



The Municipal League of King County  
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March 10, 2009

Honorable Dow Constantine, Chair  
 Regional Transit Committee  
 516 Third Avenue, Suite 1200  
 Seattle, WA 98104

Honorable Kathy Huckabay, Vice Chair  
 Regional Transit Committee  
 801 228th Ave SE  
 Sammamish, WA 98075

Dear Chair Constantine and Vice Chair Huckabay,

Thank you for agreeing to have the Regional Transit Committee consider the Municipal League's involvement in the RTC's upcoming deliberations on Metro Transit budget development, service allocation and cutbacks. We are pleased that our November 2008 report *Review of Metro Transit* has garnered the interest of stakeholders and policymakers throughout King County.

As we described to you in our meeting on March 4, we are proposing a roundtable process to engage stakeholders in a public dialogue on our findings and recommendations. This process is now particularly relevant as Metro is facing an unprecedented crisis in declining revenue just as ridership demand is at an all-time high. We see this as an opportunity to revisit and discuss the County's service allocation policies and to call for renewed transparency and clarity in the use of service standards and data that may be applied to any potential cutbacks or service changes.

We are requesting that you incorporate into your guidance to Metro staff a number of our roundtable process principles and suggestions so that our efforts may be aligned toward a common goal of an equitable, data-driven, cost-effective and transparent set of service changes. As the region's leaders on transit service provision, we would also strongly urge you to embrace an overarching goal of "do the least harm" to the people who rely on public transit every day.

Six principles we propose are the following:

- Transparency
- Open Process
- Communication
- Countywide perspective
- Cost-effective practices
- Fairness

As Metro staff begins to analyze budget measures to meet the identified shortfall and as potential cutbacks are considered, we propose the following elements be included in any analysis:

- Equity / Tax generation
- Activity Centers & Corridors
- Coverage / Distance from bus stop
- Growth rate (recent and projected)
- Productivity
- Transit Dependence / Income
- Farebox recovery

No single driver should be considered sufficient in this very complex exercise. Further, as you begin to consider broad policy alternatives, we propose that you ask Metro staff to develop a number of broad framework scenarios that you and the public can weigh with respect to who in our communities will be most affected. Under our principle of transparency, we believe it will be vital for members of the public to clearly understand the values and trade-offs that must underlie your decision-making. We suggest that you ask Metro to include some combination of these scenarios:

- Current policy framework
- Growth Management framework (activity centers & corridors)
- Productivity framework (ridership, cost-effectiveness)
- Safety Net framework (coverage and service to most transit-dependent)
- Hybrid approaches (for example, among many possible options:)
  - ⇒ One-third Equity
  - ⇒ One-third Growth Management
  - ⇒ One-third Safety Net

Our current plan for the Municipal League roundtable process proposes to invite two stakeholder groups, technical staff and knowledgeable community leaders, to two sessions each to discuss the concepts outlined above. The purpose of these sessions would be to describe our Municipal League findings and recommendations and to seek both professional and community input and comment on how they might best be implemented. We would report back to you what we learn in these meetings.

Thus, a Session 1 would consist of discussions of factors that should be part of a policy-based

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service allocation approach. This initial session would take place in the April-early May period, concurrent with the initial stages of Metro's budget development process. A second session would be convened with the same stakeholders once Metro has developed its scenarios and could present them to the public, probably in the late May-June timeframe. The attached graphic illustrates our proposed process.

It is our intent to align our stakeholder process with the budget development and policy processes that the County staff, RTC and County Council will be engaged in over the next six to eight months. Recognizing the intense pressures on Metro staff, we hope to avoid increasing Metro's work load by asking that you fold our proposals into the larger countywide process.

We understand that the County's audit of Metro will be delivering a status report this spring that may inform the budget process in the short term and the transit strategic planning process in the longer term. To the extent that the timeline for this information can also be aligned with the other processes, we welcome that.

We look forward to your ideas in response to this plan and would be happy to discuss the details with you at your convenience. Thank you for considering the Municipal League's proposals.

Sincerely,



Brad Meacham  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Kathy Elias  
Chair, Metro Transit Review Committee

Cc: Regional Transit Committee members  
County Executive Ron Sims  
Metro General Manager Kevin Desmond

Attachment: Process timeline

### Municipal League of King County Roundtable Process

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Muni League Roundtables		Technical Group 1		Technical Group 2		Report to RTC/ KC Council			
		Community Leaders 1		Community Leaders 2					
Metro Audit			Interim Report				Final Report		
King County Budget Process	County Council policy discussions & guidance								
	Regional Transit Committee policy discussions & guidance								
	Staff analysis			Service scenarios					
King County Public Outreach									