
SERVICE ELEMENT

CHAPTER I - PROJECT CONTEXT AND APPROACH

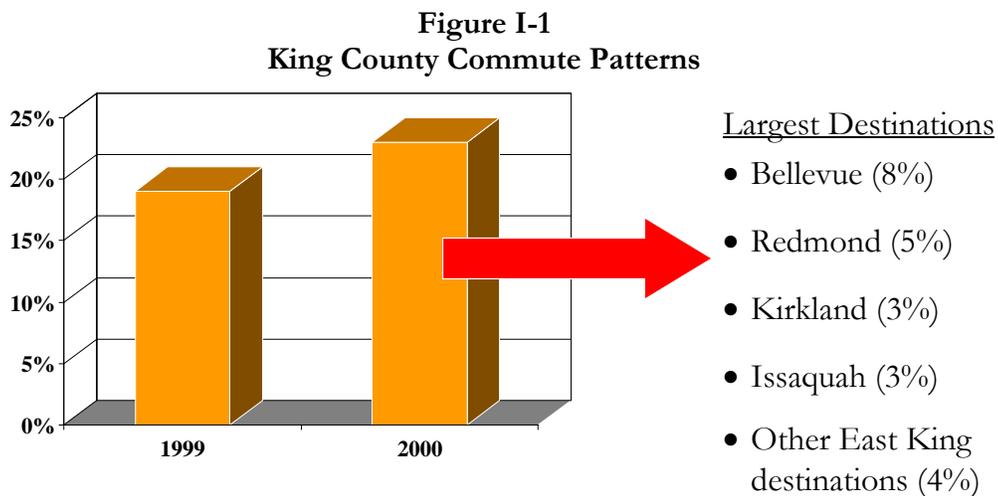
In its May 8, 2000 adoption of the *Comprehensive King County Transit Policies* (see Appendix A) the Bellevue City Council directed city staff to undertake the following service-related activities with the region's transit providers:

- I. Identify transit needs to support continued growth & development.
- II. Strengthen transit services to/from & within Eastside communities.
- III. Emphasize transit service to Urban Centers and Suburban clusters.
- IV. Coordinate with Metro in improving downtown circulation.
- V. Support coordination of services provided by Sound Transit & Metro.

Such policy guidance has become the basis for the City's Service Element of the *Bellevue Transit Plan Update (2001-2007)*. The overarching message from this policy directive is that the City of Bellevue has achieved population and employment densities that warrant dramatic transit service improvements. Further, it appears that local transit will play an increasing role in supporting the City's future growth in population and employment.

Growing Attractiveness of Transit on Eastside

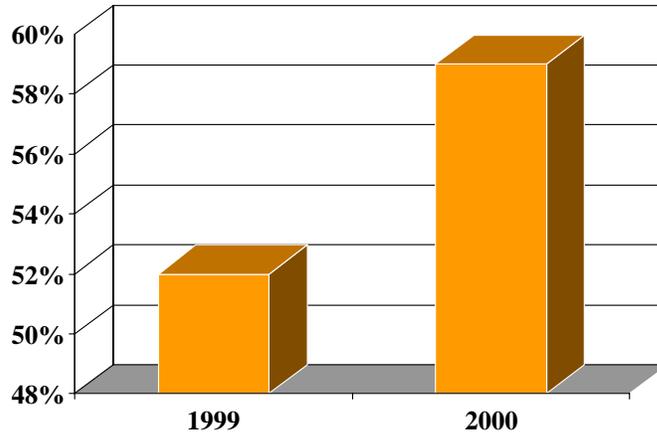
King County Metro's *2000 Rider/Nonrider Survey* shows that an ever increasing number of King County workers are commuting to East King County jobs. From 1999 to 2000, the number of King County commuters traveling to East King County jobs increased from 19% in 1999 to 23% in 2000 – with 70 percent of these commuters travelling to the East King urban centers of Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland.



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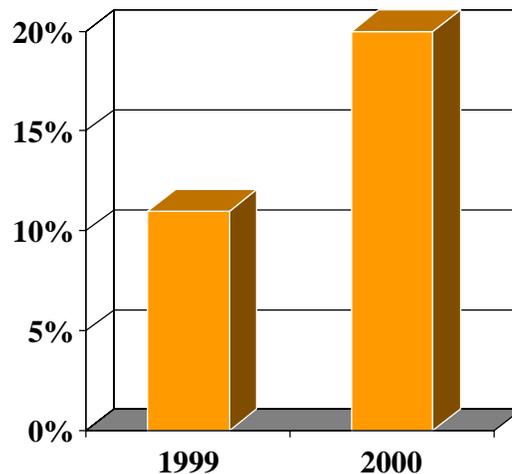
As reflected in Figure I-2 the “traditional commute” - the Bellevue resident commuting to downtown Seattle - is now one of many travel markets; including Bellevue residents commuting to Bellevue and other eastside jurisdictions as well as the Seattle resident commuting to downtown Bellevue. King County Metro’s 2000 *Rider/Nonrider Survey* goes on to show that nearly six out of ten (59%) commuters living in East King County also work on the Eastside – up from 52% in 1999.

**Figure I-2
East King County Commute Patterns**



Noteworthy is the fact that the proportion of commuters going to East King County who find the idea of commuting by bus to be “very appealing” has nearly doubled since 1999 (from 11% to 20% in 2000). A growing interest among Bellevue residents in using transit was also witnessed in the public focus group discussions that were held as part of the Bellevue Transit Plan Update.

**Figure I-3
Appeal of Using the Bus for East King County Commute**



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Public Focus Group Discussions

Public focus group discussions provided a valuable assessment of local transit needs and opportunities in Bellevue. Three brief focus group discussions were held with Bellevue residents: Group 1 included elderly residents; Group 2 included youth/student residents; and, Group 3 included residents who use existing transit services.¹ These brief focus groups helped to identify the commuting patterns, satisfaction with current transit operations, suggestions for service improvements in the study area, and perception of transit's image on the Eastside. The following represent the major themes from these discussions:

Figure I-4 Focus Group Discussion Summary

Scheduling Improvements desired:

- More service, in general, throughout Bellevue
- More frequent service - buses every 10 to 15 minutes
- Eastside routes have over-loaded buses/sometimes people are returned away (272, 253, 230, 923)
- Improvements to make transfer connections – more/better timed
- Extend late night service (after 10 PM) from Seattle to Bellevue
- Extend evening and late night service on the Eastside
- Some seniors would like a way of scheduling Access service less than a week ahead (not always possible to do so)
- Bus schedules in vicinity of schools do not match school schedules (Bellevue schools are now out by 12:30 on Wednesdays/other times are also not coordinated with school schedules)
- Buses often do not run on time - some are late and, even more irritating to riders, some are early (222/230)

Route improvements desired:

- More direct routes that do not require transfers
- Bellevue would benefit from a “cobweb” of routes, rather than the current hub system
- All-day service needed on 116th to serve people going to medical offices
- Better service needed to office campuses off 156th and 148th north of 520

Other improvements desired:

- Increase capacity at Park and Rides/add more Park and Rides (the Bellevue Park and Rides are full by 8 AM)
- Bus stops in Bellevue are too far away in many areas, especially some of the residential areas
- Keep buses cleaner/remove graffiti
- Improve web site to provide more individual route and schedule information
- Have more Eastside outlets for purchasing bus passes and obtaining transit information
- Have a full-service customer service operation at the Bellevue Transit Center

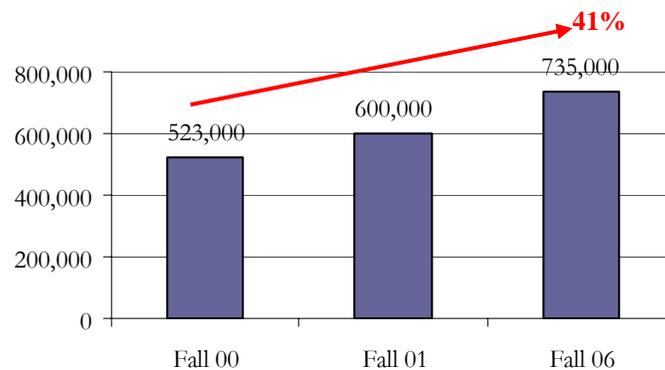
¹ The focus groups are described in detail in Appendix B.

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Resource Availability, 2001-2006

The passage of the 0.2% sales tax increase for transit in the November 2000 election means that Metro can begin to implement a number of needed service and facility improvements in East King County. As reflected in Figure I-5, under current allocation methods, East King County can expect to have an estimated 41% increase in service hours through Fall 2006. It should be noted that this significant increase in service is, in part, available because of the implementation of Sound Transit regional express services which freed-up an estimated 70,000 hours of Metro service.

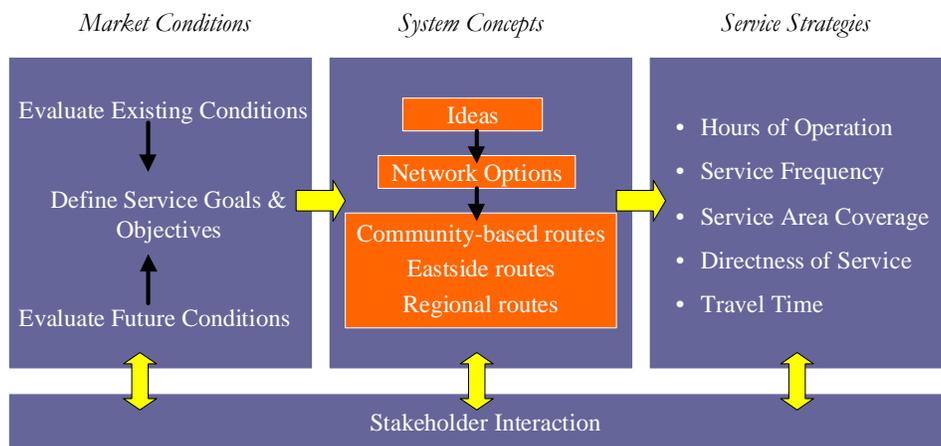
Figure I-5
Planned Metro Service Hour Increases in East King County



Project Approach

The goal of the Service Element of the *Bellevue Transit Plan (2001-2007)* is to determine the optimal transit investments within the City of Bellevue. As reflected in Figure I-6, the Service Element was approached in a three-phased planning process.

Figure 1-6
Service Element Planning Process



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1. *Market Conditions* – The market conditions phase of the Service Element provides answers to the following questions: (i) what is the existing market; (ii) how are existing services meeting this market; and (iii) what will the future market look like? The assessment of market conditions provided the City with the information it needed to conceptualize various network options that would better serve Bellevue residents and businesses.
2. *System Concepts* – The system concepts phase of the Service Element identified what can be changed in the existing transit service network to best meet the existing and future travel markets within Bellevue and between Bellevue and other eastside and regional destinations. This phase identified and prioritized investments in neighborhood, Eastside, and regional transit connections. Ensuring a transit network for Bellevue, within the context of the greater Eastside, is critical in improving the travel options for Bellevue area residents and employers.
3. *Service Strategies* – The service strategies phase of the Service Element identifies the specific service attributes of the concepts reviewed in the prior phase. Service connections specified in this task will detail the anticipated markets-served and the operating requirements associated with service implementation; including, hours of operation, service frequency, travel time, etc.

This approach was further informed through targeted public involvement, interaction with elected officials, and the resources available through King County Metro.