SECTION 5

USING THE GUIDELINES TO REDUCE SERVICE BECAUSE OF A MAJOR FUNDING SHORTFALL

Metro's funding shortfall

Since the service guidelines were adopted in July 2011, Metro has been using them to improve the transit system by delivering productive, high-quality service where it's needed most. This year, we have begun using the guidelines for a different purpose: to prepare for a major reduction of the transit system that may be necessary because of a severe funding shortfall facing Metro.

Since 2008, the Great Recession and ongoing weak economy have caused a shortfall in Metro's revenue from sales tax. Over the past five years, King County and Metro have taken many steps to substantially cut costs, increase revenue, and preserve most service. Actions include reducing staff and overhead, finding new operating efficiencies, tapping reserve funds, cutting very-low-productivity bus trips, raising fares, and adopting a temporary congestion reduction charge (CRC) that provides supplemental funding for two years.

However, the CRC will expire and available reserve funds will be exhausted in mid-2014. Metro's adopted 2013-2014 budget assumes that as a result, annual revenues will fall $75 million short of what is needed to maintain the current level of service. Compounding this problem, state funding will end in June 2014 for enhanced Metro service to mitigate traffic impacts of the Alaskan Way Viaduct (AWV) Replacement Project.

If Metro does not receive additional revenue, up to 17 percent of current service would have to be eliminated in 2014 and 2015 to balance the transit budget. This would include up to 600,000 annual service hours to close the general revenue gap, plus 45,000 hours that would be lost when the AWV mitigation service ends. At the time this report is being prepared, the most recent sales tax collections for Metro have been somewhat better than expected, though not nearly enough to stave off service reductions. The actual size of the reductions will depend on Metro's current finances at the time reductions are approved.

In June 2014, the 45,000 hours of transit service supported by the AWV project mitigation contract would be removed. The West Seattle area has been receiving the most mitigation service and would be most heavily affected; other corridors that have been receiving mitigation service are those linking Burien, White Center, North Seattle (Aurora), Ballard and downtown Seattle. About 150 bus trips per day representing 7,500 bus seats per day would be lost, resulting in more-crowded and less-reliable transit service in an even more congested SR-99 corridor.

Service reductions would begin in June 2014, followed by additional reductions in September 2014 and February, June and September 2015. Up to 600,000 annual service hours would be eliminated in communities across King County, plus 45,000 hours in corridors that have been receiving AWV mitigation service.

The following is a proposal for making the necessary service reductions based on the service guidelines and objective data about route performance.

Service reduction proposal

This proposal differs from the reduction illustration that was shared with the public in the 2012 service guidelines report. It has an added focus on revisions to the network that result in greater overall efficiency

and preservation of service on the most highly used corridors. Using the service guidelines, Metro planners developed the proposal based on a close examination of the network to find the most effective ways to provide service within a severely constrained budget.

More than 80 percent of Metro's routes would be changed in some way—some would be deleted, some would be reduced and some would be revised. These changes would have broad impacts on the entire public transportation network—even for routes that are not changed—and would affect a large portion of Metro's customers and communities across King County. Impacts would include fewer travel options for riders, longer waits at bus stops, more transfers where people today have a direct connection, more-crowded and less-reliable buses, and increased traffic congestion.

As the basis for this service reduction proposal, Metro spent several months doing a detailed, comprehensive analysis of data for all routes in regular service as of spring 2013. The routes are listed in Table 19. Because the service reductions would come from our current system, Table 19 lists routes as of fall 2013. Routes 208 and 219 are new as of fall 2013, so they are not shown in any tables in the preceding sections. Also that fall, Route 155 was converted to DART service, which is listed as 906DART in the table. We used the service guidelines described in Section 3 as the overarching guidance for which services would be reduced. We identified reduction priorities by considering each route's performance and whether it is above, below or at the corridor's target service level. The methodology for reducing service is illustrated in Figure 13.

We also looked for opportunities to cut hours yet maintain an effective network by making service revisions to areas of the county, to groups of routes, and to individual routes. Through these revisions, we could reduce duplication in the transit network while maintaining higher levels of service in the areas with the most ridership. Making changes to multiple routes along a corridor or within an area can improve efficiency and reduce operating costs while retaining more riders. At the same time, we kept in mind that large revisions also reduce or eliminate service in some current route segments, which can be harmful for customers and stressful for bus operators. We also sought to maintain connections in areas where there are high concentrations of minority populations or people with low incomes and high transit ridership.

In the service reduction proposal that is based on this work, the following changes would occur:

- **Less than 20 percent of Metro's routes (33 routes) would remain unchanged,** but even these unchanged routes would likely carry more people and be more crowded in a reduced transit network. These routes typically are now in the top 25 percent on one or both performance measures, or were revised since spring 2013 to improve their performance and system efficiency.

  Table 19 shows five routes that are in the bottom 25 for one or more productivity measures remaining unchanged. These routes remain unchanged for the following reasons:

  - Route 10 was in the top 25 for one measure and in the bottom 25 for the other. This route helps maintain a network of well-spaced services.
  - Route 224 was shortened in fall 2013 as part of the alternative services delivery project to help make the service more cost-effective.
  - Route 246 was revised in fall 2013 to help make the service more productive.
  - Route 309EX was in the bottom 25 only because it was on a temporary reroute. Since the re-route has ended, this route is no longer in the bottom 25.
  - Route 601EX is an in service deadhead trip; in other words, it picks people up on its way from the base to the start of a different route. This means deletion of this trip would result in little to no cost savings because the bus and driver would still have to make this trip.

- **More than 50 percent of Metro's routes (107 routes) would be reduced or revised.** In general, routes were proposed for reduction or revision because of low performance or because of an opportunity to improve the efficiency of the transit network.

The changes in this category would have the widest degree of variation. They range from smaller service reductions such as the last trips at the end of the day or elimination of low productivity route "tails," to larger reductions that include frequency reductions elimination of all night or off-peak service.

About 40 percent of routes in this category are now performing in the bottom 25 percent for one or both productivity measures during one or more time periods of the day. Many of these routes would be reduced or revised during the specific time periods when they carry the fewest riders, as we seek to preserve service where it is most highly used. The other 60 percent of routes in this category are higher-productivity routes that would be reduced and/or revised, or modified as part of a restructure, to improve service efficiency.

- **More than 30 percent of Metro's routes (74 routes) would be deleted.** Many of the routes that would be deleted are in the bottom 25 percent for one or both productivity measures, but some more-productive routes would also be deleted. Many of these higher-productivity routes are peak-only routes that do not meet the peak speed or ridership criteria described in Section 1 of this report. We also proposed to delete routes when we were able to consolidate service that operates on parallel corridors and serves similar markets, making better use of overall resources. Some routes would be deleted as we restructured larger areas and revised other routes to provide replacement service.

TABLE 19

How Routes Would Be Affected in the Service Reduction Proposal

Unchanged		Deleted				Reduced/Revised				
A Line	301	4	82	205EX	909DART	C Line	32*	114	177*	249
B Line	303EX	5EX	83	209	910DART	D Line	33	116EX	180	252
10	309EX	7EX	84	210	913DART	1	36	118EX	181*	255
15EX	312EX	19	99	211EX	916DART	2	40	118	182	257
48	316	21	110	213	919DART	3*	41	119EX	186	269
74EX	330	22	113	215	927DART	5	43	119	187	271
75	345	25	139	217	930DART	7	44	120	193EX	311
76	347	26	152	237	935DART	8	49	121	197	331
77	373EX	27	154	238		9EX	50*	122	204	342*
101	601EX	28	158	242		11	55	123	208	346
102	906DART	30	159	243		12	56EX	124	212*	348
140 (F Line)		31	161	244EX		13*	60	125	214	355EX*
153		37	167	250		14	64EX	128	221	358EX* (E Line)
166		47	173	260		16*	65	131	226	372EX*
169		48EX	178	265		17EX	70*	132	232	903DART
183		57	179	277		18EX	71	143EX	234	907DART
216		61	190	280		21EX	73*	148	235*	914DART
218		62	192	304		24	98†	150	236	915DART
219		66EX	200	306EX		26EX*	105	156	240	917DART
224		67	201	308		28EX*	106*	157*	241	931DART
246		68	202	901DART		29	107	164	245	
268		72	203	908DART			111	168*	248	

Shaded cells are routes that perform in the bottom 25% in at least one measure, in at least one time period.

* Routes have additional service/trips as a result of a revision

† South Lake Union Streetcar

TABLE 20

Areas and Related Routes That Would Be Revised or Consolidated

REVISIONS IN REDUCTION PRIORITY II

Northeast Seattle	31	32*	66EX	67	68	70*	71	72	73*	242	372EX*	
Northeast King County	221	234	235*	236	237	238	252	255	257	311	342*	930DART
Central/Southeast Seattle	7	8	9EX	14	27	36	60	98†	106*	107		
West Seattle	21	50*	116EX	118EX	119EX	125	128	131	132			
Queen Anne/Central Seattle	1	2	3*	4	12	13*	29					
North-Central Seattle	5EX	5	16*	26EX*	26	28EX*	28	40	355EX*			
I-5 South	177*	178	179	181*	190	192	193EX	197				
Magnolia	24	33										

ROUTE CONSOLIDATIONS AND ROUTING CHANGES

Kent	157*	158	159	168*	914DART	916DART
Federal Way	187	901DART				
Renton	111					
Eastgate	212*	217	226	245	271	

* Routes have additional service/trips as a result of a revision

Bolded red routes are those that would be deleted

Revisions would take place in several areas of the county, listed below. These revisions are categorized as major, minor or route consolidations to give a sense of their magnitude. In proposing the revisions (as listed in tables 19 and 20), Metro's objective is to maintain service for as many current riders as possible, although in every case some riders would have to walk farther or would lose their service.

Major revisions are those where entire areas of the county would be restructured to provide more efficient service, reduce route duplication, target higher frequencies of service to the places with the most ridership, respond to major network changes and land-use developments, and create simpler service patterns that would be easier to understand. In these cases, we would be asking riders to adjust to a new service network, with many riders required to walk farther to reach service and some losing service altogether.

The service reduction proposal includes the following major revisions:

- **Northeast Seattle:** Consolidate several duplicative routes into one frequent route that runs between Northgate and downtown Seattle via the University District. Preserve night and weekend service on corridors with higher ridership in northeast Seattle and reduce service coverage to areas with fewer riders.
- **Northeast King County:** Shorten some routes that have less productive segments, reduce duplication in the network, maintain frequency in areas with higher ridership, better match service provided to the demand for that service, and reduce service coverage to areas that have fewer riders.
- **Central/Southeast Seattle:** Consolidate service to reduce duplication in the network while maintaining connections to areas with higher ridership. Preserve off-peak and night service to corridors with higher ridership in central and southeast Seattle by shortening some routes and reducing service coverage to areas that have fewer riders.
- **West Seattle:** Consolidate service to preserve commuter network and service coverage and frequency to West Seattle and southwest King County arterials. These restructures are in response to the combined impacts of Metro's structural financial gap and the loss of funding for the Alaskan Way Viaduct mitigation service.

Minor revisions are those where groups of routes that provide similar service would be revised or combined to provide more efficient service. In these cases, riders would use different routes to get to their destinations, but most riders would have service that is similar to what they currently use. Other riders may walk farther to access service or may lose their service. The service reduction proposal includes the following minor revisions:

- **Queen Anne/Central Seattle:** Consolidate service to reduce duplication in the network, maintain frequency in areas with high ridership and reduce service to areas with low ridership.
- **North-Central Seattle:** Streamline routings and consolidate competing services. Preserve off-peak, night, and weekend service on corridors with higher ridership in north-central Seattle by reducing service coverage in areas with fewer riders.
- **Magnolia:** Maintain all-day service to the areas with the highest ridership in Magnolia and preserve peak service levels that match rider demand.
- **I-5 South commuter service (Federal Way, Kent):** Maintain service frequency and ability to access current destinations to the most highly used park-and-ride lots on the I-5 south corridor. Eliminate peak service to park-and-rides that have relatively low utilization.

Route consolidations: In some cases, two or more routes are combined into one route that serves the majority of the riders that the two original routes served. The service reduction proposal also includes route consolidations in the following areas:

- **Kent:** Maintain some peak service to Kent East Hill by consolidating commuter service onto a single route and providing timed connections with Sounder commuter rail. Maintain scaled-back local DART service in Kent.
- **Federal Way:** Maintain some service coverage by reducing local service network duplication.
- **Renton:** Shorten route to serve most productive segments.
- **Eastgate:** Streamline routing to serve stops with the highest ridership and make service more efficient. Add peak service to accommodate rider demand.

Route by route descriptions of all service reductions and revisions are available online at www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future. These descriptions include a map, summary of the route changes, resulting frequency and service span (or number of trips for peak service), and reasons why the service was reduced or revised. Also available online are maps of revision areas, with route frequencies and service spans of the resulting service network for each revised area. There are no route-by-route descriptions of unchanged or deleted routes.

Public outreach is part of any major service change. In November 2013, Metro will launch a public outreach process to inform people about the proposed reductions and learn from them about potential impacts of the changes. Throughout this process, we will strive to increase the public's understanding of the process Metro followed to determine the necessary reductions.

Metro will reach out in multiple forums in all areas of the county. The public outreach effort will be geared toward helping people better understand why service must be cut and how they may be affected, as well as helping Metro understand these effects. The feedback will help us identify impacts we might have missed in our own analysis, as well as ways we might meet our customers' needs in the future. If public feedback helps us identify ways to soften the impacts of service cuts, increase ridership, and *still make the necessary overall reductions*, we may make some adjustments to our proposal before finalizing the service reduction package that will ultimately be considered for adoption by the King County Council. Metro will more likely be able to respond to public feedback that:

- Identifies ways to reduce impacts on riders and serve more people while making the necessary service-hour reductions
- Balances the principles of social equity, geographic value and productivity by following the service guidelines
- Concerns a quantifiable reduced impact or benefit of the suggested change.

Community comments will also inform future service changes and policies, even if we are not able to adjust the reduction proposal and respond to people's concerns within the constraints of our current revenue environment.

A final proposal will be submitted to the King County Council for a decision in 2014.

Potential impacts

The proposed reduction of Metro service would directly affect more than 80 percent of Metro's routes and have a broad impact on the entire public transportation network and a large portion of Metro's customers. Our services are part of an integrated transportation system, in which services work together to get people where they want to go. Today, as many as one-third of our customers make trips that involve transfers. For many of these riders, connections would become less convenient or impossible if services were eliminated or reduced.

The effectiveness of the overall transit network would be diminished. A reduced transit network would shrink the number of places people could go, limit where and how often they could travel, and increase the time that trips would take. People would have to walk farther or wait longer for a bus; many would

ride crowded buses, or be left at the curb as full buses pass them by. Overall, the system would be less convenient, attractive, and functional for many riders. Many riders might stop using transit as a result.

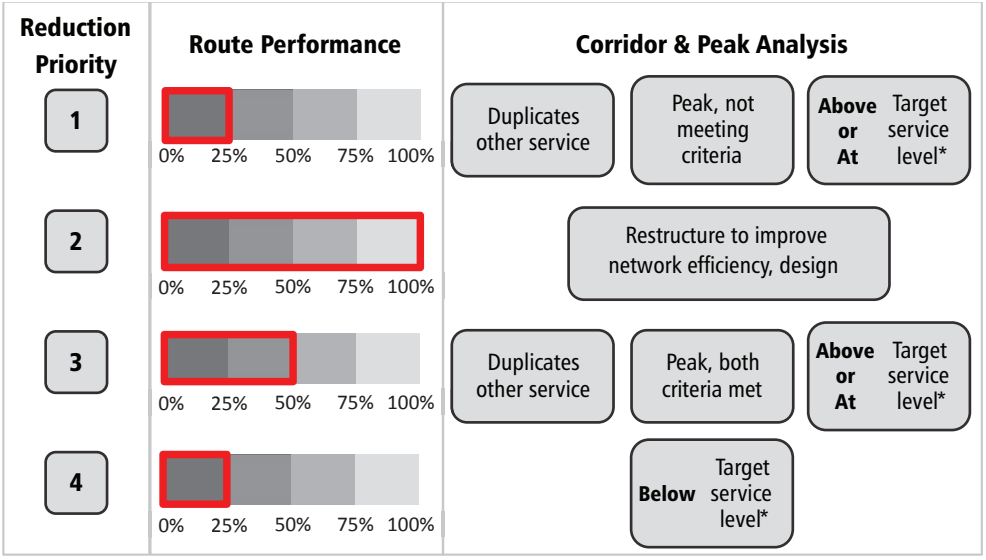
Here are some examples of what a reduced network could mean:

- **Elimination or reduction of more than 80 percent of the routes in the system would affect all types of services, not just those that are low-performing**.
- **Reduced neighborhood access to transit.** Many people in neighborhoods throughout King County would get less service, or would lose service entirely.
- **Longer, less-convenient trips to work and school.** Fifty-six percent of Metro's riders take the bus to school or work. Riders would have to wait longer, walk farther, make extra transfers or stand in the aisle more often. Some might not be able to get to their jobs or classes.
- **Increased traffic congestion.** Metro service takes about 175,000 vehicles off the road every weekday—largely during the busiest times of day on the most heavily used corridors. Major service reductions would send thousands of people back into their cars, increasing congestion and slowing traffic for everyone by adding tens of thousands of new car trips to King County's already-congested roadways.
- **Impacts on economic growth.** More than 1,500 businesses, the University of Washington, and other institutions provide bus passes to their employees or students; they rely on transportation to get people to work on time, manage parking capacity, and help reduce traffic congestion. Cuts to the transit system would affect our local economy as people would have a harder time getting to work and as increased congestion would make it harder to move goods and deliver services.
- **Impacts on those who depend on transit.** People who rely solely or heavily on transit would have fewer travel choices because there would be fewer bus stops, fewer routes, and less service on remaining routes.
- **Decreased accessible service options.** With less fixed-route service and fewer bus stops, riders with disabilities would have fewer opportunities to use Metro's fixed-route system. Federal requirements for complementary ADA paratransit, Metro's Access service, would be reduced if Metro's fixed-route service was reduced. Reductions in the areas and times in which Access service would be provided are possible, but are not yet part of this proposal.

Guidelines methodology for reducing service

The first routes considered for reduction are those that perform in the bottom 25 percent on one or both productivity measures: **rides per platform hour and passenger miles per platform mile.**

Fig. 13
Methodology For Reducing Service



*Target service level is based on demographics and demand between connections served by transit

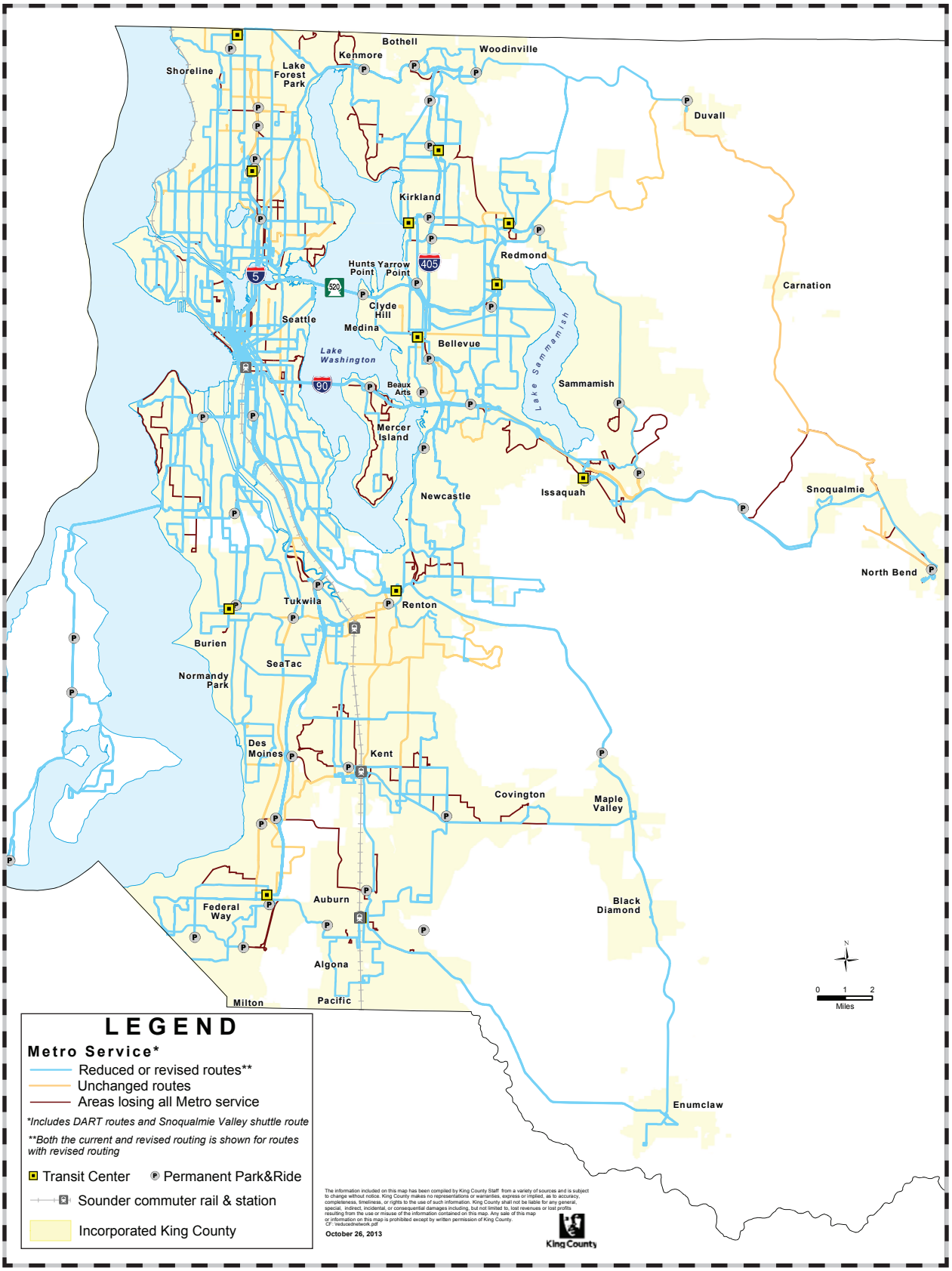
Why reducing routes in the bottom 25 percent is not enough

The routes that perform in the bottom 25 percent for productivity are a starting point for potential service reductions. Additional cuts would be needed to reduce the 600,000 hours necessary to close the $75 million shortfall as well as the 45,000 hours funded by the Alaskan Way Viaduct mitigation contract that expires in June 2014. Some routes in the bottom 25 percent would be maintained to support some level of service throughout King County as well as other policy objectives. The remaining cuts would have to come from services that have higher productivity and would normally have a low potential for reduction. For further discussion, please see Section 3, Service Reduction Priorities, page 43.

The figures on the following pages show area maps indicating routes that are deleted, reduced or revised, or unchanged in the service reduction proposal.

FIG. 14

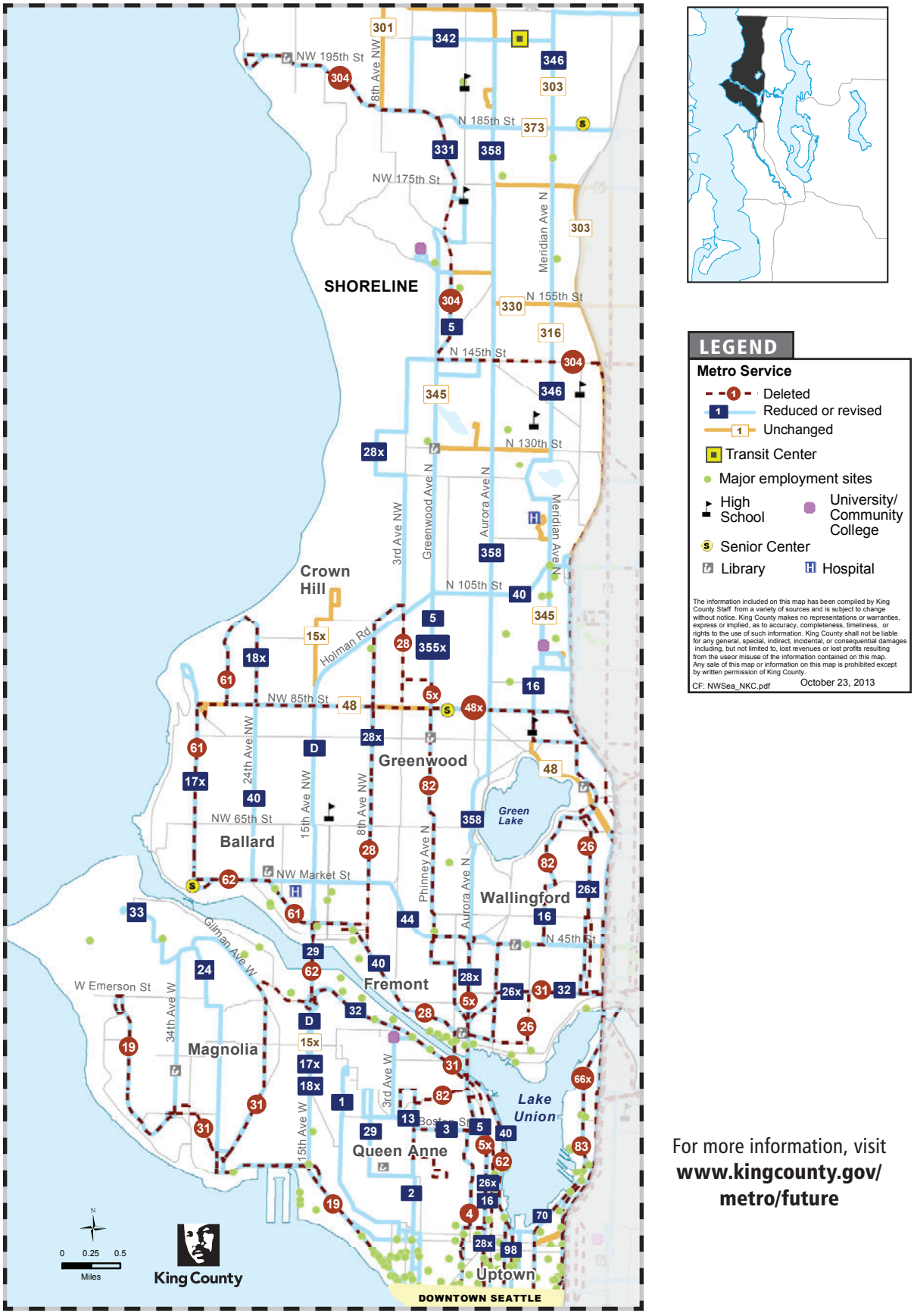
Proposed Reduction of Up to 600,000 Annual Service Hours



For more information, visit **www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future**

FIG. 15

Service Reduction Proposal: Northwest Seattle/North King County



LEGEND

Metro Service

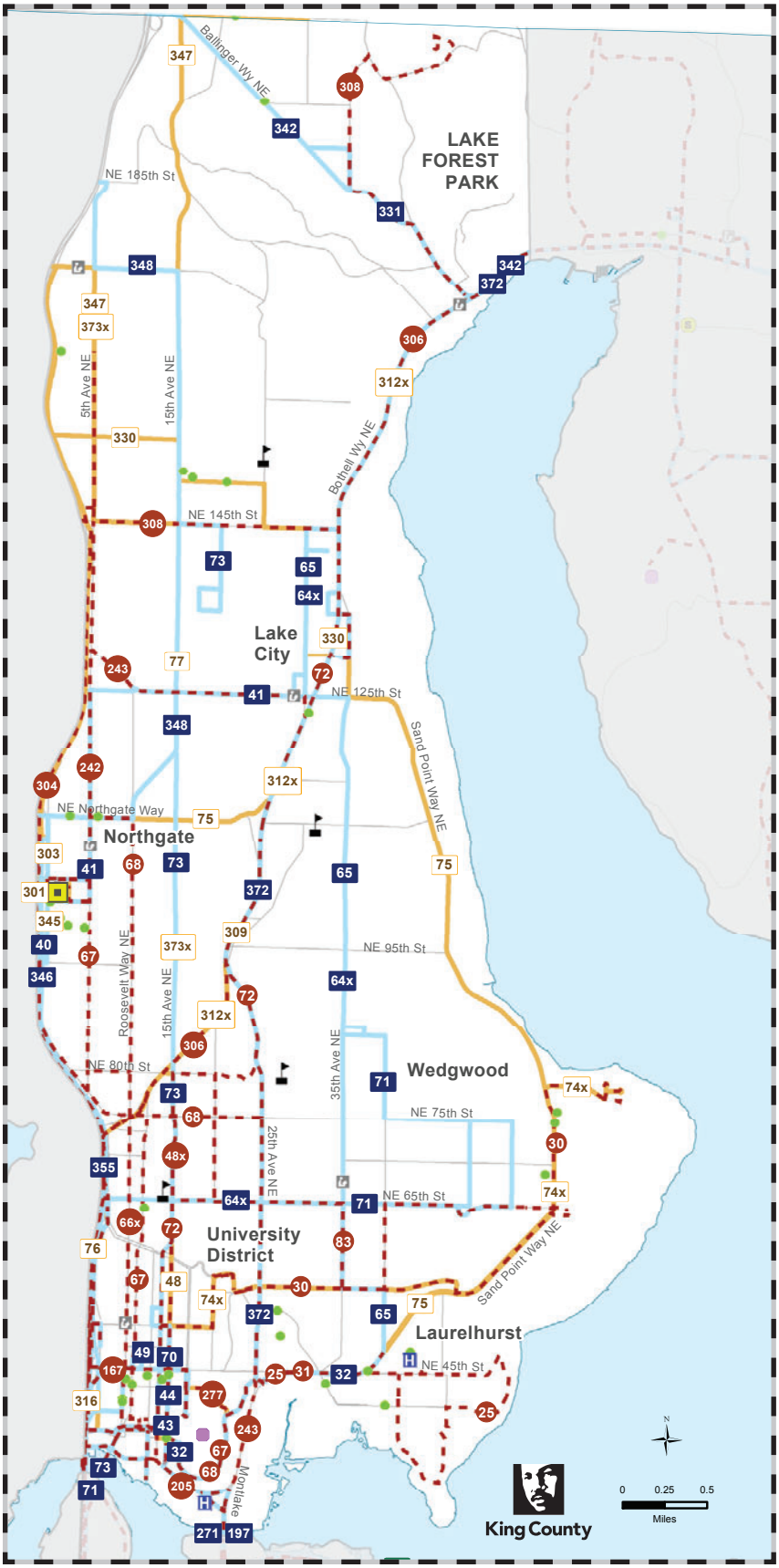
- Deleted
- Reduced or revised
- Unchanged
- Transit Center
- Major employment sites
- High School
- University/ Community College
- Senior Center
- Library
- Hospital

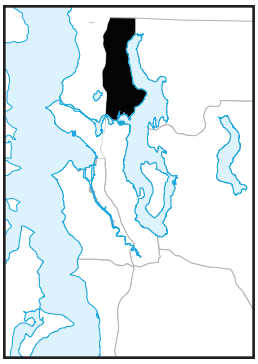
CF: NWSea_NKC.pdf October 23, 2013

For more information, visit **www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future**

FIG. 16

Service Reduction Proposal: Northeast Seattle/North King County





LEGEND

Metro Service

- Deleted
- Reduced or revised
- Unchanged
- Transit Center
- Major employment sites
- High School
- University/ Community College
- Senior Center
- Library
- Hospital

CF: NESea_NKC.pdf

October 24, 2013

For more information, visit **www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future**

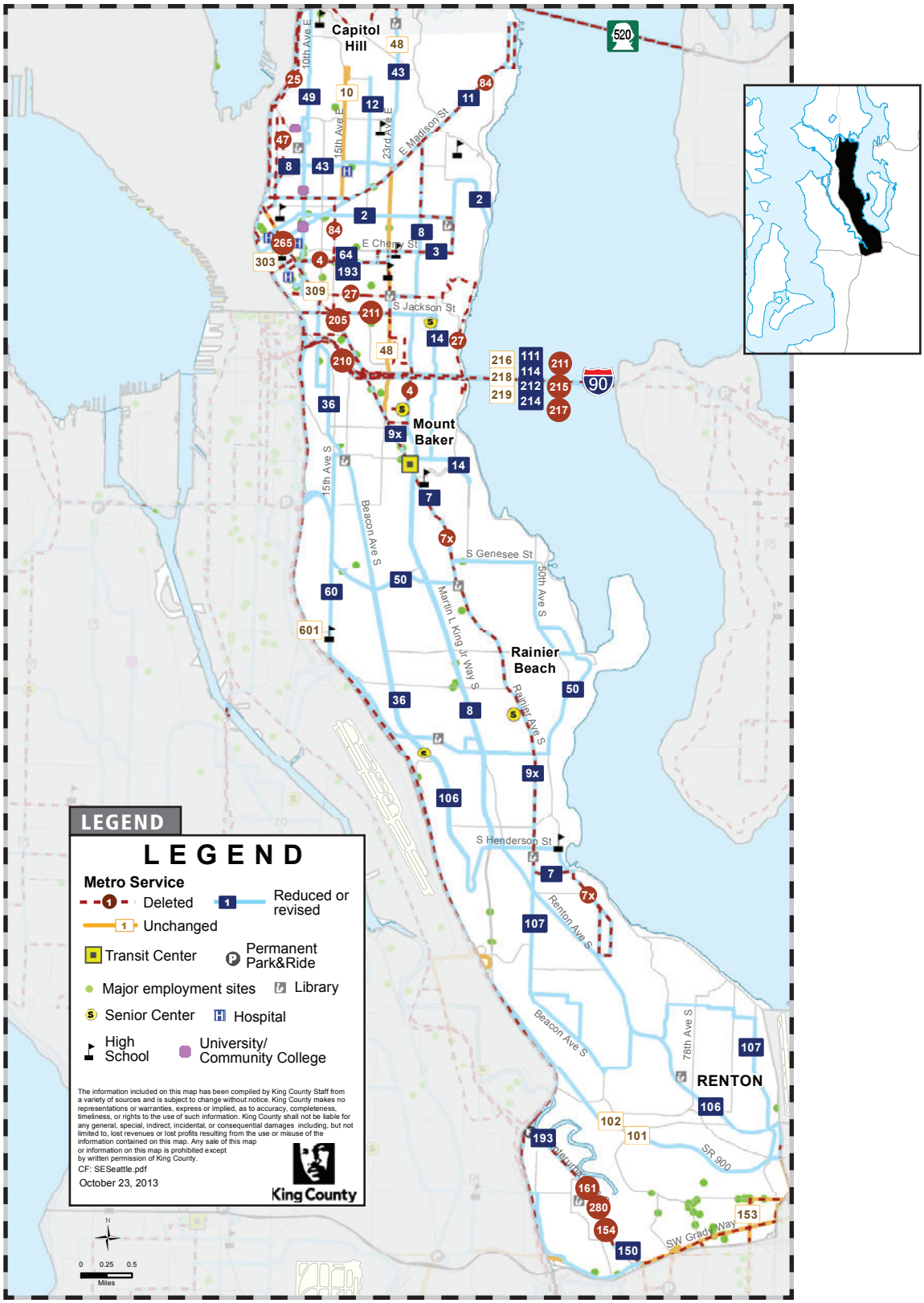
FIG. 17

Service Reduction Proposal: Southwest Seattle/South King County

For more information, visit
www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future

FIG. 18

Service Reduction Proposal: Central And Southeast Seattle/South King County



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www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future

FIG. 19

Service Reduction Proposal: East King County–North

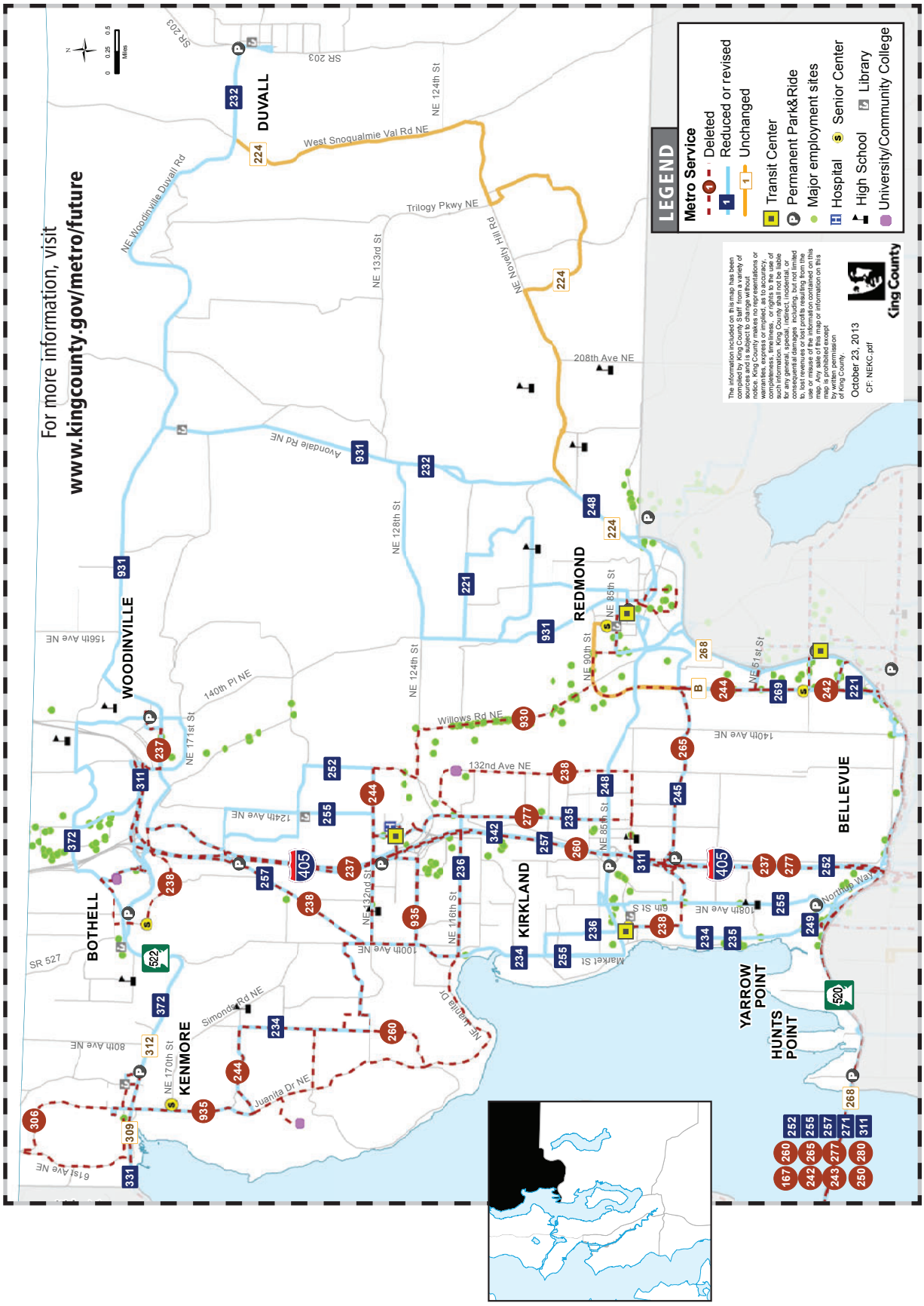

FIG. 20

Service Reduction Proposal: East King County—South

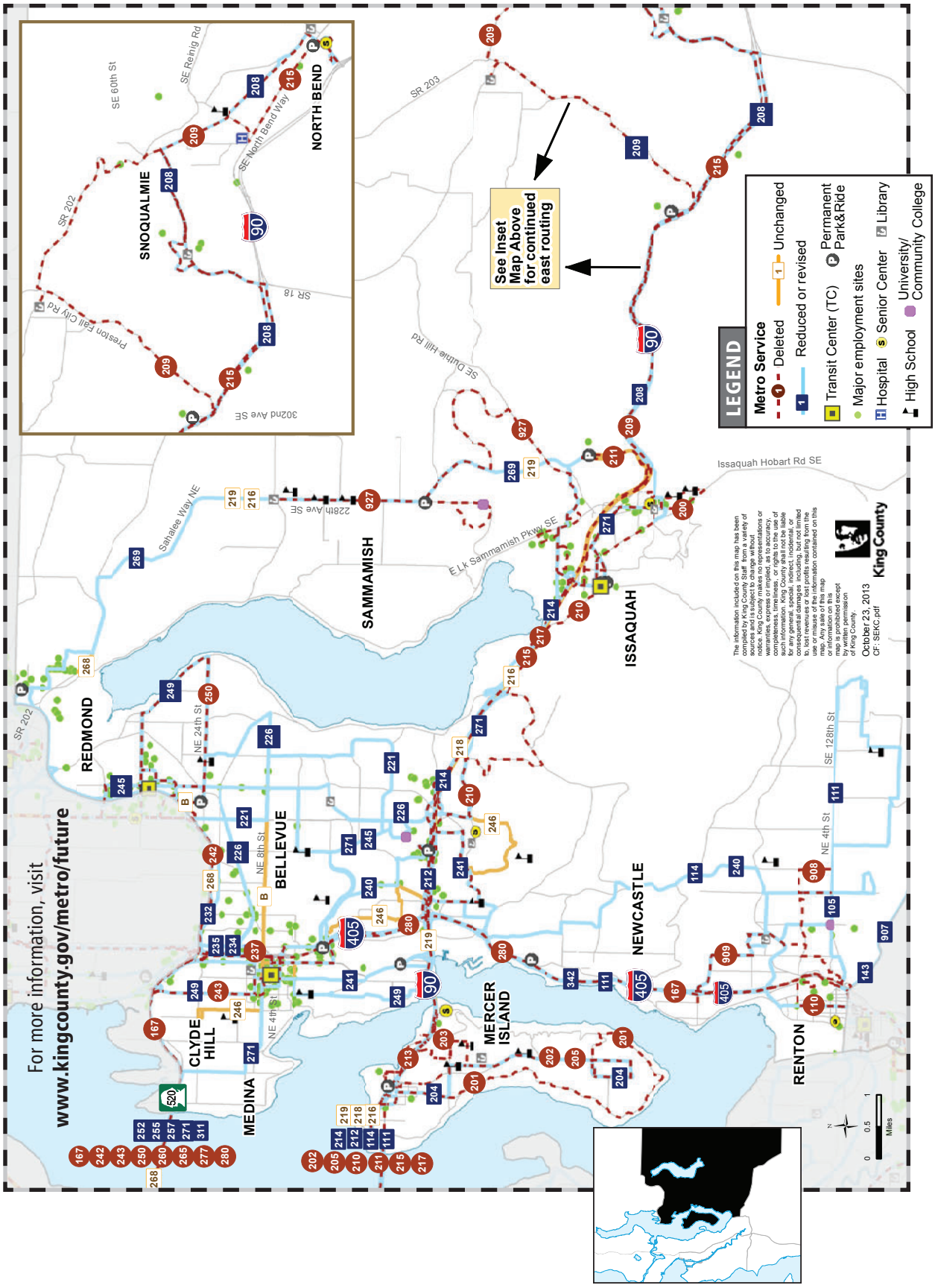

FIG. 21

Service Reduction Proposal: Southwest King County

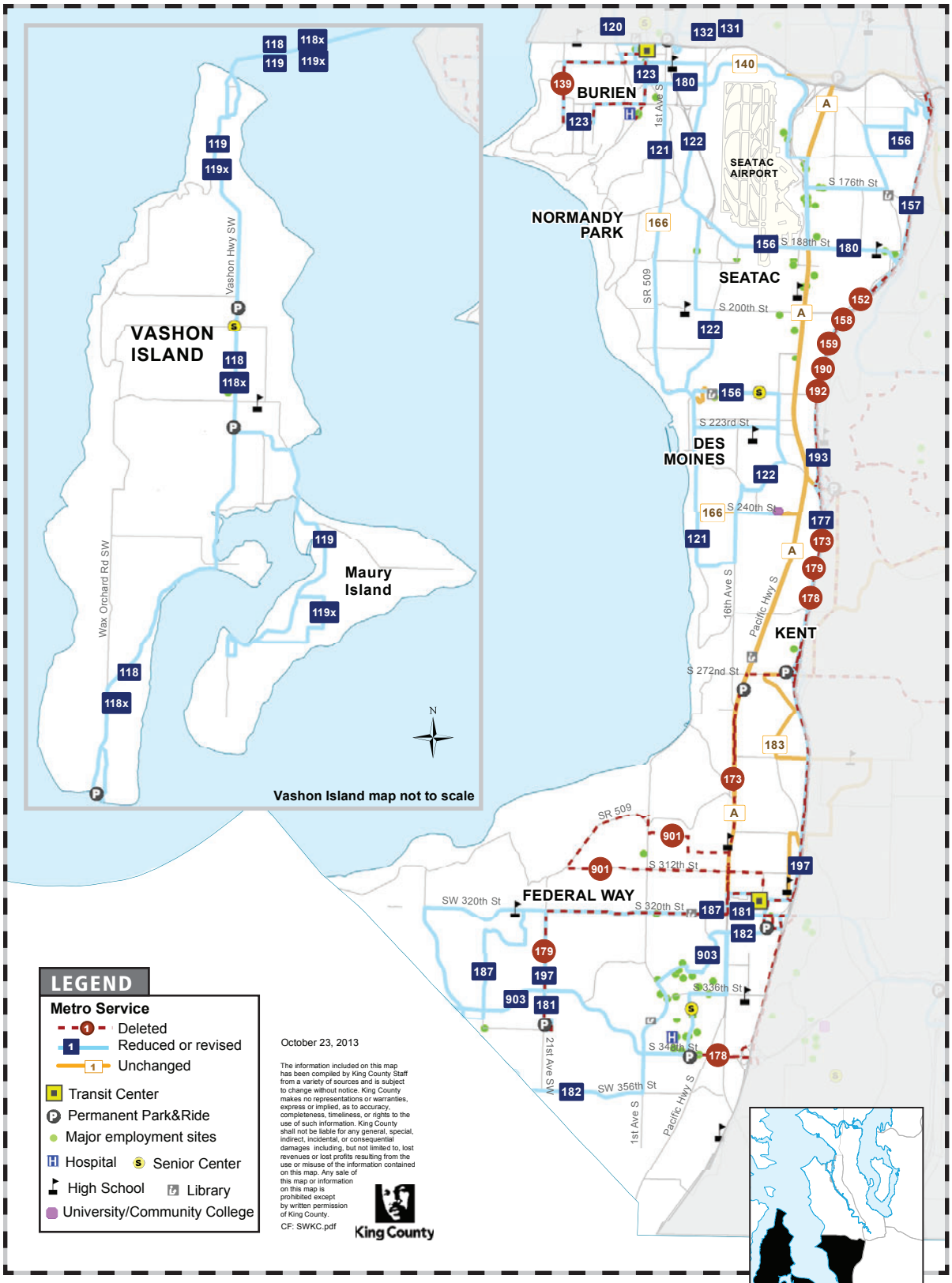

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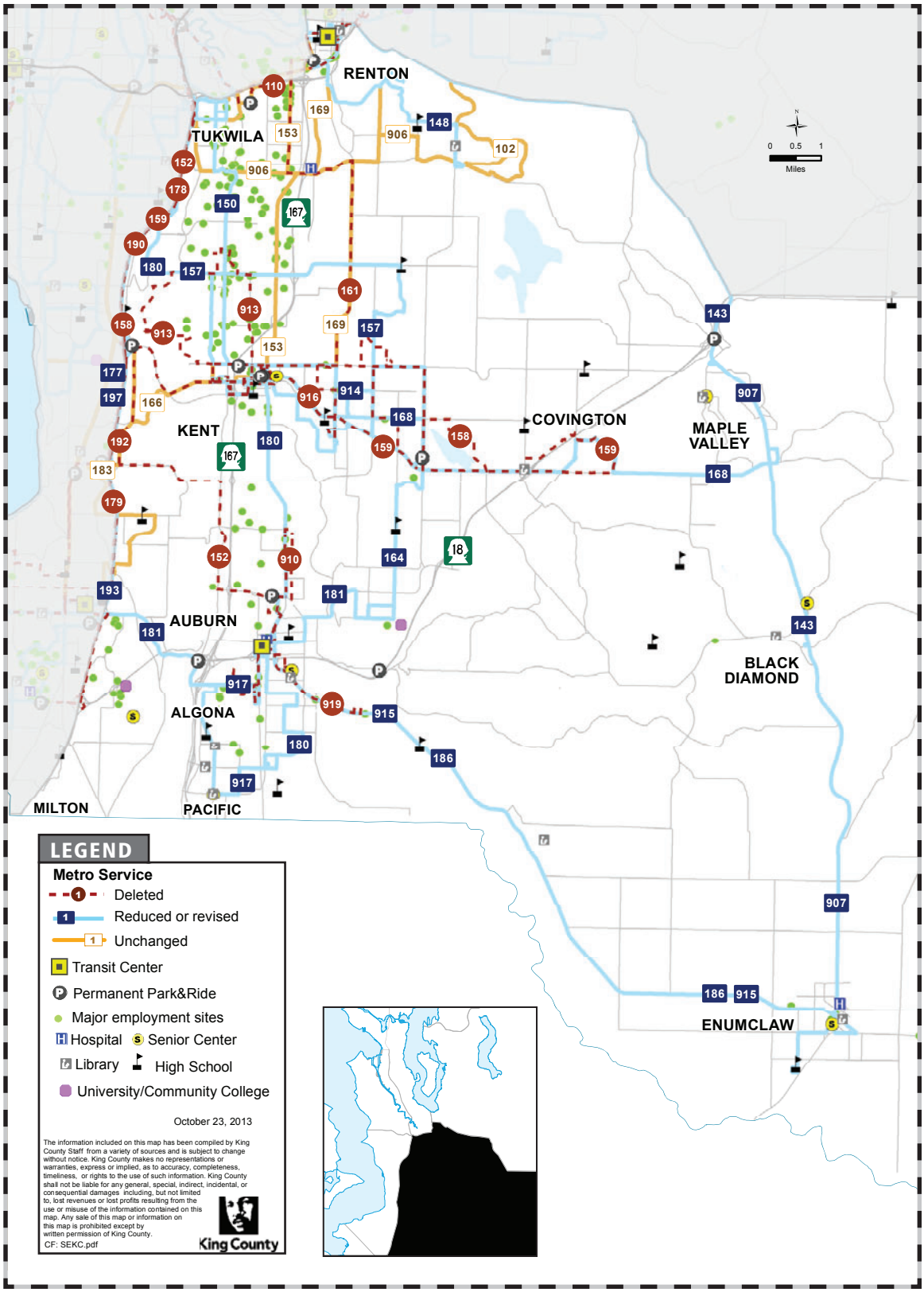
FIG. 22

Service Reduction Proposal: Southeast King County



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