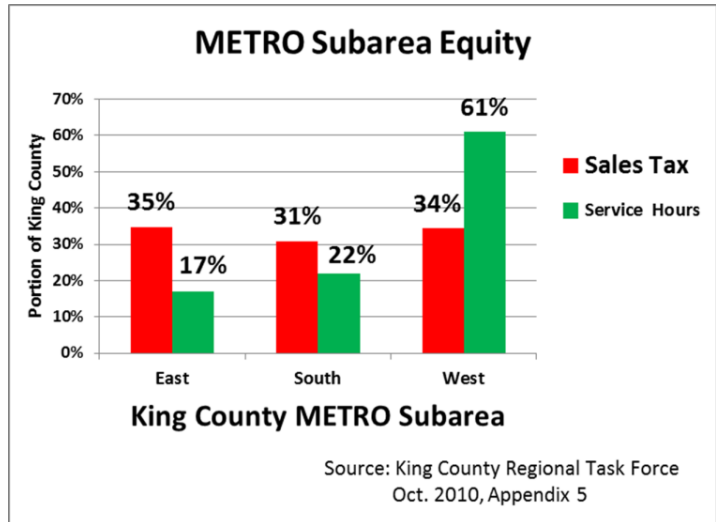


# METRO IS UNFAIR!

Eastside Transportation Association, Nov. 18, 2013

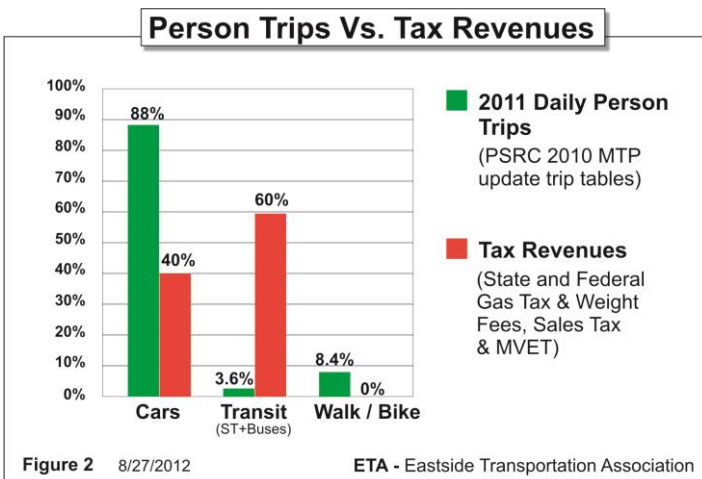
## The inequity of METRO Transit funding to King County's suburban subareas is significant and unfair.

East King County receives less than half the service hours it pays for with the sales taxes collected in this area, whereas the Seattle/Shoreline subarea receives nearly double the service hours compared to their taxes paid. South King County pays 31% of METRO's taxes yet receives only 22% of the countywide service hours. Each subarea has roughly the same population. In spite of decades of efforts by cities outside Seattle to get their fair share of Metro Transit service, King County continues to take money from them to subsidize transit service in Seattle. Inadequate transit service in growing suburban cities, combined with high transit taxes, is the result of this unfair practice.



This subarea equity issue must be fixed prior to approving any additional taxes for METRO. King County's eastside and south end should first receive as much transit service as they are already paying for with existing transit taxes. If METRO then wants to increase transit expenditures above what a subarea is paying for, the subarea should tax itself for this benefit. For example, a Transportation Benefit District for the City of Seattle is one possibility to replace Seattle's unfair excess allocation of METRO's service hours. Regardless, METRO should give the East and South King County areas the transit service they deserve and are paying for.

In addition to the unfair redistribution of suburban METRO Transit taxes to Seattle, an even larger transportation tax inequity exists between transit and other modes of travel. While transit trips are just a small portion of the total daily trips in the Puget Sound region, transit receives more than half of all transportation taxes. Only 3.6% of trips are taken on the region's six transit agencies (down from 6% 40+ years ago). However, nearly 60% of all transportation tax revenue is spent on transit. Only 40% is spent on state highways and streets<sup>1</sup>. This covers all state highways, plus a direct allocation to cities and counties, state ferry subsidies, and many pedestrian and bicycle facilities.



Transit usage is only projected to grow to about 5% system-wide on a daily basis by 2040<sup>2</sup>. This assumes a doubling of local transit service hours, extension of light rail to Everett, Redmond, Issaquah, Tacoma and Lakewood, plus tolling of all Highways of Statewide Significance in the Puget Sound region. In short, the transit market share has decreased in 40 years and is not projected to make any significant gains in the next 30 years, despite allocation of more than half of the transportation tax dollar to subsidize transit.

**Equity to the suburban taxpayers must be addressed prior to new tax authority for METRO.**

**Eastside Transportation Association**

[www.eastsideta.com](http://www.eastsideta.com)

1. Washington Policy Center, Legislative Memo, *How Public Officials Spend our Transportation Taxes*, February 2010 and shown in Figure 2 of ETA's *The War on Cars* pamphlet shown here and at [www.eastsideta.com](http://www.eastsideta.com).  
 2. Puget Sound Regional Council, *Transportation 2040*, May 20, 2010.