

METRO CONNECTS Development Program

To make the METRO CONNECTS vision a reality, Metro would develop a rolling six-year Development Program in collaboration with riders, community members, cities, and transportation stakeholders.

King County would use the METRO CONNECTS Development Program to coordinate internally and with jurisdictions to deliver the near-term service changes, complementary capital investments, and other program and policy work needed to support the METRO CONNECTS vision. Decisions to make changes to the transit network would be made through our existing service change process, which includes extensive public engagement prior to the King County Council's adoption of service change ordinances. The needs identified in the program would inform and be informed by our biennial budgets.

Each of the project areas in METRO CONNECTS would require more detailed analysis and consideration as we move toward project delivery. For example, the Development Program would help Metro coordinate construction of a new bus-only lane where a RapidRide alignment has been planned, or begin early conversations with Sound Transit around transit hubs where we know passenger volumes will grow.

In some cases, the Development Program will suggest the need for new research, feasibility analysis, or other study of topics like enhanced data collection systems, new customer information tools, fare integration opportunities, or application of emerging technology.

By breaking the METRO CONNECTS vision down into smaller, achievable pieces, we could ensure that the needed system infrastructure, land use, service, policies, and programs are coordinated and scaled appropriately. We would form partnerships early and often to make sure transportation infrastructure is in place as transit expands.

This program would be informed by Metro's Service Guidelines, which help us evaluate, design, and modify transit services to meet changing needs and deliver high-quality service. The guidelines are based on three principles: productivity, geographic value, and social equity.

The Development Program would evaluate concepts such as RapidRide alignments and express pathways, providing a solid basis for community engagement when we begin a service change proposal.

Decisions regarding service allocation would be shaped by the following factors:

- Existing service hours on Metro routes in the project area.
- The estimated service-hour need identified in METRO CONNECTS and in Metro's annual System Evaluation Report, including hours needed to create new RapidRide lines.
- Partnership contributions such as financial or in-kind contributions and transit-supportive policy changes.
- Distribution of service across all areas of the county.
- Presence of communities with large minority and low-income populations.

By considering both planning factors and available resources, the Development Program would provide opportunities to reconcile the needs identified in Metro's annual System Evaluation Report with the METRO CONNECTS service network and vision. Metro expects to begin work in 2017 on our first Development Program, to help inform the 2019–2020 budget.

Development Program, continued

What guides the METRO CONNECTS Development Program? (relationship of plans)

The implementation of METRO CONNECTS will be guided by various King County and Metro policies, refined and discussed with regional partners, and carried out through existing methods for changing service and capital projects, described in more detail below. Metro's planning documents can be separated into those that provide overarching policy, those that are direct inputs to the Development Program, and existing methods for making service and capital changes to the Metro system that will move us toward the vision laid out in METRO CONNECTS.

The planning documents below are a description of existing Metro policy. Other guiding policy documents include the King County Strategic Plan, the Fund Management Policies for Public Transportation and Countywide Financial Policies, the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan, and the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.

Overarching policy

- The **Strategic Plan for Public Transportation** describes Metro's goals, strategies and objectives concerning safety, equitable access, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, service excellence, financial stewardship, public engagement, and workforce quality.
- The **Service Guidelines**, which are used to evaluate, design, and modify transit services to meet changing needs and to deliver efficient, high-quality service.

Inputs to the METRO CONNECTS Development Program

This new initiative provides the forum for discussions—both internal and with jurisdiction partners—about the factors that influence our service and capital decisions. Participants will share their ideas and priorities, which will inform the development of Metro's budgets going forward.

Metro will share information with regional partners about the following:

- **METRO CONNECTS**, which establishes a long-term vision for how we will serve the mobility needs of the county that is consistent with our policies. It defines service concepts and types of capital

investments (including in areas of the county with Service Guideline needs) or that would be necessary to support long-term changes to the transit network.

- The **Service Guidelines**, which include the tools for guiding near-term service decisions such as restructuring service, planning alternative service, and working with partners.
- The **System Evaluation Report**, which will present the results of the Service Guidelines assessment and the performance and progress of the Alternative Services program. The Service Guidelines assessment identifies where the county's greatest transit needs are, based on four investment priorities: routes that are crowded, routes that are unreliable, routes that do not have enough service, and highly productive routes.

Cities' and transportation agencies will bring information to the forum about:

- **Local and regional plans** and known projects that will have impacts on the transportation network, such as land-use changes, roadway improvements, and Link extensions, that Metro should respond to.
- **Local priorities** for transit service whether based on the existing Service Guidelines needs or on the METRO CONNECTS vision.

Budget and next steps

Input from regional partners would inform the development of Metro's budget and a six to eight-year service and capital program. The budget would be adopted by the King County Council as part of King County's biennial budget.

Metro would work with communities and partner agencies to plan and implement service changes; plan and construct capital projects to support transit service; and plan and implement other programs and initiatives that support the METRO CONNECTS vision.

Reporting

In addition to reporting on the Service Guidelines assessment and the performance of the Alternative Services Program, Metro's annual System Evaluation Report would report on progress toward the METRO CONNECTS vision.