
SERVICE ELEMENT

CHAPTER V - SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

In its May 8, 2000 adoption of the *Comprehensive King County Transit Policies* (see Appendix L) 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, because the City is expected to realize continued growth in population and employment in the future, it appears that local transit will play an ever greater role in the longer term (2010-2030). What follows is a detailed explanation of how each objective is being achieved:

I. Identify transit needs to support continued growth & development.

To address this policy guidance, the *Bellevue Transit Plan (2001-2007)* recommends improving transit access for Bellevue residents to *urban-quality* transit service levels commensurate with the growth and development occurring in the City. The following are representative examples of *urban quality* transit service levels:

- ***Span of Service*** - Routes operating in Bellevue have a strong peak orientation with limited service in non-peak periods, rendering transit ineffective for many trips. Regular transit service should be matched to activities in the City's centers to make transit a viable mode.

Recommendation: A Fall 2007 minimum target of service through 10:00 PM is recommended to capture the transit market from each of these centers.

- ***Service Frequency*** - Short and regular headways (that is, high frequency) are an essential element of attracting passenger trips to a system. From the point of view of the rider, service headways operating in excess of every 30 minutes are considered inconvenient for potential users of the system.

Recommendation: A Fall 2007 minimum off-peak service frequency target of two or more trips per hour (i.e., 30 minute headways) on most routes.

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- ***Improved Transit Travel Speeds*** – If Metro is to support Bellevue’s continued growth and development it will need to promote transit as an alternative to the private automobile for a wide variety of trip purposes. To accomplish this objective, Metro will need to improve transit travel speeds relative to the private auto. As presently configured, a number of disparities exist between auto and transit travel times. In a number of these instances, bus route alignments are circuitous and service frequencies are low.

Recommendation: Metro should strive to operate at a transit/auto travel time ratio of no greater than 1.5 on mid-day route connections between key origin/destination pairs by Fall 2007.

II. Strengthen transit services to/from & within Eastside communities.

Recommendation: Improve transit connectivity between Bellevue and other major Eastside destinations. The following represent the highest priority transit nodes in East King County:

- Redmond
- Kirkland
- Issaquah
- Mercer Island
- Renton

Links between Bellevue and these eastside transit nodes should be enhanced through more frequent⁶ and more direct service that is operated for longer periods of time.

III. Emphasize transit service to Urban Centers and Suburban clusters.

Recommendation: Improve one-seat access to major Bellevue destinations from all areas of the City. The following represent the highest priority transit nodes in the City:

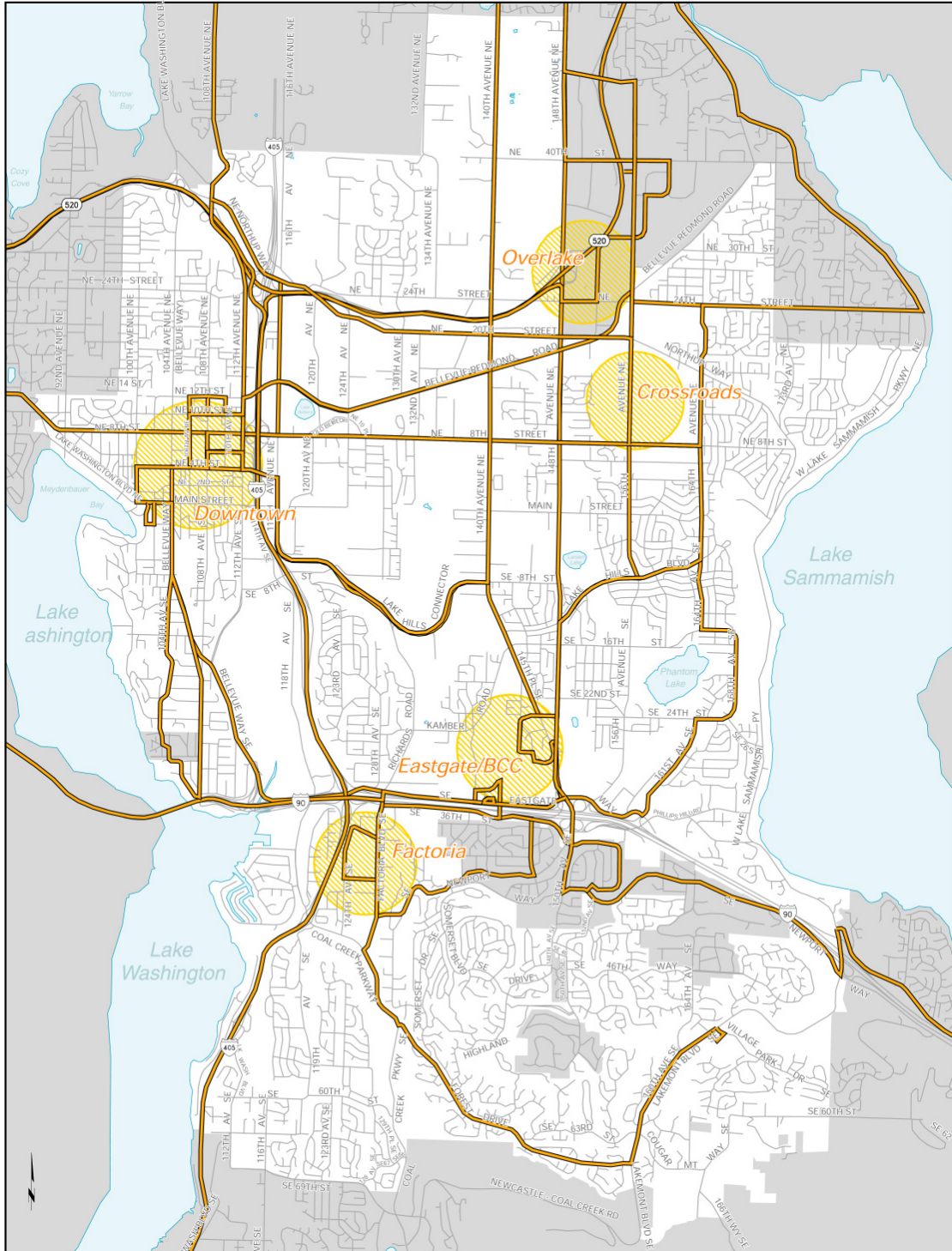
- Downtown Bellevue
- Overlake Area
- Factoria Mall
- Eastgate/BCC
- Crossroads Mall

Figure V-1 aggregates route-level recommendations in this report and reflects the activity center-based approach to service planning the City arrived at following a determination that the existing network is often circuitous and travel times for even relatively short-distance trips are often extended. Based upon the importance given to travel time among the general public, it is recommended that these transit nodes be developed as hubs that are connected together by a network of direct transit links.

⁶ Weekday peak frequencies of 15 minutes with 30 minutes at all other times.

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Figure V-1
Activity Center-Based Service Improvements, Fall 2007



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IV. Coordinate with Metro in improving downtown circulation.

Recommendation: By Fall 2007, Metro's service network should offer all-day service connections throughout the downtown urban core at a minimum of 30 minute frequencies on most routes. A number of important service connections are missing in the existing downtown transit network (e.g., service to medical facilities on 116th). This recommendation is consistent with establishing the Distributed Facilities Network in downtown in September 2001. Further, Metro's cooperation is requested on the continued consideration of a downtown transit circulator to supplement service there.

V. Support coordination of services provided by Sound Transit & Metro.

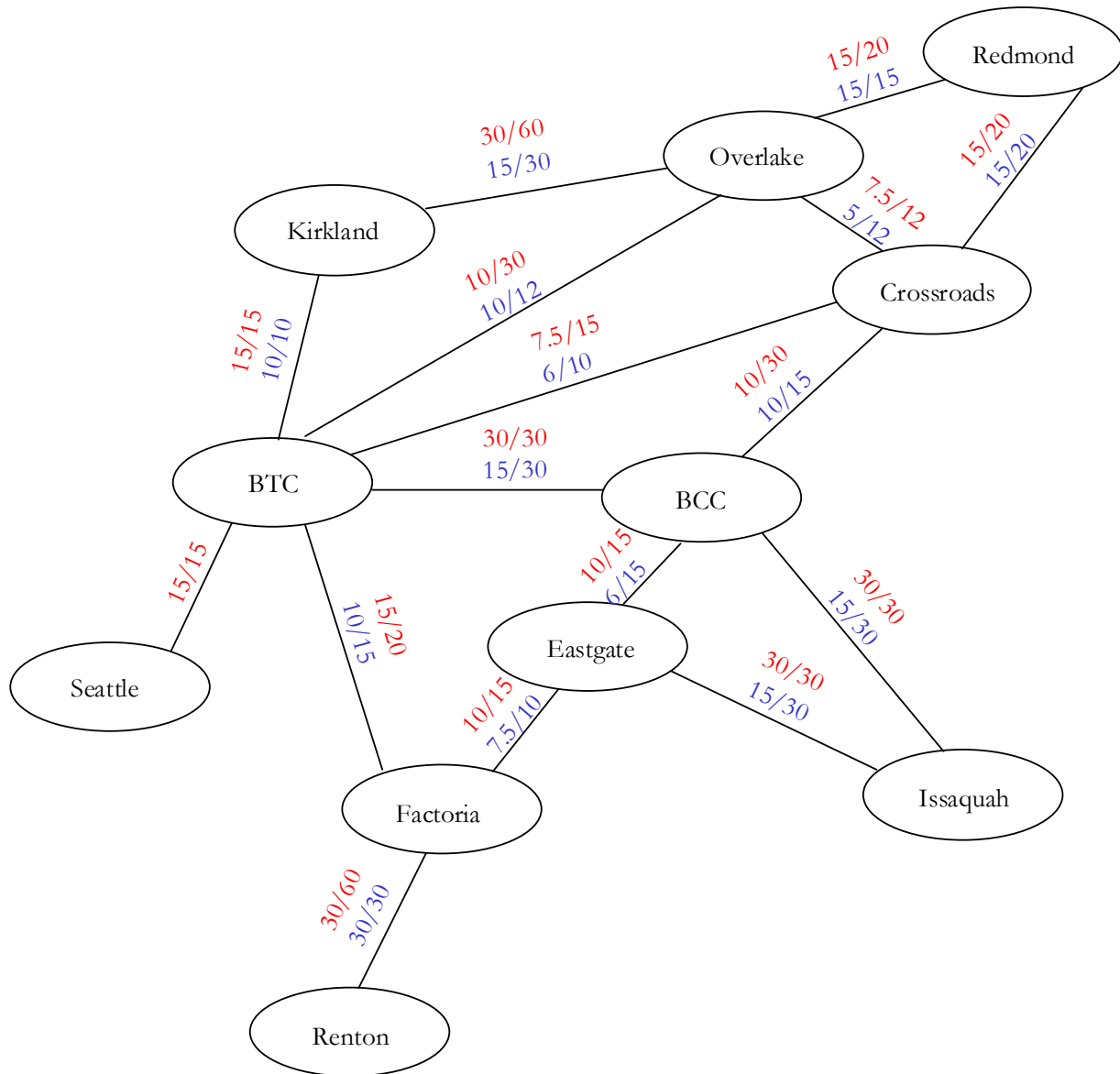
The Sound Transit Regional Express bus network connects urban centers with frequent all day every day two-way service. In addition to offering service connections unlike those that were operated previously, these corridor enhancements have enabled King County Metro to eliminate a number of routes that paralleled the Regional Express services. As a result, an estimated 70,000 hours of Metro service have been "freed-up" in East King County to enhance local service connections. Eastside jurisdictions are intent on ensuring that these and future "freed-up" service hours are expeditiously reinvested in East King County.

Figure V-2 reflects the service objectives for frequency improvements within Bellevue and between Bellevue and other eastside and regional destinations by Fall 2007. This schematic representation will be arrived at through a series of service enhancements implemented over the next six years. The recommended network strives to ensure residents and businesses realize a measurable improvement to Bellevue's transit network within the context of the greater Eastside through the following types of enhancements:

- (i) improved local service frequencies (both peak and off-peak);
- (ii) improved connections to downtown Bellevue; Crossroads; Overlake; Factoria; Eastgate/BCC
- (iii) improved travel time between major sub-regional destinations;
- (iv) enhanced peak hour express service to major eastside employers;
- (v) improved access to medical facilities (i.e., Overlake Hospital);
- (vi) improved frequencies along priority corridors (e.g., 156th, 148th, Bell-Red Road, Richards Road)
- (vii) improved all-day connections to other Eastside jurisdictions;
- (viii) elimination of duplicative services;
- (ix) creation of route structure less dependent on Seattle & more focused on Eastside;
- (x) improved connections between Bellevue neighborhoods.

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**Figure V-2
Recommended Service Frequency Connections**



Short-Term (Fall 01) Service Frequency Recommendations (Peak/Mid-day)
 Long-Term (Fall 07) Service Frequency Recommendations (Peak/Mid-day)

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The September 2001 service change includes the most significant near-term service improvements that moves the City toward achieving the service network reflected in Figure V-2. The City of Bellevue's service recommendations are segmented into the following time-frames:

1. **Near-Term (for implementation in September 2001)** – These recommendations are within Metro's East King County budget of 80,000 hours for the September 2001 service change and result in an East King County service hour investment of approximately 600,000 annual hours. *It should be noted that the City of Bellevue takes issue with the current method of transit service allocation and feels strongly that this needs to be revisited.*
2. **Long-Term (for implementation by Fall 2007)** – These recommendations result in Metro's investment of an additional 135,000 hours in East King County through Fall 2007 and result in an East King County service hour investment of approximately 735,000 annual hours.

For a detailed listing of the recommended frequency improvements please reference Appendix C. For a detailed listing of the route-level hour requirements of the recommended frequency improvements please reference Appendix E.