



**In Transit**

# May/June 2008

**A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees**



*From the desk  
of the General  
Manager*

## **Good news/ bad news: Metro takes it as it comes**

Let's do the good news first.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced recently that King County Metro Transit had the highest percentage ridership increase of all large U.S. bus transit agencies in 2007—a 7.5-percent growth over 2006, which dwarfs the one-percent national average. We knew we had a good year, and now the whole world knows it. Thank you, everyone, for contributing to our success. You should have received a pin by now commemorating this achievement, and I hope you'll wear it proudly. You earned it.

The bad news is that the good news—the unprecedented and rapid growth in ridership—is making it hard to do business the way we want, which is to deliver top-quality transit service to the community at all times. Rising gasoline prices drive more and more customers our way, and the sheer size of the increased demand is straining our capacity to accommodate it. Bus overcrowding is more common, and loyal customers accustomed to having a seat must now stand more often.

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New riders are flocking to Metro buses as gas prices rise, but we have to buy fuel too—and the sudden jump in ridership brings its own set of challenges.

## Maintaining Service Quality

In the past two years, Metro ridership has increased by 15 percent, reaching nearly 111 million riders in 2007. Ridership continues to grow in 2008, with the March 2008 total six percent higher than that for March 2007. Combined with increasing congestion, this record-breaking growth is impacting service quality for Metro customers and operators.

“Metro’s record ridership is a good thing,” said **David Hull**, supervisor of Service Planning. “It reinforces why voters chose to tax themselves for Transit Now. But the numbers we are carrying are putting a lot of pressure on the

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*We'll Get You There*

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## General Manager

Keeping buses on time is also more difficult because of increasing time spent at stops. Late trips are on the rise, even as we see overall improvement in on-time performance since last summer. Some of this improvement is due to the reopening of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel last September. Clearly, schedule performance issues are complex, but we are addressing them.

Ideally, we'd like to accelerate service improvements so we can better match our passenger-carrying capacity to the demand. Unfortunately, the primary cause of the rapid growth in demand is also constraining our ability to respond. Metro is not immune to the rising cost of fuel. The chart on page 3 shows how the average price we paid for diesel fuel has skyrocketed, especially in 2008. In fact, we paid as much as \$4.18 per gallon for diesel in May—a cost that is well in excess of our fuel budget. So just when we need to add more service hours than we originally planned, our ability to do so is hampered by rising operating costs.

Still, we are doing everything we can to respond. Transit Now revenues are being used to expand services throughout the county, which has freed funding in our base budget to invest about 19,000 annual "schedule maintenance hours" this year and for each of the next five years. These investments will address quality-of-service issues such as on-time performance and service frequency gaps on selected routes (see story on page 4). We know that coach operators feel the strain of increased demand too, so some schedule maintenance hours will be used to address layover and recovery problems. Our transit schedulers are reaching out more to get input from operators about the service problems they face on the road (see story on page 14). But the infusion of schedule maintenance hours alone can't keep up with the increasing demand and related issues.

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The supervisor-in-training (SIT) recruitment and hiring process takes about six months. Pictured is the most recent SIT class: kneeling, left to right: Prakash Chand, Howard Leung; standing, left to right: Garnett Young, Alan Siciliano, Jeffrey Cannon, Tonya Davis, Kerrie Jackson, and Shanta Sillan. They will train for about one year before picking regular "first-liner" shifts.

## Becoming a Metro 'first-liner' no easy feat

There are 135 full-time first-line supervisors stationed throughout the Metro system to keep its day-to-day operation running safely and smoothly. Also known as "first-liners," these supervisors can be found dispatching work at base windows, in training offices, at consoles in the Communications Control Center, in field cars, at transit centers, or on foot in downtown Seattle. All first-line supervisors are promoted from transit operator positions.

About every two years, Transit Operations begins an extensive new recruitment and training process, referred to as the Supervisor-in-Training (SIT) program, to promote operators into open or new first-line supervisor positions.

Most recently, more than 200 operators applied for just 32 SIT positions, making this process one of the most rigorous and competitive to date. Applicants must first successfully pass a written test and employment review. Then comes an interview and role-play test. During the role-play, the candidate is given a typical situation that a first-line supervisor is called upon to resolve. A panel of Operations personnel observes and evaluates each candidate's decisions and ability to handle the situation.

"Candidates display a depth of knowledge, creativity, and motivation that reminds us of what a rich and diverse group of people we have here at Metro," says Ken Johnston, lead SIT recruitment coordinator. Along with Johnston, the most recent SIT recruitment team included Dareyl Plummer, Sandy Sander, and Suzanne Keyport. The interview and role-play team included Rudy Allen, Tim Mack, Sherman Alston, Doug Beatty, Valerie Summer, Mike Yamamoto, Ken Dvorak, Cheryl Washington, and Jim Farris.



# Speed and Reliability tackles problems big and small

**S**ervice Development's Speed and Reliability group is one of many in Metro that strive to improve the quality and reliability of our services. The group's traffic engineers, project managers, and intelligent transportation systems specialists work with local cities to improve signals and roadways for transit. They identify problems that affect Metro service, propose solutions, get approval from the appropriate cities, and figure out how to finance the solutions and make them happen.

The group's accomplishments include a protected left-turn signal for Route 7 coaches at the intersection of Broadway and E Pine Street; two new "bus bulbs" that let Route 44 buses stop in-lane rather than pulling in and out of traffic on 45th Street; and a new protected left-turn signal going in at the intersection of Garden Way and NE 175th Street in Woodinville, which should help Routes 236 and 251 pass through the intersection more easily.

In addition to spot improvement projects like these, Speed and Reliability traffic engineers are working to get transit improvements included in larger regional projects, especially the Alaskan Way Viaduct project and others in the Seattle central business district. Major initiatives now being discussed include exclusive transit lanes on First Avenue S and the Alaskan Way Viaduct (and its replacement), a new transit couplet\* using Main and Washington streets to and from Third Avenue, a comprehensive set of transit improvements involving Olive Way and Stewart and Virginia streets, and the reorganization of trolley routes in downtown Seattle to reduce turning conflicts on Third Avenue.

*\*Editor's note—A transit couplet separates eastbound and westbound buses onto two streets that are parallel and next to each other, which minimizes the impact of buses on any one street.*



**Speed and Reliability developed a contra-flow lane on Seneca Street between Second and Third avenues to provide faster, more reliable access to Third Avenue for buses coming off the Alaskan Way Viaduct.**

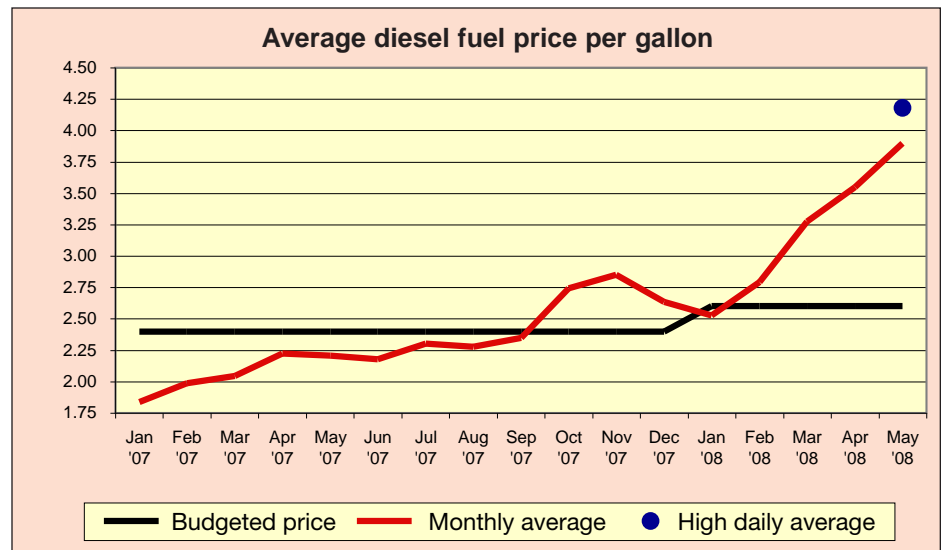
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**Other initiatives to improve service quality include bringing 22 new articulated coaches into service beginning with the June service change, adding new services in September, and addressing service quality issues through Speed and Reliability projects (see story on this page). These actions will help, but**

**even more efforts will be needed as we move forward. Fortunately, we have a great group of employees whose resilience will help us face the challenges ahead.**

**Thank you and keep up the good work. Let's enjoy the ride!**

**— Kevin Desmond, GM**



**Diesel prices have grown sharply in the last few months. Higher fuel prices are helping to increase ridership, but increased costs may limit the amount of service we can provide.**

# Metro looks to schedule maintenance for relief of trouble spots

**W**hat do you do when you're a bus driver and your trip is overloaded? You ask for a bigger coach or another trip on the schedule. If you're not getting at least five minutes in between each trip, you say, "Hey Metro, add some time to that layover so I can stay on schedule!" What if the bus is always late? You say, "Fix that schedule!" Who makes all these changes to bus schedules, anyway? The answer: the Scheduling group in Metro's Service Development Section.

Schedule maintenance hours are the currency that this group invests to improve schedule reliability. The primary purpose of those hours is to keep existing service running as smoothly as possible, but they can also be used to address problems related to reroutes, construction impacts, and moving a route from one base to another.

Each year, the Scheduling group is given a set number of schedule maintenance hours to spend on reliability investments in the Metro system. In 2008, they have a budget of up to 18,750 new hours for addressing overloads, late trips, and short layovers.

The budget is not always so generous. "No hours were invested in schedule maintenance in 2003 or 2004, and very few hours were invested in 2005 and 2006," said scheduling supervisor Jon Bez. "The economic slowdown that hit the region in the early part of this decade had critical impacts on transit service. It reduced the number of people riding the bus to work, which actually helped with crowding and with on-time performance because having fewer riders can speed up service. However, the slowdown

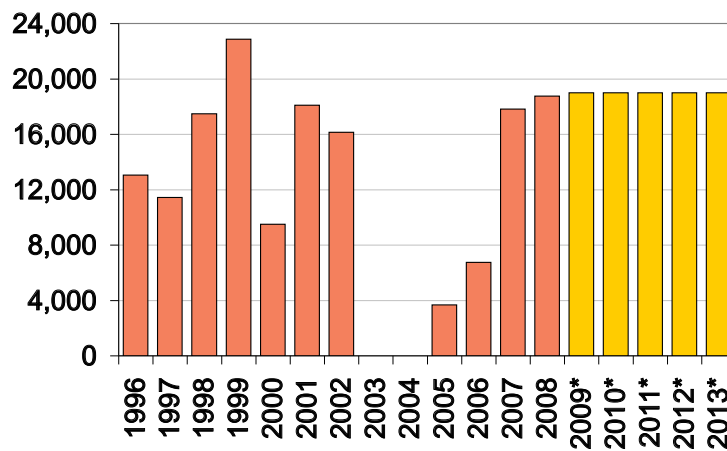
also affected sales tax collection, and with fewer riders, fare revenues dropped. When budget cuts became necessary, schedule maintenance was reduced."

The impact of deferred schedule maintenance began to hit home in 2005 and 2006, when the economy

and ridership started to pick up. On-time performance and bus crowding became more pressing (see On-time performance chart below). Fortunately, the passage of Transit Now in the fall of 2006 restored our ability to budget for schedule maintenance. The first signs of

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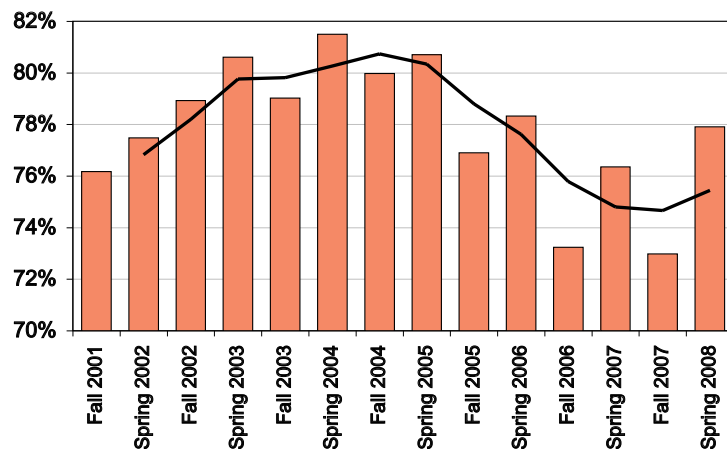
**Schedule maintenance hours by year**



\*Projected additional service maintenance hours

**No maintenance hours were allotted in 2003 and 2004.**

**On-time performance by service period 2001 - 2008**



Note: Trend line shows the average percent trips on-time for the last 2 service changes.

**The reopening of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel and scheduled maintenance hours funded by Transit Now are improving on-time performance.**

# SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

## News briefs in and around the Transit Division



**Art in the tunnel**—Nine 14-by-14-foot panels of painted and folded stainless steel depicting origami patterns, by artist Sonya Ishii, decorate the east wall of the International District station platform.

■ **Who needs museums?**—A new guide to the art and architecture of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel touts the tunnel’s “Art-itecture” and supports ridership by increasing the tunnel’s visibility in a positive way. Information Production created the 28-page booklet for current and potential bus riders; people walking through the tunnel stations; people and organizations interested in public art and architecture; downtown shoppers and tourists; and downtown businesses, hotels, and public attractions. Metro information distributors are stocking the guide mostly in downtown transit literature racks and delivering it to organizations interested in displaying it. You can also find the text and photos on Metro Online at <http://transit.metrokc.gov/tops/tunnel/tunnel-stationart.html>.

■ **Tunnel logos enhance bus stop signs**—Information Production has added decals to bus stop signs in downtown Seattle that indicate when a route operates in the transit tunnel during the tunnel’s open hours. The decals feature the downtown tunnel

symbol and are located beside the route numbers. Another decal serves as a key for the tunnel symbol, lists the tunnel’s hours, and directs customers to see the schedules for details.

■ **Prototype bus signs field-tested**—Members of the public and Metro employees had an opportunity recently to comment on two prototype bus signs installed temporarily in downtown Seattle. Created with the aid of an experienced transit-sign design consultant, the prototypes are part of a multi-year effort to make Metro’s bus signs more informative, easier to see and use, and more attractive. Eventually, the existing 18-year-old signage system will be replaced, beginning with signs at Metro bus stops. The consultant is working closely with a team of Metro staff members representing the key work groups that plan, produce, install, maintain, and use the signs. Metro management and community transit advisory committees are also involved.

■ **Demo buses on tour**—Metro is planning to place an order soon for new 40-foot buses, so manufacturers are sending sample coaches for us to look over. Pictured below is one sent by Nova Bus, which uses the Allison hybrid package for clients who order that feature. For more information on the upcoming procurement or the demo buses, contact Leo Hrechanyk at 206-684-1849 or [leo.hrechanyk@kingcounty.gov](mailto:leo.hrechanyk@kingcounty.gov).

■ **Promotion surpasses itself**—The Wheel Options commuter promotion held in March was a huge success, with 30,700 participants—25 percent more than ever before. Of these, 17,500 were commuters to worksites in King County. Commuters were eligible if they used an alternative to driving alone at least twice in the two-week promotion period. In King County, more than 350 worksites promoted Wheel Options to their employees, and 87 of those sites saw at least a 20-percent increase in participation over the fall 2007 promotion. The 17,500 King County participants

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**A demo coach from Nova Bus paid a visit to Metro in May.**



prevented 155,053 drive-alone trips, kept an estimated 4,071,833 pounds of carbon dioxide and 136,838 pounds of carbon monoxide out of the air, and reduced gas consumption by an estimated 208,900 gallons.

■ **RideshareOnline works with Wheel Options**—Rideshare Operations does outreach each spring in conjunction with the statewide Wheel Options promotion (see above). This year, RideshareOnline.com got 3,029 new registrations during the five-week period, a 17-percent increase over last year and a 77-percent increase over 2006. The effort averaged more than 600 new registrations and 500 updated registrations each week. A weekly drawing for \$100 gift cards and a special prize (a new television/dvd package) were offered as incentives to use RideshareOnline.com. Winning participants came from across the state, plus one from Idaho. The gift cards and special prize had a \$2,200 value, making this a very cost-effective outreach—only \$0.73 was spent for each new user gained.

■ **Vehicle maintenance overhaul grant approved**—The Federal Transportation Administration approved Metro’s grant application for \$43 million to help fund our adopted 2008 vehicle maintenance budget of \$88.6 million.

■ **Water Taxi resumes service**—The Elliott Bay Water Taxi began its 11th season on April 27. About 400 people gathered at Seacrest Dock in West Seattle to celebrate the taxi’s opening day, which featured live music, face painting, and fine weather. Argosy Cruises will again operate the service, using the 150-passenger MV Sightseer. The boat leaves Seacrest Dock and Pier 55 every 40 minutes during commute hours, and once an hour during mid-day. Also returning is



**Water Taxi passengers disembark on the Seattle waterfront on the first day of service.**

the free shuttle van service, operating as Metro Route 773, that provides a direct connection to the Admiral District, the West Seattle Junction, Alki, and Harbor Avenue. Next time you have a yearning to feel the sea breeze in your hair, hop aboard the Water Taxi for a mini-vacation—King County employees ride free with their bus passes.

■ **September service changes approved**—The September 2008 Service Change Ordinance, approved by the Metropolitan King County Council on May 5, continues the rollout of Transit Now-funded service, including investments from the rapidly-developing-areas, high-ridership, and partnership programs. Major service enhancements include investments and restructuring in the East I-90 corridor and lower Snoqualmie Valley; a new commuter service from Kent’s East Hill; and

additional peak trips on the Route 143 serving Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and other areas; as well as improvements funded by four service partnerships.

■ **Metro takes protest march in stride**—When a May 1 march through downtown Seattle was expected to draw up to 3,000 protesters, Metro Operations prepared for significant delays in bus service. Staff members met with representatives from other agencies to work out strategies. On the day of the march, extra coaches were standing by; two push vehicles were at the ready; and extra supervisors were

assigned to precede and follow the march. Metro’s mobile command post was staffed with our special events coordinator, to handle communications with the Transit Control Center, and with personnel from Pierce Transit and the King County Sheriff’s Office. Only 450 marchers arrived by the scheduled start time of 4 p.m., so the march was delayed an hour, which meant less impact on our customers. Once the march got underway the delays varied, averaging about 10 minutes per intersection. Metro’s Fourth Avenue services were delayed behind marchers for about 40 minutes, but in general our preparations paid off and customer inconvenience was kept to a minimum.

■ **Four-legged contractors return**—The goats from eastern Washington are on the job again for Metro in 2008, munching their way through unwanted vegetation that humans can't easily reach. In June, the goats, owned by Craig Madsen, are revisiting the Tukwila Park-and-Ride and East Base sites where they worked last year, and also putting in some time at the Houghton and Kingsgate park-and-rides. They'll also be back for a return engagement around the end of September. The visits to each location are scheduled to last 2-4 days, depending on how much material is to be removed and also on the weather. In

Roadeo. Watch for details of both events in the July/August issue of In Transit. MEHVA is a group of volunteers, mostly active and retired Metro employees, dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and operation of historic transit vehicles from the Seattle/King County area. MEHVA also holds excursions on its fleet of historic trolley and motor buses. The next scheduled trip is the Snohomish Tour on July 13, a four-hour scenic trip to the historic town. For more information, call the MEHVA Hotline, 206-684-1816, or visit [www.mehva.org](http://www.mehva.org).

drivers included a letter explaining the incentive offer, maps showing available parking alternatives, a list of amenities at each alternative lot, an incentive application form for each rider, and a return envelope for the applications. As of April 30, nine vanpools had vacated 93 parking stalls to make room for bus riders.

■ **Metro and parks to market at Seattle Storm basketball games**—Basketball fans attending Seattle Storm games will soon be seeing ads from Metro and the county's Department of Natural Resources and Parks. The pilot program's goal is to influence fans to use public transportation more often and recycle more, via a series of "Go Green" promotions on the Storm Web site; e-mails; and on-court events. Informational/help sessions will also be offered in the concourse areas of Key Arena.



Weed munching goats arrived last year with a healthy enthusiasm for their job (photo by Erik Martinson, transit chief, Power and Facilities).

pouring rain, it seems, the four-legged "crew" will respond much like two-legged ones, seeking shelter under a tree to wait it out.

■ **Employees celebrate historic vehicles**—The 20th Annual King County Employees Car Show, sponsored by the Metro Employees Historic Vehicle Association (MEHVA), took place June 21 at Metro's Safety and Training Center in conjunction with the Metro

■ **Vanpool relocation program off to great start**—Rideshare Operations has begun a program to help reduce the impact on parking of the Washington State Department of Transportation's I-405 Renton to Bellevue project. Vanpool users who park at the South Renton, South Bellevue, and Wilburton park-and-rides were offered \$300 gift cards for parking in alternate locations through March 2009. An outreach package sent to 34 Metro vanpool





# Kids try out their job skills at Transit Facilities Maintenance shop

“Imagine yourself—maximize your potential” was the theme of this year’s county-wide Take Your Kids to Work Day on May 22. Eighteen youngsters visited Power and Facilities’ south facilities shop in Tukwila, where they tried their hands at several of the tasks routinely carried out at the facility.

On hand to guide the young workers at the various stations were **Larry Drummer** and **Wes McDaniel** (“paint a shelter mural”); **Mark Lauhoff** and **Gene McGuire** (“assemble copper pipe”); **Dan Little**, **Diane Rolfe**, and **Sue Mulvihill** (“build a wood CD rack”); and **Carl Hendrickson** (“operate a boom”). **Lyn Winfield** coordinated the event, and the photos on this page were taken by **Lisa Carter**.

The south facilities maintenance shop is responsible for the skilled-trades repair and maintenance of seven major bus bases, the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, and more than 1500 bus shelters. Its crews include building operating engineers, carpenters, laborers, painters, plumbers/pipefitters, and welders.







# Performance corner

## Survey shows opportunities to improve customer experience

**T**he 2007 Rider/Non-Rider Survey provides Metro Transit with updated information about its riders and potential riders. Among the findings:

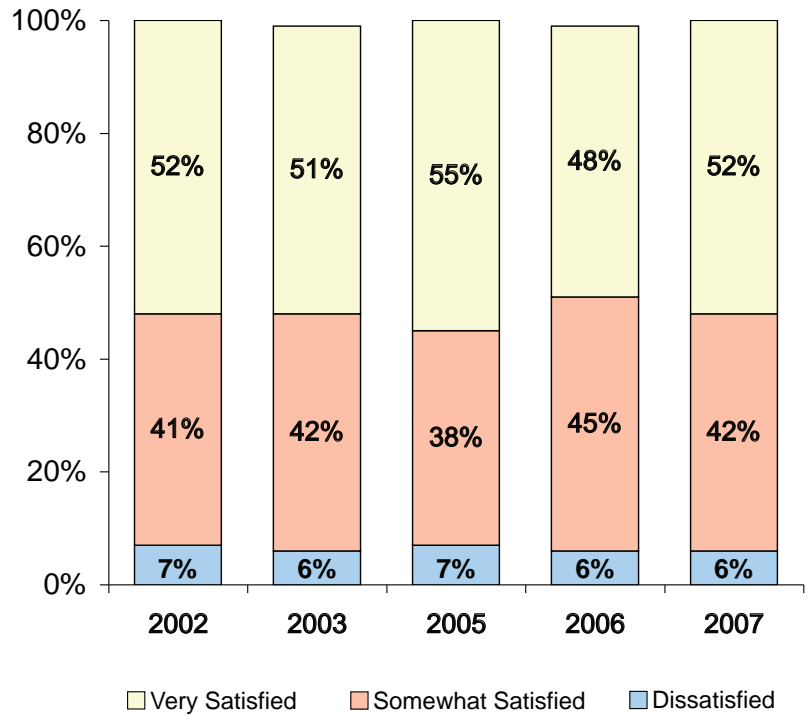
**Market share**—Metro’s market share of households did not change significantly from 2006 (26 percent), but did achieve levels seen from 1999 through 2001. In 2007, 28 percent of King County households had at least one “regular” rider (5 or more rides in the past 30 days) and another 12 percent had at least one “infrequent” rider (1-4 rides in the past 30 days).

**Bus operations after tunnel reopening**— Respondents who ride the bus to downtown Seattle were asked how their satisfaction with bus operations downtown had changed after the tunnel reopened on Sept. 24, 2007. Forty-three percent were more satisfied with downtown bus operations and 8 percent were less satisfied, but nearly half (49 percent) said they have not used the tunnel or that the tunnel reopening made no difference in their satisfaction with downtown bus operations.

**Service attribute importance**—Riders were asked to rate the importance of 11 attributes of transit travel when deciding whether to ride the bus. On-time performance of buses was reported as the most important, with 68 percent ranking it very important and 95 percent ranking it at least somewhat important. Personal safety when waiting for the bus after dark was rated second highest, with 88 percent ranking it very or somewhat important. The least important element was the number of stops the bus makes on your trip, which only 64 percent rated as very or somewhat important.

**Rider satisfaction**—While overall satisfaction among all riders in 2007 (94 percent) has not changed significantly from 2006 (93 percent), the number of riders saying they were very satisfied increased substantially from 48 percent in 2006 to 52 percent in 2007 (see chart). In addition, our riders were asked about their satisfaction with 21 elements of Metro service. Compared to 2006, the 2007 riders were significantly more satisfied with personal safety at the park-and-ride (+17 percentage points); where the bus routes go (+10); security of their automobiles at the park-and-ride (+10); travel time by bus (+10); and cleanliness of bus shelters (+6). However, they also indicated they were less satisfied with their ability to get information by phone (-22).

**Overall, how satisfied are you with Metro Transit?**



**Metro priorities**—After analyzing rider responses to the importance and satisfaction questions, Metro staff members identified four top-priority improvement areas: 1) on-time performance, 2) personal safety while waiting for the bus after dark, 3) time between buses, and 4) wait time when transferring.

For more information on the 2007 Rider/Non-Rider Survey results, contact Project Manager Lori Mimms at 206-684-2088 or view the report online at <http://gmsptest/rmi/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

## Maintaining service quality

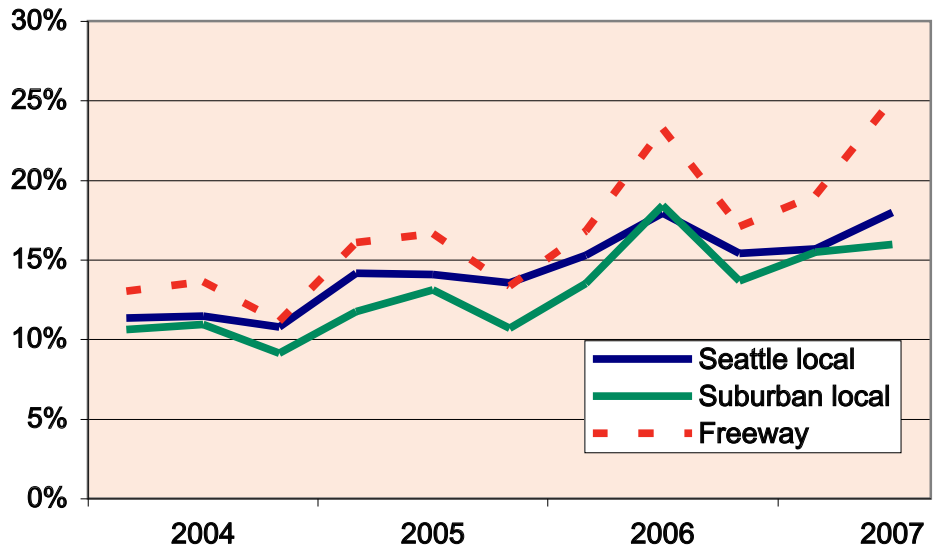
system and affecting the quality of service we provide our customers.”

Four major factors affect service quality: speed, reliability, loadings, and availability. Metro has seen changes in all of these areas, with more passengers standing throughout the system, more late trips, and a decline in system speed. Crowding affects reliability: as buses become more crowded, they slow down and fall behind schedule. Slower operation contributes to bus “bunching:” as a late bus begins to pick up some of the passengers the next bus would ordinarily carry, the loading becomes more uneven. These issues all need to be addressed to improve and sustain service quality for Metro’s customers and operators.

Metro uses several strategies to address service quality issues, including shifting articulated coach assignments between routes, allowing all-door boarding in the Ride Free Area, and adding schedule time to ensure adequate layovers. When resources are available, Metro planners and schedulers consider adding more trips and updating schedules to account for travel-time increases (see stories on pages 4 and 14). Metro also encourages speed and reliability partnerships on projects that can increase operating speeds (see story on page 3). Bus stop spacing also affects service quality. If done properly, reducing the number of bus stops along a route can reduce travel times and smooth out travel time variability, improving overall reliability and potentially increasing ridership.

“Our scheduling and planning staffs do what they can with limited resources to address crowding and reliability issues,” Hull said. “I’m excited about our future RapidRide services, which

**Average percentage of late trips**  
(late = more than 5 minutes behind schedule)



**Rapid ridership growth causes overloads and decreases operation speeds, resulting in more late trips.**



**More riders at stops mean boarding takes longer.**

will test our route design and service management concepts. If they’re successful, the lessons we learn can be applied to our other services.” RapidRide will include all-door boarding and a proof-of-payment system that will expedite passenger loading. RapidRide buses will have a more open interior design and three doors, making it easier for passengers to enter or exit the bus. Once RapidRide services are launched in 2010, these strategies may help guide improvements on other Metro routes.

Metro is also exploring other strategies to improve service quality. Managing headways by focusing on maintaining spacing between buses, rather than the specific schedule of individual buses, is one possibility (see Active Service Management on page 11). Metro is also looking to make freeway routes more reliable by working with the Washington State Department of Transportation for more aggressive management of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. The elimination of “through-routes” is another potential strategy that would decrease the number of long routes and help provide more reliable service.

Metro continues to work on maintaining a balance between improving service quality and adding new transit service. “As our ridership growth continues,” Hull said, “maintaining service quality becomes increasingly important if we are to ensure the best possible customer experience.”



# Testing Active Service Management for use with RapidRide

One goal for Metro's new RapidRide bus service is to improve reliability so riders can expect the buses to "be there and be on time."\* Through visits to other transit agencies and a review of industry reports, staff members from Service Development and Transit Operations learned that two key components of service reliability are keeping buses evenly spaced along a corridor and managing passenger overloads. If we were able to respond more quickly to breakdowns or delays, they concluded, perhaps by having buses standing by along the route, we might improve service reliability.

This type of management is known as "active service management" (ASM), and one potential drawback to using it on the RapidRide corridors is the added cost of operation. Today, each control center coordinator monitors about 300 buses during a peak hour. For a closer, more proactive management of specific routes, more coordinators would have to be on duty. Before Metro can decide whether to pursue this avenue for RapidRide, we must first determine the likely costs and benefits.

In March and April, the control center tested the concept on Route 358, which serves the Aurora Avenue N corridor. This corridor is scheduled to receive RapidRide service in fall 2013. For three weeks, Coordinator David Vestal actively managed Route 358 buses during peak hours. Using Metro's existing Automatic Vehicle Location technology, Vestal tracked the movement of Route 358 buses



During a three-week test, Coordinator David Vestal actively managed Route 358 buses from the control center.

on his monitor and contacted drivers when the spacing between buses became uneven. Almost immediately, he was able to improve the reliability of Route 358 by preventing service from "bunching up" and causing gaps along the route. Vestal also used stand-by buses to provide quick responses to delays. Riders benefited, as their buses arrived on time and were less crowded because passenger loads were more evenly distributed.

Data from this test were analyzed by a joint team from Service Development and Transit Operations. The team presented its findings and recommendations to the RapidRide Steering Committee in May to help the committee make a decision on whether to use ASM for RapidRide. The results were mixed, but showed enough positive impact to keep the concept on the table. A second test will be run this fall after some schedule adjustments.

*Continued from page 4*

## Maintenance

improvement in on-time performance are just beginning to show, thanks also to the reopening of the downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. With continued investment in schedule maintenance and the arrival of 22 new hybrid articulated coaches in June, schedulers can add both running time and seats where they are needed most.

As the June shake-up approached, schedulers were looking forward to seeing their planned schedule maintenance investments go into effect, even as they worked furiously to identify and plan September's improvements. Given the added emphasis that Metro is now placing on improving on-time performance and the increased attention that customers and the media are putting on bus crowding, schedule maintenance is likely to remain a high priority in the years to come.

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\* From *to the RapidRide Service Design Vision and Goals*

# KUDOS IN TRANSIT



Kevin Desmond (on left) and King County Councilmember Larry Gossett (third from left) pose with students from Franklin High School at a ceremony honoring the students for taking action to help a fellow bus passenger in medical distress. The students are, left to right, Abdurahman Hassan, Briana-Marie Sims, Hassan Dolal, Jasmeon Mathews, and Dat Nguyen. Metro Transit Police Captain Scott Strathy is on the right.

■ **High school students render aid**—On May 14, a group of Franklin High School students on an extremely crowded Route 42 bus noticed that a passenger had collapsed. Suspecting a heart attack, they alerted operator **Kimberly Freeman**, who stopped and called for help. The students checked the man's pulse and performed CPR until fire department personnel arrived and transported him



to Harborview Medical Center. *In Transit* congratulates and thanks these students for their quick thinking, life-saving skills, and willingness to help another passenger in need.

■ **Employee forges new partnership**—Thanks to **Dave Hollar**, employer transportation representative for Sales and Customer Services, all 76 members of the staff and faculty of Eastside Catholic High School will be offered a new FlexPass program in August as the school relocates to its new building in Sammamish. Transit service to the new site is limited, so the program will focus on Vanpools or Vanshares, plus Guaranteed Ride Home and carpooling with preferential parking benefits. Tom Scherting, a member of the school's board, thanked Hollar

“for investing your time and energy to walk us through this process.” Hollar said at first he considered the school a “low opportunity” lead, but “it shows the possibilities when providing the next level of service... even if you do not initially believe anything will materialize.” Co-worker **Gayle Delanty** may have said it best in a commendation e-mail: “Congrats, Dave. This was a work of art on your part.”

■ **Metro roadeo team just misses podium in Texas**—By a scant 0.01 percent, the combined Metro Transit team—operator **Michael Grady** and the Metro Vehicle Maintenance (VM) team of **Ryan Stringfellow**, **Leonard Emry**, and **Larry Fitzpatrick**—finished in fourth place overall at the 2008 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) International Roadeo in Austin, Texas, in May. Grady finished seventh among 78 professional operators in the 40-foot coach competition. The VM team finished eighth out of 47 teams in the maintenance competition. Each, however, had their moment of glory. The VM team took first-place honors in the Cummins/Voith power-train event, and Grady came in second in the Customer Service Challenge, which judges professionalism, customer service skills, and problem-solving creativity. Mark your calendars for next year, when Metro will host this prestigious international roadeo event.



■ **Three and a half decades of safety**—On May 8, Ryerson Base operator **Robert Rothwell** was honored by Transit Operations Manager **Jim O'Rourke** for a truly remarkable 35 years of safe driving. Rothwell joined Metro in 1967, was named Operator of the Year in 1990, and spent a decade as a motorman on



**Robert Rothwell**

the Waterfront Streetcar. His achievement is all the more impressive because he has chosen to operate routes in the city center throughout his career. Rothwell exemplifies the qualities, especially a concern for “safety first,” that Metro seeks in all its employees.

the Waterfront Streetcar. His achievement is all the more impressive because he has chosen to operate routes in the city center throughout his career. Rothwell exemplifies the

■ **Vehicle Maintenance names employee of the year**—For 28 years now, **Dan Flynn** has been the “go-to” person in the Component Supply Center Body Shop. He’s worked on dozens of bus models, doing every kind of repair, large and small, including door frames, mirrors, and bike racks. He even worked on Seattle Monorail cars, back when Metro operated the line for the City of Seattle. Flynn takes pride in his work and strives to complete each job with little or no down time for the coach. His expertise and professionalism have earned him the respect of his co-workers and supervisors, who also appreciate his sense of humor and positive attitude. At the ceremony naming him Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year, Flynn said, “I’m with a great crew who are like family to me, and work for an agency that values safety and quality workmanship. I can’t think of any place I’d rather work.”



**Dan Flynn, in blue coverall at center of photo, receives accolades after being named Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year**



**First-Line Supervisor Jackie Owens**

■ **First-line supervisor aids operator**—Alerted by an operator at Central Base that another operator in the building was having difficulty, first-line supervisor **Jackie Owens** went upstairs to check. Recognizing that operator **Andrew Baldwin** was showing signs of a heart attack, Owens called for aid, and Baldwin was taken to a hospital emergency room. “Though she was just doing her job, the extra, compassionate step of going upstairs to check on the situation may have been of critical importance” to Baldwin, said On-Call Base Chief **Ben Renfrow**. Baldwin is now feeling better and back at work.

*Continued on page 14*

**Kudos**

# Transit operators of the month

## April 2008

Atlantic Base: **Hajrudin (Rudy Vojnikovic)**

Bellevue Base: **Stanley Slenning**

Central Base: **Warren Davidson**

East Base: **Clifford Louie**

North Base: **Harold Olsoy**

Ryerson Base: **Carlos Torres**

South Base: **Zayid Salaam**

## May 2008

Atlantic Base: **Elizabeth Ferriday**

Bellevue Base: **Jessie Ota**

Central Base: **David Lambert**

East Base: **Tore Lyderson**

North Base: **Jack Millman**

Ryerson Base: **Alversia Stroughter**

South Base: **William Hurd**

# Transit schedulers reach out to operators for help

“I hear your bus is getting more crowded. How can I help?” Bus drivers may be hearing this more often as ridership increases and as Metro’s Scheduling group does more to get feedback from them about system problems.

The Scheduling group has the weighty responsibility of deciding where to spend schedule maintenance hours at each service change. These hours are used to make schedule improvements throughout the system (see story on page 4). “Lately, we’re able to address only about a quarter of the problems we’d like to fix in the system,” said scheduling supervisor **Jonathon Bez**, “but we are making a dent each shake-up—and where we do make improvements, we see positive results.”

Schedulers are focusing on Routes 2, 8, 72, 153, 183, 245, 271, and 316 for the service change coming this September. “We’re taking an extra step for September,” said senior scheduler **Bernie Durant**, “to make sure we get it right.”



Senior schedule planners **Jayson Peterson**, left, and **Monique Allen**, center, talk with operator **Ed Hughes** about Route 8.

Schedulers usually choose schedule maintenance investments by consulting feedback from customers, operators, and service quality supervisors and looking at rider counts and travel-time data collected from buses. After reviewing all the information, they choose the route and improvements they think will make the most difference. But for this September, after picking out the routes that need improvements, they’re talking to the operators who drive those routes. “Schedulers are asking drivers what they see as the problem and how they would fix it,” Bez said. “We’ll see how this approach goes. If it makes sense, we’ll keep doing it for future service changes.”

Scheduling is also working with each base to create more opportunities for scheduler-operator contact. In the near future, there should be visible evidence at every base of ways for operators to have input on the process of changing transit service.

## In Transit



*We'll Get You There*

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to **In Transit**, M.S. KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Clemenger**: 206-263-6482 or [anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov](mailto:anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov).

Produced by Transportation Community Relations and Communications

Editor: **Anna Clemenger**

Transit Coordination: **Bob Simpson**

Designer: **Jackie Phillips**

Staff Photographer: **Ned Ahrens**

80066cerc.indd





# We'll Get You There

## Shifting the Spotlight

### Direct mail campaign welcomes new move-ins

**M**oving to a new home can be stressful, but people dealing with change also tend to be receptive to new opportunities. They want to learn quickly how to move around and get into a “travel comfort zone” in their new surroundings. Metro views this as a golden opportunity to introduce them to the many transportation choices we offer.

Metro’s Transit Marketing group recently introduced a program targeted toward new residents in areas that have good existing Metro service—and where that service has the capacity to accommodate the new users. Twenty thousand “New Movers” received an offer of 10 free rides for completing and returning a short survey. Those who did so were sent a welcome packet containing:

- A letter outlining Metro resources
- 10 free-ride tickets
- A “Bus Basics” information sheet
- A “Clean Air” bookmark.

The response rate was phenomenal: 24 percent of the households that received the mailer responded by returning the survey. Here’s what we learned:

- Thirty-three percent had not taken the bus since moving.
- Half said they would use the tickets for both commuting and non-commute trips.

By early June, 75,156 of the free-ride tickets had been redeemed, helping to make Metro a part of the recipients’ travel lifestyles.

Given this success, Transit Marketing will continue reaching out to new residents in 2008, offering information on the many ways in which Metro can deliver on our pledge to “Get You There.”



### In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/aboutus/intransit](http://www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/aboutus/intransit).

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### On the Move

**Nick Nash**, constructor (South Facilities)—April 30  
**Steve Surber**, utility laborer—March 31

### Sales and Customer Services

**Debra Billups**, administrative specialist III (term-limited), Marketing and Service Information—April 1

**Everjean Carver**, trainee assigned rider information specialist—April 30

**Theresa Collier**, trainee assigned rider information specialist—April 30

**Anne Hartner**, trainee assigned rider information specialist—April 30

### Service Development

**Emily Allen**, transportation planner II—May 1

**Michael Cechvala**, engineer II—June 23

**Alice Diep**, transportation planner II (term-limited)—May 6

**Jana Wright**, transportation planner II—May 19

### Vehicle Maintenance

**Adam Arriaga**, mechanic—May 12

**Steve Bockelie**, mechanic—May 12

**Christopher Carlos**, mechanic—April 14

**Ronnie Castillo**, equipment service worker—April 14

**Johnny Juan**, mechanic—April 14

**John Leicester**, mechanic—May 12

**Deanna Mays**, technical information processing specialist III—May 19

**Clint O’Francia**, equipment service worker—May 12

### In Our Thoughts

**Lewis Bernard Jones**, first African-American Metro retiree, passed away May 30 (past Operator of the Month, former Jefferson Base)

**Clarence Meyer**, retired mechanic, passed away Jan. 30

**Gary Parker**, retired lead sheet metal worker, passed away March 6

**Mazel Stites**, former technical information processing specialist III, passed away Feb. 26



# ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

## Retirements

### Operations

#### **Operators:**

**John Fabre**, Ryerson Base—June 30; 38 years (2005 Operator of the year; 33-year safe driving award)

**David Howard**, North Base—June 30; 22 years

**William Smith**, North Base—June 2; 30 years (first part-time operator to reach 30 years)

### Vehicle Maintenance

**Stanley Alex**, mechanic—May 30; 18+ years

**Saul Saldana**, lead upholsterer—May 31; 28 years

## Promotions and Job Changes

### Design and Construction

**Linda Eaves** to administrator I (special duty acting assignment) from administrative specialist III, Sales and Customer Service, Marketing and Service Information

### Human Resources

**Lisa Krohn** to HR analyst (special duty acting assignment) from Transit Design and Construction Administrator I

### Information Technology (IT)

**Tamir Hasan** to application developer-journey (term-limited) from database administrator-journey (term-limited, Design and Construction)

**Stephen Heard** to applications developer-master (special duty assignment) from applications developer-senior

**Ken Miller** to LAN administrator-journey (term-limited) from desktop support specialist-journey (term-limited)

### Light Rail

**Evon Holden** to streetcar operator from coach operator (South Base)

**Brad Kittredge** to senior SCADA specialist, Rail Operations from AVL data analyst, Transit IT

**Jacqueline Mabry** to streetcar operator from coach operator (North Base)

**John Murrow** to streetcar operator from coach operator (South Base)

**Bob Wells** to rail SCADA systems specialist from rail operations/VM training chief

### Metro Transit Police (MTP)

**Detective Megan Dauber** to MTP, Crime Prevention Unit from Burglary/Larceny, Precinct 3, KC Sheriff's Office (KCSO)

**Deputy Joe Eshom** to MTP patrol (2nd shift) from Precinct 3 patrol, KCSO

**Deputy Steve Johnson** to MTP patrol (2nd shift) from Precinct 3 patrol, KCSO

**Deputy Joe Winters** to MTP patrol (2nd shift) from "master police officer," Precinct 2 patrol, KCSO

### Power and Facilities

**Gary Grosso** to chief of Power Distribution from electrician crew chief

**Lyn Winfield** to administrative staff assistant (Work Center) from administrative specialist III (South Facilities); **Marti Gomez**, administrative specialist III (temp) is backfilling for Lyn Winfield

### Sales and Customer Services

**Kara Higgins** to rider information specialist from assigned (on-call) rider information specialist

**Mark Konecny** to lead customer services coordinator from fiscal specialist II, Customer Service Office

### Service Development

**Janice Berlin** to special events coordinator from acting senior schedule planner

**Jayson Peterson** to acting senior schedule planner from first-line supervisor

## New Hires

### Design and Construction

**Ray Bulger**, designer IV – April 7

**Ken Tarp**, engineer V (term-limited rehire)—May 20  
**"Bud" Titus**, engineer IV – April 7

### General Manager's Office

**Neil Crozier**, reception (temp)—May 6; succeeds Alice Diep (see New Hires, Service Development)

### Information Technology

**Barbara Brown**, project program manager IV—April 28

### Light Rail

**Jose Ballesteros**, rail VM chief—April 14

**John Zawstaniak**, rail VM chief—April 1

### Power and Facilities

**Henry Garrett**, electrician constructor, Power Distribution—February 19

**Tecele Ghebremichael**, transit custodian II—March 26

**Louis Grant, Jr.**, utility laborer—February 19

**Michael Hazard**, constructor (South Facilities)—April 30

*Continued on page 15*