

A message from Metro's general manager



East King County is the fastest-growing area of the county, is home to Microsoft and other large employers, and can boast of regional attractions like Bellevue Community College, Marymoor Park and outstanding retail centers.

With so many people and so many places to go, the Eastside is turning to public transportation to help its communities stay livable, prosperous and green. Here at Metro we are working hard to give the Eastside more transit services and options. I am proud that we are delivering our Transit Now program as promised, along with other improvements.

As we continue enhancing public transportation on the Eastside, Metro must be smart and innovative to match transit service with the characteristics of suburban cities and rural areas.

We also must find new, more stable funding to maintain and expand service. Demand for transit services continually outstrips our resources. In part that is because after we invest in transit improvements, ridership grows more. That's a challenge we welcome. The larger and problematic reason is that Metro relies heavily on an erratic funding source—sales tax—which currently is generating far less revenue than we had expected.

As Metro copes with these challenges while continuing to improve Eastside service, I welcome your suggestions, comments and support.

- Kevin Desmond



In 2008, Metro restructured and expanded bus service to provide better connections to major Eastside destinations, including Bellevue Community College.

Metro is delivering Transit Now improvements to East King County right on schedule

In the first two years of King County Metro's Transit Now program (2007-2008), Metro improved Eastside transit services as scheduled in the adopted 10-year plan:

- Added 37,000 hours of service to Eastside bus routes that are heavily used or serve rapidly growing areas
- Funded service on two routes through partnerships with Eastside cities and businesses
- Engaged the community in planning the Bellevue-Redmond RapidRide line
- Enhanced paratransit and ridesharing services in East King County.

TRANSIT NOW

Transit Now, an initiative approved by voters in 2006, increased the sales tax by one-tenth of one percent to pay for a 15-20 percent expansion of Metro service over 10 years.

Metro also restructured Eastside routes to meet customer needs and improve efficiency, opened the Redmond Transit Center, and coordinated local route improvements with Sound Transit's Express service to give riders better connections for regional travel.

Metro is planning additional improvements, including the launch of RapidRide bus rapid transit—the B Line—between Bellevue and Redmond in 2011.

Future service levels could be affected by Metro's financial situation

All funds for the Transit Now program, as well as more than 60 percent of Metro's total revenues, come from sales tax. Sales tax revenues are in steep decline because of the economic downturn. Metro has taken many steps to reduce costs, and is seeking new, stable funding to maintain and continue improving transit service in East King County and systemwide.

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Transit Now improvements in East King County, 2007-2008

Metro made the following improvements in East King County in 2007 and 2008, on pace with the approved 10-year plan for phasing in the Transit Now program. (Service-hour numbers are rounded.)

29,000 new annual service hours on high-ridership routes

- Route 221 (Eastgate-Overlake-Redmond-Education Hill) – created this new route (began 2/08)
- Route 230 (Bellevue-Redmond) – added evening trips (9/08)
- Route 234 (Kenmore-Juanita-Kirkland-Bellevue) – added service in evenings (2/07) and Sundays (9/07)
- Route 245 (Kirkland-Rose Hill-Overlake-Crossroads-Eastgate-Factoria) – doubled Sunday service to every 30 minutes (02/07)
- Route 248 (Kirkland-Redmond-Avondale) – created this new route (2/08)
- Route 253 (Bellevue-Redmond) – added later evening service Mon-Sat (9/08)
- Route 269 (Issaquah-Redmond) – added midday service and weekday peak service (9/07). (Also expanded further through a service partnership—see below.)
- Route 271 (University of Washington-Eastgate) – added afternoon trips to increase frequency to every 15 minutes (2/07)
- Route 929 (Fall City-Redmond) – revised routing and increased weekday service; coordinated with Route 209 in Fall City for service to North Bend or Issaquah



Metro expects to see continued growth on the routes it added and restructured in 2008. It can take up to three years for new routes to achieve their full ridership potential.

8,000 new annual service hours on routes serving rapidly developing areas

- Route 215 (North Bend-Snoqualmie Ridge-downtown Seattle) – created this new route that provides half-hourly peak-period service (9/08)
- Route 209 (Issaquah-North Bend) – added new morning and afternoon peak-period weekday trips (9/08)
- Increased frequency and expanded schedule for Route 929 serving Fall City, Carnation, Duvall and Redmond
- Identified other potential new service to be phased in over 10-year Transit Now program in Duvall, Issaquah, Klahanie, Lakemont, Redmond Ridge, Sammamish and Snoqualmie

Planning to launch RapidRide in 2011

- Organized a citizen advisory group that made recommendations about RapidRide routing and stops
- Mailed information and questionnaire and held public meeting to get input
- Worked with cities of Bellevue and Redmond to plan roadway improvements to keep buses moving



Drawing of a RapidRide shelter and bus with the distinctive red and yellow color scheme.

9,000 annual service hours funded through service partnerships

- Entered into partnerships with the cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Redmond and Sammamish and with the Microsoft Corporation, Port Blakely Communities and Timber Ridge at Talus to phase in new services over several years
- Added peak-period trips to Route 269 (Overlake-Issaquah) with funding from a partnership between Metro and the cities of Sammamish, Redmond, Issaquah and the Microsoft Corporation (9/08)
- Replaced former temporary Route 644 with new Route 244 (Kenmore-Juanita-Overlake) with funding from a partnership between Metro, the City of Redmond and Microsoft

Expanded paratransit and ridesharing services

- Expanded Access van program for people with disabilities to serve two rural Eastside areas that were not previously served (plus two areas in southeast King County)
- Registered 11,551 new Eastside participants in the Rideshare program
- Formed 210 new Eastside vanpools with 1,722 participants

Service expansion follows subarea allocation policy

Metro allocates new service hours to subareas of King County according to a policy enacted by the King County Council: 40 percent to East King County, 40 percent to South, and 20 percent to West (the “40-40-20 policy”).

Metro’s Transit Now program follows this policy, but as Metro phases in the program over 10 years, subareas may receive more or less than these percentages in particular years. This is because Metro typically adjusts numerous routes in one subarea when improving the local bus network or when starting a major new service like RapidRide. For example, East King County received about 70 percent of new Transit Now service hours in 2008 when Metro restructured and expanded a number of routes; South King County is scheduled to receive about 90 percent of new

service hours in 2010 when the Rapid-Ride A line gets underway on Pacific Highway S.

The Transit Now phasing plan provides for the subarea investments to balance out over time and adhere to the 40-40-20 policy. Metro’s investments will meet the 40-40-20 allocation at regular intervals—whenever 200,000 new service hours have been added—and by the end of the Transit Now program in 2016. (Hours added through service partnerships are not included in the 40-40-20 allocation.)

Subarea	New annual service hours 2007-2008	Percent
East	37,000	53%
South	28,000	39%
West	6,000	8%
Total	71,000	100%



Passengers boarding new Route 221 at the Redmond Transit Center (left), and Redmond Mayor John Marchione speaking at the opening ceremony for the transit center.



New Redmond Transit Center is comfortable, efficient

Metro, the City of Redmond and Sound Transit opened the new Redmond Transit Center in February 2008. The center has improved boarding areas for 14 routes that serve the Eastside and downtown Seattle, better shelter for waiting passengers, and crosswalks, sidewalks and lighting to improve safety.

Next to the transit center, Metro is building a three-floor garage with more than 380 parking stalls to replace a surface lot. The garage is slated to open in June 2009. The garage and transit center are helping spur an adjacent transit oriented development with housing and commercial space that fits the character of Redmond’s urban core.

Eastside park-and-ride capacity increased

Collaboration between Metro, Sound Transit and local jurisdictions resulted in the addition of more than 700 new park-and-ride spaces on the Eastside in 2007 and 2008 (at Issaquah Transit Center, Mercer Island Park and Ride, Snoqualmie Ridge and Redmond Ridge).

Performance measures

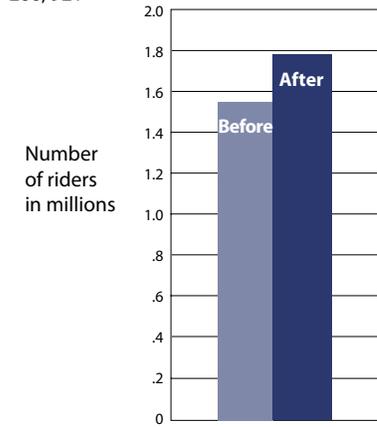
Metro made gains in ridership, productivity

As of fall 2008, **Metro’s ridership had increased by 15 percent** on Eastside routes that were restructured and expanded in February 2008, as shown below.

Ridership on Metro Routes Restructured in February 2008, Before and After

“Before” routes: 220, 222, 232, 233, 238, 249, 251, 254, 266, 921

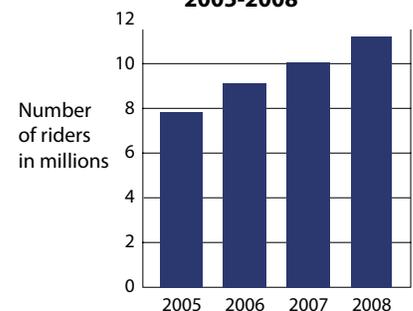
“After” routes: 221, 222, 232, 233, 238, 248, 249, 251, 266, 921



Productivity also improved after the February route restructuring. In 2007, six of the nine routes attracted fewer than 10 rides for each hour a bus was on the road. In 2008, only one route attracted fewer than 10 rides per hour a bus was on the road.

Overall, Metro has been serving a **steadily increasing number of riders in the East King County subarea**, as the chart below shows. Ridership grew by 42 percent from 2005 to 2008.

Metro’s East King County Subarea Ridership 2005-2008





Meetings of the Bellevue-Redmond RapidRide Advisory Group (left) and the Eastside Sounding Board.

Metro listened as it planned transit improvements

In 2005, Metro and Sound Transit formed a 22-member community sounding board to help plan an extensive restructuring of routes serving Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Duvall and Woodinville. The transit agencies wanted to work together and with the community to give people the service they wanted, where they wanted it.

Metro and the Eastside Sounding Board blanketed the community with route information and questionnaires and held public open houses. The sounding board helped Metro analyze public comments as it developed recommendations about service changes for the

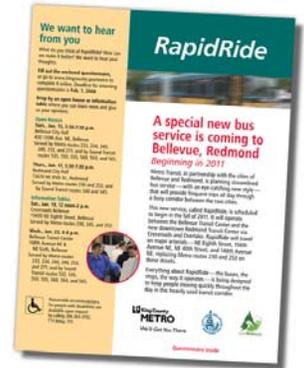
King County Council. The Council adopted the recommendations and Metro made the service changes in February 2008.

Also in 2008, another community advisory panel advised Metro about routing and stops for the upcoming RapidRide B Line, which will provide frequent service all day between Bellevue and Redmond via Overlake and Crossroads.

And Metro listened to people in North Bend, Preston, Fall City, Snoqualmie, Carnation and Issaquah as it planned the September 2008 service changes in their area. Metro informed commu-

nity members about proposed service revisions and made major changes to the proposals after hearing public comments.

A brochure and questionnaire about RapidRide were mailed to households and businesses in Bellevue and Redmond.



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For information about Transit Now, please visit:
www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/metrotransit/transitnow

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