

## Transit

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes reducing auto dependency by creating viable travel options. Travel options should include a strong transit system that focuses on serving local residents, employees and businesses. In order to provide a transit system that is responsive to the needs of the community, this Plan supports a close working partnership between the city and the local and regional transit providers.

In June 2003, Bellevue adopted a Transit Plan that includes a set of recommendations regarding future transit service as well as capital support for these services. The recommendations are based on a 10-Year Transit Vision of service improvements (see Figure TR.8).

The Transit Plan calls for a hierarchy of transit services that is focused on three major elements – connections within Bellevue, connections between Bellevue and other Eastside communities, and connections between Bellevue and other communities in the region. To allow convenient transfers between these services, a network of transit hubs has been identified at key locations within Bellevue. These hubs, located in the vicinity of activity areas such as retail and employment centers, will provide opportunities for transferring between the various types of transit services.

In September 2002, King County Metro adopted the Six-Year Transit Development Plan. The city worked with King County to develop this plan which defines King County's public transportation development for 2002 through 2007. Investments in transit identified and prioritized in this Plan are focused on relieving congestion and improving mobility. The city is working closely with King County to successfully implement the Plan and maintain consistency with Bellevue's Transit Plan.

## Policies

**POLICY TR-50.** Work with transit providers to implement the Bellevue Transit Plan as an attractive travel option for local residents, employees, students, visitors, businesses and other users of regional facilities. (see Figure TR.910).

**POLICY TR-51.** Work with transit providers to establish a hierarchy of transit services focused on three major elements:

1. Bellevue-Bellevue Connections (e.g. Downtown, Overlake, Crossroads, Eastgate/BCC, Factoria)
2. Bellevue-Eastside Connections (e.g. Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah)
3. Bellevue-Regional Connections (e.g. Seattle, south county)

**POLICY TR-52.** Work with transit providers to establish transit hubs at activity areas in the city. Strategic locations for transit hubs include Downtown Bellevue, Crossroads, Eastgate (including Bellevue Community College), and Factoria. Direct the most intensive levels of transit service to the designated transit hubs which have been strategically located in the designated Urban Center and Activity Centers of Bellevue.

**POLICY TR-53.** Work with transit providers to maintain and improve public transportation services to meet employer and employee needs. Develop and implement attractive transit

commuter options, such as park and ride facilities and local shuttle systems with sufficient frequencies to increase use of transit for commuting and reduce reliance on private automobiles.

**POLICY TR-54.** Work with transit providers to create, maintain, and enhance a system of supportive facilities and systems such as:

1. Transit stations and centers;
2. Passenger shelters;
3. Park and ride lots;
4. Dedicated bus lanes, bus layovers, bus queue by-pass lanes, bus signal priorities;
5. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
6. Pricing;
7. Kiosks and on-line information; and
8. Incentive programs.

**POLICY TR-55.** Work with private developers and transit providers to integrate transit facilities and pedestrian and bicycle connections into residential, retail, manufacturing, commercial, office, and other types of development.

**POLICY TR-56.** Develop partnerships with transit providers to implement projects providing neighborhood-to-transit links that improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit services and facilities.

**POLICY TR-57.** Coordinate with transit providers to enhance transit service information and provide incentives to encourage and facilitate transit use.

## Regional Transit

### Goals:

1. To provide a regional transit service at levels that support the land use goals of the city.
2. To provide high performance transit connections with the other urban centers in the region.
3. To develop programs to encourage ridership on regional transit.

### Interjurisdictional Implications

In November 1996, voters within areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties approved funding for a Regional Transit System including light rail, commuter rail, and regional express bus services. Vision ~~2020-2040~~ and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan “Destination 2030” adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council, and the Countywide Planning Policies for King County call for a high capacity transit system linking urban centers and supported by other travel modes.

Unprecedented levels of interjurisdictional cooperation to plan, fund, and build the regional transit system will be required. Bellevue participates in regional planning efforts, and with other local jurisdictions, is working to create an environment that integrates the transit system into the community and promotes system usage.

Implementing the regional transit system will require an array of city efforts in the coming decades. Priorities include city participation in detailed system design, preservation of right-of-way, and station area planning, along with other needs to be identified as the system progresses.

## **Policies**

**POLICY TR-58.** Participate actively in ~~Sound Transit Phase 1~~ efforts to expand the regional transit system. Work to ensure that Eastside services and facilities are high priorities for system improvements, ~~including direct HOV access to Downtown Bellevue and the Eastgate Park and Ride lot, and expansion of the Bellevue Transit Center.~~

**POLICY TR-59.** Provide regional leadership for ~~Sound Transit Phase 2~~ regional transit system planning efforts.

**POLICY TR-60.** Secure a share of regional transit system facilities and service priorities for Bellevue residents proportional to the city's contributed share of regional transit revenues.

**POLICY TR-61.** Work with transit providers to maintain and expand direct and frequent regional bus routes to support the city's land use and mode split goals.

**POLICY TR-62.** Work to ensure that the regional transit system includes park and ride lots to serve activity centers in the region and on the Eastside to:

1. Intercept trips by single occupant vehicles closer to the trip origins;
2. Reduce traffic congestion; and
3. Reduce total vehicle miles traveled.

**POLICY TR-63.** Encourage transit providers to increase the frequency of transit serving the permanent park and ride lots in the I-90 corridor to better balance commuter usage of the lots.

**POLICY TR-64.** Encourage transit providers and the state to provide new and expanded park and ride lots to adequately serve city residents and to develop additional capacity outside Bellevue at other strategic Eastside locations to serve outlying residents.

**POLICY TR-65.** Work with transit providers and local property owners to develop new leased park and ride lots.

**POLICY TR-66.** Work with the regional transit provider to ensure that transit system development occurs in accordance with the adopted Sound Transit ~~Phase 1~~ long range system map and plan (see Figure TR.10).

**POLICY TR-67.** Identify and preserve necessary right-of-way for regional transit facilities.

**POLICY TR-68.** Integrate local transit services and facilities with the regional transit services and facilities and modes serving Bellevue and the Eastside.

**POLICY TR-69.** Work in partnership with transit providers to market and promote regional transit services to commuters, residents, and employers.

**POLICY TR-70.** Promote transit use and achieve land use objectives through transit system planning that includes consideration of:

1. Land uses that support transit, including mixed use and night-time activities;
2. Transit-oriented development opportunities with the private and public sectors;
3. A safe and accessible pedestrian environment, with restrictions on auto access;
4. Integrating multiple access modes, including buses, carpools and vanpools, bicycles and pedestrians;
5. Urban design and community character that support and facilitate transit use; and
6. Protecting nearby neighborhoods from undesirable impacts.

**POLICY TR-71.** Improve transit connections between downtown Bellevue and other designated urban centers.

## High-Capacity Transit

High-Capacity Transit (HCT) is defined as various types of transit systems operating on a fixed guideway, dedicated right-of-way, or freeway/express facility, designed to carry a large number of riders at higher speeds than conventional transit.

Bellevue is participating with Sound Transit in planning for high capacity transit to serve the city. HCT may include a mix of commuter rail, light rail, express bus services and facilities and/or other high capacity transit technologies, plus other associated transit improvements that tie local/regional transit services to each other and to other travel modes.

## Policies

**POLICY TR-72.** Provide regional leadership to implement a successful high capacity transit system to serve Bellevue and the Eastside.

**POLICY TR-73.** Work with Sound Transit to ensure that any HCT service to and within the Eastside serves Downtown Bellevue as the major hub of the Eastside.

**POLICY TR-74.** Work with Sound Transit to ensure that HCT services to Downtown Bellevue are provided at levels commensurate with Downtown Bellevue being the highest concentration of population and employment in King County outside of Seattle and its designation as an urban center as well as a Metropolitan Regional Growth Center. HCT services should include frequent service to downtown Seattle and ~~services provided to other urban centers.~~

**POLICY TR-75.** Strengthen Bellevue's role as the Eastside urban center through provision of high levels of HCT service.

*Cross-reference:*

*Also see the **Transit and Regional Transit** sections.*

## **Light Rail Transit**

In anticipation of the potential East Link light rail project proposed by Sound Transit to connect downtown Bellevue with Seattle and Redmond, the City Council established a Light Rail Best Practices Committee in 2007 to review “best practices” for implementing light rail in other North American cities and apply those “lessons learned” to Bellevue.

Starting with community issues and concerns, the Committee pursued literature research, community input, and tours of light rail systems. The Committee developed the Light Rail Best Practices Report, which includes a set of best practices and a range of complementary implementing actions to guide the development and operation of a light rail system in Bellevue. The range of actions included Comprehensive Plan policies, amendments to city codes and standards, other city policies and procedures, city capital investments, and expectations of Sound Transit. Council considered the full set of actions and adopted the following section of Light Rail Transit Comprehensive Plan policies.

These Light Rail Transit policies are a subset of the High Capacity Transit (HCT) policies also included in this Element. Although the Committee’s charge and research was limited to light rail systems, many of the resulting policies may be appropriate for other HCT systems. Applicability of light rail policies to other HCT systems should be analyzed at such time that there is a change or addition to the HCT technology that would serve Bellevue. For purposes of this discussion, HCT is defined as a transit system operating in dedicated right-of-way such as light rail, bus rapid transit in its own right-of-way, or a substantially equivalent system, including future technologies.

## **Policies**

### **General**

**POLICY TR-75.1** Develop a light rail system in collaboration with the regional transit provider that advances the City’s long-term transportation and land use objectives, minimizes environmental and neighborhood impacts, and balances regional system performance.

*Discussion: This policy is a recognition of the potential trade-offs involved in developing a light rail system. While cost and system performance are important both to the City and to the regional transit provider, the City places at least equal importance on achieving local land use and transportation objectives. These factors are not mutually exclusive and in fact they are interdependent. The intent of this policy is to ensure that local land use and transportation objectives are given equal consideration with regional objectives when planning, designing, building and operating a light rail system in Bellevue.*

**POLICY TR-75.2** Use the Light Rail Best Practices Report, including City expectations of Sound Transit, to guide City actions and advocacy in pursuit of the best community outcomes for developing and operating light rail transit in Bellevue.

**POLICY TR-75.3** Develop and maintain a strong working relationship with the regional transit provider to ensure a collaborative effort to implement light rail in Bellevue.

**POLICY TR-75.4** Provide ample opportunity for meaningful public involvement by residents, neighborhood groups, business leaders, and other informal and formal stakeholders in a cooperative and coordinated community involvement program with the regional transit provider. Members of the community should have opportunities throughout any light rail planning and implementation process to help shape the ultimate configuration of any light rail system in Bellevue and throughout the Eastside.

### **Routing & Alignment**

**POLICY TR-75.5** Work with the regional transit provider to provide reliable, high-performance, attractive alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel by providing service to the city's major employment centers and residential areas. A light rail system should add new travel capacity within its own right-of-way, rather than replace existing travel lane capacity, in order to maximize speed and reliability for light rail while minimizing impacts to other modes.

*Discussion: The intent of this policy is to ensure that the addition of a light rail system in Bellevue does not reduce the capacity of travel lanes on existing city arterials. This is especially critical in the downtown where the capacity of lanes for non-rail vehicle travel is already constrained.*

**POLICY TR-75.6** Support plans by the regional transit provider to connect Bellevue, Seattle and Redmond activity centers, including downtown Bellevue and the developing center of Bel-Red, with service that optimizes convenience for riders. Light rail should connect "somewhere to somewhere."

*Discussion: Light rail should connect the places where people live, work, shop and play (i.e. "somewhere") within Bellevue and within the region, helping to reinforce the local and regional land use plans. In contrast to regions with systems that simply connect park and ride lots rather than places, central Puget Sound is a region with a largely mature land use pattern. Light rail can help reinforce the key activity centers within this pattern. Connecting places advances the local community vision, meets regional transportation needs, and optimizes system convenience and ridership.*

**POLICY TR-75.7** Advocate for light rail service that is consistent with local land use and transportation plans. Light rail planning should further the achievement of the City's land use and transportation vision.

**POLICY TR-75.8** Advocate for an alignment for downtown Bellevue that advances the adopted land use vision for an urban downtown by:

1. optimizing ridership, system performance, and user convenience;
2. locating stations in proximity (i.e. within a 10 minute walk) to existing and planned employment and residential concentrations in the downtown subarea;
3. addressing aesthetic concerns and promoting superior urban design integration, within the established urban context;

4. minimizing impacts on businesses and residents during construction; and
5. minimizing overall impacts of a light rail system on the operation of the downtown street network.

**POLICY TR-75.9** Advocate for an alignment south of downtown Bellevue that advances the adopted land use vision by:

1. protecting the character and livability of existing neighborhoods, including adequate ingress and egress to the neighborhood;
2. minimizing impacts to wetlands and other natural resources;
3. providing local access to the system for Bellevue neighborhoods; and
4. optimizing ridership and user convenience.

**POLICY TR-75.10** Advocate for an alignment in the Bel-Red corridor that is consistent with the Bel-Red Subarea Plan.

**POLICY TR-75.11** Protect environmentally sensitive areas of local and regional significance in the siting and alignment of light rail facilities.

### **Community Integration**

**POLICY TR-75.12** Partner with the regional transit provider to design transit stations and facilities incorporating neighborhood objectives and context sensitive design to better integrate facilities into the community. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Incorporating superior urban design, complementary building materials, and public art; and
2. Providing substantial landscaping at stations and along the alignment, including retained significant trees and transplanted trees that are, at a minimum, saplings.

*Discussion: Context sensitive design, as it relates to transportation projects, asserts that all decisions in transportation planning, project development, operations and maintenance should take into consideration the communities and land uses which the project passes through (“the context”). Context sensitive design seeks to balance the needs of the project with other desirable outcomes, including environmental sustainability, community character, and the creation of vital public places. Typical considerations of context sensitive design include building materials and texture, building scale relative to nearby structures and relationship to streets and adjacent uses.*

**POLICY TR-75.13** Encourage the regional transit provider to work closely with affected neighborhoods (e.g. through neighborhood workshops, design charrettes, advisory committees) in the design of any light rail transit facility to ensure that the design of the facility incorporates neighborhood objectives and context sensitive design.

**POLICY TR-75.14** Promote the use of context sensitive design and high quality materials to prevent and mitigate negative impacts and incorporate the light rail system appropriately into the streetscape.

**POLICY TR-75.15** Formulate standards and guidelines that can be applied by the regional transit provider to create stations that are a valued place in the community by providing:

1. Access and linkages to the surrounding community;
2. A comfortable place to be, not just pass through;
3. A place that works for both large and small numbers of people; and
4. Design that encourages social interaction among people.

**POLICY TR-75.16** Work with neighborhood groups, business owners, other stakeholders, and the regional transit provider to identify and fund additional improvements that can be constructed efficiently in conjunction with project construction.

**POLICY TR-75.17** Protect Bellevue's residential and commercial areas from the negative effects of light rail by promoting actions of the regional transit provider that minimize environmental, traffic and noise impacts.

**POLICY TR-75.18** Protect residential neighborhoods adjacent to light rail facilities from spillover impacts, including parking and cut through traffic, resulting from system construction and/or operation, with techniques such as residential parking zone programs, parking patrols, and traffic calming measures. Monitor the outcomes of these efforts and make adjustments as needed to ensure continued effectiveness.

*Discussion: "Residential neighborhoods," for purposes of these Light Rail Transit policies, refers to an existing land use pattern dominated by single family and/or multi-family development. It also refers to a mixed use area where the residential use is well-established to the point where the residential character (e.g. street level activity, streetscape and amenities) is a strong element of the area. Unless otherwise noted, "residential neighborhoods" does not refer to the specific zoning of residential uses.*

**POLICY TR-75.19** Ensure that any future land use that occurs around station areas is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan land use vision for that area, recognizing that:

1. Some potential station areas (e.g. Bel-Red) could support more intense redevelopment that includes density increases that support transit;
2. Some potential station areas (e.g. Downtown) could sustain a more transit supportive design and orientation without changes to land use intensity; and
3. Land use changes would be precluded in existing single family designations and environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. south Bellevue, Mercer Slough).

**POLICY TR-75.20** Maintain and enhance the safety of Bellevue's streets when incorporating light rail, through the use of street design features, materials, street signage and lane markings that provide clear, unambiguous direction to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

**POLICY TR-75.21** Maximize the efficient usage of the transportation network through utilization of transit signal priority (TSP) technology. Provide for efficient light rail operation and minimize delay, while maintaining capacity for non-rail vehicle movements.

**POLICY TR-75.22** Encourage quality design and construction in the light rail system, by:

1. Including durable materials in design and construction to ensure facilities retain appearance, functionality and community value; and
2. Incorporating art, public spaces, and other features as community assets.

**POLICY TR-75.23** Coordinate with the regional transit provider to employ crime prevention principles in the design of light rail stations, and use available technologies to deter crime. Examples include:

1. Visibility of station platform from adjacent streets and parking;
2. Open and well-lighted pedestrian connections to parking and adjacent community;
3. Video surveillance on station platforms and trains; and
4. Establishing and enforcing a fare paid zone for station platforms.

**POLICY TR-75.24** Develop agreements with the regional transit provider to ensure long-term safety and security, operation and maintenance of stations.

### **System Access**

**POLICY TR-75.25** Develop and maintain a safe and convenient pedestrian network to light rail stations, through shared responsibility with the regional transit provider, that is intended to:

1. Provide short, direct routes within a ten-minute walk;
2. Incorporate principles of universal design, i.e. designing the pedestrian environment to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation;
3. Maximize safety for all pedestrians at street crossings; and
4. Give priority to pedestrian access and safety in station areas.

**POLICY TR-75.26** Employ principles of universal design (i.e. designing the pedestrian environment to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation) in streets within station planning areas to accommodate the widest range of potential users, including people with mobility and visual impairments and other special needs.

**POLICY TR-75.27** Provide reliable access to the system for Bellevue residents in cooperation with local and regional transit providers, by ensuring that adequate existing and new park and ride lot capacity, neighborhood bus connections and local and regional express bus services are available.

**POLICY TR-75.28** Facilitate intermodal transfers and increased access to transit stations through partnerships with public and private providers of transit and shuttle services. Encourage transit-to-transit, transit-to-pedestrian, transit-to-bicycle, and transit-to-pick-up/drop-off transfers, with an emphasis on safety for people transferring between the station platform and the various modes.

*Discussion: Facilitation of intermodal transfers encompasses the provision of convenient, well-lighted and secure storage at stations sufficient to accommodate a range of modes (e.g. bicycles and other small motorized and non-motorized vehicles).*

**POLICY TR-75.29** Develop and implement an integrated wayfinding system, incorporating principles of universal design (i.e. designing the pedestrian environment to be

usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation) and multiple languages, in conjunction with the regional transit providers, to facilitate transit ridership by all users.

**POLICY TR-75.30** Evaluate proposed new park and ride facilities and expansion of existing park and ride facilities to serve light rail transit, for their effectiveness to serve the community and the light rail system, and for their potential environmental and community impacts. New or expanded park and ride facilities should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan vision for each specific location.

### **Construction & Mitigation**

**POLICY TR-75.31** Develop an interlocal agreement with the regional transit provider to develop, monitor, and adapt mitigation measures for the design and construction phases of projects, to ensure the continual effectiveness of the measures.

**POLICY TR-75.32** Collaborate with the regional transit provider to create a Construction Management Plan for all new major transit investments. The Construction Management Plan should include a Construction Phasing Plan that minimizes the corridor length disrupted at one time and minimizes the time period of disruption.

**POLICY TR-75.33** Place a priority on the use of noise avoidance or absorption techniques over noise deflection for residential uses when developing mitigation measures with the regional transit provider. Monitor the outcomes of these efforts and pursue adjustments with the regional transit provider to ensure continued effectiveness.

**POLICY TR-75.34** Develop and implement an early and ongoing program with the regional transit provider to provide assistance to residents and businesses affected by construction.

**POLICY TR-75.35** Minimize disruption and inconvenience of construction staging areas to adjacent land uses, in collaboration with the regional transit provider, through actions such as site selection, design and operational management plans. Construction staging areas should not be located in residential neighborhoods except where no practicable alternative exists.

*Discussion: Construction staging areas for light rail projects are primarily used for the storage of equipment and materials as well as activities such as tunnel boring, employee parking, deliveries and construction offices. These areas typically encompass several acres and remain in use for the duration of the project. Tunnel boring areas generate additional truck trips to haul away dirt and debris and typically require a larger staging area.*

### **Cross reference for Light Rail Transit section:**

*Transportation Policy TR-1 supporting integration of land use and transportation decisions to ensure that the transportation system supports the Land Use Vision.*

*Transportation Policy TR-8 supporting pedestrian design features that improve safety including adequate lighting and paved, hazard free surfaces.*

**Transportation Policy TR-28** supporting neighborhood involvement in the planning and design of transportation systems.

**Transportation Policy TR-46** supporting calming measures to reduce cut-through traffic.

**Transportation Policy TR-56** supporting partnerships that improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit services and facilities.

**Transportation Policies TR-62-65** regarding park and ride facilities.

**Transportation Policy TR-67** supporting preservation of necessary right-of-way for regional transit facilities.

**Transportation Policy TR-69** supporting partnerships that promote regional transit services to commuters, residents and employers.

**Transportation Policy TR-70** supporting transit system planning that promotes transit use and land use objectives; and that protects nearby neighborhoods from undesirable impacts.

**Transportation Policy TR-79** supporting pedestrian and bicycle projects that provide accessible linkages to the transit system.

**Transportation Policy TR-80** supporting improved pedestrian and bicycle linkages to transit and school bus systems; and supporting improved security and utility of park-and-ride lots and bus stops.

**Transportation Policy TR-112** supporting physical treatments to reduce noise impacts on adjacent neighborhoods from transportation construction projects.

**Transportation Policy TR-118** supporting mitigation of adverse impacts of proposed transportation projects on adjacent neighborhoods, including air quality, noise, light and glare.

**Transportation Policy TR-119** supporting residential parking zone programs to reduce spillover parking.

**Urban Design Policy UD-47** supporting a cooperative regional transit design process to ensure facilities reflect the general character of Bellevue and the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Urban Design Policies UD-47-49** for guidance on the design of transit facilities.

**Urban Design Policies UD-49** supporting transit facilities design that includes bike racks, wheelchair access, and pedestrian amenities.

**Environmental Policies EN-59-66** for guidance on protection of wetlands and habitat.

**Community Participation Policies** for guidance on expanding public participation.

*FIGURE TR.9*  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION VISION**

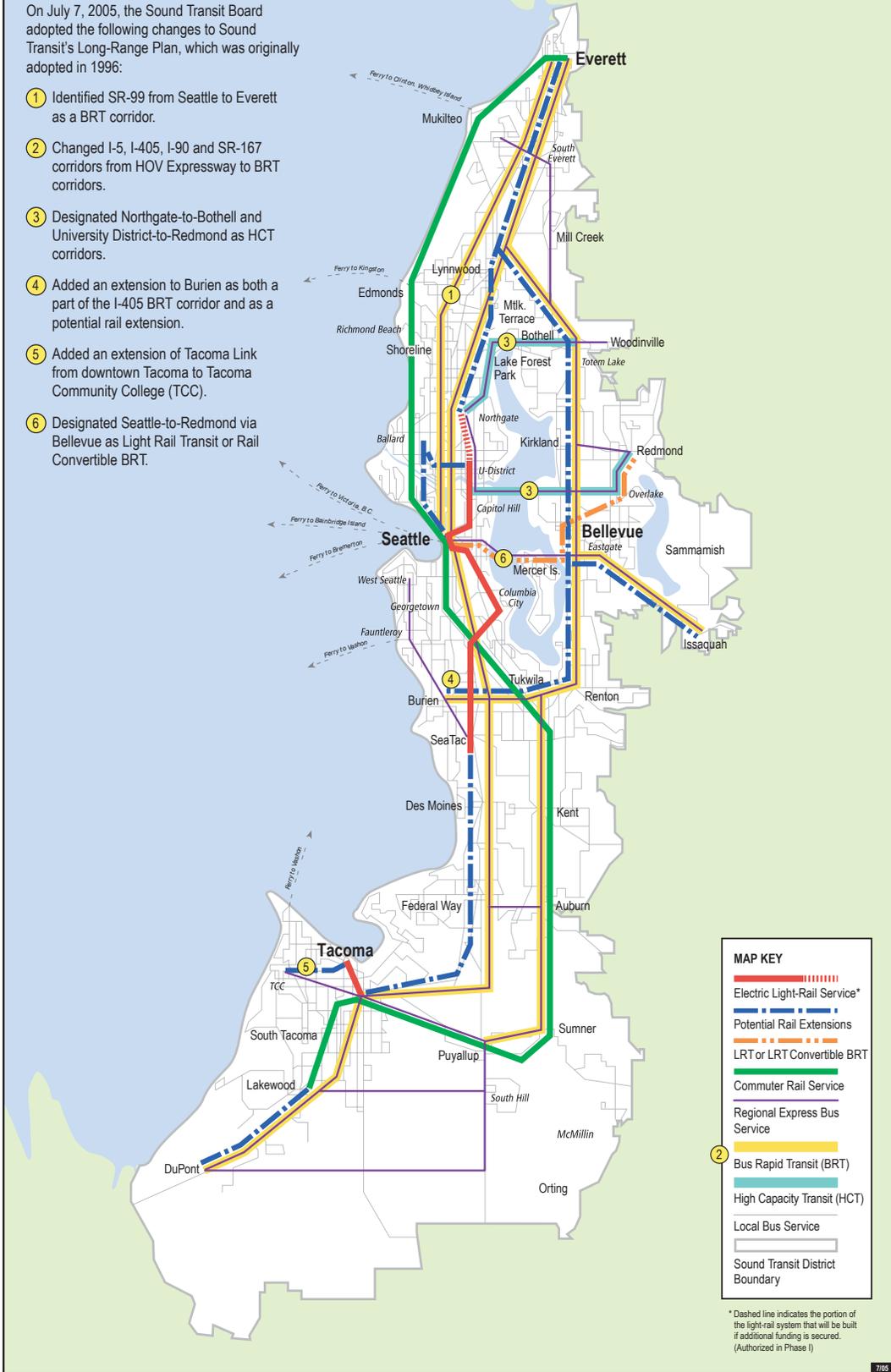
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*FIGURE TR.10*  
**SOUND TRANSIT 2005 LONG-RANGE PLAN**

Per Ordinance 5834, Adopted by Bellevue City Council, August 4, 2008.

On July 7, 2005, the Sound Transit Board adopted the following changes to Sound Transit's Long-Range Plan, which was originally adopted in 1996:

- 1 Identified SR-99 from Seattle to Everett as a BRT corridor.
- 2 Changed I-5, I-405, I-90 and SR-167 corridors from HOV Expressway to BRT corridors.
- 3 Designated Northgate-to-Bothell and University District-to-Redmond as HCT corridors.
- 4 Added an extension to Burien as both a part of the I-405 BRT corridor and as a potential rail extension.
- 5 Added an extension of Tacoma Link from downtown Tacoma to Tacoma Community College (TCC).
- 6 Designated Seattle-to-Redmond via Bellevue as Light Rail Transit or Rail Convertible BRT.



**FIGURE TR.10**  
**Sound Transit**  
 2005 Long-Range Plan

