



King County

Department of Transportation

Metro Transit

Service Development

201 South Jackson Street

M.S. KSC-TR-0426

Seattle, WA 98104-3856

Linking Transit and Development

Working Group Meeting #5

King Street Center, Rooms 2A and 2B

September 11, 2012

Work Group Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Janet Lewine	Bellevue
Kim Becklund	Bellevue
Sarady Long	Federal Way
Mary Joe deBeck	Issaquah
Cathy Mooney	Kent
Charlene Anderson	Kent
Paul Carlson	King County Council
Emiko Atherton	King County Councilmember Julia Patterson
Kimberly Nuber	King County Councilmember Jane Hague
Michelle Allison	King County Councilmember Joe McDermott
Dave Godfrey	Kirkland
Gil Cerise	PSRC
Alex Krieg	PSRC
Terry Marpert	Redmond
Chester Knapp	Redmond
Jim Seitz	Renton
Bill Bryant	Seattle (DOT)
Jeff Bender	Seattle (DOT)
Norm Schwab	Seattle- Council Central Staff
Alicia McIntire	Shoreline
Mike Bergman	Sound Transit
Emily Yasukochi	Sound Transit
Monica Whitman	Suburban Cities
Jaimie Reavis	Tukwila

Introduction and Meeting Objectives

Victor Obeso, manager of Service Development, reviewed the purpose and timeline for the workgroup. Metro is looking for more specific feedback on potential adjustments to the Metro Service Guidelines to better reflect existing and planned linkages between transit and development. As required by legislation, Metro is moving forward with a preliminary report, due to the King County Council on October 31st, 2012. This preliminary report will not provide recommendations, but outline preliminary concepts for adjustments to the service guidelines.

Recommendations will be included in the April 2013 report to the council. The October report will also discuss themes heard in the Working Group: 1) keep it simple 2) identify more certainty in the long term and 3) provide continued coordination between Metro and the jurisdictions.

Christina O'Claire, supervisor of Strategic Planning and Analysis, reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which included a presentation from Sound Transit and a review of the preliminary report concepts, such as themes from the Working Group and potential changes to the corridor analysis.

Sound Transit

Mike Bergman, Service Planning Manager at Sound Transit (ST), provided an overview of the Sound Transit system and history, and shared examples of how Metro and Sound Transit have coordinated service in the past.

Sound Transit Regional Express bus service (ST Express) has different service characteristics than Metro services. There is an emphasis on direct routing, higher travel speeds and more limited stops at key connection points. The Sound Transit 2 (ST2) Plan was approved by voters in November 2008; this plan invested in light rail expansion, 100k ST Express bus service, Sounder Service and the First Hill Street car.

The recession reduced ST revenues by 27%. As a result, the ST board approved a realignment plan, which moved some capital projects to later completion dates, delayed light rail extension and reduced bus service investment from 100k to 40k hours.

ST operates 26 express bus routes with an estimate 14.7 million annual rides for 2012. ST Express service is capped at 690k hours through 2023. ST continues to coordinate with its partner agencies, including Metro, to address transit service demands and reduce duplication in service.

Two recent examples of coordination between Metro and Sound Transit include:

- East Corridor: ST operates Route 540, which runs between Kirkland and the U District, has the lowest number of boardings per trip in the system- about 17 boardings per trip compared with the system-wide average of 36 (2011). Route 540 shares coverage with Metro routes 255 and 271. Metro increased service levels on both routes in advance of SR 520 tolling. ST evaluated Route 540 ridership following tolling and found it did not increase significantly and decided to reduce trips on the route since there were frequent service levels provided by the existing Metro routes.
- Central Link Integration – In 2009, when Link light rail came online, Metro and ST undertook intensive planning process. Link light rail replaced Metro Route 194 between Sea-Tac/Federal Way and downtown Seattle. With this change, Sound Transit improved ST Express connections and service to Federal Way, reducing travel times for riders to downtown Seattle. Metro also made significant local investments in southeast Seattle to better connect riders to Link light rail service from the Rainier Valley to downtown Seattle.

Christina O'Claire, supervisor of Strategic Planning and Analysis, reviewed agency policy guidance from both agencies on coordination between Metro and Sound Transit.

- Redeployment Guidelines (1998) outlined that redeployed resources should not be used to duplicate ST service or compete for the same travel market and that Metro should maintain local service to provide connections to regional service.

Metro Service Guidelines also address service design and provide guidance on how Metro works with ST to restructure service. The Regional Transit Committee (RTC) has asked Metro "to consider" ST service in the Service Guidelines analysis. This may mean adding language into the Service Guidelines or Strategic Plan suggesting that Metro evaluate the need to add or remove corridors as ST service changes.

For the longer term, including Link extensions beginning in 2016, it is difficult to develop an exact network plan for what will happen when Link opens; however, adding this language to the guidelines may provide some guidance on the types of changes to expect.

Working Group Questions and Comments

Workgroup: The eastside has a lot of regional express service and that many of those services are overloaded. There is a desire to ensure that ST services are not used as substitute for local service. Metro is overlaid with ST Express service right now. If duplicative service is redeployed, will the redeployed hours will be reinvested on the eastside or moved elsewhere? Investments should be maintained within the area of current service otherwise staff anticipates that the Eastside could face continual reduction with more ST investments.

Metro staff has been analyzing whether there is a need to evaluate feeder service to ST as a part of the guidelines and identify the service levels being provided. Metro is working to ensure it is serving the transit markets on all 113 corridors.

Workgroup: There are concerns that existing corridors that play a feeder role are not adequately reflected in the Service Guidelines. If feeder routes do not perform well and are targeted for reduction, then they can no longer function effectively as feeder service. If Metro replaces a direct peak service with a new feeder that connects to more frequent service, it is important to ensure that an effective connection is maintained. It is also important to ensure that local service levels are maintained.

Metro and Sound Transit have a history of integration. Metro operated service between downtown Seattle and Issaquah prior to the ST Route 554. Metro service was slower with more stops on the route. ST began service that was faster with fewer stops. Metro reinvested in more local service. Metro staff asked for specific examples of where in the network have Metro missed investment in a feeder service..

Workgroup: One example is the Route 245, which serves Kirkland, Overlake and Eastgate. The service level was recently bumped up but now it is identified as over-served in the Service Guidelines.

Metro is looking at how it characterizes over-served corridors as part of this process. Metro staff emphasized that routes on over-served corridors are not a priority for reduction unless they also have low productivity.

Workgroup: Metro has done a good job coordinating feeder routes with ST services. Feeder routes are important and should be valued. For example, the first and last connections to the train have lower ridership. The Service Guidelines should find a way to value this connection between these services.

Workgroup: Redeployment guidelines are still relevant. RapidRide B Line was replaced by two routes (230/253), but when it was replaced, connections were not completely replaced, particularly Redmond Town Center to SE Redmond. The City of Redmond has moved to help promote growth in SE Redmond, bringing in a grid system. Buses could be effective in collecting people in this area.

Workgroup: Metro should evaluate Sound Transit corridors. Route 255 allowed for ST Route 540 resources to be redeployed. How durable are investments? Such as ST Route 555?
Metro's corridor analysis undervalues ST services given the different service characteristics. Metro's analysis may not accurately capture what is happening in the corridor. It is valuable to acknowledge the corridors that should have service – for example, the Route 255 operates in a corridor that should always have service. There should be some certainty in the longer-term that service will be there; but not the same as a guarantee that the same service levels will be present. Service should be sized to the demand being seen in a corridor, and can be adjusted over time as demand warrants.

Working Group Themes

Christina O'Claire, supervisor of Strategic Planning and Analysis, reviewed themes for modifications to the guidelines identified through the Working Group process: Improved Coordination, More Certainty and Simple and Clear.

Improved Coordination

- More deliberate in communicating annual performance analysis and investments and the need for coordination across all time frames (near term and longer term) reflecting regional growth plans.
- Longer Term:
 - Align future investments with jurisdiction growth plans and know where planned growth is.
 - Implement goals of Strategic Plan
 - Identify funding needs and paths to financial sustainability.

More Certainty

- Near-term:
 - Service Guidelines provide some certainty about where Metro is putting service.
 - Service Guidelines include maps by corridor family to help show where the gaps are in the system.
 - Map of under-served corridors shows where corridors are not meeting target service levels.
 - Service Planning works with more recent data in making decisions about service restructures and investments.
- Long-Term:

- Align future investments with jurisdiction growth plans and know where planned growth is.
- Integrate service with Sound Transit
- Enhance service consistent with the Strategic Plan
- Resolve funding gap to be consistent with regional growth plan.
- Near vs. Long Term – Metro and Jurisdictions
 - Where can we better align? Understanding where growth and development are expected to be concentrated to support transit service.
 - Location of public facilities
 - Infrastructure investments
 - Permitting
 - Policy Changes

Simple and Clear

- Seek to make guidelines revisions that add value, but are simple
- Balancing complexity of measures used with the need to provide predictability and be understandable to a larger audience
- Adjusting use and implementation guidelines to be clear about how jurisdiction action can tie to Metro actions.

Adjustments to the Corridor Analysis

Stephen Hunt, Strategic Planning and Analysis, walked through potential adjustments to the Corridor Analysis.

Corridor Analysis in the Current Service Guidelines is done in two steps:

Step 1: Evaluate land use, development and connections between centers – evaluated objectively no matter where they are in King County.

Step 2: Ensure there are enough buses to service current riders

Outcome: How does existing service differ from target service levels?

There are three common themes that have emerged in workgroup discussions that have the potential to add value to the process without adding complexity.

- Increasing sensitivity to development: providing static thresholds or more thresholds for the households and jobs factors
 - Currently three thresholds (4.7 and 10 points) that look at development on the ground today.
 - More thresholds would mean more points (example of 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 points)
 - Static thresholds give jurisdictions a target to shoot for to increase corridor scores.
 - Distributing the points in the household factor differently values development densities and increases the sensitivity to all types of development.
 - Adjustment does not increase total points for corridor score.
- Adding colleges and universities enrollment to the jobs factor to better reflect student travel demand.
 - Concentrates jobs further; not all corridors service large colleges or universities
- Distinguishing Centers

- Weighting by population, activity or density – which reinforces land use scores, does not add value in terms of emphasizing centers
- Adding more points for primary connections to regional centers; raised scores of almost every corridor since nearly all provide a connection to a regional center.

Adjustments to Use and Implementation: Adding a new priority

- Partnerships
 - Guidelines note that a route fully funded by a partner will become a priority; as well as an underserved route with 1/3 of the funding covered by a partner.
 - Tie in with jurisdiction action and growth
- More clarity
 - Meaning of over-served corridors: calling out over-served corridors only when they are not productive.
 - Sound Transit changes: steps Metro takes when ST brings service to new corridors or leaves corridors

Working Group Comments

Workgroup: Will the preliminary report talk about a long range plan? There should be some articulation about a detailed plan and a commitment to doing it. Without a long range plan, it may be difficult for eastside communities to get excited about future funding. There should be a nexus between the long term plan and service guidelines, the relationship between these should be simple.

Workgroup: What the data sources for the households and jobs data?

Households information comes from the King County Assessor's data, which is updated annual. Jobs information comes from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

Workgroup: Is there industry research that supports the thresholds developed for households?

The thresholds are set based on appropriate levels of development that support certain levels of transit service. The number of points awarded increases with more development to reflect the fact more intense development tends to support higher levels of transit. The household factor is aligned with density levels that support transit. The prior method, with less gradation, did not acknowledge that development can be supportive at lower transit service levels. Through this methodology, jurisdictions can target individual corridors for certain levels of transit service. It will also help jurisdictions identify what type of density is necessary for a corridor to get a bump in land use scores. This adjustment can help more finely measure changes as development occurs.

Workgroup: Making the analysis more sensitive to development seems to result in more underserved corridors. This will also mean that there will be fewer over-served corridors. With a greater unmet need, there may be more potential need to seek hours from over-served corridors to find resources for underserved corridors. It looks to be a more "peanut butter" approach; there is more need, but resources are spread thinner.

The current need would be enlarged if there was more stratification in the analysis. The list of need may grow, but Metro is only able to make some progress on the list each year. The priorities for investment will still be the same and Metro will get to them in their priority order.

Workgroup: Should larger high schools be included? For example, schools with more than 1,000 students add demand on the system.

Demand from high schools is reflected in other parts of the analysis – particularly in the step 2 ridership analysis. Data on high school enrollment is difficult to collect; it requires pulling information from individual schools or districts throughout the county.

Workgroup: How is student population for colleges and universities added to the corridor? How does it result in improved service?

Student populations are added to the corridors that colleges and universities are in. Similar to trip origins for jobs in corridors, it is difficult to know where all the travel in a corridor is going to and from. This adjustment may result in a few corridors changing service levels – particularly those with larger universities and colleges.

Workgroup: It seems awkward to include other centers (such as transit activity centers). How were these developed?

Metro staff looked at city plans to see where activity centers might be. Metro was specifically asked to describe these centers as Transit Activity Centers, the purpose of which is to describe the extent of the area that Metro should connect to, from and between.

Workgroup: Suggest giving 15 points to corridors that connect Regional Growth Centers to give more credit to the large centers.

Of the total 40 points for a corridor score, 30 points are related to centers – households, jobs, primary connections and step 2 considers ridership demand. Additional points may change the thresholds for service families, giving activity centers fewer points.

Workgroup: What is meant by adding a priority?

The preliminary report will look at different possibilities including the consideration of adding another priority to the existing priority list as well as other changes. Metro Service Guidelines currently list four priorities for adding service: 1) Overcrowded Service 2) Unreliable Service 3) Under-Served Corridors 4) Productive Service. As discussed in the workgroup meetings, the report will discuss potential options for adding another priority to this list as well as the possibility of adding clearer discussion in the guidelines of over-served corridors and including language about coordination with ST. Potential options discussed in the report for adding a priority may include partnerships with jurisdictions and prior topics discussed such as transit overlay zones or emphasis corridors.

Next Steps

- September 19th: RTC discussion
- October 31st: Preliminary Report due to Council
- November 14th: Working Group Meeting 1:30-3:30pm, King Street Center, 8th floor
- December RTC Meeting

Please contact Chris O’Claire, christina.oclaire@kingcounty.gov with any additional feedback or questions you would like to share on the process so far.