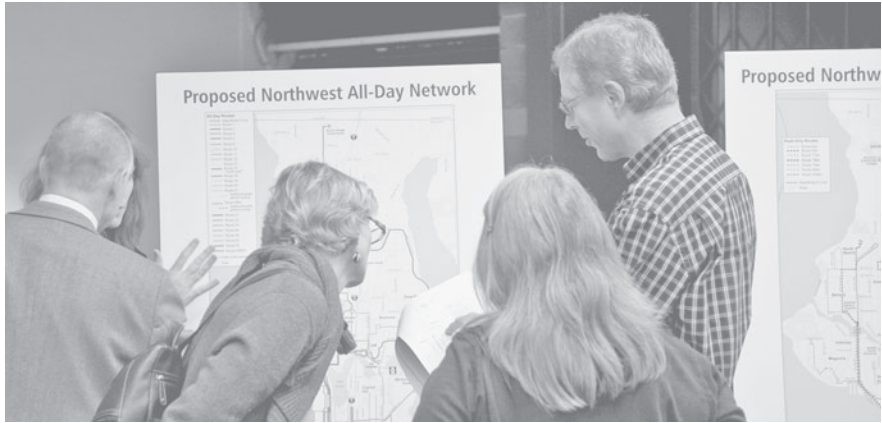


Land Use	Households within 1/4 mile of stops per corridor mile	50% of highest score	7
		33% of highest score	4
Social Equity and Geographic Value	Jobs within 1/4 mile of stops per corridor mile	16% of highest score	0
		<16% of highest score	5
	Percent of boardings in low-income census tracts <sup>1</sup>	Above system average	0
		Below system average	5
	Percent of boardings in minority census tracts <sup>2</sup>	Above system average	0
		Below system average	5
Primary connection between regional growth, manufacturing/industrial centers	Yes	0	
	No	5	
	No	0	



# King County Metro Transit **2011 Service Guidelines Report**

March 2012



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*We'll Get You There*

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## ■ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The King County Council adopted Metro Transit's service guidelines as part of our new *Strategic Plan for Public Transportation* in July 2011. The plan and guidelines are consistent with the recommendations of the Regional Transit Task Force. The guidelines help us plan and manage the transit system, and enable the public to see the basis of our proposals to expand, reduce or revise service.

The guidelines are designed to help us use tax and fare dollars as effectively as possible to provide high-quality service that gets people where they want to go. The guidelines strike a balance between productivity, social equity and geographic value. They help us make sure that we serve areas that have many low-income and minority residents and others who may depend on transit (social equity), and that we respond to public transportation needs throughout the county (geographic value).

Metro prepared this *2011 Service Guidelines Report* to comply with Section 5 of King County Ordinance 17143, which adopted the service guidelines. As the first annual guidelines report, this report contains the results of our 2011 assessment and will serve as the baseline for future analyses. This report does not recommend specific service changes; rather, it provides the information that is the foundation for service planning. This report replaces and expands on Metro's annual route performance report.

### The analysis

A foundation for our guidelines analysis is the All-Day and Peak Network, made up of major transit corridors in King County that connect designated regional growth centers, manufacturing/industrial centers and other areas of concentrated activity. We set target service levels for the 113 all-day corridors in the All-Day and Peak Network based on objective criteria that reflect productivity, social equity and geographic value. We measured how close Metro's actual service comes to matching the targets, and designated each corridor as adequately served, underserved, or overserved.

We also assessed the performance of 244 bus routes, using two different ways of measuring productivity. Comparing the performance of similar routes and times of day, we identified those in the bottom 25 percent, the middle group from 25 to 75 percent, and the top 25 percent performance level. We also examined the quality of service on each route by finding how often the buses are overcrowded or late.

### The guidelines and service changes

This analysis of transit corridors and individual routes points to areas where we could improve the transit system. It identifies corridors and routes where the investment of more service hours is needed to improve service quality. It also identifies potential opportunities to adjust routes to improve performance or re-allocate investments from lower performing services to areas where needs are more pressing.

We use this analysis to identify potential opportunities for improvement and to inform the service planning process. This report does not recommend specific service changes or mandate a course of actions. Service change proposals are developed through a multilateral process that takes into account many factors. We look at how the network serves our customers and consider the tradeoffs that result from changing service. Public input is critically important as well; Metro conducts extensive public outreach around major service changes, sharing initial ideas and modifying them in response to what we hear. Proposed major changes must be approved by the County Council, and policy makers also consider public input and the broad implications of changes in transit service.



## Highlights of the results

The following is a summary of our major findings:

- 1. Assessment of service adequacy.** Our service adequacy analysis found that 99 of the 113 all-day corridors have adequate service in one or more periods of the day (peak, off-peak or night), 49 corridors are underserved in one or more periods of the day, and 29 corridors have a higher level of service than is warranted in at least one time period.
- 2. Investment priorities.** The guidelines identify routes that have low-quality service—regularly overcrowded or behind schedule—and underserved corridors as the highest priority candidates for investments. A total of nearly 400,000 annual service hours would be required to reduce overcrowding, improve on-time performance, and meet unmet target service levels on corridors. The system’s largest need for investment or reallocation of service hours is in corridors that are currently underserved during at least one time period.
- 3. Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness.** Of the 244 bus routes<sup>1</sup> examined, 65 routes are in the bottom 25 percent on both performance measures in at least one time period. Of these 65 routes, 39 serve the Seattle core and 26 do not serve the Seattle core. Four routes that serve the Seattle core and nine that do not serve the Seattle core are in the bottom 25 percent on both measures in multiple time periods.

Routes that are low performers are identified for further review. In some cases, these routes might be candidates for reduction or revision. In other cases, they might be retained because they provide an important connection within the network. We may consider alternatives to improve a route’s performance. In some instances, Metro may identify alternative service delivery strategies to meet the mobility needs of communities that are served by low-performing routes. These strategies could include dial-a-ride-transit as an alternative to existing fixed-route service, or other services such as ridesharing, community vans, or Community Access Transportation. The guidelines indicate that we must maintain a fixed-route or alternative service in urban areas adjacent to rural areas when such service is the only Metro route available, regardless of its performance.

## The guidelines at work: 2011 service changes

While the guidelines were still being developed, we used the concepts in them as we planned a major restructure of Metro’s Eastside transit service that took effect in fall 2011. Our planning was based on analysis of corridors and routes, consideration of social equity and geographic value, and input gathered through an extensive public outreach project.

The restructure added frequent all-day service—including the new RapidRide B Line—between key centers, increased service to meet target levels, reduced duplicative services, revised and reduced services that had low productivity, and reallocated service hours to improve service quality on several routes. We made these changes with the expectation of attracting more riders, improving productivity, connecting major centers on the Eastside and around the county, and advancing social equity by serving people who depend on transit.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes route parts as separate routes – for example, the northern portion of Route 3(3 N) is analyzed separately from the southern portion of Route 3 (3S)