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TO: Service Guidelines Task Force Members
FROM: John Howell
SUBJECT: Preliminary Draft Principles and Recommendations
DATE: June 12, 2015

At the close of our last meeting I said I would begin to draft preliminary recommendations for review and discussion. The attached draft is meant to initiate conversation among our task force members. I will not be asking you to make any decisions about this draft, but we will be spending considerable time discussing it at our meeting next week.

The document is divided into two sections: preliminary principles and preliminary recommendations. The principles are meant to be broad, high level statements that provide the context for the recommendations that follow. The recommendations are more specific strategies that address the elements of the charge that we have been given by the County Executive and Council.

The ideas described in the document are yours. The draft principle statements are drawn from the conversations we have been having as a group. This is the first time you have seen these principle statements, but they should reflect our discussions. The recommendations are taken directly from the summaries of “emerging ideas” that I have provided after each meeting and we have discussed and edited as a group.

You will note that I have marked those recommendations where I believe we have a strong consensus with an asterisk (*). I base this assessment on the discussions about the “emerging ideas” summaries. We may also have a strong consensus around the alternative service recommendations, but since we haven’t discussed that summary of emerging ideas yet (we will next week) I didn’t want to assume agreement.

I’m looking forward to discussing this document with you next Tuesday.

Service Guidelines Draft Principles and Recommendations

Draft Principles

During the course of task force deliberations, members have discussed a number of potential changes to the Service Guidelines and the process Metro uses for making service decisions. The group's discussions have also identified several broad principles that frame the more specific recommendations, and will provide guidance to Metro as it works to implement the task force recommendations. The following draft principle statements will guide the development of policy changes to the Service Guidelines, Strategic Plan, and other Metro planning efforts:

- **Different parts of the county have different travel demands:** The Service Guidelines Task Force recognizes that transit mobility needs take different forms throughout King County and acknowledges that a different structure of services types may help align transit service solutions with these needs. This will require a more refined recognition of the different land uses of the county and purposes of that service.
- **Measure performance of routes against similar services.** The current guidelines have two service types, and all services within those two service types compete equally against each other. However, the cost and demand characteristics of different types of service are inherently dissimilar.
- **Right-size service and seed new markets:** While the current system values appear to be about right, some greater emphasis could be placed on supporting new markets and serving transit-dependent riders who do not have access to all-day fixed-route services. Since Metro has a broad suite of products and services and is industry-leading in its alternative services program; the alternative services program should be further expanded to better meet mobility needs of King County. The recent budget action adding new resources for alternative services for 2015/16 was a good start.
- **Create better connections between centers:** Transit services should help support mobility between non-Seattle centers and to connect people to jobs, particular for low-wage job centers throughout King County. To accomplish this goal there needs to be a better understanding about the origins and destinations of riders.
- **Maintain and improve productivity of the system.** Making adjustments to the Service Guidelines will create some tradeoffs in the level of service provided throughout the system. Changes to the Guidelines must continue to focus on making each of the different service types more productive.
- **The demands for transit service far outweigh current available resources.** There are considerable unmet needs across the transit system – both as defined by the Service Guidelines in the near term and as identified by the PSRC and addressed in the King County Metro Long Range Plan now under development. While each part of the county should feel value for the transit services they receive, those services will not always be in the form of fixed route scheduled service.

Draft Recommendations

Therefore, the Service Guidelines Task Force recommends that Metro: (NOTE: There was strong consensus among the members for the strategies with an asterisk (*). Those strategies *italicized* are being suggested by Metro staff, consistent with task force discussions.)

- Make changes to the Service Guidelines:
 - Modify service types to create an express category; to move DART to new alternative services category; and to consider different service types (e.g. express, rural, suburban).
 - Develop minimum service standards for each service type.
 - Create a point system that allows for a scaling of points for geographic value. *
 - Create a point system that allows for a scaling of points for social equity. *
- Make changes to the planning process:
 - Use the service planning and community engagement process to more thoroughly and explicitly address issues regarding origin and destination, including frequency of service. *
 - Use the planning process to better identify the needs of those taking the transit trips, including traditionally hard-to-reach communities. *
 - Use the planning process to explicitly address needs of youth, disabled and elderly populations. *
 - *Increase transparency of guidelines process by holding planning/guidelines workshops throughout the county each year and integrate the Service Guidelines with the findings of Metro's Long Range Plan.*
- Enhance the alternative services Program:
 - Alternative services may be used to address several system needs not being met by current transit services: 1) replace poorly performing, fixed-route services under certain circumstances, 2) provide better connections between centers, 3) in rural communities and 4) in emerging markets to “seed” potential new routes.
 - Increase funding support to plan and deliver more alternative services where fixed-route service is not cost effective.
 - Enhance the planning for alternative services by facilitating discussions between municipalities, employers and residents to identify unmet needs and opportunities for alternative services and partnerships.
 - Create a new metric for measuring performance of alternative services and differentiate the types of alternative service in evaluating their performance.
 - Consider using private service providers as a way to augment the Metro-provided alternative services.
 - Consider modifications to increase subsidy for van pool services.

- Make changes to partnerships and land-use initiatives:
 - Identify potential new community partnerships that would support transit options for low income workers. *
 - Increase management of Park and Rides better utilization of current and future investments.*
 - Others (depending on discussion at June 16 meeting)
- Support new funding:
 - There is a need for new resources to support the growth of transit services. *