

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Metro Transit Subarea Allocation DEPARTMENT: Public Works PRESENTED BY: Mark Relph, Public Works Director
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PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

King County councilmember Bob Ferguson suggested to the City of Shoreline a proposal to move the City from the West Subarea of the King County Metro Planning Area to the East Subarea. Council action in September was requested by Councilmember Ferguson so as to confirm our preference

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact to the City, but the city's location within a subarea is important when Metro plans and allocates transit service.

RECOMMENDATION

It is Staff's recommendation that the City of Shoreline stay within the West Subarea of the Metro Transit Planning Area. There are two main reasons for the recommendation; 1) 16 of the 18 transit routes within Shoreline go to Seattle, 2) while there may be more transit service hours available in the East Subarea, there are more cities vying or competing for the service.

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney ____

INTRODUCTION

King County Councilmember Bob Ferguson recently contacted the City to discuss the possibility of changing the boundaries of the King County Metro planning subareas to include Shoreline in the East subarea. Part of the rationale for this change would be to allow Shoreline to compete for a larger pool of new transit service hours. Metro distributes new transit service hours among three subareas within its service area. These subareas are the East, South and Seattle/North King County. Currently, Shoreline is in the Seattle/North King County subarea, along with Seattle and Lake Forest Park. The East subarea includes Kenmore, Bothell, Woodinville, Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, Sammamish, Mercer Island, Snoqualmie and North Bend.

While the East Subarea receives more allocation of new transit service, the concern is the larger number of cities competing for that service. In addition, Shoreline's service requirements are more closely tied to Seattle than any of the other East Subarea cities. This may make it difficult for Shoreline to move forward our priorities when the other East Subarea cities may have priorities centered within their immediate developing area.

BACKGROUND

Metro's planning policies require that new transit service hours for the three Subareas be distributed according to the following formula:

- East subarea: 40 percent of new transit service hours
- South subarea: 40 percent of new transit service hours
- Seattle/North King County subarea: 20 percent of new transit service hours.

Transit Now includes 500,000 new service hours, which will be implemented between now and 2016. These service hours will be dedicated to three areas of transit service: Rapidly developing areas, RapidRide and High Ridership/Core Routes. These hours are subject to the 40-40-20 rule described above. Currently, the City of Shoreline is scheduled to receive approximately 5,000 additional hours for implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit system on Aurora Avenue North beginning in 2013. Additionally, improved service to Route 331, which serves Shoreline Community College and the Aurora Village Transit Center, then continues to UW Bothell/Cascadia Community College via Ballinger Way NE and Bothell Way NE, is scheduled to receive additional service hours as part of a High Ridership/Core Route improvement. The additional service hours on Route 331 will result in 15 minute headways during the two hour peak periods in each direction. The timing for implementation of these additional service hours is unknown at this time. The attached chart shows the anticipated distribution of these hours over the next ten years.

In addition to the 500,000 new service hours, Transit Now includes 90,000 new service hours which can be implemented through service partnerships. Service partnerships, which include Direct Financial Partnerships and Speed and Reliability Partnerships, are

an opportunity for a jurisdiction or private entity to enter into an agreement with Metro to provide improved transit service, either by providing direct financial support to Metro or implementing capital improvements. Service partnerships are not subject to the 40-40-20 rule. The City is currently pursuing a Speed and Reliability Partnership in conjunction with the City of Seattle (see memo from Kirk McKinley and Alicia Sherman dated June 28, 2007).

If the City of Shoreline is located within the East subarea, the City would be located in a subarea with a larger pool of hours available for new service (40 percent of the new service allocation versus 20 percent of the new service allocation). The following charts, prepared by Metro staff, show the current and proposed distribution of population and service hours among the subareas according to the current boundaries and those if Shoreline was located in the East subarea. It should be noted that Lake Forest Park will also be included in the East subarea if this change is implemented. Annual service hours on routes serving Shoreline and Lake Forest Park constitute approximately 5.2 percent of Metro's total annual service hours (approximately 173,600 hours). Please note that the West subarea listed on the chart is the same as the Seattle/North King County subarea.

Current Subarea Distribution

Subarea	King County Population (2005)	Percent	Annual Service Hours (Fall 2006)	Percent
East	501,700	27.7%	542,074	16.3%
South	668,300	37.0%	659,715	19.8%
West	638,200	35.3%	2,126,434	63.9%
Total	1,808,200	100.0%	3,328,223	100.0%

Subarea Distribution, with Shoreline and Lake Forest Park as East

Subarea	King County Population (2005)	Percent	Annual Service Hours (Fall 2006)	Percent
East	566,930	31.4%	715,735	21.5%
South	668,300	37.0%	659,715	19.8%
West	572,970	31.7%	1,952,773	58.7%
Total	1,808,200	100.0%	3,328,223	100.0%

The majority of Metro service within Shoreline serves Seattle. Currently, there are eighteen Metro routes that serve the City of Shoreline. Sixteen of these routes go through or into Seattle. Of these sixteen routes, nine serve downtown Seattle, seven serve the Northgate Transit Center, one serves the University District and two serve Lake City. One route that serves the Northgate Transit Center continues service to the Overlake Park and Ride via I-5 and SR 520. Of the two routes that do not include

service to Seattle, one route provides service to the Kenmore Park and Ride via Ballinger Way NE and Bothell Way NE and the other route provides service to the Renton Park and Ride via Ballinger Way NE, Bothell Way NE and I-405.

At this time, the majority of Metro service provided to the East subarea begins and ends in either the East or south subarea. Sound Transit provides the majority of cross-lake service into downtown Seattle for the East subarea, allowing Metro service hours to be focused on serving the East subarea. All of the Metro routes that serve Shoreline along Bothell Way NE begin/end in the East subarea. If these routes are experiencing overcrowding at this time, that means residents of the East subarea are experiencing these problems as well. It is worth examining the East subarea's priorities for these routes at this time to determine why the East subarea is not advocating for better service on these routes at this time.

Metro staff has explained that municipalities do not "compete" for service hours – they are allocated in the areas where the best and most efficient transit service can be provided. Although there are more new service hours available in the East subarea, that does not mean that Shoreline will have a better chance at receiving them. Metro staff has explained that hours are allocated according to service need. Although Shoreline would not necessarily be ignored, the East subarea appears to have different priorities for service locations. Decisions about the allocation of service hours are made by the King County Council upon review and recommendation by the King County Regional Transit Committee. Regardless of which subarea the City is in, the representative for the City of Shoreline will need to ensure that the City's needs are met.

Finally, there are concerns about how this would impact the City's involvement with the SeaShore Transportation Forum. Shoreline would participate in the Eastside Transportation Partnership to discuss allocation of Metro Transit service hours, even though decisions would not be made by ETP regarding these allocations. Unless Sound Transit modified its subarea boundaries, Shoreline would participate in the SeaShore Forum regarding Sound Transit issues. It is likely that Shoreline would participate in when developing proposals for SAFETEA-LU funding through the PSRC regional competition.

Councilmember Ferguson met with Lake Forest Park's mayor on June 29, the Lake Forest Park City Council on July 12 and the Shoreline City Council on July 23. On July 26, 2007, the City of Lake Forest Park passed a resolution identifying their wish to be located in the East subarea for allocation of Metro service hours. Overall, it is our recommendation that the City of Shoreline remain in the Seattle/North King County subarea. We acknowledge that improved service is needed for east-west transit connections, however, the City benefits through its relationship with Seattle, as the routes that serve Seattle are successful and heavily used. We believe the City should examine alternate ways to improve east-west transit service rather than changing subareas, including discussions with the East subarea to improve routes that serve both subareas.

RECOMMENDATION

It is Staff's recommendation that the City of Shoreline stay within the West Subarea of the Metro Transit Planning Area. There are two main reasons for the recommendation; 1) 16 of the 18 transit routes within Shoreline go to Seattle, 2) while there may be more transit service hours available in the East Subarea, there are more cities vying or competing for the service.

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