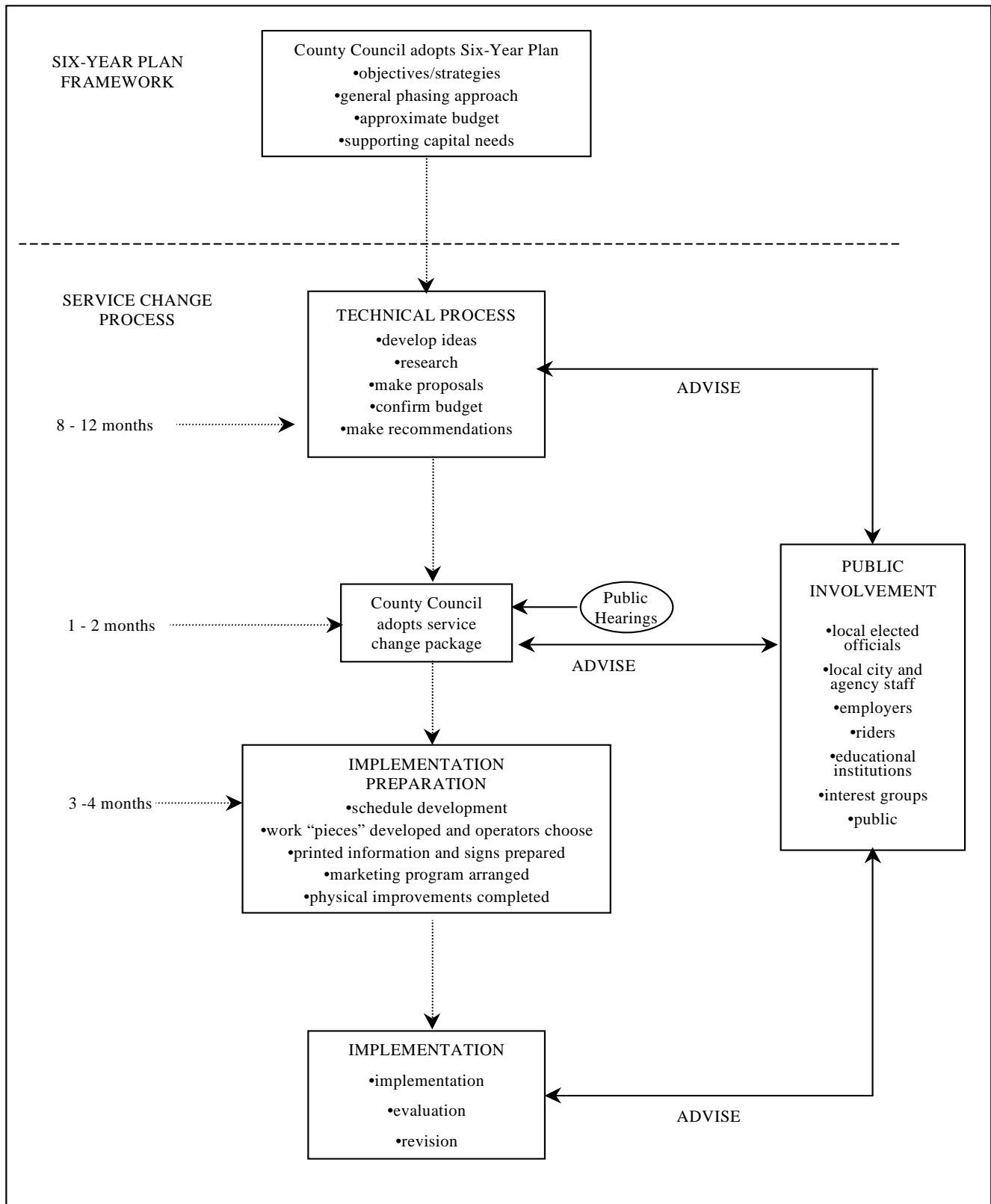
Additional Factors

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.