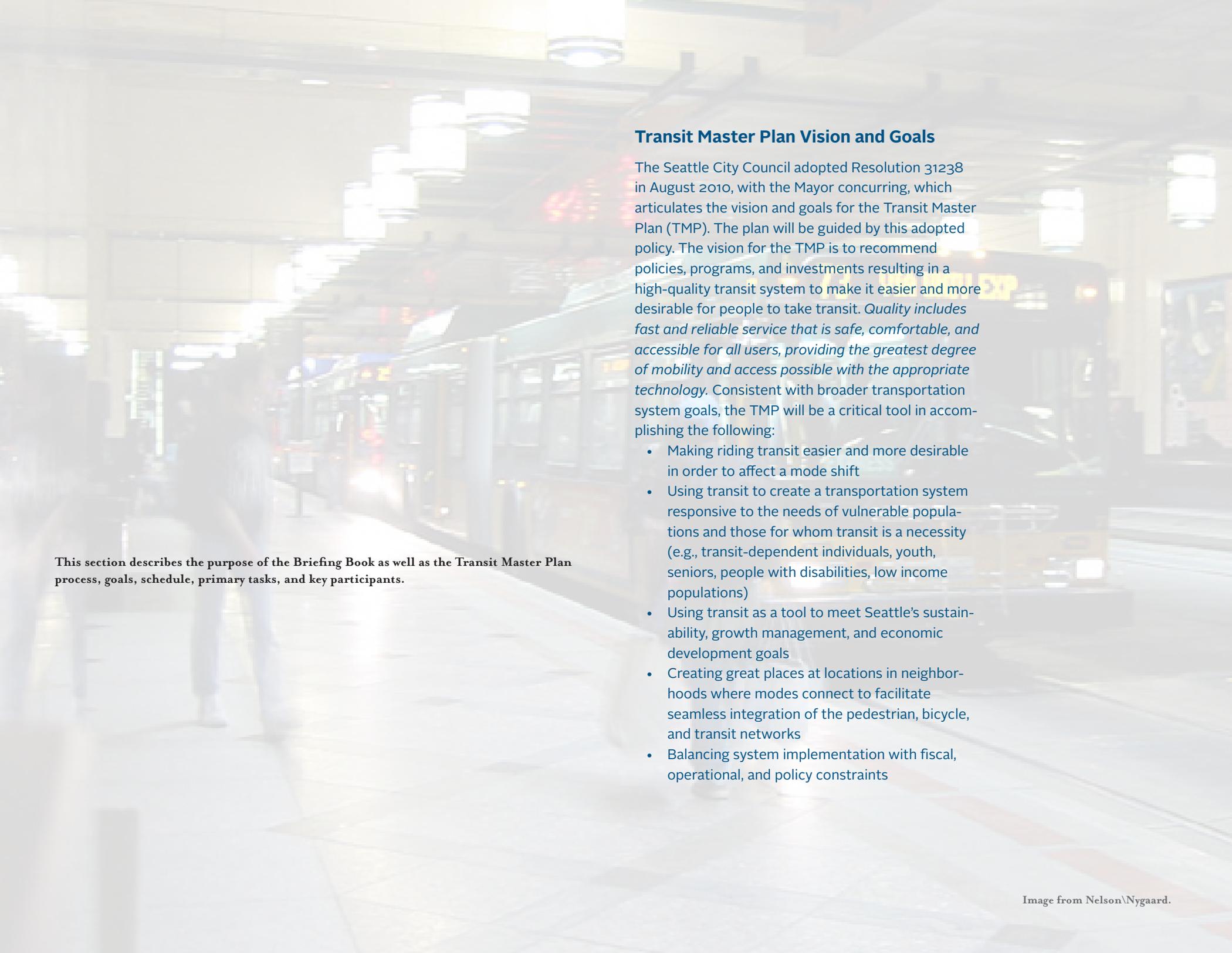


1 INTRODUCTION





This section describes the purpose of the Briefing Book as well as the Transit Master Plan process, goals, schedule, primary tasks, and key participants.

Transit Master Plan Vision and Goals

The Seattle City Council adopted Resolution 31238 in August 2010, with the Mayor concurring, which articulates the vision and goals for the Transit Master Plan (TMP). The plan will be guided by this adopted policy. The vision for the TMP is to recommend policies, programs, and investments resulting in a high-quality transit system to make it easier and more desirable for people to take transit. *Quality includes fast and reliable service that is safe, comfortable, and accessible for all users, providing the greatest degree of mobility and access possible with the appropriate technology.* Consistent with broader transportation system goals, the TMP will be a critical tool in accomplishing the following:

- Making riding transit easier and more desirable in order to affect a mode shift
- Using transit to create a transportation system responsive to the needs of vulnerable populations and those for whom transit is a necessity (e.g., transit-dependent individuals, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, low income populations)
- Using transit as a tool to meet Seattle's sustainability, growth management, and economic development goals
- Creating great places at locations in neighborhoods where modes connect to facilitate seamless integration of the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks
- Balancing system implementation with fiscal, operational, and policy constraints

1 INTRODUCTION

About the Briefing Book

The Briefing Book is a high-level snapshot of the state of the Seattle transit environment. The Briefing Book describes the current and future conditions of transit in Seattle, identifying both positive elements as well as areas of concern, and highlights key opportunities to improve its quality and accessibility. Additionally, the Briefing Book:

- Identifies core policy and performance principles;
- Examines national and international best practices, with special emphasis on the user perspective, and suggests strategies for Seattle
- Provides a foundation for the topics that the Transit Master Plan (TMP) will address

The Briefing Book is divided into 10 sections, including this introduction:

1. **Introduction** —Introduces the Transit Master Plan and presents its process, goals, schedule, tasks, and participants. This section describes the TMP's background and relationship to the 2005 Seattle Transit Plan as well as recommendations and plans that will influence its development.
2. **Travel Demand and Transit Market Analysis**— Assesses the market for public transportation between Seattle neighborhoods and between Seattle and other regional destinations. The section is a foundational element of the TMP and includes (1) a point-to-point analysis of all travel within Seattle and between Seattle and the region using data from Seattle's travel demand model and (2) a point-to-point and corridor level analysis of transit demand and use patterns in Seattle using the Seattle travel demand model and boarding data collected

by King County Metro and Sound Transit. The information presented in this section is the first stage of a multi-stage analysis process. The market analysis will answer several important questions. This stage of market analysis answers the following important questions:

- What are the major travel patterns within Seattle and connecting to the region?
 - How effective is the current transit network in serving those travel markets?
 - Where is the transit system being used most heavily? How does this correlate with overall travel demand? What factors are attributable to the differences?
3. **Land Use and Development**—Provides a brief overview of land use and economic development plans in Seattle, presenting demographic trends and travel characteristics that will impact transit performance and demand. This section also describes the urban village framework that is central to achieving the land use and transportation goals set out in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. It also reviews key land use factors and planning approaches that support the development of high-quality transit service.
 4. **Overview of Existing and Planned Transit Services**—Presents an overview of existing and planned transit serving Seattle, including Seattle-oriented service planned and provided by King County Metro Transit, Sound Transit, Community Transit, and Pierce Transit. In addition, this section provides an overview of ferry service and water taxis as well as human service transportation and private transportation services operating in Seattle. The second portion of this section focuses on transit performance in

Seattle, including transit ridership, performance of transit routes and the Urban Village Transit Network (UVTN) corridors, travel time, and transit greenhouse gas emissions.

5. **Peer Review**—Introduces comparative information from peer cities regarding transit performance, operations, downtown circulation, facility development, and other relevant issues. This section examines transit services and performance in five U.S. cities and two Canadian cities that are North American leaders in transit service delivery and system development. The evaluation is intended to provide insight into challenges and opportunities Seattle will face as the regional rail system is expanded, RapidRide begins in Seattle, and the city continues to grow.
6. **Mode Analysis**—Discusses the relationship between vehicle choice, service design, and overall transit experience, describing transit modes and their basic features, costs, strengths, and weaknesses that impact decisions about what can be implemented in Seattle. This section seeks to clarify and simplify the decision-making process for selecting a mode of transit. It first identifies a few characteristics of "mode" that are essential to a proper understanding of the concept. It then describes a potential decision-making framework for selection of a mode. Finally, it provides general analysis of transit modes using that framework. This section presents a conceptual framework, a range of options, as well as a description of trade-offs associated with each mode. It does not represent a final decision-making tool to be used in defining transit modes for Seattle.

7. **Best Practices in Urban Transit**—Presents best practices from domestic and international cities that provide a variety of “lessons learned” relevant to Seattle. The purpose of this section is to inspire and stimulate creative thinking about what is possible in Seattle. It provides a range of examples from different cities on important TMP topics, including bus rapid transit, high capacity transit and European street trams, transportation-land use linkages, local government standards for transit agencies, city-based transportation demand management, congestion pricing, Complete Streets policies, transit priority treatments, emerging technology, adaptive traffic signal systems, bicycle access to transit, pedestrian access to transit, capital funding and finance, financing operations, Center City circulation, regional governance of transit, and transit’s role in meeting greenhouse gas reduction goals.
8. **Stakeholder Interview and Public Outreach Summary**—Presents findings from stakeholder interviews and an online public survey. The interviews were conducted with more than 40 individuals by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting during October and November 2010. Stakeholders represented neighborhoods, businesses, and transit agencies, including planning and operations personnel. A web-based survey was also conducted to gain an understanding of public perceptions and attitudes towards transit. The survey was posted on the City of Seattle’s web site and was available in English and in six other languages. This section highlights findings from the more than 10,000 survey responses that were received.

9. **Appendix A: Plans and Policies Impacting Transit in Seattle**—Summarizes existing plans and policies from Puget Sound Regional Council, the City of Seattle, King County, and Sound Transit.
10. **Appendix B: Glossary**—Includes Seattle-specific transit acronyms and terminology as well as other transportation concepts related to improving transit service.

Transit Master Plan Background

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is leading the effort to develop a citywide Transit Master Plan, which will update and expand upon the existing Seattle Transit Plan (2005). The 2005 plan provides a solid policy framework and a system for measuring transit performance in Seattle, but does not provide detailed guidance on how and where the City should invest in transit. The TMP will recommend specific actions, projects and programs that will elevate transit’s role in meeting city goals of sustainability, equity, economic productivity, and livability. Serving as a blueprint for transit, the plan will provide a vision for Seattle’s transit network through 2030 and will help to identify future transit capital and operational investments. Recommendations from the plan will be considered by the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee III, which will help to develop a proposed project list and spending plan for anticipated revenues generated by the \$20 annual vehicle license fee (VLF) through the Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD).

The TMP will build on the success of recent modal plans, including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans. Backed by strong community support and funding from Bridging the Gap, these two plans have launched significant and important improvements

to the city’s bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Likewise, the TMP will be an implementation-focused plan that can translate to meaningful enhancements to transit speed, reliability, and quality of user experience, as well as deliver a clear set of priorities for major transit corridor investments. A critical task of the TMP will be to identify the appropriate transit modes for major transit corridors, with an eye toward meeting city goals.

The TMP will address a number of critical issues:

- Identifying the city’s most important transit corridors that carry high ridership today and/or have the potential to serve transit needs that will emerge as Seattle grows and transit demand increases
- Assigning transit modes, such as versions of bus rapid transit, light rail, or streetcar, that would work best on those corridors
- Integrating transit capital facilities and services with walking and biking infrastructure, and using transit to make great places
- Enhancing bus transit performance through roadway investments such as bus bulbs and traffic signal priority
- Coordinating with Metro and Sound Transit to create a seamless, fully integrated, and user-friendly network of transit services

Regional Transit Task Force Process

In addition to the vision and goals adopted by the City of Seattle, the TMP will be informed and guided by recommendations from the Regional Transit Task Force (RTTF). The King County Council formed the task force in February 2010 to consider a policy framework for the potential future growth and, if necessary, contraction of King County Metro Transit. The RTTF was created in response to a significant drop

in sales tax receipts, which make up 62% of Metro's operating revenues, resulting from the economic recession that began in late 2008. At the same time, Metro's ridership has grown, and the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040 plans predict long-term growth in the region.

The task force created recommendations that reflect a new policy direction for transit service allocation and a decision-making framework that will result in greater clarity and transparency, including:

- **Performance measures:** Metro should create and adopt a new set of performance measures by service type and report at least annually on the agency's performance on these measures.
- **Cost control:** Cost control strategies should include continued implementation of the 2009 performance audit findings, exploration of alternative service delivery models, and potential reduction of overhead and internal service changes.
- **Policy guidelines for service reduction and expansion:** Service allocation decisions will be guided by transparency and emphasize productivity and linkage to economic development, land use, financial sustainability, and environmental sustainability. In addition, decisions will be designed to ensure social equity and provide geographic value throughout King County. Metro will use system design factors and performance thresholds as the basis for decision making on network changes.

Walk Bike Ride

The TMP will support Seattle's Walk Bike Ride initiative, which seeks to make walking, biking, and taking transit the easiest ways to travel around the city. By improving transit quality and delivery, the plan will help to knit together the city's urban villages into an accessible network of great neighborhoods. Since all transit trips begin with walking or biking, the TMP will consider important pedestrian and bicycle linkages to transit services and identify ways to improve accessibility.

Schedule

The TMP is scheduled to be completed in September 2011. Phase 1 began in September 2010 and will be completed in January 2011. Phase 2 is expected to begin in February 2011 and will be completed in June 2011. Between Phase I and Phase II, the Mayor and City Council will conduct a thorough review of the Phase I results and provide guidance for Phase II.

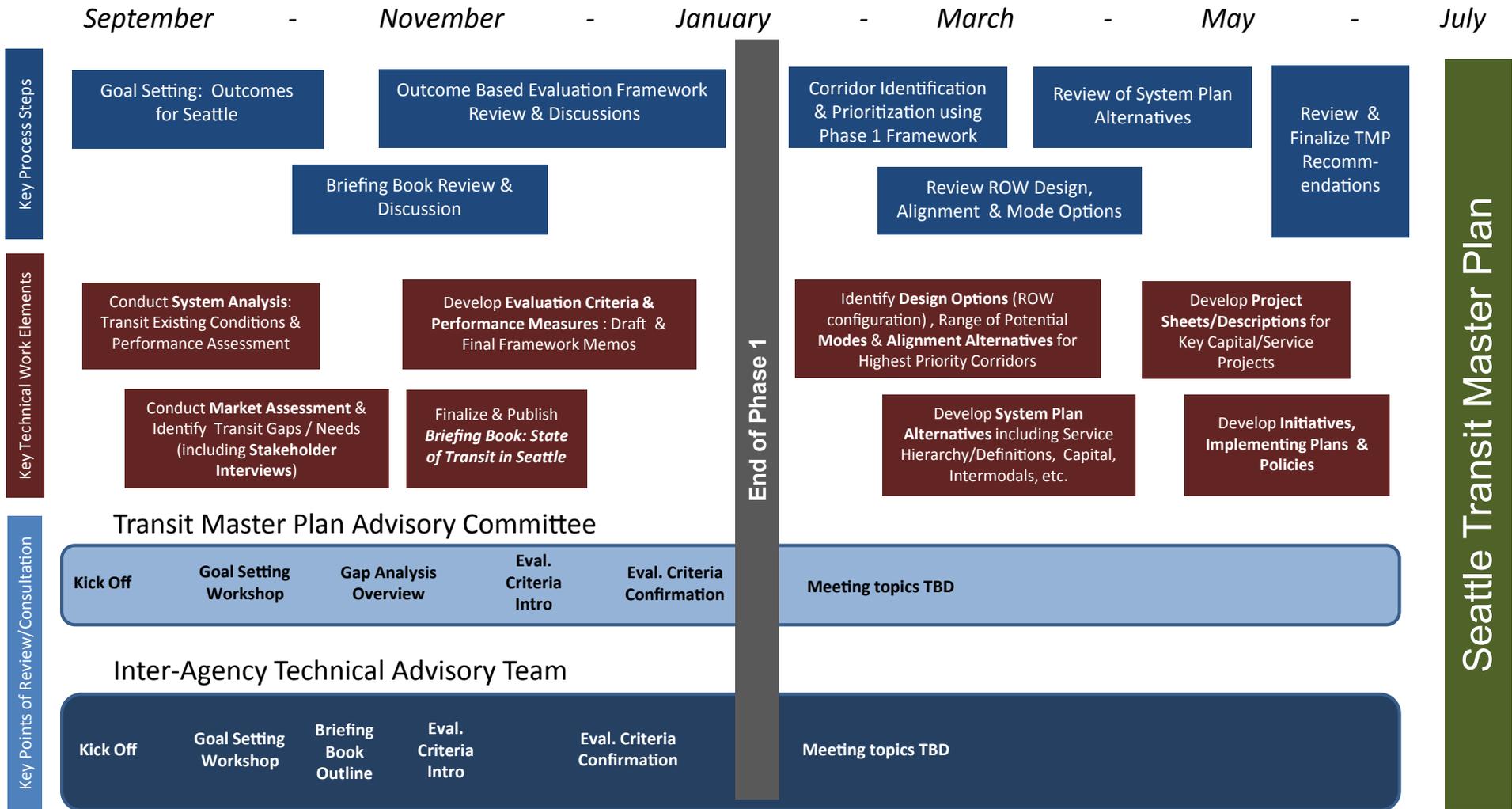
Major TMP Tasks

The TMP is divided into two phases as illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page:

- **Phase 1** involves a systems analysis that results in the development of this Briefing Book. The Briefing Book describes the state of transit in Seattle, including existing conditions, gaps analysis, market evaluation, peer review, and best practices. This phase also involves developing an evaluation framework focusing on outcomes important to Seattle, which will guide the Phase 2 corridor and modal analyses. Additionally, the market analysis will identify the most important transit market connections for Phase 2 analysis.
- **Phase 2** will involve the analysis of priority corridors identified in Phase 1 to determine alignment and mode. The analysis will consider how various corridors can be assembled to form a coherent network of premium services that improves service quality and capacity between urban villages and centers, enhances pedestrian and bicycle access, and enhances connectivity to the regional transit network. The analysis will take fiscal constraints and scenarios into consideration and present a range of options for consideration. A draft and final Transit Master Plan will be produced, including detailed design standards, service design recommendations, and implementation phasing plans.

FIGURE 1-1 PROJECT SCHEDULE

Seattle Transit Master Plan



Project Organization, Oversight, and Involvement

Project Organization

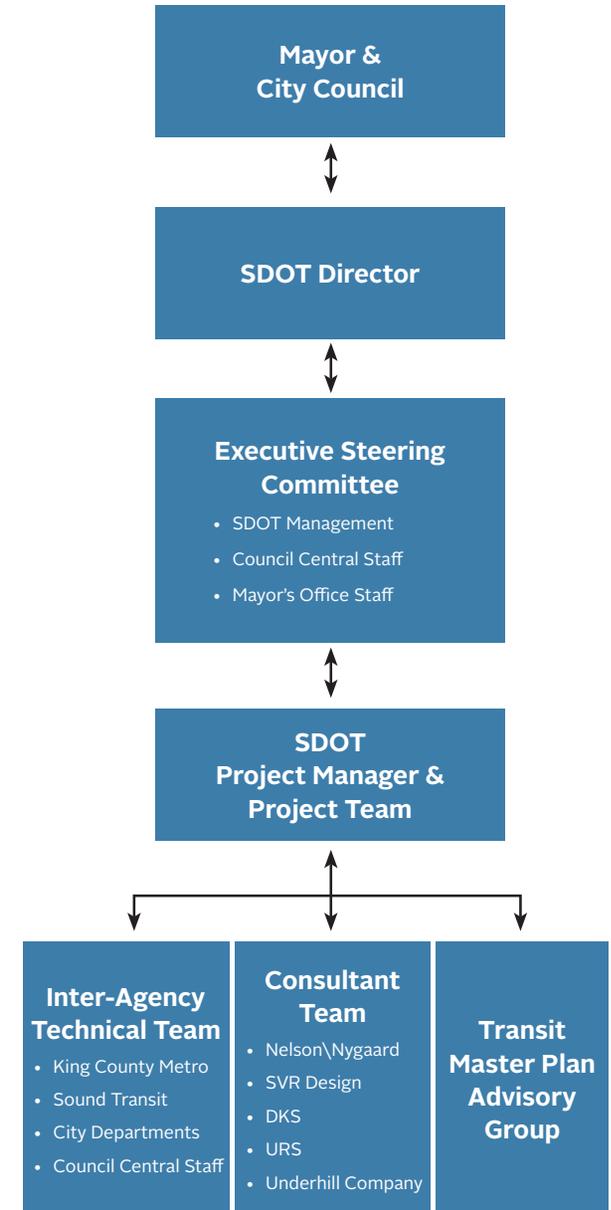
Figure 2 illustrates the roles and responsibilities associated with developing the Transit Master Plan:

- The **Mayor and City Council** provide policy direction and oversight for the plan.
- The **SDOT Director** is the liaison between the Mayor and Council and SDOT executives and project staff. The director ensures that the plan meets the city's goals and can be implemented by the department.
- The **Executive Steering Committee** provides project oversight and reviews key project documents. This committee consists of key executive and policy staff from SDOT, the City Council, and the Mayor's office.
- The **SDOT Project Manager and Project Team** are responsible for managing all aspects of TMP development, including the consultant team and working groups.
- The **Inter-Agency Technical Team and TMP Advisory Committee** work closely with the consultant team to oversee the development of the TMP and ensure that it meets project goals and public expectations. The Inter-Agency Technical Advisory Team (ITAT) includes technical staff from SDOT and other city departments, the Seattle Planning Commission, King County Metro Transit, Sound Transit, Puget Sound Regional Council, and Public Health Seattle – King County. The Transit Master Plan Advisory Group (TMPAG) has 25 members appointed by City Council and the Mayor. Group members have an interest in transportation issues and

represent diverse interests and perspectives of Seattle residents and employers.

- The **consultant team** is responsible for all aspects of developing the TMP, including conducting researching, stakeholder interviews, and public outreach, as well as developing all project deliverables, including the Briefing Book and the draft and final Transit Master Plan. **Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates**, a nationally recognized public transportation consulting firm, is leading the consultant team. The team also includes SvR Design Company, URS, DKS Associates, and the Underhill Company. **URS** is leading rail planning and conceptual engineering efforts, building on their streetcar design work. **SvR Design Company** is building on its work on the Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan, ensuring corridor evaluation and implementation recommendations support the city's pedestrian access and placemaking priorities. **DKS Associates** brings extensive experience implementing transit priority treatments in Seattle bus and rail corridors. The **Underhill Company** provides local expertise in transit corridor implementation and neighborhood facilitation and is assisting the team with stakeholder outreach.

FIGURE 1-2 PROJECT ORGANIZATION



In addition to participation by the agencies and individuals listed above, the project will include opportunities for additional review through existing organizations and meetings:

- Seattle boards and commissions (Planning Commission, Design Commission, Bicycle Advisory Board, Pedestrian Advisory Board, Freight Mobility Advisory Committee)
- Bridging the Gap Oversight Committee
- Citywide Neighborhood Council, district councils, and other community groups
- Citywide community forums

Public Input

SDOT will organize and hold public forums at key points in the project to allow for all Seattle residents and employers to provide feedback.

Project Web Site

Key documents such as the Briefing Book and the Transit Master Plan will be posted on the project Web site for public review (<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/transitmasterplan.htm>).

Stakeholder Involvement

In October 2010, the consultant team interviewed community stakeholders to identify their vision for Seattle's transportation system. These interviews were a key method for gathering input about desired community outcomes or goals for public transportation in Seattle. Feedback was gathered on transportation needs, visions of Seattle's future, key trip origins and destinations, new drivers of growth, and opportunities for coordinating existing transit services. These interviews are summarized in Section 8: Stakeholder Interview and Public Outreach Summary.

Survey

A general public survey was posted on the City's web site to collect information on people's use of transit and their priorities for investment. The survey was available in English and six other languages. To encourage participation and help link people to the survey, 4,000 "business cards" were distributed to Neighborhood Service Centers and Community Centers. E-mail alerts were sent directly to over 200 community groups and key stakeholders. More than 10,000 responses were received. Survey findings in Section 8: Stakeholder Interview and Public Outreach Summary summarize responses from November 12, 2010- January 14, 2011.