

## Reducing service

Metro identifies service to be reduced by using the guidelines for productivity and the All-Day and Peak Network. Metro also considers restructures when making large reductions, to identify areas where restructuring can lead to more efficient service. Reduction of service can range from reduction of a single trip to elimination of an entire route. While no route or area is exempt from change during large-scale system reductions, Metro will seek to maintain service at All-Day and Peak Network levels, and to avoid reducing service on corridors already identified as under-served.

Service restructuring allows Metro to improve efficiency while consolidating and focusing service in corridors such as those in the All-Day and Peak Network. Restructuring allows Metro to make reductions while minimizing impacts on areas identified as under-served in the All-Day and Peak Network. Metro strives to eliminate duplication of service and match service to ridership during large-scale reductions.

Priorities for reduction are listed below. All areas identified as over- or under-served are defined in relation to the All-Day and Peak Network. Reduction priorities are:

1. Reduce low-productivity services in the following order:
  - All-day routes that do not provide service on all-day corridors of the All-Day and Peak Network
  - Peak routes that meet none or only one of the criteria for peak service of the All-Day and Peak Network
  - All-day routes that operate on over-served corridors
  - All-day routes that operate on appropriately-served corridors. This worsens the deficiency between existing service and the All-Day and Peak Network service levels.
2. Restructure service to improve efficiency of service.
3. Reduce higher-productivity services:
  - All-day or peak routes that do not provide service on all-day corridors of the All-Day and Peak Network
  - All-day or peak routes that provide service on all-day corridors of the All-Day and Peak Network. This worsens the deficiency between existing service and the All-Day and Peak Network service levels.
4. Reduce low-productivity services in areas identified as under-served. This worsens the deficiency between existing service and the All-Day and Peak Network service levels.

Metro serves some urbanized areas of east and south King County adjacent to or surrounded by rural land. Elimination of all service in these areas would result in significant reduction in the coverage that Metro provides. To ensure that Metro continues to address the mobility needs of people throughout King County, connections to these areas would be preserved when making service reductions, regardless of productivity.

In urbanized areas adjacent to or surrounded by rural land, Metro may provide service in different ways in the future, including with alternatives to fixed-route transit service (Strategy 6.2.3). These services could include fixed-route with deviations or other Dial-a-Ride Transit, or other alternative services that offer mobility similar to the fixed-route service provided. Services such as Community Access Transportation also provide alternatives to fixed-route service by allowing Metro to partner with local agencies or jurisdictions to provide service in a way that meets the needs of the community and is more efficient and cost-effective than fixed-route transit. This approach is consistent with the *Strategic Plan for Public Transportation* because it considers a variety of products and services appropriate to the market (Strategy 2.1.1).

## **Implementation**

Metro revises service three times each year—in spring, summer, and fall. The summer service change coordinates with the summer schedule for the University of Washington, because service is adjusted each summer on routes serving the UW. In cases of emergency or time-critical construction projects, Metro may make changes at times other than the three regularly scheduled service changes. However, these situations are rare and are kept to a minimum because of the high level of disruption and difficulty they create. Metro will identify and discuss service changes that address performance-related issues in its annual route performance report.

Any proposed changes to routes are subject to approval by the Metropolitan King County Council except as follows (per King County code 28.94.020):

- Any single change or cumulative changes in a service schedule which affect the established weekly service hours for a route by 25 percent or less.
- Any change in route location which does not move the location of any route stop by more than one-half mile.
- Any changes in route numbers.

## **Public outreach**

Metro conducts outreach to gather input from the public when considering major changes. Outreach ranges from relatively limited activities, such as posting rider alerts at bus stops, to more extensive outreach including mailed informational pieces and questionnaires, websites, media notices and public open houses.

For service changes that affect multiple routes or large areas, Metro may convene a community-based sounding board. Sounding board members attend public meetings, offer advice about public outreach, and provide feedback about what changes to bus service would be best for the local communities. Metro considers sounding board recommendations as it develops recommendations.

Proposed changes may require County Council approval, as described above. The Council holds a public hearing before making a final decision on changes.

## **Future guidelines**

As the transit system changes over time, Metro may need to change some guidelines as well. Updates to the guidelines will be considered along with updates to Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation.