

# Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation

November 5, 2007

King County is required to prepare, adopt and carry out a general comprehensive plan for the public transportation that will best serve the residents of King County and to amend said plan from time to time to meet changed conditions and requirements. The following goals, objectives and policies constitute King County's Public Transportation Comprehensive Plan and will provide a framework for future Council decisions on public transportation services and facilities within the metropolitan area.

## 1. GOALS

The following six broad goals define the role of public transportation in shaping the region's future.

- 1.1 Ensure the availability to move around the region – provide reliable, convenient and safe public transportation services throughout the region for King County.
- 1.2 Support growth management goals, including preserving communities and open space, supporting communities' ability to develop in ways that preserve and enhance their livability and limiting intrusion into rural areas.
- 1.3 Improve the region's economic vitality – increase access to jobs, education and other community resources.
- 1.4 Preserve environmental quality – conserve land and energy resources, and reduce air pollution.
- 1.5 Be a responsible regional partner – build partnerships with state and local jurisdictions, members of affected communities, employers, neighboring transit agencies and the regional transit authority to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of transit services.
- 1.6 Work with other jurisdictions to ensure that land use and transportation planning and implementation are coordinated.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

### **Market Share**

**Objective 2.1** Increase the portion of trips by people using transit and ridesharing within King County.

### **Mobility**

**Objective 2.2** Reduce average HOV travel time relative to SOV travel by increasing HOV speed and reliability.

**Objective 2.3** Improve transit access to jobs and other activities.

**Objective 2.4** 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**

**Objective 2.5** Provide the most efficient and effective services and facilities possible within available resources.

### **Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits**

**Objective 2.6** Provide improved HOV services that support local and regional comprehensive plans and policies consistent with the Growth Management Act.

**Objective 2.7** Encourage creation and enhancement of pedestrian-friendly and HOV-supportive communities.

**Objective 2.8** Increase transportation options that use less energy, consume less land resources and produce fewer air pollutants.

**Objective 2.9** Reduce the average miles and hours travelled per day per person in single-occupant vehicles.

**Objective 2.10** Provide services and facilities that benefit all socio-economic groups.

### **Financial Feasibility**

**Objective 2.11** Develop a system that is affordable to build, run and use with available funding.

**Objective 2.12** Identify new funding sources through cooperation with public jurisdictions and the private sector.

### **3. POLICIES**

The following policies provide a framework for achieving King County Metro's long-range public transportation vision, and will be used to guide decisions on priorities and specific improvements.

#### **Policy Coordination**

##### **Policy 3.1.1: Growth Management**

Support local and regional growth management plans and policies. Within each subarea, focus new and existing services and facilities to support targeted land use concentrations identified in local comprehensive and regional plans and within the urbanized growth area of King County.

Work with local jurisdictions to meet the goals and requirements related to transit services and facilities that are contained in the Growth Management Act, the Countywide Planning Policies and the Multi-County Planning Policies.

##### **Policy 3.1.2: Transportation Demand Management**

Within subareas, give priority (such as a larger share of that subarea's service subsidy, earlier implementation of services improvements, capital improvements, or technical assistance) to areas or employers implementing effective demand management programs (such as ride-matching, subscription buses, or incentive programs) or HOV-supportive land use actions (such as increased density or transit-oriented design policies). Collaborate with jurisdictions and other affected parties to implement service and facilities in conjunction with these programs. Work with local jurisdictions to establish evaluation criteria for determining priorities.

##### **Policy 3.1.3: Commute Trip Reduction**

Work with employers to ensure that viable, non-SOV commute options exist for employees in order to achieve reductions in SOV use.

##### **Policy 3.1.4: Regional Transit Project**

Fulfill local transit agency responsibilities as defined in the Regional Transit System Plan.

### Policy 3.1.5: Transit Oriented Development

Use transit and public or private partner resources to pursue development opportunities at transit facilities and within a reasonable walking distance of such facilities. DOT shall pursue public-private development opportunities, calculate the cost to the public transportation fund, and estimate and report on:

- increased ridership;
- increased development within centers;
- reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and
- increased opportunities for walking, biking and transit use.

Individual TOD projects shall be measured to identify the degree to which they provide the above program benefits and other project specific benefits related to transit operating or facilities enhancements, local jurisdictional goals and other transportation goals identified in this plan.

## **Service and Capital Development**

### Policy 3.2.1: Service Concept

Work collaboratively with governments and communities to implement a locally based, regionally linked network of public transportation services and facilities addressing regional, inter-community, and local service needs. Actively develop, implement and promote non-conventional public transportation options as part of that system.

### Policy 3.2.2: Mobility

Provide mobility for persons who by choice, disability, or circumstance rely on public transportation as their primary means of travel.

### Policy 3.2.3: Service Quality

Regularly review customer satisfaction with the public transportation systems. Design and operate services and facilities to meet both existing and future customer needs and improve satisfaction where needed.

### Policy 3.2.4: System Integration and Access

Plan, design and implement a system of services and facilities that support integration of regional and local services, and that facilitate access to the system for pedestrians, bicycles, transit collection/distribution services, and persons with disabilities, thereby providing a viable alternative to auto usage.

#### Policy 3.2.5: Environmental Protection

Support preservation of environmental quality with services and capital investments resulting in fewer detrimental impacts on air and water quality, noise reduction and better regional mobility.

#### Policy 3.2.6: Services and Facility Development and Implementation Guidelines

Establish services and facility development guidelines to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the system, and address public transportation's role in growth management. These guidelines shall be used to allocate and implement service changes and capital improvements during the six-year planning and annual service investment processes. These guidelines will include, but not be limited, to:

- descriptions of the conditions under which different types of services and facilities are appropriate;
- basic and enhanced transit level-of-service targets;
- facility access requirements, including non-motorized access;
- mode split goals; and
- performance measures.

These guidelines also will include evaluation criteria for allocating services and facilities including, but not limited to, consideration of:

- demand management programs and
- HOV supportive land use actions, such as parking supply reductions and transit-friendly design standards.

It is understood that the Regional Transit Committee of the Metropolitan King County Council will be responsible for reviewing the proposed guidelines and criteria.

#### Policy 3.2.7: Locally-Developed Transit Services

If local or regional agencies propose and finance development of public transportation services that are complementary to Metro's plans and services and that Metro may operate, such as local bus circulator, streetcar, or other locally developed service concept, Metro may be a full partner and must be consulted at the earliest possible stage of development to establish the project's feasibility; identify the system-level requirements, costs, issues, implications and impacts; and clarify potential roles and responsibilities in order to form a basis for interagency agreement. For King County funds to be contributed to support the King County Metro Transit operation of a locally-developed project on an ongoing basis, the project must be consistent with service allocation provisions adopted in the Six-Year Transit Development Plan or successor plans and subarea priorities.

### Policy 3.2.8: Ballot measures

Proposed King County Metro public transportation improvements, including those specified in a proposed ballot measure for voter authorized funding, which would constitute adoption of or amendment to countywide plan or policy shall be subject to review and recommendation by the Regional Transit Committee and legislative approval under the terms of King County Charter Section 270.30. When the funding source is approved by the voters, the associated improvements shall be incorporated into the Transit Strategic Plan.

## **Local Jurisdiction and Community Involvement**

### Policy 3.3.1: Planning

Ensure a balance between local and regional service needs by involving members of the community, local jurisdictions, and the regional transit authority (where applicable) in the planning, review and implementation of services and facilities. Within each subarea, collaborate with members of the community, employers, and staff and elected officials of local jurisdictions to collectively develop services and capital development priorities to be included in transit planning efforts including, but not limited to, the six-year plans and annual service change and capital investment programs.

### Policy 3.3.2: Role of the Public in Planning

Develop and implement an open public involvement program designed to obtain input from the public for transit service and facility planning. This process should focus on achieving successful and productive public participation in transit service and facility planning efforts.

### Policy 3.3.3: Role of Local Jurisdictions in Planning

Establish a collaborative planning process with local jurisdictions to address local service and facility needs. Metro staff will work with local jurisdictions' staff and elected officials to ensure input into the guidelines for service and facility development, and into the plans for service and facilities within each jurisdiction. Local jurisdiction will have the opportunity to propose local transit service and facility plans to Metro and to review and comment on the transit service and facility plans being considered by Metro. Adopted service plans should reflect the needs of local jurisdictions.

It is understood that the Regional Transit Committee of the Metropolitan King County Council will be responsible for reviewing the proposed guidelines and plans for local transit services and facilities, and will provide recommendations to the Metropolitan King County Council, to ensure consistency and coordination among local services and facility plans with countywide and regional plans.

#### Policy 3.3.4: Implementation

Work with local jurisdictions to expedite review and development of service and capital facility improvements.

### **Financial**

#### Policy 3.4.1: Operating Subsidy Allocation

Distribution of any new service resources shall be consistent with the Six-Year Transit Development Plan, as it may be amended from time to time.

#### Policy 3.4.2: Transportation System Management (TSM) Capital Allocation

Implement a public transportation capital development program to: construct and purchase basic system infrastructure (e.g., operating bases); facilitate the provision of regional services (e.g., park-and-ride lots); and enhance the provision of local services (e.g., transit corridor improvements, bicycle and pedestrian access improvements). Through the six-year planning process, develop evaluation criteria to allocate TSM resources among subareas and competing projects. These criteria will include, but not be limited to, HOV-supportive policies in local and regional comprehensive plans, local support, and performance indicators.

#### Policy 3.4.3: OR/OE Ratios

Establish, and review annually, targets for system-wide and subarea operating-revenue-to-operating-expense (OR/OE) ratios, and OR/OE for each type of public transportation services.

#### Policy 3.4.4: Multi-Year Financial Planning

Maintain a multi-year financial plan and cashflow projection of six years or more, estimating service growth, operating expenses, capital requirements, reserves and debt services.

#### Policy 3.4.5: Partnerships

##### *General Partnerships:*

Maximize the effectiveness of local public transportation funds by pursuing joint financing of service, capital development opportunities, and ridership incentive programs with other public agencies and with private interests.

##### *Transit Now Partnerships:*

The Six-Year Transit Development Plan or successor plans will identify a portion of planned service hour expansion to be dedicated for service partnerships to leverage other public and private resources to make public transportation investments of mutual interest. Partnership agreements with public and/or private entities will specify the service improvements to be made as well as the partner contributions, which may take the form of direct financial investment or

investments in transit speed and reliability that will improve transit costs and increase ridership. Service resources dedicated to partnership programs shall be distributed based solely on performance and participation criteria, without regard to their impact on other service allocation policies.