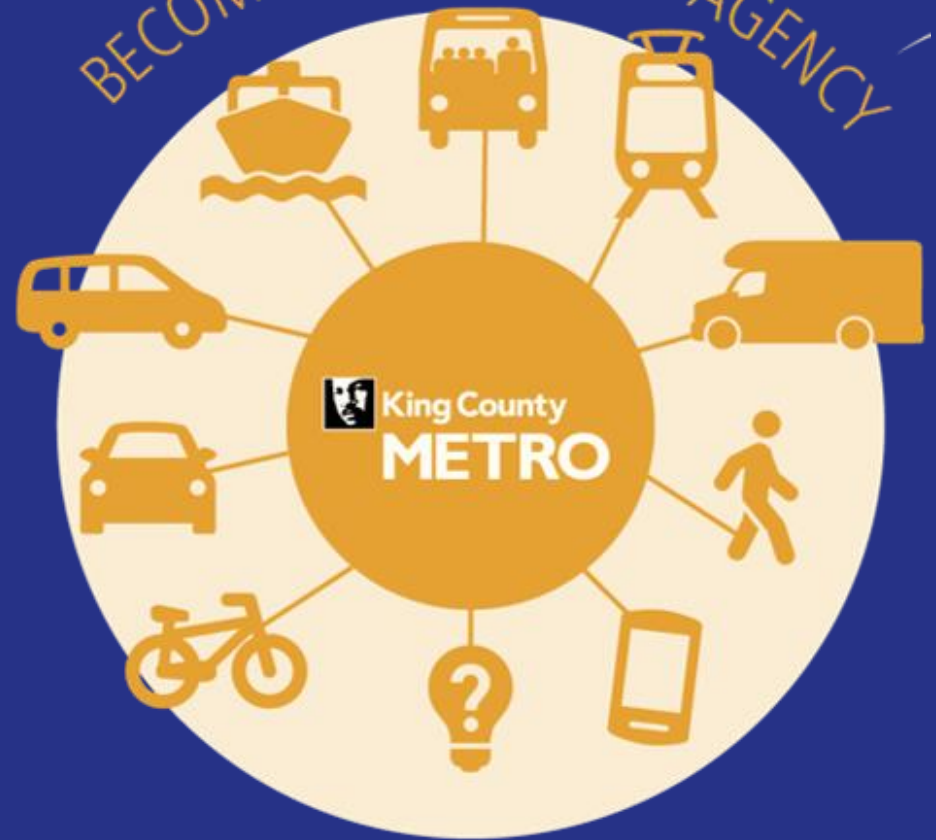


BECOMING A MOBILITY AGENCY

# King County Metro: Research Program

Regional Transit Committee  
February 15, 2023



# Today's Topics

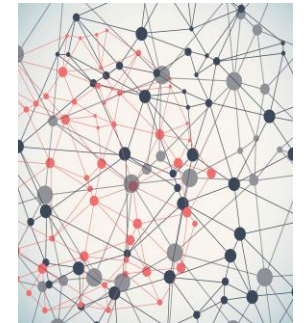
- Context
- Metro data & evidence landscape
- Research program focus
- What's next

# Today's Topics

- Context
- Metro data & evidence landscape
- Research program focus
- What's next



**Evidence** = data + analysis to yield themes, patterns, and meaning



# Context for Metro's Research Efforts

# Metro Connects

## *Attaining the Vision: Accountability and Continuous Improvement*

- Measure progress via Strategic Plan dashboard (p. 106)
- Strengthen Metro's learning and impact (pp. 107-108)



# Metro's Strategic Plan

*King County Metro Strategic Plan, Executive Summary, pp. 12-13*

## Goal: Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals (STEWARDSHIP)

Align investments with values and measure and communicate progress.

Outcome: Metro makes data-informed decisions and demonstrates how its investments advance safety, equity, and sustainability.

Continue evidence-informed and data-driven decision-making.

Track, measure, and communicate progress in a public dashboard toward this Strategic Plan for Public Transportation.

Track, measure, and communicate progress within Metro to support value-driven and data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

# Evidence-building in government

- **2018 Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (“Evidence Act”).**
  - Mandate for federal agencies to strengthen the culture and infrastructure for research, evaluation and continuous learning and improvement.
- **Growing focus on evidence-building within state and local governmental organizations to learn, enhance solutions, and ensure effectiveness**
  - King County: Emphasis on evidence to inform programs, policies, and investments
  - Metro: Striving to expand evidence and its use via internal efforts and productive research partnerships

# Evolving demands for data

Data needed to:

- Understand reach and quality of services and operations

**AND**

- Demonstrate effectiveness of current & new efforts: How are these making a difference?
- Monitor, learn, improve, and respond in a dynamic transit environment





# Evolving demands for data

Data needed to:

Data included in internal and public-facing dashboards

- Understand reach and quality of services and operations

**AND**

- Demonstrate effectiveness of current & new efforts: How are these making a difference?
- Monitor, learn, improve, and respond in a dynamic transit environment

Data in development





# Research Program Vision: A rich & robust data environment for evidence-based decision-making

Data to track services & operations

Data to track *meaningful outcomes* for people and communities

Data to innovate, improve & make smart decisions

Data to understand contribution to regional impact—a healthy & thriving King County

# Research Program Current Approaches

Build on Metro's strong data foundations & fill data gaps



Provide resources & tools and support teams' evidence-building



Promote use of data: monitor, learn, improve, innovate and tell stories of impact



Build research partnerships





# Filling gaps: Expanded data sources & methods

- **Expanded rider/non-rider survey.** County-wide, representative survey of residents exploring travel behavior, transit use, and perceptions of Metro.
- **Panel research.** Qualitative data to more deeply understand residents' experiences and perceptions re: transit.
- **Natural language/machine learning analysis of ~500K customer comments** received between 2016 and 2022.
- **Regional travel trends.** Where/when residents are traveling; modes; patterns and opportunities.
- **Outcome-focused evaluations and impact studies,** including (1) comparison of fully subsidized annual pass and ORCA Lift for low-income residents; (2) comparison of Access and new same-day paratransit service.



## Resources & tools

- New narrative-style reports to help make data very accessible for internal teams
- The REAL Hub-a comprehensive portal to support evidence-building and evidence use



# Using data: Monitor, learn, improve, innovate, and tell stories of impact

Monitor Performance	Learn, Improve, Innovate	Stories of Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Reach.</b> How many served? How much is Metro doing?</li><li>• <b>Quality.</b> How well is Metro doing?</li><li>• <b>So what?</b> What difference are Metro's investments and solutions making?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why, under what circumstances, and for whom is Metro making a difference? (or not)</li><li>• What do we know—e.g., trends, patterns? What are gaps in knowledge?</li><li>• <b>Now what?</b> What are opportunities to improve and innovate? Decisions and actions needed?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are customers' experiences?</li><li>• How are people benefitting from transit access and use?</li></ul>

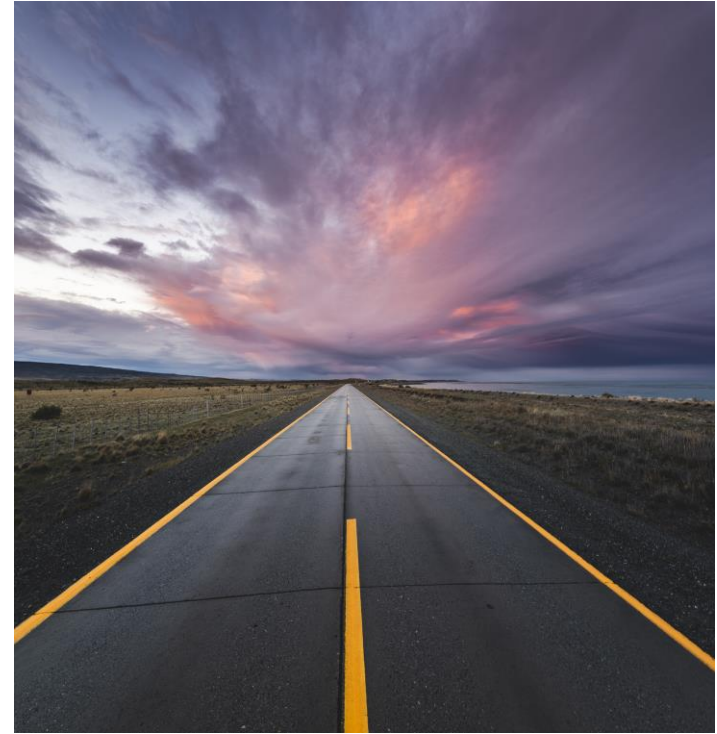


## Building research partnerships

- Expanded capacity to conduct robust program evaluations and impact studies
- Deliver strong evidence to inform policy, programs, and investments
- Foster engagement and collaboration around shared research questions

# On the Horizon

- Continue to expand Metro's data and evidence landscape
- Continue to model and support strengthened learning culture: *What's happening? So what? Now what?*
- Share new data & data reports
- REAL Hub: Access for external audiences





Questions?