Service Recovery & Proviso 7 Response

Mobility & Environment Committee

March 2021

INVESTING IN MOBILITY

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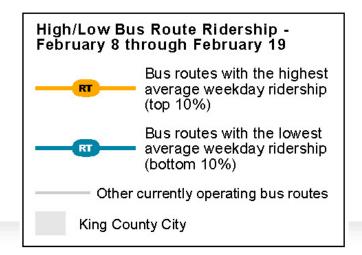*Moving forward together*

Service Recovery Overview

- Service during COVID

- Growing towards post-COVID
  - Recovering existing capacity by raising load limits
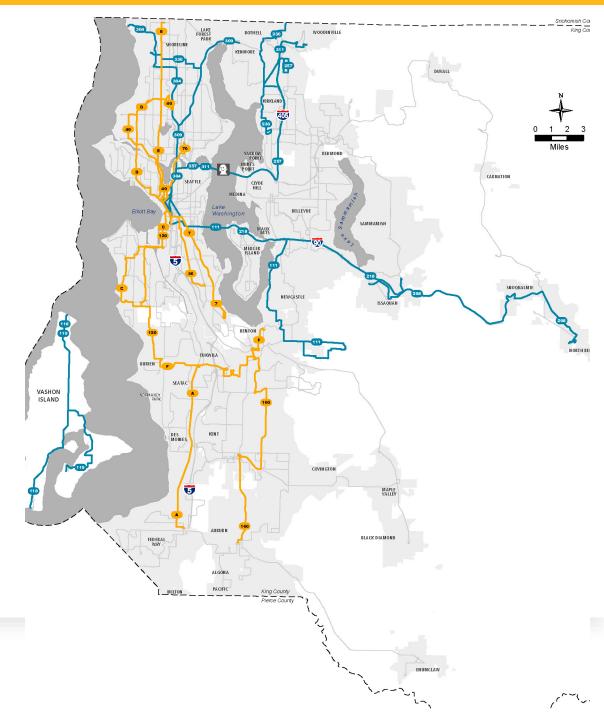 - Restoring service to meet demand

- Recovery measures

Service during COVID

- Metro is operating 85% of pre-Covid service levels as of early 2021

- Metro's 2021-22 adopted budget funds a return to pre-Covid service levels by the end of 2022, not including STBD changes
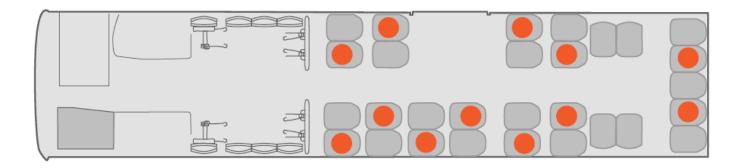

High/Low Bus Route Ridership - February 8 through February 19

- **RT** Bus routes with the highest average weekday ridership (top 10%)
- **RT** Bus routes with the lowest average weekday ridership (bottom 10%)
- Other currently operating bus routes
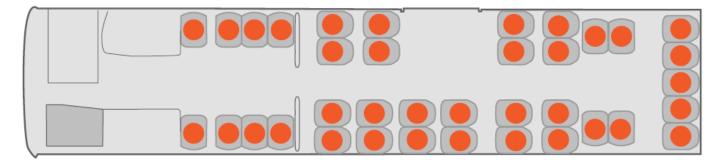- King County City

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Service during COVID

Load limits remain in place, limiting buses to 22-24% of pre-COVID capacity

COVID capacity limits 40' Bus
12 Riders
24% of Crowding Threshold

Full seated load 40' Bus
37 Riders
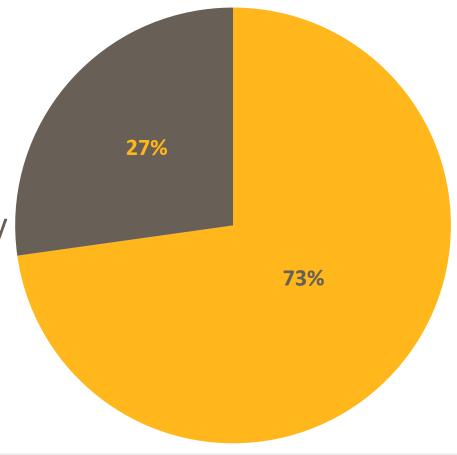71% of Crowding Threshold

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What type of Metro service is suspended?

- Approximately 414,000 Metro service hours currently suspended (about 9% of Metro service)

All-day routes
- **9 routes** fully suspended
- **17 routes** partially suspended

Peak-only routes (morning & afternoon)
- **49 routes** fully suspended
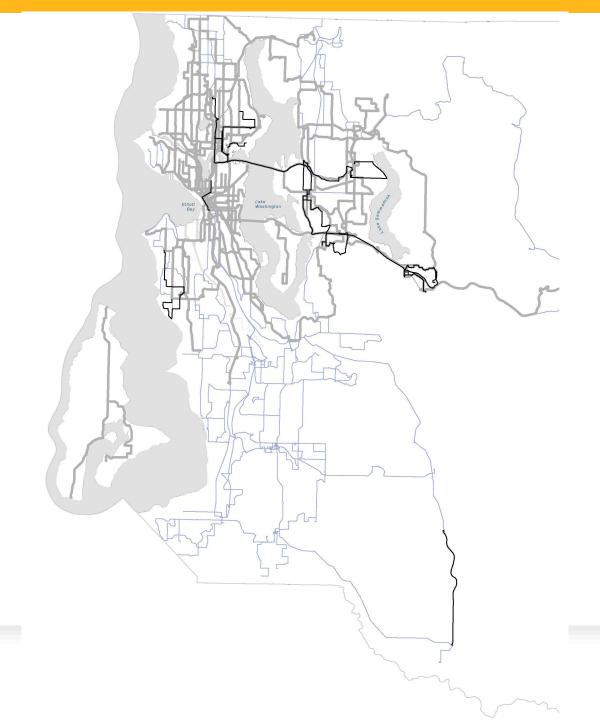- **4 routes** partially suspended

27%

73%

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*This pie chart shows percentage of total service hours suspended.

Where is all-day service is suspended?

ALL-DAY ROUTE NETWORK

—— Suspended all-day routes
—— Reduced all-day routes
—— Other operating all-day routes

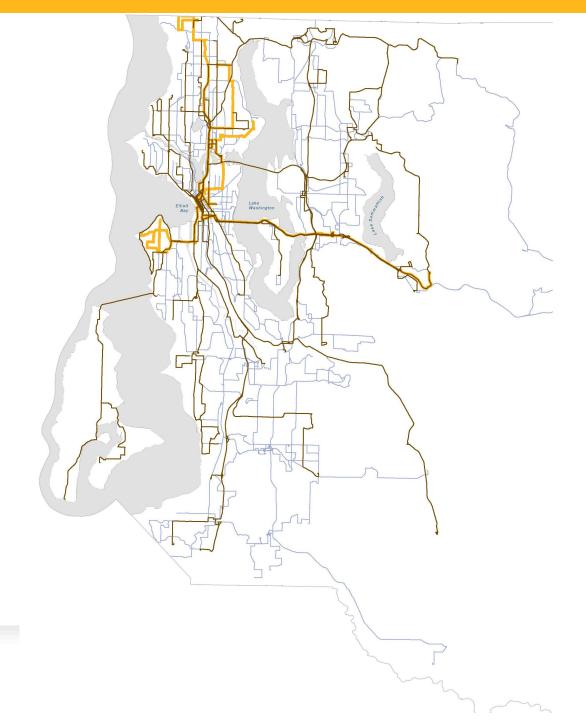# Where is peak service suspended?

PEAK-ONLY ROUTE NETWORK

──────── Suspended peak-only route

──────── Reduced peak-only routes

──────── Other operating routes*

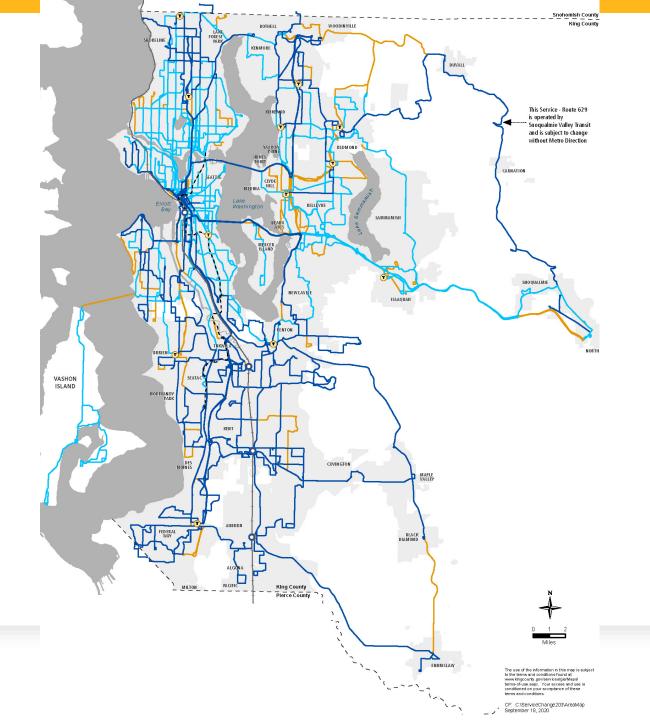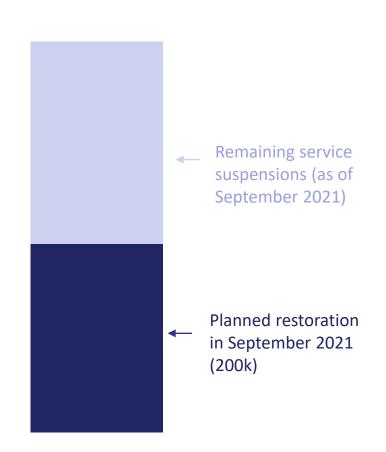*this includes all-day routes as they also run during peak periods

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Current service profile

King County Metro Transit Service*

Legend	
Bus routes operating at full service levels	Link light rail
Bus routes operating with reduced service levels	Sounder rail and station
Bus routes suspended/ not operating	Transit Center

*Other transit service not shown:
Sammamish and Juanita Community Rides - operating at full service
Via to Transit - reduced
All other Community Rides - suspended

*Sound Transit Express bus routes not included on map

This Service - Route 629 is operated by Snoqualmie Valley Transit and is subject to change without Metro Direction

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Building the post-COVID system

- Demand estimation work
  - Work underway to estimate demand in September 2021 using information from employer discussions, rider/non-rider survey data, and ORCA data
  - High uncertainty remains on many factors

- Planning to restore 200,000 hours of service in September 2021
  - Budget target developed in coordination between Operations and Mobility divisions
  - Restorations in September will help meet the needs of a returning economy, based on current assumptions for vaccination and return to in-person school and work for many in 2021

- Planning to remove load limits
  - Determining the timing and triggers to allow more customers per vehicle

Remaining service suspensions (as of September 2021)

Planned restoration in September 2021 (200k)

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How will we make decisions for September 2021?

Data & Analysis
- Regional Transit Demand Estimation
- Equity Analysis
- Ridership, Crowding & Productivity

Community Input
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Mobility Board Workshop
- Employer Engagement
- Rider Survey

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Inputs: Community Engagement Feedback

Questions

How should we prioritize service restorations?

How have service suspensions impacted your ability to travel?

Engagement Activities

- Mobility Board workshop
- Partner agency groups
- Community advisory groups
- Rider survey (February 8 – March 8)
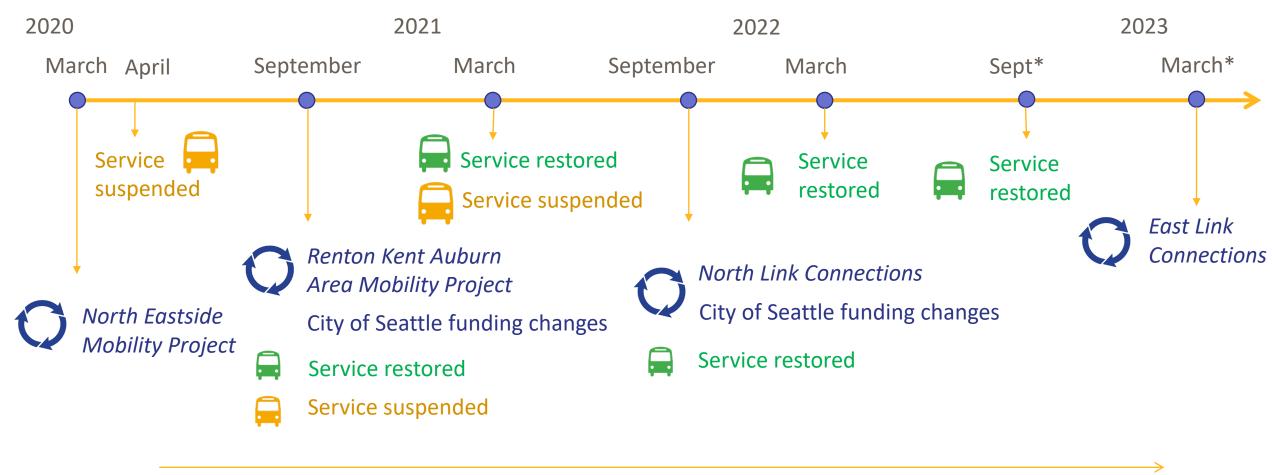- Outreach through social media, radio, bus stop signs, rider alerts

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Inputs: Data & Analysis

- Ridership during COVID
- Ridership before COVID
- Crowding
- Equity
- Productivity
- Employer Plans
- Back to School Plans
- Back to Work Plans
- Governor's Safe Start Phases
- **Service Restoration Decisions**

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Restoration Analysis Metrics

- Ridership: Prioritize routes with higher pre-COVID ridership based on the 2020 System Evaluation Report.

- Crowding: Prioritize restorations to mitigate identified crowding issues on service in operation.*

- Equity: Prioritize restorations on routes with high opportunity scores defined based on the proportion of populations of persons of color, poverty/low-income, linguistically diverse, disability, and immigrant/refugee (born abroad).

- Employers: Prioritize restorations on routes with high proportions of ORCA passport usage from major employers (e.g. Amazon, Microsoft, UW), when those employers indicate they may begin phasing out or reducing teleworking.

- Productivity: De-prioritize service restoration on routes with low pre-COVID productivity based on higher probability of later permanent reduction based on Service Guidelines reduction priorities.

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*This metric will change as load limits change.

Ridership

- Average daily ridership is about 125,000 (30% of 2019 levels)

- Routes with the smallest declines:
  - Frequent, all-day routes
  - Routes serving South King County
  - RapidRide routes

Top 10 Routes by Average Daily Boardings – 2/1/2021

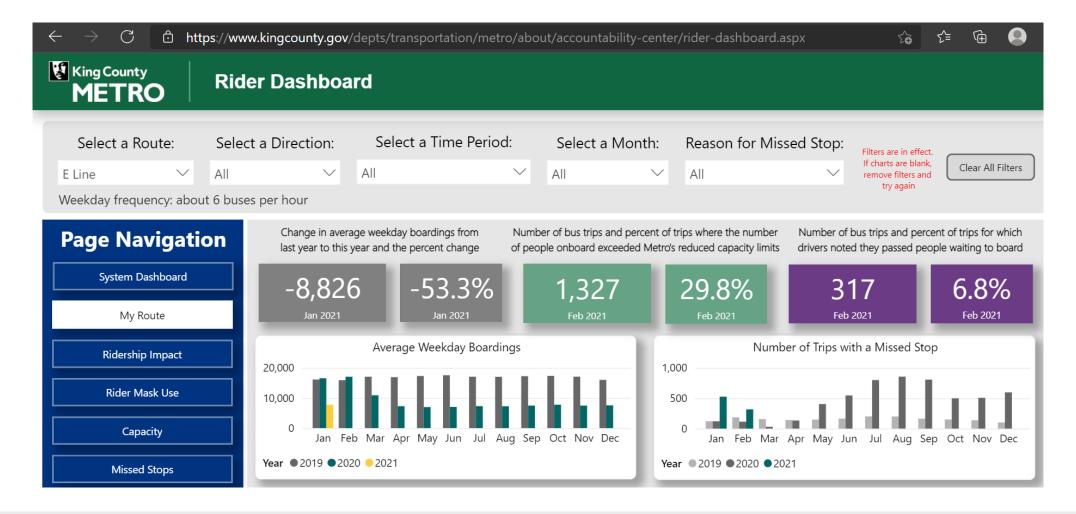| Route	Avg Baseline	Avg Current	Percent Change
675	17,413	7,844	-55.0%
7	12,087	6,422	-46.9%
671	8,934	5,823	-34.8%
674	14,333	4,939	-65.5%
120	8,307	4,240	-49.0%
36	9,769	4,210	-56.9%
673	11,708	3,634	-69.0%
40	14,435	3,385	-76.6%
676	5,184	3,130	-39.6%
160		2,859	N/A

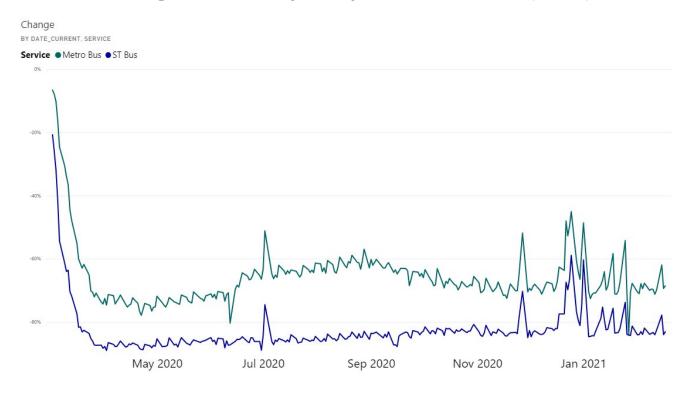| Ridership	Prioritize routes with higher pre-COVID ridership based on the 2020 System Evaluation Report

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Ridership

Ridership

- Peak-only and express routes lost the most riders before suspensions

- Some peak-only routes operating in early 2021 will see trip reductions in March 2021 due to low demand

- Transit demand estimation work is ongoing for September 2021
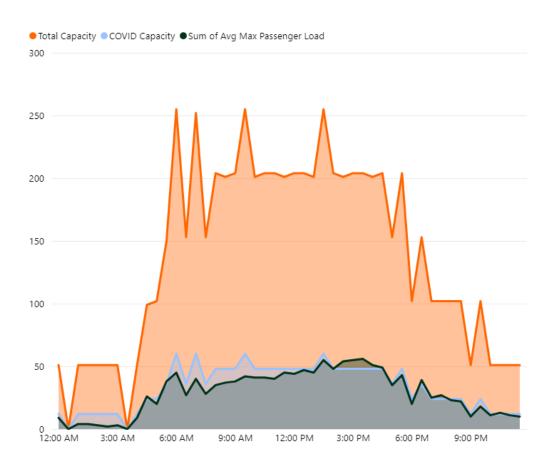
Percent Change in Ridership compared to Baseline (2019)

Change
BY DATE_CURRENT, SERVICE

Service ● Metro Bus ● ST Bus

Crowding

- **Current load limits: 12 on 40' bus and 18 on 60' bus**
  - If ridership increases and current load limits remain in place, crowding/pass ups will worsen
  - This is already occurring on some routes at current ridership levels (e.g. Route 160)
- Metro is adding service to 15 routes in March 2021 to address crowding issues
- Metro is continuously monitoring crowding to inform provision of supplemental service

Route 160 (future I Line)

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Crowding

- Key findings:
  - Several routes have consistently met or exceeded COVID load limits:
    - High ridership routes serving areas with a high proportion of priority populations (A, E, 7, 36)
  - Most crowding situations occur in the mid-day or PM period

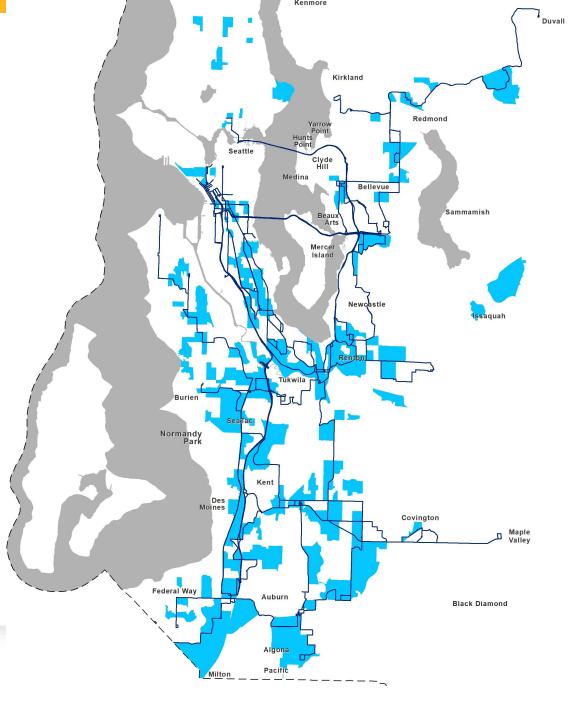| Crowding	Prioritize restorations to mitigate identified crowding issues on service in operation. This metric will change as load limits change during COVID.

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Equity

- Some suspended routes have high Opportunity Scores
  - 4 of 17 partially suspended all-day routes
  - 2 of 9 fully suspended all-day routes
  - 2 of 4 partially suspended peak-only routes
  - 13 of 41 fully suspended peak-only routes

■ Equity Priority Areas

— Routes with high Opportunity Scores

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Equity

- How will Metro planning incorporate equity?
  - Prioritizing routes with high Opportunity Scores
  - Identifying equity gaps through analysis
  - Identify impacts to equity priority populations through engagement

Equity	Prioritize restorations on routes with high opportunity scores defined based on the proportion of populations of persons of color, poverty/low-income, linguistically diverse, disability, and immigrant/refugee (born abroad).

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Employers

- Business accounts made up 41% of all boardings and 51% of total fare revenue in 2019

  - Business account boardings are down 85% relative to baseline

- Metro is working with numerous employers who are custom Passport customers to understand plans for staff who are currently teleworking.

  - Amazon, AT&T, Children's Hospital, Expedia, Facebook, Holland America, Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft, Port of Seattle, REI, Sound Transit, Swedish, Uber, University of Washington, Virginia Mason, Zulily

Employers

- Key findings:
  - Employers closely monitoring the rollout of vaccines and COVID caseloads
  - Expectation is the return to work/school can begin in summer though more likely fall
  - Most employers are planning for a hybrid model of time split between working from home and being in the office
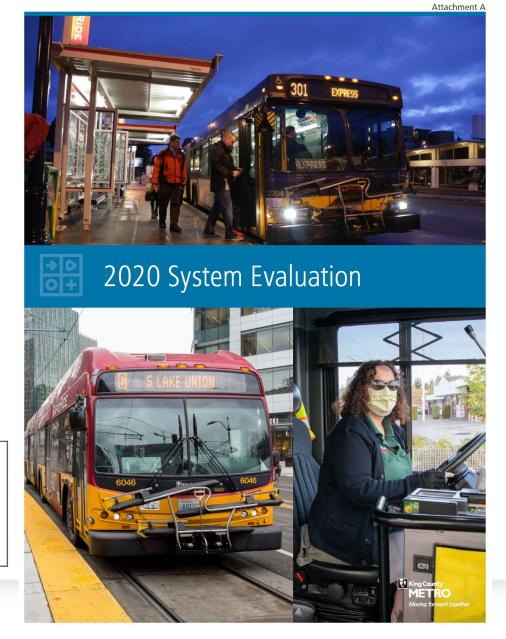
Employers	Prioritize restorations on routes with high proportions of ORCA passport usage from major employers (e.g. Amazon, Microsoft, UW), when those employers indicate they may begin phasing out or reducing teleworking.

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Productivity

- Many partially or fully suspended routes have productivity below 25% threshold and are top candidates for reduction based on the Service Guidelines and pre-Covid route performance:
  - 6 of 17 partially suspended all-day routes
  - 5 of 9 fully suspended all-day routes
  - 1 of 4 partially suspended peak-only routes
  - 20 of 41 fully suspended peak-only routes

Productivity	De-prioritize service restoration on routes with low pre-COVID productivity based on higher probability of later permanent reduction based on Service Guidelines reduction priorities

2020 System Evaluation

Proviso 7 Response

Requirements of Proviso 7

A. Recovery, restorations and emergency service changes:
- New Guidelines language addressing emergency planning authority
- Performance indicators for reduced or suspended routes for service restorations
- Factors used for planning restorations, service additions or reductions
- Restoration planning as it relates to Metro Connects updates

B. Description of proposed changes to the Restructuring Service section of the Service Guidelines

C. Future briefings to describe the changes the Metro transit department is preparing to address service restructures and post pandemic service restoration in the King County Metro Service Guidelines

Guidelines for emergencies

- **Proposed updates to Service Guidelines will include more specific information about emergency situations that impact ridership or service levels**
  - Adding a description of Metro's emergency authority from the King County code section 28.94.010.B.2 into the section about major service changes.
  - Adding information about how Metro should develop situation-specific policies when emergencies arise, including recognition that Metro will use performance information from both before and during emergencies to guide planning.
  - Continued recognition of the need for Metro to have flexibility to immediately change service in response to emergencies.

Service changes during Covid emergency

Temporary changes

Temporarily suspending service

Shortening operating hours

Suspending an entire route

Reducing the frequency of route

Temporarily adding service

Adding service to a crowded route

Restoring service

Partial restoration of a route

Full restoration of a route

Permanent changes

Permanent changes to service

Permanently reducing service

Changing the structure and pathway of a route
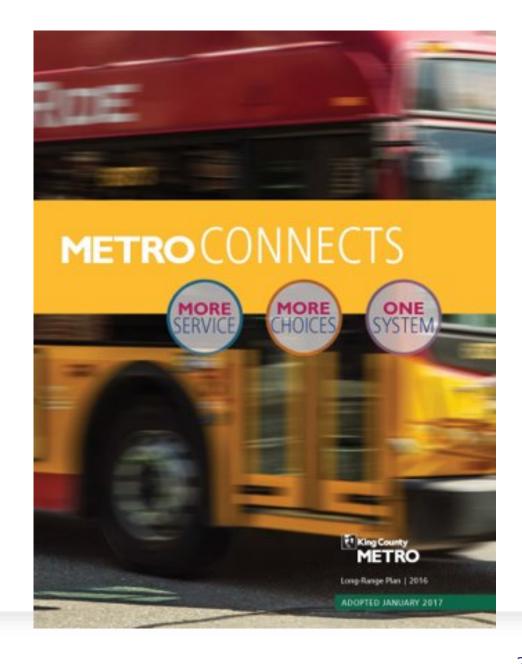
Consolidating routes

Permanently investing in new service

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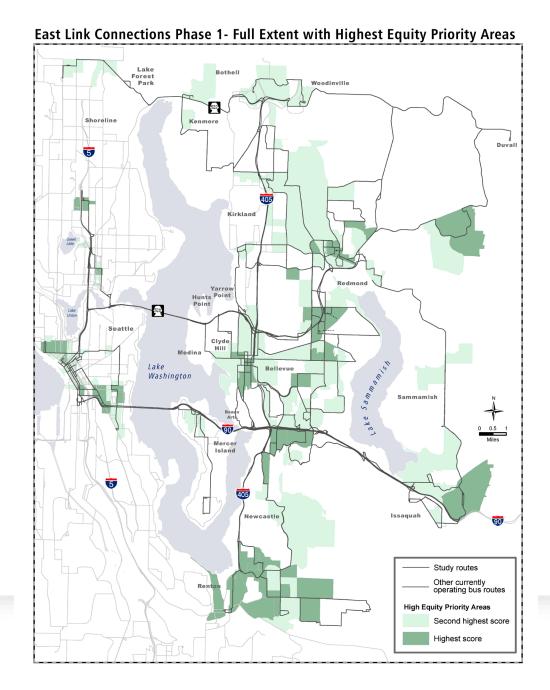
Recovery & Metro Connects

- Metro Connects represents a vision for King County's transit service more than 20 years in the future.

- This vision remains strong and the ridership and other trends during COVID reinforce the need to serve trips throughout all times of day.

- Though COVID and recovery-related service changes were not incorporated into the update to the Metro Connects service networks, Metro Connects has influenced how we think about recovery

- Service recovery is an opportunity to build towards the long-range system

- Future updates to Metro Connects are expected over time and will incorporate any long-term changes that result from the pandemic and post-pandemic recovery.

Guidelines for Service Restructures

- **Updates to the Restructuring Service section will be discussed in detail at the April RTC meeting**

- The Guidelines provide clear direction on service restructures, including the triggers for considering restructures.

- **New restructures goals will include:**
  - *Improved access to address unmet need*
  - *Reducing emissions*
  - *Move towards Metro Connects*
  - *Create convenient transfer opportunities*
  - *Match capacity and mobility service type*

East Link Connections Phase 1- Full Extent with Highest Equity Priority Areas

Next Steps

- King County Executive will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the King County Council, its committees, and the Regional Transit Committee on Metro's planning and policy updates.

- Quarterly reports on COVID service recovery including how we are using the measures outlined in Table will be provided to RTC

- Briefings to Councilmembers on these or other issues related to service restorations, planning, and policy update processes are available.

- Current data on routes and Metro recovery is available on public dashboard, The Dash

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Closing and Questions

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