

REVISED DRAFT 07/09/10

Statements of Initial Policy Direction Emerging from the Regional Transit Task Force July 1, 2010

These draft statements of emerging policy direction attempt to summarize multiple conversations at the full task force and sub group meetings. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list of policy statements that may ultimately be created by the task force.

Service Allocation

- Productivity should be a major factor in designing the transit system and making service allocation decisions. Emphasizing productivity will tend to prioritize services to the corridors that serve the most people and job centers, while matching the frequency, hours of operation and type of transit services to the market. The “key factors” of productivity, financial sustainability, land use, and economic development are closely linked to productivity.
- While productivity should be the primary focus in service allocation decisions, the transit system must also serve the mobility needs of people in low wage jobs **or who work outside of the traditional 8 – 5 weekday commuter window**, students, and those dependent on transit service for basic mobility, in places where the highest numbers of such people live and work (social equity).
- Service allocation decisions must also address issues regarding geographic balance and equitable service coverage. How best to define these interests has not yet been determined. In discussions about the appropriate balance with other objectives, task force members have suggested that with respect to potential service reductions, productivity and financial sustainability should factor more heavily in service allocation decisions. There has not been discussion about the appropriate balance of objectives for service growth.
- **Local service should not be limited to fixed route services. Transit services in lower density areas can be supplemented by the larger family of mobility options and transit-related services and strategies, such as vanpool/rideshare services, community agency vans, and demand responsive services, such as Metro’s DART or taxi scrip programs.**
- The focus on high productivity services will generally tend to support existing population and employment centers and corridors. Service allocation policies should also support, **with appropriate levels of service**, communities that **are** developing in a manner that is supportive of high ridership transit use. *Note: This concept needs greater definition.)*

Performance Measures

- Metro should create and adopt a new set of performance measures by service type, **including for fixed route services (i.e., Frequent Arterial, Peak Commuter, Local, and Hourly service)**,

and Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART), Access, vanpool, etc. and report at least annually on the agency's performance on these measures. Modifying Metro's current method of compiling and reporting on performance measures will enable Metro managers, County decision makers, and the public to compare the performance of similar types of service and evaluate the effectiveness of Metro services. This work should also include establishment of service standards for the different types of service (Frequent Arterial, Peak Commuter, Local, Hourly).

- Analysis of performance measures should include comparisons with Metro's peer transit agencies. However, for that comparison to be useful it will require a detailed and thorough analysis of why there are differences between Metro and the peer agencies. This work should be completed within the next year, and it should be used to inform decisions by policy makers.
- The list of "key factors" identified by the Council and Executive should also include a factor for "Environmental Sustainability". This would be defined as transit service carrying a sufficient number of passengers so that less energy is used than would be used if the same number traveled by automobile.

Financial Sustainability

- Metro must continue efforts to further reduce costs, create efficiencies and implement the savings strategies, including those identified in the audit. Metro should provide regular updates on the progress it is making and its expected timetable to implement the 2009 audit findings. Additional cost control and efficiency measures could free up resources to increase the amount of service provided, reduce the scale of needed hours of service cuts, or reduce the amount of new revenue needed to sustain or expand existing service. (Note: The cost control/efficiency sub group is also exploring the potential to use alternative service delivery models, and questions about the county overhead charges.)
- Metro's financial model, with current revenue sources and Metro's expense structure, is not sustainable over the long-term. Metro's wages, salaries and benefits for all employees comprise 65% of its total operating costs. The county should create a growth curve for personnel costs that is sustainable over time. (Note: At the last meeting a member expressed concern about the language that focuses on personnel expenditures as being the cause of Metro's financial model being unsustainable. The facilitator is working with members to see if alternative language can be crafted.)