

**From:** [Jesse Piedfort](#)  
**To:** [KCC - Committee Assistants \(Email Group\)](#)  
**Subject:** Regional Transit Committee - Sierra Club Comment on Metro Policy Updates  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 17, 2021 12:38:16 PM

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Dear Chair Upthegrove and members of the King County Regional Transit Committee,

On behalf of Sierra Club Washington State Chapter, I'm writing in strong support of Proposed Ordinance No. 2021-0286, adopting updates to Metro's Strategic Plan, Metro Service Guidelines, and the Metro Connects Long-Range Plan.

Sierra Club is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization, with more than 100,000 members and supporters in the Club's Washington State Chapter. With transportation making up the largest share of climate pollution in Washington, we continue to prioritize building a cleaner transportation system on a foundation of strong public transit and local solutions that center equity and justice.

First and foremost, we wish to express our appreciation to the Regional Transit Committee and King County Council for your leadership on developing policies that advance equity and address climate change, and for following the direction of community leaders.

We believe these updates are urgently needed. Last year's extreme heat is part of a concerning trend in the Puget Sound region, where people now experience more heat-related health impacts including hospitalizations and deaths. In King County, the transportation sector is responsible for more than one third of climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions. And as climate change worsens, low-income people and communities of color experience disproportionate impacts.

These updates represent a significant and much-needed shift in the way that Metro will plan for service growth, appropriately prioritizing equity and land use. Among the highest-ranking equity investments, the investments will be prioritized by land use. This shift will ensure investments are made in a way that provides direct benefits to highly impacted communities while maximizing the climate impact of Metro service.

Similarly, climate is being better incorporated into RapidRide corridor prioritization (by explicitly considering new riders gained, VMT reduction, and the total number of housing units and jobs) and capital program prioritization. We were also pleased to see analysis of the climate impact and cost-effectiveness of potential Metro mobility and fleet investments. Work to expand RapidRide and proceed with fleet electrification programs scored well under this analysis, and we are excited to see these initiatives progress in the years to come.

Metro must be a cornerstone of King County's approach to climate. However, Metro currently contributes close to 50 percent of King County government's greenhouse gas emissions. These policy updates will lead to strong improvements in the agency's carbon footprint, especially commitments to accelerate Metro's transition to a zero-emission bus fleet to 2035, reduce climate emissions from facilities operation, and build green and equitable capital infrastructure (importantly including no new natural gas installations).

These policy updates succeed in aligning with commitments made in the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan. We also support the approach in these updates of a commitment to reduce car trips, support for equitable transit-oriented communities, and development of equitable vehicle usage pricing strategies.

In total, these policies represent significant positive steps to address climate change while providing great benefits to the people who rely most on quality public transit. We urge you to support these policies and advance them out of committee without delay.

Thank you for your consideration and for your important work on building a green and equitable King County.

Sincerely,

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