



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: David Ramsay, City Manager

From: Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director
David Godfrey, P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager

Date: May 8, 2008

Subject: Funding Metro Route 255

RECOMMENDATION:

We have not been able to secure funding for the "extra" 255 trips. In September 2008, 15 minute peak period peak direction service will return to operating only between Kirkland Transit Center and Seattle. It is likely that a permanent source of funding will come out of a King County Metro sponsored public process and service can be reinstated in September of 2009.

BACKGROUND:

Summary

Metro Route 255 currently operates at 15 minute frequencies in the morning peak to Seattle from Brickyard P&R and to Brickyard from Seattle in the afternoon peak. Prior to the beginning of construction of the I-405 nickel project, about half of these peak period trips originated or ended at Kirkland Transit Center instead of Brickyard P&R. WSDOT paid to extend all the peak period trips to Brickyard as construction mitigation for the nickel project. The new trips are very popular, growing by about 30% since their inception in 2006. Now that construction of the nickel project is complete, WSDOT is no longer funding the extra trips, their support will end in June, 2008. The City of Kirkland and Metro have partnered to fund the trips through September 2008. As of this writing, no funding for extra the trips has been secured past September 2008. The cost of funding the extra trips is about \$150,000 per year if they continue to Brickyard and \$90,000 if they end at Totem Lake.

On April 1, Council reviewed options for funding the 255 trips and directed staff to pursue the following options:

1. Work with Metro to reconfigure service on the 255 to allow funding of the extra trips.
2. Pursue funding partners besides Metro
3. Further pursue funding with Metro/King County

Council directed staff not to pursue cutting service on other Routes such as Route 277 to fund the 255 trips.

Reconfiguring service

As mentioned above, 255 currently serves Brickyard Park and Ride. If it were terminated at Totem Lake instead, enough hours would be freed up to easily fund the trips we are looking to fund. However this is a

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major change and Metro rules require a public process and County Council action to make a change of that magnitude.

Trimming or eliminating some of the regular 255 routes, for example those at the beginning or end of the day would be small enough to not require a public process or County Council action. However, Metro staff does not support this action because it would result in a reduction of the span (hours during which the route operates) or frequency of the existing services beyond what is reasonable. Stopping some of the runs at Totem Lake and others at Brickyard would be confusing to riders. Therefore, a simple administrative change of existing 255 service is not advisable.

Metro is planning such a process to reconfigure routes after the Totem Lake Transit Center opens. Metro believes that at that time the entire Route 255 can be changed sufficiently to reinstate 15 minute service between Seattle and Totem Lake. Metro is currently planning to complete that process in time to have service in place in September of 2009.

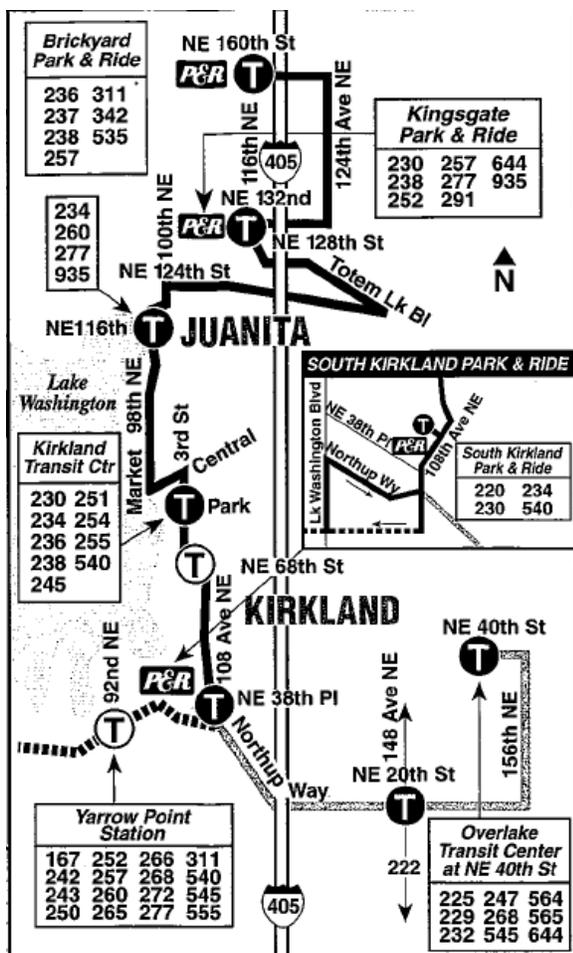


Figure 1. Map of Route 255. Non-Kirkland portions of the maps are omitted. Heavy black lines indicate routes, broken lines indicate travel on freeways.

Pursuing other funding partners.

As mentioned above, WSDOT funded the extra trips we are now trying to fund as construction mitigation for the I-405 nickel project. They were able to fund transit service because construction was taking place. In

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fact WSDOT would be willing to continue funding, but they are statutorily prohibited from doing so unless construction is underway. Current schedules call for I-405 in Kirkland to be under construction with Phase 2 of the nickel project again in 2010.

Sound Transit has provided temporary funding for non-Sound Transit service in the past. Staff pursued funding through Sound Transit and Sound Transit staff considered our request. However, Sound Transit requires that service they fund be directly related to other Sound Transit service. For example service in a corridor that will be served by Sound Transit in the future or service with the purpose of connecting directly with Sounder trains. Sound Transit evaluated our 255 request and could not support its direct connection to Sound Transit service.

Pursuing King County Funding

Staff has had multiple discussions about funding the 255 service at the highest levels within the Department of Transportation without success. We have also pursued funding through King County's Brickyard park and ride project which also was not successful.

Conclusion

As of this writing we have not been able to find a way to fund the extra 255 trips. Without a new funding source, peak period peak direction service at 15 minute frequencies will return to operating only between Kirkland Transit Center and Seattle in September 2008.