

Community Connections History

Starting with the recession of 2008, fluctuating funding and growing demand for mobility motivated county decision makers to begin developing a way to provide innovative alternatives to fixed-route service in communities that do not have the land use, density, or topography to support a productive fixed-route transit network.

Program history

July 2011 – King County adopted Metro’s Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021, which called for an expanded role for alternative service delivery in achieving a cost-effective, equitable public transportation system.

September 2012 – King County accepted the King County Metro Transit Five-Year Implementation Plan for Alternatives to Traditional Transit Service Delivery, which identified candidate areas for the first three alternative services demonstration projects (the Snoqualmie Valley, Vashon Island, and Southeast King County). Through amendment, a fourth demonstration project was added to focus on suburban connections to urban transit. At the time of the plan’s adoption, Metro expected to be in an unstable funding situation as an agency and projects were chosen in areas where alternative services could be implemented as part of larger fixed-route service “right-sizing” exercises.

September 2013 – The first alternative services pilot service - the Snoqualmie Valley Shuttle (Route 629) - launches.

September 2014 – Metro reduced or eliminated service on more than 30 of its lowest performing routes to cover a budget shortfall.

November 2014 – With approval of the 2015/2016 Biennial Budget (Ordinance 17941), the County established a 2015-2018 alternative services demonstration program with \$12 million in funding during the 2015-2016 biennium. This ordinance also directed Metro to prioritize alternative services projects as follows:

- A. Service reduction mitigation, which shall focus on mitigating significant impacts that are a result of September 2014 service changes;*
- B. Complete alternative services delivery plan reinvestment and restructure, which shall initiate community planning process for the two outstanding areas identified in the Five-year Alternative Services Delivery Plan – SE King County and Vashon Island; and,*
- C. Complementary service, which is intended to complement the fixed route or DART service in a Metro growth scenario.*

Summer 2015 – Program-level staffing for the alternative services demonstration program starts.

September 2015 – the King County Budget and Fiscal Management Committee passed Ordinance 18110, which amended the 2015/2016 Biennial Budget (Ordinance 17941), requiring Metro to develop a plan

for providing alternative services between the University of Washington Bothell and Cascadia College (UW Bothell/Cascadia College campus) and the cities of Woodinville and Bothell. This ordinance gave rise to the Bothell-Woodinville alternative services pilot project.

October 2016 – Metro announces the Alternative Services Pilot Participation application process. The purpose of this process was to identify up to eight pilot communities for Alternative Services projects that will be initiated in 2017. This is the first opportunity for program to act on the third program priority called for in the initial budget allocation, complementary service. King County municipal jurisdictions, tribal governments, and unincorporated Community Service Area (CSA) councils/organizations were eligible to submit an application.

November 2016 – As part of the 2017/2018 Biennial Budget (Ordinance 18409), the County approves \$15 million to maintain and expand the alternative services demonstration program.

March 2017 – Metro renames the alternative services program to the Community Connections program.

Projects by program priority (as of May 2017)

Priority A: Mitigation

- Burien Community Shuttle Route 631
- Mercer Island Community Shuttle Route 630
- Snoqualmie Community Shuttle Route 628
- Mercer Island TripPool
- Kenmore-Kirkland TripPool (in roll-out)
- Shoreline/Lake Forest Park
- Sammamish

Priority B: Five-year plan

- Snoqualmie Valley Shuttle Route 629
- Duvall Community Van
- Redmond Real-Time Rideshare
- Redmond LOOP
- Black Diamond-Enumclaw Community Ride
- Auburn TripPool (in roll-out)
- Vashon Island Community Van (in planning)
- Vashon Island Real-Time Rideshare (in planning)

Priority C: Complementary Service

- I-90 Trailheads Access
- Bellevue/Eastgate-Factoria
- Kirkland/LW Tech
- Seattle/SODO
- Des Moines
- Normandy Park
- Kent
- Newcastle
- Issaquah

Ordinance 18110

- Bothell-Woodinville Community Van (in roll-out)
- Bothell-Woodinville TripPool (in roll-out)
- Bothell-Woodinville Real-Time Rideshare (in planning)