



In Transit

September/October 2007

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



From the desk of the General Manager

After two years of renovation, the dust finally settled and the Downtown

Seattle Transit Tunnel reopened as scheduled on Sept. 24.

The reopening was a success because of you, the employees of King County Metro Transit. Crews involved in the extensive construction project worked days, nights, and weekends over the past few months. More than 1,500 operators completed special training for tunnel operations. Customer service, marketing, service planning, and sign shop employees worked to inform the public about downtown route changes. More than 200 street team volunteers helped draw attention to the coming changes in the days before the tunnel opening and helped riders find their buses that first Monday.

It was a massive endeavor, and the public noticed and appreciated your hard work.

The successful reopening of the tunnel proves that Metro employees are willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish our goal, and it highlights what can be achieved when we work together.

Along the way, there were many extraordinary efforts to note:

Crews from Power and Facilities and From Design and Construction spent

Continued on page 2



Buses and passengers brought life and activity back to the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel on Monday, Sept. 24.

Transit tunnel reopens

The Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel reopened for weekday bus service on Monday, Sept. 24, two years to the day after it was closed to be retrofitted for future light rail service. An opening-day celebration at Westlake Park featured refreshments, live entertainment by local artists, and commemorative items such as a plantable paper card embedded with wildflower seeds.

Eighteen bus routes returned from surface streets to the 1.3-mile tunnel, allowing Metro to adjust some surface-street routes to balance traffic volumes and relieve congestion in the downtown Seattle core, particularly during peak commute hours. More than 20 routes moved to Third Avenue to take advantage of the transit priority corridor that exists from 6 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6:30 p.m. on weekdays, reducing the number of buses on First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth Avenues. From 5 a.m.

Continued on page 3

In this issue

Performance corner	2
Torchlight Parade	3
Kudos	4
Short shots	6
Spotlight	7
On the move	8



We'll Get You There

General Manager

countless hours testing and retesting the new and modified tunnel systems installed by Sound Transit. They also recommissioned mothballed systems and put them back into service. Finally, Power and Facilities swept and cleaned until the wee hours of the morning to make sure everything was ready for the public when the gates opened the first day.

Light Rail tunnel control staff spent many hours learning about and testing the new safety and signalization systems and ensuring that all was ready to go.

Several street team volunteers hopped onto buses along Third Avenue to announce the upcoming route changes to passengers, and some helped passengers find the reopened tunnel by personally walking with them to the tunnel entrances.

I also need to mention our partner, Sound Transit, who led the construction project. I'm looking forward to continuing our partnership as we prepare to start joint operations in 2009.

Of course, while we were working to get the tunnel ready to resume bus operations, Metro employees were involved in many other activities that deserve recognition as well. Be sure to read the articles in this issue about Metro's participation in the Seafair Torchlight Parade (page 3) and about Speed and Reliability's service partnership program (page 7).

I commend Metro employees for all your hard work over the past few months. Whether we achieve something in a big or small way, going above and beyond the call of duty does more than get the job done – it makes a difference.

Let's enjoy the ride!
— Kevin Desmond



Performance corner

Transit performance "AIMs High"

The King County Executive has launched a new Web site designed to provide information to the public about key community conditions and the performance of King County government. The Web site, entitled King County AIMs High: Annual Indicators and Measures, is intended to:

- Increase transparency and accountability by reporting performance results to the public;
- Allow residents to assess government performance;
- Help residents identify what actions the public or their government should take to improve community conditions.

The Transit Division's performance on a number of key indicators will be available on the AIMs High site, including annual transit ridership (boardings); system productivity (as measured by boardings per platform hour); on-time performance; and percent of fuel used that is biodiesel. These indicators are taken from the Executive's proposed 2008/2009 budget, and show the Transit Division's performance from 2003 to 2006, its projected 2007 performance, and 2008 and 2009 targets for these same measures.

The Web site is available at www.kingcounty.gov/exec/aimshigh

The screenshot shows the King County website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, NEWS, SERVICES, DIRECTORY, and CONTACT. Below this is the King County logo and the text 'Always at your service'. The main content area is titled 'King County, Washington' and includes the website URL 'www.KingCounty.gov: Providing efficient, effective and innovative service'. A sidebar on the left lists various services and departments. The main content area is focused on 'Performance Measure' for 'Transit boardings'. It includes a section titled 'Why is this measure important?' and 'How is our performance?'. A bar chart titled 'Number of transit boardings, King County Metro Transit' displays data for the years 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. The chart shows a steady increase in boardings from 2003 to 2006, with a target for 2009. The data points are: 2003: 114.6, 2004: 117.7, 2005: 120.8, 2006: 123.9, 2007: 127.0, 2008: 130.1, 2009: 133.2. A target line is shown at 136.3. The page is updated as of June 19, 2007.

This screenshot shows the county's new Web site, which offers hard data about transit use and goals.

Holding the world by a string

Metro marches at the Seafair Torchlight Parade

Metro got a chance to strut its earth-friendly message in the 2007 Seafair Torchlight Parade, with a team of employees carrying a 15-foot-wide earth balloon and a banner emblazoned with the uplifting message, "Create Cleaner Air." Of course they were also smiling, waving, and handing out Metro information to the 300,000 spectators, who responded with enthusiasm.

The Metro Seafair Team included **Lance Benedict, Roger Bruckshen, Kendall Carson, Mike Crisler, Tonja Diaz, Michael Harrell, Faye Smith, Aileen Lewis, Dale Lewis, Peter Hu, Michael Landon, Mercedes McCaw-Landon, Brandon McCaw-Landon, Tara Mullally, Janice Johnson, Bob Virkelyst, and Deborah Brockway.**

If you're interested in being a part of the 2008 Metro Seafair Torchlight Parade team, contact Deborah Brockway at 296-1927 or deborah.brockway@kingcounty.gov.



Putting their feet on the street for Metro in the Seafair Torchlight Parade were (left to right) front row: **Michael Landon, Brandon McCaw-Landon, Mercedes McCaw-Landon, Ron Sims, Aileen Lewis, Deborah Brockway, and Faye Smith;** back row: **Kendall Carson, Bob Virkelyst, Roger Bruckshen, Mike Crisler, Lance Benedict, Dale Lewis, Janice Johnson, and Tara Mullally.**

Continued from page 1

Tunnel reopens

to 7 p.m. on weekdays, the tunnel is now used by Metro routes 41, 71, 72, 73, 74 Express, 101, 106, 150, 174, 194, 212, 217 (mornings only), 225, 229, 255, 256, 301, and Sound Transit Express 550. Link light rail service is scheduled to start running in the tunnel in 2009.

Turn to page 5 to read about the Metro and other King County employees who hit the streets to help customers find their buses.

We've got the power

In Transit offers a special nod of thanks to the Power and Facilities section for their extraordinary efforts in getting the transit tunnel ready for its grand reopening on Sept. 24. Power and Facilities staff members put in numerous hours and spent many long days ensuring that the fire and life-safety systems were operational and that the tunnel was accessible via escalator or elevator for our passengers with heavy loads or special needs. They also worked hard to make sure the tunnel was clean and ready for the public at 5 a.m. on opening day.

Their dedication and perseverance demonstrates that they won't accept anything less than the best for our customers and that they keep the interests and needs of our passengers foremost in mind.



Power and Facilities staff members (left to right) Kelvin Bridges, Paul Sorensen, Jerry Parkinson, Don Brewer, Greg Johnston, and Gary Grasso take a much-deserved breather after the transit tunnel's successful reopening in September.

KUDOS IN TRANSIT



Michael Grady in June, after his first Metro roadeo victory of the year in Tukwila

■ **Operator Grady headed for international bus roadeo**—Michael Grady (East Base) placed third in the 40-foot coach division at the 2007 state roadeo on Aug. 19 in Vancouver, Wash. Competing against 27 other local champions from across the state, Grady finished third behind operators from Pierce Transit and Spokane Transit. Finishing in the top three won him the right to compete at the American Public Transit Association's international roadeo to be held in Austin, Texas, on May 4, 2008.

■ **Preparations for I-5 lane closure pay off**—Metro's careful planning and daily adjustments during the I-5 lane closures in August paid big dividends. More than 130 northbound morning bus trips had to be detoured off the freeway, yet service delays and overcrowding were kept to a minimum. The public

did its part by turning to the many alternative Metro transportation services available to them. During the two-week construction period, use of Metro services increased by about 1,000 passengers each morning. Compared to typical August passenger loads, ridership on Metro buses increased by about 10 percent. The Water Taxi averaged nearly 300 more riders each morning between 6 and 9 a.m., and set a single-sailing record on one trip with 191 passengers. Metro's Rideshare program exceeded all expectations by starting up 48 new county-sponsored vanpools and vanshares in August, more than double the number for an average month. And starting in June, members of Metro's Customer Information Technology and Resource staff helped keep the public well informed, providing timely updates on Metro Online and to the online Trip Planner. *In Transit* thanks all who contributed to this rousing success for a job well done.

■ **Rideshare Operations recognized**—Rideshare Operations' "Fill It Up" commuter van incentive campaign received second place in the Public Sector-Outstanding Service Award category at the Association of Commuter Transportation (ACT) national conference, held in Seattle Sept. 10-12. ACT is the premier association for professionals and organizations whose focus is the delivery of commuting options and solutions for an efficient transportation system.

Rideshare Operations launched the countywide campaign in June

2006, and it ran through May 2007. New riders, drivers, and primary bookkeepers received gift cards for each role they assumed in a vanpool or vanshare. Participants also received rewards for each new recruit they brought into the program, a feature that was included because survey data had shown that most vanpoolers learned about the program from another participant. Eighty-two new groups joined our commuter van fleet during the campaign, making a total of 942 groups and more than 3,500 new participants, increasing overall ridership by nearly 15 percent.

Transit operators of the month

August 2007

Atlantic Base: **James Turner**
Bellevue Base: **Conrad Pieczynski**
Central Base: **Luis Guanlao**
East Base: **Jon Warner**
North Base: **Daniel Hutt**
Ryerson Base: **Mark Robles**
South Base: **William Hoffard**

September 2007

Atlantic Base: **Lester Osborne**
Bellevue Base: **Larry Lariza**
Central Base: **Ravi Chand**
East Base: **Larry Johnson**
North Base: **Curtis Schmautz**
Ryerson Base: **George Hunter**
South Base: **Michael Clevenger**

Street teams roll out to ease transition

Wearing blue caps with Metro's new logo and vests stuffed with timetables and other literature, some 200 Metro employees stood at bus stops in downtown Seattle in the days before the September service change and on the first Monday afterward, which was also the day the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel reopened. They had volunteered for street team duty, which meant braving the elements to spread the word about the coming changes and to help customers find their buses.

"We had several really good comments from people saying how much they appreciated the service," said Marketing and Sales Specialist **Jim Martin**, who coordinated the street team effort. Martin was assisted by Rider Information Specialist **Cabrina Bell**, detailed Operator **Willie Middleton**, and Customer Assistance Representative **Lisa Muhammad**. Bell produced the Rider Alert signs, Muhammad handled recruitment and scheduling, and Middleton was an essential "Jack of all trades."

Transit Planner **Ted Day** of Service Planning recommended locations for street team shifts, which included "pretty much every stop on First, Second, Third, and Fourth avenues," Martin said, plus selected locations on east-west streets and on the mezzanine levels of all tunnel stations. Day also coordinated production of the "cheat sheets" that helped the street teams answer specific questions at each location.

"Everybody stayed very busy out there," Martin said. "There was never any lack of questions from the public."

In fact, one grateful customer turned out to be none other than King County Councilmember Bob Ferguson, who told the council's Transportation Committee about his experience at the committee's Sept. 26 meeting:

"I had personal experience with these folks with the green vests," Ferguson said. While he was trying to figure out when the tunnel closed, and therefore where to catch his bus, he said, "Someone, sensing my confusion, approached me and asked if they could help me out. I really appreciated, both as an individual and as a member of the council, seeing a friendly face helping me."

If you missed out on the fun this time, take heart—your next opportunity will come in February, when street teams will be deployed on the Eastside to help customers negotiate changes to routes in that area.



Metro employees took to the streets in September to help customers negotiate changes to their bus routes that resulted from the reopening of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel.



SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division

■ **Metro researchers featured at WSDOT conference** — Metro's research capabilities were featured at WSDOT's 2007 Public Transportation Conference on Aug. 20 in Vancouver, Wash. **Fotini Georgiadou** of Research and Management Information moderated a session on Fundamentals of Designing Surveys and Analyzing Data. **Pat Fullmer, Lori Mimms, Michelle Major, and Greg Lipton** of the same section and **Andrea Maillet** of Rideshare Operations shared their research experience with colleagues at transit agencies from around the state.

Presentations at the conference were also made by **Park Woodworth, Carol Cooper, Sunny Knott, Christina O'Claire** (DOT Director's Office), and **Ref Lindmark**.

■ **FlexPass program renewals run high** — Metro's Sales and Customer Service and Market Development groups renewed several large FlexPass programs and expanded to new employer groups in August, September, and October. Renewals included Amazon, with 3,546 employees and a total contract value of \$1,387,000. New FlexPass partners included the Boeing Employees Credit Union, with locations in Tukwila and Kent (582 employees for \$33,156).

■ **North Base personnel help sheriff's office find missing woman** — Acting North Base Chief **Tutti Compton** and operator **Ben Limargo** helped reunite a missing 64-year Shoreline woman with her family in September. After the woman, a regular on Route 358 to the Pike Place Market, was reported missing, Compton showed her photograph to



Live Well Challenge team the Vegetable Soup-a-Stars, from Metro's Market Development Group, include (left to right) David Stallings, Malva Slachowitz, Eileen Kadesh, Sunny Knott (in back), Ref Lindmark (in back), and Elaine Ducken, plus (not pictured) Dave Dunneback, Keeley Hozjan, Jeremy Fichter, and Lindsey Greto.

select North Base Route 358 operators. Limargo recognized the photo and was able to report when the missing woman had taken his bus. Within a short time she was reunited with her family. *In Transit* thanks Compton, Limargo, and Service Communications and Service Quality personnel for making this happy ending possible.

■ **Metro/KCDOT teams rise to the Live Well Challenge** — Several Transit teams took part in the county's second annual eight-week Live Well Challenge, which had nearly 1,000 participants countywide and ended Oct. 1. From Bellevue Base to King Street Center, Transit employees stepped up to "Eat Smart, Move More and Stress Less." They earned points over an 8-week period by engaging in a wide variety of healthy behaviors to qualify for prizes. Teams from the Transit Division included the Trans-it Fat Ban, Transit Titans, and

Vegetable Soup-a-Stars, who received Honorable Mention in the Most Creative Team Photo category and whose team leader, **Malva Slachowitz**, was named Most Inspirational Team Captain. Visit www.metrokc.gov/employees/LiveWellChallenge/ for a complete list of teams and final scores.

■ **Water taxi sails on** — A banner season led to an extended autumn run for Metro's Elliott Bay Water Taxi, originally scheduled to wrap up its 10th sailing season Sept. 30. Thanks to record ridership and revenues, weekday Water Taxi service was continued through October, serving commuters traveling between West Seattle's Seacrest Dock and Pier 55 on the downtown Seattle waterfront. "The value of the Elliott Bay Water Taxi was particularly evident during the Interstate 5 construction," said King County Executive **Ron Sims**, "when it carried more than 2,300 passengers in nine days."

We'll Get You There

Spotlight on

Reliability

Speed and Reliability Program

You're standing at your bus shelter, becoming increasingly irritated. The bus is 10 minutes late, and you have to get to work. What has gone wrong? It may be tempting to blame the driver (did he or she fail to show up for work?) or the bus itself (did it break down?), but these aren't the only reasons for a bus to be off-schedule.

Late buses can also be caused by problems with the road infrastructure, said **John Toone**, senior ITS project manager with the Speed and Reliability Program. For example, there could be a problem with the timing of traffic lights or road signals, which play an integral role in moving buses along in a timely fashion.

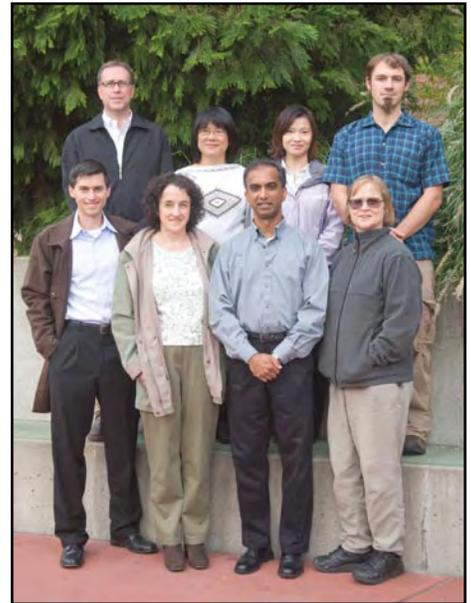
Reliability is a central feature of the service Metro offers, and we continually strive to provide our riders with on-time service. We define "on-time" as arriving at a scheduled time point no more than one minute early or five minutes late. The Scheduling section tracks and reports how the overall system is doing, and Metro has worked hard to raise its on-time score.

The Speed and Reliability team contributes to this effort by forming partnerships with cities in the Metro service area. In exchange for increased transit service, the cities improve their roadway infrastructures in ways that benefit transit. The voter-approved Transit Now package includes funding for speed and reliability service partnerships. As part of the Transit Now partnerships, cities agree to improve bus travel times on agreed-upon core routes by at least 10 percent in return for 5,000 hours of additional transit service hours per year. Metro helps the cities identify improvements that are likely to achieve the necessary time savings and the models that will be used to measure the savings.

The service partnership program builds on the Speed and Reliability group's 15-year history of working with local jurisdictions to identify, design, and implement corridor and spot improvements that benefit transit. Spot improvement projects originate with input from scheduling and service planning staff members and from operators, and are assessed with the aid of the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system, which tracks buses and determines whether they are on schedule.

Our operators are another valuable tool that can help Metro improve its reliability. They usually know what's causing their schedule problems, and they can help us fix those problems by telling us about them.

The next time your bus doesn't arrive at the scheduled time, think again about the possible reasons. It may not be the driver or bus after all. And remember, the Speed and Reliability group is continually working to Get You There—on time.



The Speed and Reliability group consists of: (top row, left to right) David Cantey, Irin Limargo, Sidney Quach, and Owen Kehoe; (bottom row, left to right) John Toone, Rose McCracken, Franco Fernandes, and Ellen Bevington; and (not pictured) Mike Boonsripisal.

In Transit



We'll Get You There

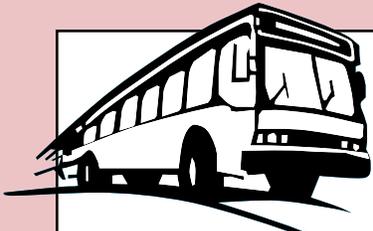
If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to **In Transit**, M.S. KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Peekstok**: 206-263-6482 or anna.peekstok@metrokc.gov. Produced by Transportation Community Relations and Communications

Editor: **Anna Peekstok**
Transit Coordination: **Bob Simpson**
Designer: **Jackie Phillips**
Staff Photographer: **Ned Ahrens**

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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/



ON THE MOVE

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

Retirements

Operations—Non-Operators

Tom O'Malley, first-line supervisor (Service Quality)—
Oct. 31; 30 years

George Toulouse, first-line supervisor (Service Quality)—
Oct. 31; 27+ years

Power and Facilities

Abdon Mendoza, transit custodian II—Aug. 31; 24 years

Sales and Customer Services

Teopisto (Tony) Abalde, revenue coordinator—Oct. 15;
12+ years

Vehicle Maintenance

Fran Cochran, technical information processing
specialist — Sept. 28; 32+ years

Ron Murray, equipment service worker — Sept. 1; 30+ years

Promotions and Job Changes

Design and Construction

Rylan Knuttgen to engineer III (career service) from undergrad
intern

Light Rail

Tedd Hankins, superintendent of vehicle maintenance, added
duties of acting superintendent of way, power and signals

Dale Lewis to streetcar chief from light rail safety officer

Chris Skaar to Maintenance Service Center chief from lead
transit parts specialist (East Base Vehicle Maintenance)

Vicki Smith-Jones to light rail safety officer from transit safety
officer

Operations

Jeff Wamsley to supervisor from acting base supervisor
(Bellevue Base Operations)

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Jason Halvorson to acting transit planner III from rideshare
services representative

Power and Facilities

Kelvin Bridges to acting chief of power from electrician
constructor

Julian Castillo to acting lead custodian from transit custodian II

Yoonin Chao to acting lead custodian from transit custodian II

Fat Chung to transit custodian II from transit custodian I (temp)

Gary Grosso to electrician crew chief from acting chief of
power

Craig Hall to acting lead sign specialist from sign specialist

Derrick Hunter acting lead custodian from transit custodian II

Walter Padilla to transit custodian II from transit custodian I

Luisa Quiambao to acting lead custodian from transit custodian II

Sales and Customer Services

Phil Branham to acting customer services administrator from
customer service supervisor

Paul Gilkes to acting customer services supervisor from senior
rider information specialist

Theresa Huey to acting customer services supervisor from
customer service coordinator-lead

Service Development

Jan Berlin to acting senior schedule planner from transit first
line supervisor

Kevin Winter to first line supervisor, Central Base, from
acting senior schedule planner

Transit IT

David Hastings to database administrator journey from IT
systems specialist-senior

Vehicle Maintenance

Fiona Frisch to lead equipment service worker from
equipment service worker

Mario Jandoc to lead transit parts specialist from transit
parts specialist

New Hires

Design and Construction

Michael Chargualaf, project control engineer (South
Construction Field Office)—Oct. 1

Light Rail

Tom Kennedy, superintendent of Way, Power and
Signals—Oct. 15

Power and Facilities

Garet Dungan, building operating engineer—Aug. 20

Carlo Natividad, transit custodian II — Aug. 17

Darin Tharp, transit custodian II — Aug. 17

Richard Young, transit custodian II — Aug. 17

Sales and Customer Services

Kara Higgins, assigned rider information specialist—
Aug. 20

Service Development

Megan L. Wolfe, transportation planner II, term limited
position—Oct. 1

Transit IT

Shirley Dunphy, project program manager IV—Sept. 24

Baiwei Fu, database administrator senior—Sept. 10

Holly Hidenrick, project program manager II — Aug. 27

Scott Larson, project program manager II—Aug. 13

Pam Odden, senior applications developer—Oct. 22

Transit Safety

Scott Beasley, safety and health administrator IV—Sept. 24

Deborah Elsenhout, safety and health administrator IV—
Sept. 10

Vehicle Maintenance

Richard Acosta, sheet metal worker — Oct. 8

Jamie Bonnar, technical information processing
specialist—Sept. 10

Jason Leczo, mechanic apprentice—Sept. 10

James Smith, equipment service worker—Aug. 13

Nathen Stevens, warranty parts analyst—Sept. 10

Charles Triggs, equipment service worker—Aug. 13

Jon VanderWoude, maintenance machinist—Sept. 10