



King County

Metropolitan King County Council REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM: 12

DATE: March 17, 2010

BRIEFING NO. 2010-B0046

PREPARED BY: Arthur Thornbury

SUBJECT: Transit Regional Stakeholder Task Force

SUMMARY: The Transit Division will provide a flowchart showing the structure and schedule of the task force process in 2010.

BACKGROUND: With the adoption of the 2010/2011 Transit Budget the council called for creation of "a regional stakeholder task force to consider a policy framework to guide the growth and, if necessary, contraction of King County Metro Transit's system."

The specific provisions of the council's budget action included:

- a requirement that the executive transmit a proposed task force work plan by January 31, 2010 addressing "a scope of work, tasks, schedule, milestones and the budget and appointment criteria/process for municipal and community stakeholders, and a coordinated staff working group;"
- a charge to the task force of identifying "short term and long term objectives for transit service investment, and formulation of a recommended service implementation policy by September 2010," and
- a requirement that the executive transmit legislation by December 15, 2010 amending the Transit Comprehensive Plan and Transit Strategic Plan to establish a new policy framework to guide growth or contraction of the system.

Since then, the executive has transmitted legislation to appoint the 28 task force members which the council approved on March 1st and legislation to approve the task force work plan (attached) which was reviewed and amended in the Environment and Transportation Committee on March 9th and will be considered by the full council on March 15th.

The task force flow chart will be provided to members at the March 17th meeting of the committee.

ATTACHMENT: Proposed Regional Stakeholder Task Force Work Plan (as amended at the March 9, 2010 meeting of the Environment and Transportation Committee)

Regional Stakeholder Task Force

Work Plan

Prepared for:
King County Executive
King County Council

Prepared by:
Metro Transit Division
King County Department of Transportation

FEBRUARY 2010



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Introduction

Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to summarize the work plan for the regional stakeholder task force that will explore the transit system and its integration within the region's public transportation and overall transportation system, make recommendations on transit system design and function, and recommend a policy framework to the executive and the council that reflects prioritization of the key system design factors. This framework should include:

- Concurrence with, or proposed changes to, the vision and mission of King County Metro;
- Criteria for systematically growing the transit system to achieve the vision;
- State and federal legislative agenda issues to achieve the vision;
- Strategies for increasing the efficiency of King County Metro; and
- Criteria for systematically reducing the transit system should revenues not be available to sustain it.

This work plan includes a relevant scope of work, tasks, schedule, milestones, budget, and the appointment criteria/process for municipal and community stakeholders, and a coordinated Interbranch Working Group. This work plan was written in response to Expenditure Restriction ER3 of the 2010 King County Metro Transit budget, Ordinance 16717, Section 131.

Background

Since 2008, King County Metro Transit has faced unprecedented financial challenges. In 2008, sales tax revenues began to decline precipitously at the same time that Metro experienced tremendous ridership growth, placing strains on the transit system. Sales tax revenues declined even more dramatically in 2009 as a national recession further impacted Metro's ability to continue to provide transit service at the existing level. Preserving Metro's current system and finding a way to continue with plans for growth became priorities for King County.

2010 Metro Transit Budget

On November 23, 2009, the King County Council unanimously approved the 2010 budget for King County, including the 2010-2011 biennial budget for Metro Transit. The final 2010/2011 Metro Transit budget was balanced using numerous tools and strategies including eliminating staff positions, fare increases, cutting capital projects, using reserves, levying a new property tax, implementing operating efficiencies, and deferring some planned Transit Now investments. This budget allows Metro to maintain most current service over the next two years. However, due to the difficulty and trade-offs involved in balancing this budget, there were several Expenditure Restrictions that were also included as part of the adopted budget. This work plan was developed in response to one such restriction, the language of which follows.

ER3 EXPENDITURE RESTRICTION:

Of this appropriation, \$1,800,000 may not be expended until the executive transmits a motion establishing a detailed work plan for a regional stakeholder task force to consider a policy framework to guide the growth and, if necessary, contraction of King County Metro Transit's system. The work plan shall include a scope of work, tasks, schedule, milestones and the budget and appointment criteria/process for municipal and community stakeholders, and a coordinated staff working group.

The charge to the task force shall be to develop recommendations by September 2010 that will identify short term and long term objectives for transit service investment, and formulate a service implementation policy implementing those objectives.

The motion and work plan for the regional stakeholder process required to be submitted by this proviso must be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all council members and to the committee coordinator for the physical environment

Definition of a Task Force

A task force is a group of people who are temporarily assigned to work together to achieve a very specific and clearly defined objective. Several things set a task force aside from other working groups.

1) **A sense of autonomy:** task force leadership and members are high-ranking enough to not need to constantly consult others to make decisions. This independence allows the task force process to transform as needed and provides members the liberty to communicate candidly so time is used efficiently.

2) A task force also **typically contains a broad cross-section of people**, integrating an assortment of skills into a single unit.

When a task force is formed, the goals of the task force are clearly spelled out, and the leader of the task force typically indicates the kind of staffing and funding that would be needed. When the desired goal is achieved, the task force is dissolved, with the members returning to their normal positions.¹

¹ (Adapted from: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-task-force.htm>)

committee or its successor. If the proposed motion and work plan are not transmitted by January 31, 2010, appropriation authority shall lapse for the \$1,800,000 million restricted by this proviso.

Expenditure Restriction ER3 of the 2010 King County Metro Transit budget calls for the development of a task force to develop recommendations by September 2010 that will identify short and long term objectives for transit service investment, formulate a service implementation policy to accomplish those objectives, and recommend a policy framework to the executive and the council that reflects prioritization of the key system design factors. A work plan for the task force is to be developed by February 10, 2010 that includes a scope of work, tasks, schedule, milestones and the budget and appointment criteria/process for municipal and community stakeholders, and a coordinated staff-working group.

Membership and Process

Task Force Membership

Membership of the task force will include approximately 25 executive level participants representing a variety of interests throughout King County. Members are not necessarily transit experts, but are reasonably familiar with how the transportation system affects quality of life, and transit's relationship to land use. Membership includes a mix of elected officials, transportation experts, corporate/business leaders, interest groups, and riders. Representatives will be identified through consultation with the County Council and will be recruited by the Executive's office and the King County Department of Transportation.

Members

The table below provides the list of regional stakeholder task force member categories and the approximate number of members for each category.

Interests	Number of Participants
currently elected officials	6
business/economic development	3
organized labor	2
countywide rider interests	-
educational interests	2
social service interests	2
large employers	2
persons with disabilities	1
good government	1
environmental concerns	2
transportation experts	2
riders or citizen representatives	3
Transit advisory committee representative	1
Puget Sound Regional Council representative	1
Metro General Manager, Sound Transit senior staff member, and Washington State JTC Staff	3 (non-voting members)
Total voting Membership	28

Appointment Process

The King County Executive is working with King County Councilmembers to identify potential task force members. Task force members should be broad thinkers that understand multiple stakeholder views and are committed to creating and sustaining livable communities. Task force members should collectively represent a balanced geographic distribution, including rural representation and representation from the Rapidly Developing Areas as defined in the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation. These members should be open to addressing the charge of the task force without being bound to previously held positions. Additionally, the overall task force membership should reflect the racial, gender, and economic diversity of King County. Potential task members will be recruited by the Executive's office and the Department of Transportation and will be approved by motion.

Executive Committee

An Executive Committee will consist of the King County Executive and three King County Councilmembers with equal representation from each of the three King County transportation subareas, without designees. These three councilmembers shall be appointed to the Executive Committee by the chair of the King County Council, per OR-1-020 of the Council's Organization Compilation. The chair of the Regional Transit Committee, without designee, should be the alternate to the Executive Committee. In a balanced Legislative and Executive branch approach, the Executive Committee is charged with overseeing the task force schedule meeting agendas and process relative to the County Council-approved work plan objectives and charge as transmitted by the Executive in accordance with Ordinance 16717. The Executive Committee should not influence the substance or content of task force deliberations, and should offer to act as a sounding board during the development of actionable recommendations.

Project Manager

The King County Metro Transit Manager of Service Development is designated as the project manager for the Transit task force process. The Project Manager will oversee day-to-day needs of the transit task force, supervise the facilitator contract, and coordinate the development and review of materials for the task force.

Supporting Interbranch Working Group

An interbranch working group will support the Executive Committee and the task force through comprehensive review and preparation of data and materials. The Interbranch Working Group will consist of King County Executive, transit division, and council staff.

Consensus-based Decision-making

The task force will use a consensus-based decision making approach which it defines when establishing its ground rules and procedures. Often the process undertaken in consensus decision-making is as important as the decision or recommendation itself.

Facilitation

The task force will be guided by a third-party professional facilitator with successful experience resolving differences and/or mediating to achieve policy level issue consensus involving participants from both the private and public sector. The facilitator will be selected based on guidance of the Executive Committee and in cooperation with King County Councilmembers. The work of the facilitator will be based on the guidance of the Executive Committee and the support of the Interbranch Working Group.

The facilitator/mediator will be responsible for the following list of tasks. This task list may be updated in the future.

Lay the Process Foundation

- Work with the Executive Committee to develop draft work plan and schedule.
- Develop preliminary task force ground rules and procedures, including provision for public comment.
- Meet with task force members to learn their opinions and perspectives, and to identify their interests and explore possible solutions that they may propose during the meetings.
- Produce a summary of member interviews that identify issues, problems and challenges of greatest interest to the majority of task force members, as well as a listing of member's mutual interests.
- Solicit reactions to the key findings and mutual interests.
- Prepare initial meeting agenda -- submit for review.
- Work with the Interbranch Working Group to prepare and organize written materials that accompany the agenda.
- Prior to meetings work with those that are presenting.

- Connect with task force members to ensure members are comfortable and supportive of the process.

Build the Framework of Consensus

- Facilitate 6 to 10 task force meetings.
- Develop and submit draft agendas.
- Prepare a meeting summary of the key discussions, decisions and agreements, and distribute for comment.
- Edit meeting summary if needed then re-distribute the amended summary of the meeting with the draft agenda for the next session.
- Communicate with task force members between meetings as needed to maintain their engagement and move the group towards objectives.
- Coordinate with the Interbranch Working Group as necessary.

Finalize the Recommendations

- Prepare a summary report that documents the process, information provided to the task force, task force discussion summaries and the consensus recommendations.
- Circulate the draft report to all participants and solicit comments.
- Produce the final consensus report.
- Coordinate with the Executive Committee and the Interbranch Working Group on how the recommendations should be presented to the King County Executive and County Council, and the public.
- Work with the Interbranch Working Group to prepare presentation materials and messaging pieces.

Scope of Work

Objectives and Charge

The primary objective of the task force is to recommend to the King County Executive and County Council a policy framework that reflects the prioritization of key system design factors and to make recommendations about transit system design and function. These frameworks will be derived from an exploration of the transit system and its integration with the region's public transportation and overall transportation system. The overall framework should include:

- Concurrence with, or proposed changes to, the vision and mission of King County Metro;
- Criteria for systematically growing the transit system to achieve the vision;
- State and federal legislative agenda issues to achieve the vision;
- Strategies for increasing the efficiency of King County Metro; and
- Criteria for systematically reducing the transit system should revenues not be available to sustain it.

In the context of the overall transit and transportation system in King County as contemplated in the Puget Sound Regional Council 2040 plan, the task force is charged with exploring the following key factors for transit system design:

- Land Use;
- Social Equity and Environmental Justice;
- Financial Sustainability;
- Geographic Equity;
- Economic Development; and
- Productivity and Efficiency

The task force should make recommendations on how and to what extent these considerations should be reflected in the design of King County's transit system. The task force should explore system integration and make recommendations regarding King County Metro's role within the region's public transportation and overall transportation system.

Additional Efforts

Following efforts in 2010, the Task Force may be called for a second phase of work in 2011 related to the implementation of their recommendations, and the resulting policy. This second phase may be focused on identification of other policies or potential major investments such as the Eastside Rail Corridor that should be considered in future King County Metro Comprehensive or Strategic plans.

Tasks

Task Force Tasks

Specific tasks to meet the identified objectives and scope of work will depend on the facilitator/mediator hired to manage the effort. However, once basic information about Metro and the King County public transportation system is provided, it is expected the focus of the task force will be discussion among the members.

General overview of tasks

- I. Establish task force operating rules and meeting schedule.

- II. Review current vision, mission, objectives and performance of the Transit system in King County. Review basic transit planning principles and the regional transit planning and funding environment in the context of the key transit system design factors.

- III. Review Metro's criteria for growing and reducing the transit system.

- IV. Discuss and identify policies for achieving objectives, whether in a period of growth or contraction. Discuss and identify short and long term transit investment objectives. Discuss and identify legislative funding options.

- V. Reach consensus.

- VI. Make recommendations:
 - How and to what extent key system design factors should be reflected in the design of King County's Transit System.
 - Metro's role within the region's public transportation system.
 - Policy framework that reflects prioritization of the key system design factors.

- VII. Compile and develop report of recommendations.

Schedule and Milestones

Schedule

Given the September deadline established by the proviso, the task force's work needs to commence no later than March. The schedule is described below, with deliverables and intermediate milestones.

Process Timeline and Milestones

Month	Description of Activities	Deliverables
December 2009-February 2010	Process Development: Define what the task force will do, identify people who will be involved and secure their cooperation, prepare a motion for the King County council responding to the budget proviso and confirming details of the task force.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion for King County Council • Contract with facilitator/mediator • Tentative agreements with members of task force

Milestone **Completed and submitted motion to King County Council for approval.**

February/March 2010	Preparation for Task Force Discussions: Facilitator will consult with the Executive Committee and prepare the task force members for the process, including identification of salient issues, problems, challenges and interests. Task force members will be comfortable with and supportive of the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of interviews with task force members • Outline of process with member buy in • Meeting agendas • Finalized schedule • Written background materials
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Milestone **Executive Committee Meeting 1**
Milestone **Task force members are prepared for the process and have bought into the specifics of the process.**

March 2010	Task Force First Meeting: The first meeting will establish the ground rules and procedures formally and will provide an overview of transit in King County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations for meeting
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Milestone **First meeting completed.**

March-July 2010	<p>Member Discussion: Task force members will identify and discuss short term and long term objectives for transit service investment, and formulate a service implementation policy putting these objectives into practice.</p> <p>Throughout the task force process the project manager and facilitator will meet with the Executive Committee and seek guidance and direction on the task force process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft report
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Milestone **Executive Committee Meeting 2**
Milestone **Draft report completed and submitted for review.**

August 2010	Task Force Adopts Consensus Report: The report is approved by all task force members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report
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Milestone **Executive Committee Meeting 3**
Milestone **Final report approved.**

September 2010	Finding and Recommendations Presented: task force presents findings and recommendations to the King County Executive and the King County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation
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Milestone **Task Force work completed.**

Budget

Preliminary Project Budget*

Professional Facilitation	\$75,000
Meeting supplies and support	\$25,000
King County Staff time:	<u>No additional cost</u>
Total Budget	\$100,000

* Funding for this effort was included in the 2010/2011 biennial budget adopted by the King County Council in November, 2009.

