Attachment A

King County METRO

We'll Get You There

King County Metro **Strategic Plan for Public Transportation** 2011-2021

2015 UPDATE

LETTER FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Dear Friends,

Our strategic plan cover girl, Anaya, was only six when she appeared on the first edition of the plan in 2011. She has changed in the years since then, and so has Metro as we put the strategic plan and service guidelines to work.

Some highlights of what we've done:

- Enhanced safety—our number one goal—through more frequent bus operator safety training, a pedestrian awareness campaign, and stronger measures to protect our drivers.
- Launched the groundbreaking ORCA LIFT reduced fare program, making transit more affordable for people with low incomes.
- Supported our region's economy by getting more people to work as the job market rebounded. Metro delivered an all-time record of 121 million passenger trips in 2014.
- Brought new-generation hybrid buses and zero-emission electric trolleys into our fleet as we move toward our goal of an all-electric and hybrid fleet by 2018. We also completed a Sustainability Plan with goals for conserving energy and water, reducing climate pollution, managing waste, and growing transit ridership.
- Earned high marks from customers—90 percent of riders surveyed in 2014 were very or somewhat satisfied with our service. Service improvements, such as the six RapidRide lines we completed between 2010 and 2014, and improved communication tools like our new TripPlanner mobile app, are factors.
- Continued to focus on containing costs. One way we're doing this is to involve employees in Lean and process improvement projects.
- Engaged tens of thousands of county residents in planning services as we started RapidRide lines, restructured bus networks to serve customers better and more efficiently, coordinated Metro's services with Sound Transit's Link light rail, and developed alternative services to meet local community needs.
- Enhanced programs to help employees move up in the organization and to develop the next generation of leaders. The Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity, formed in 2013, continues working to build and sustain an inclusive, fair and equitable workplace.
- Used the service guidelines every year to evaluate our transit system and help us provide efficient, high-quality service that meets the county's most important public transportation needs.

- Produced annual reports showing our progress toward the strategic plan objectives using the metrics defined in the plan. The reports also compare Metro's performance with that of peer transit agencies. Our online Accountability Center makes it easy for the public to find performance reports as well as monthly and annual data.

The first edition of the strategic plan didn't sit on the shelf—we actively used it. The same will go for this updated version, and by incorporating recommendations from the Service Guidelines Task Force and Access to Transit Study, this 2015 plan improves the strategies and tools we're using to make real progress toward our vision.

Sincerely,

Kevin Desmond, General Manager
King County Metro Transit

King County Metro Transit

Strategic Plan for Public Transportation

2011-2021

2015 UPDATE

King County METRO

We'll Get You There

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METRO'S MISSION

Provide the best possible public transportation services and improve regional mobility and quality of life in King County.

METRO'S VISION

What we aspire to be.

Metro provides safe, efficient and reliable public transportation that people find easy to use. We offer a cost-effective mix of products and services, tailored to specific market needs and well-integrated with the services offered by other public transportation agencies.

Our fixed-route bus system meets the public transportation needs of most of our customers, particularly in areas of concentrated economic activity or urban development and along the corridors that link them. Metro's other public transportation options include paratransit service for people with disabilities who can't use the fixed-route system, alternative services designed for communities where regular bus service isn't the best fit, commuter vanpools, and ridesharing programs. No matter what community people live in or what needs they might have related to age, disability, income, or other circumstances, people can use public transportation throughout King County.

Expanded and improved products and services make public transportation attractive to a growing segment of the population, and public transportation **ridership increases** as a result. With more and more people switching from single-occupant cars to buses, carpools and other alternative transportation options, roadways are more efficient—carrying more people and goods and moving them faster. Less land is paved for parking, and the region can reduce its reliance on highway expansion.

Public transportation is **contributing to a better quality of life** in the Puget Sound region. The local economy is thriving because transit keeps the region moving. Public health is improving because people are walking, biking, and using transit more. Emissions from transportation have leveled off and are starting to decline, and Metro is using new technologies to reduce our energy consumption.

The public is engaged with Metro—informed about our plans and performance and a big part of the decision-making process. Customers find the public transportation experience to be positive at every stage, from trip planning to arrival at a destination. People understand how to use Metro's products and services, and are happy with the variety of transportation options available.

Metro has **quality employees who enjoy their jobs.** Their satisfaction shows in their good work ethic and responsiveness to customers.

Metro is **financially stable**—able to sustain transit products and services in both the short and long term by emphasizing productivity and efficiency and by controlling costs. Metro receives sufficient funding to fulfill the public's expectations for service and the region's vision for a robust public transportation system.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A plan for moving toward our vision

Public transportation is vitally important to the Puget Sound region, providing connections to jobs, schools, and other destinations; enabling people with limited mobility options to travel; enhancing regional economic vitality; providing an alternative to single-occupant driving on the most congested roadways; helping accommodate growth; and benefitting the environment.

King County Metro Transit, King County's public transportation provider, is committed to serving the public with the highest quality products and services possible as we work toward our vision of a sustainable public transportation system that helps our region thrive.

The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation outlines key opportunities and challenges Metro faces:

Population and economic growth: To accommodate 28 percent more people and 40 percent more jobs, Metro's annual service is expected to grow by 2.3 million annual service hours (roughly 60 percent) by 2040.

Demographic changes: The percentage of residents in King County over age 65 is increasing, younger people are increasingly choosing transit, the number of people with low incomes is growing, and our population is becoming more diverse—with associated disparities in education, employment, and income. Metro will continue to provide mobility for people who, for these and other reasons, have limited transportation options or are increasingly choosing transit.

Customer service and satisfaction: An ongoing aspiration is to make every customer's public transportation experience positive at every stage of a trip. Among the drivers of customer satisfaction are the frequency of service, personal safety on buses and at stops, comfort and cleanliness on buses and at stops, customer information, bus drivers' performance and the number of transfers.

The environment: Metro has a major role to play in helping King County meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets: reduce countywide sources of greenhouse emissions by 25 percent by 2020, 50 percent by 2030, and 80 percent by 2050; and reduce emissions from County operations by at least 15 percent by 2015, 25 percent by 2020, and 50 percent by 2030. (Targets are compared to a 2007 baseline.)

Funding: Metro's heavy reliance on sales tax makes it challenging to provide sustainable bus service, because revenue from this source is likely to decline in an economic downturn. While Metro's finances are on relatively stable footing as of late 2015, all of the region's transit agencies need additional long-term, sustainable funding to deliver the services our region expects. Metro's annual service guidelines analysis consistently finds that the transit system needs substantially higher investments in service than Metro can make with available resources. The 2015 analysis found a need of more than 470,000 annual service hours, equivalent to a 13 percent expansion of our system.

Access to transit: People's access to transit depends on factors such as their proximity to bus stops, the quality of walking and biking pathways, the availability of parking spaces at park-and-rides, and the type and amount of transit service provided at the access point. Working in partnership with other transit agencies and local jurisdictions, Metro can help improve access across King County.

Evolving transportation system: Continued and increased collaboration with other agencies will be necessary to deliver efficient, well-integrated services as the region's public transportation system evolves.

Pathway to the future

This is a plan for addressing these challenges and opportunities and moving toward our vision for public transportation. A companion long-term plan, slated for adoption in 2016, will contain more detail about Metro's future public transportation network.

Our plan builds on the foundation of King County's mission, vision, guiding principles, and goals, which were adopted in 2010 and updated in 2015. The revised County goals highlight the importance of transportation by adding a new goal: Deliver a seamless, reliable network of transportation options to get people where they need to go, when they need to get there.

Metro's plan and attached service guidelines also reflect the recommendations of two public advisory groups:

- **The Regional Transit Task Force,** which in 2010 proposed a groundbreaking new policy framework and service guidelines for transit in King County.
- **The Service Guidelines Task Force,** which in 2015 reviewed Metro's experience using the service guidelines and recommended a number of revisions.

The plan establishes goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving our vision, as well as performance measures to track progress. These are summarized in the table that follows.

TABLE 1: **Summary table of Metro strategic plan elements**

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
Goal 1: Safety. Support safe communities.		
Keep people safe and secure. Outcome: Metro's services and facilities are safe and secure.	Promote safety and security in public transportation operations and facilities. Plan for and execute regional emergency-response and homeland security efforts.	• Preventable accidents per million miles • Operator and passenger incidents and assaults • Customer satisfaction regarding safety and security • Effectiveness of emergency responses
Goal 2: Human Potential. Provide equitable opportunities for people from all areas of King County to access the public transportation system.		
Provide public transportation products and services that add value throughout King County and that facilitate access to jobs, education and other destinations. Outcome: More people throughout King County have access to public transportation products and services.	Design and offer a variety of public transportation products and services appropriate to different markets and mobility needs. Provide travel opportunities and supporting amenities for historically disadvantaged populations, such as low-income people, students, youth, seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, and others with limited transportation options. Provide products and services that are designed to provide geographic value in all parts of King County. In areas that are not well-served by fixed-route service, seek to complement or "right-size" transportation service by working with partners to develop an extensive range of alternative services to serve the general public.	• Population within a ¼-mile walk delete to a transit stop • Number of jobs within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop • Number of students at universities and community colleges that are within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop • Percentage of households in low-income census tracts within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop • Percentage of households in minority census tracts within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop • Population within ½ mile of stops with frequent service • Number of jobs within ½ mile of stops with frequent service • Households within specific ranges of distance from frequent service • Average number of jobs and households accessible within 30 minutes countywide (total population, low-income population, minority population)*

* See note on next page.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
		• Average number of jobs and households accessible within 30 minutes from regional growth centers, manufacturing/industrial centers, and transit activity centers* • Vanpool boardings • Transit mode share by market • Student and reduced-fare permits and usage • Accessible bus stops • Access registrants • Access boardings/number of trips provided by the Community Access Transportation (CAT) program • Requested Access trips compared to those provided • Access applicants who undertake fixed-route travel training

* These two metrics measure the accessibility of the county using the transit system, or what can be accessed via transit within a given time from a given location. Because buses run on schedules, trip times can vary greatly depending on the exact time the trip begins. For this reason, we compute the number of jobs and households that a person can reach from particular locations at multiple different times, averaged throughout the day. For the countywide measures, we conduct the same computations, but we choose multiple starting locations throughout the county. These results provide a picture of how many jobs the average King County resident can access via transit within 30 minutes.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
Goal 3: Economic Growth and Built Environment. Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.		
Support a strong, diverse, sustainable economy. Outcome: Public transportation products and services are available throughout King County and are well-utilized in centers and areas of concentrated economic activity.	Encourage land uses, policies, and development that lead to communities that have good access to transit and that transit can serve efficiently and effectively. Partner with employers to make public transportation products and services more affordable and convenient for employees.	• All public transportation ridership in King County (rail, bus, Paratransit, Rideshare) • Transit rides per capita • Ridership in population/ business centers • Employees at CTR sites sharing non-drive-alone transportation modes during peak commute hours • Employer-sponsored passes and usage • Park-and-ride capacity and utilization (individually and systemwide); capacity and utilization of park-and-ride lots with frequent service • HOV lane passenger miles • Bike locker capacity and utilization (including number of locations with bike lockers)
Address the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county. Outcome: More people have access to and regularly use public transportation products and services in King County.	Expand services to accommodate the region's growing population and serve new transit markets. Coordinate and develop services and facilities with other providers, local jurisdictions and the private sector to create an integrated and efficient regional transportation system that takes innovative approaches to improving mobility. Facilitate convenient and safe access to transit by all modes. Work in collaboration with transit partners, WSDOT, and other public and private partners to address transit parking capacity demand through a range of approaches that use resources efficiently and enable more people to access transit.	
Support compact, healthy communities. Outcome: More people regularly use public transportation products and services along corridors with compact development.	Encourage land uses, policies, and practices that promote transit-oriented development and lead to communities that have good access to transit and that transit can serve efficiently and effectively. Support bicycle and pedestrian access to jobs, services, and the transit system.	
Support economic development by using existing transportation infrastructure efficiently and effectively. Outcome: Regional investments in major highway capacity projects and parking requirements are complemented by high transit service levels in congested corridors and centers.	Serve centers and other areas of concentrated activity, consistent with Transportation 2040.	

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
Goal 4: Environmental Sustainability. Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.		
Help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region. Outcome: People drive single-occupant vehicles less.	Increase the proportion of travel in King County that is provided by public transportation products and services.	• Average miles per gallon of the Metro bus fleet • Vehicle energy use (diesel, gasoline, kWh) normalized by miles • Vehicle fuel use (diesel, gasoline, kWh) normalized by boardings • Total facility energy use • Energy use at Metro facilities: kWh and natural gas used in facilities, normalized by area and temperature • Per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) • Transit mode share
Minimize Metro's environmental footprint. Outcome: Metro's environmental footprint is reduced (normalized against service growth).	Operate vehicles and adopt technology that has the least impact on the environment and maximizes long-term sustainability. Incorporate sustainable design, construction, operating and maintenance practices.	
Goal 5: Service Excellence. Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.		
Improve satisfaction with Metro's products and services and the way they are delivered. Outcome: People are more satisfied with Metro's products and services.	Provide service that is easy to understand and use. Emphasize customer service in transit operations and workforce training. Improve transit speed and reliability.	• Customer satisfaction • Customer complaints per boarding • On-time performance by time of day • Crowding • Use of Metro web tools and alerts
Improve public awareness of Metro products and services. Outcome: People understand how to use Metro's products and services and use them more often.	Use available tools, new technologies, and new methods to improve communication with customers. Promote Metro's products and services to existing and potential customers.	

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
Goal 6: Financial Stewardship. Exercise sound financial management and build Metro's long-term sustainability.		
Emphasize planning and delivery of productive service. Outcome: Service productivity improves.	Manage the transit system through service guidelines and performance measures.	• Service hours operated • Service hours and service hour change per route • Boardings per vehicle hour • Boardings per revenue hour • Ridership and ridership change per route • Passenger miles per vehicle mile • Passenger miles per revenue mile • Cost per hour • Cost per vehicle mile • Cost per boarding • Cost per passenger mile • Cost per vanpool boarding • Cost per Access boarding • Fare revenues • Farebox recovery • ORCA use • Asset condition assessment • For new or nontraditional alternative services, cost per boarding, ride, or user, as appropriate (Note: Different performance measures may be used to evaluate different types of services.)
Control costs. Outcome: Metro's costs grow at or below the rate of inflation.	Continually explore and implement cost efficiencies including operational and administrative efficiencies. Provide and maintain capital assets to support efficient and effective service delivery. Develop and implement alternative public transportation services and delivery strategies. Provide alternative or "right-sized" services in the context of overall system financial health and the need to reduce, maintain or expand the system.	
Seek to establish a sustainable funding structure to support short- and long-term public transportation needs. Outcome: Adequate funding to support King County's short- and long-term public transportation needs.	Secure long-term stable funding. Establish fare structures and fare levels that are simple to understand, aligned with other service providers, and meet revenue targets established by Metro's fund management policies. Establish fund management policies that ensure stability through a variety of economic conditions.	

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
Goal 7: Public Engagement and Transparency. Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.		
Empower people to play an active role in shaping Metro's products and services. Outcome: The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.	Engage the public in the planning process and improve customer outreach.	• Public participation rates • Customer satisfaction regarding Metro's communications and reporting • Social media indicators • Conformance with King County policy on communications accessibility and translation to other languages
Increase customer and public access to understandable, accurate and transparent information. Outcome: Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.	Communicate service change concepts, the decision-making process, and public transportation information in language that is accessible and easy to understand. Explore innovative ways to report to and inform the public.	
Goal 8: Quality Workforce. Develop and empower Metro's most valuable asset, its employees.		
Attract and recruit quality employees. Outcome: Metro is satisfied with the quality of its workforce.	Market Metro as an employer of choice and cultivate a diverse and highly skilled applicant pool. Promote equity, social justice and transparency in hiring and recruiting activities.	• Demographics of Metro employees • Employee job satisfaction • Promotion rate • Probationary pass rate
Empower and retain efficient, effective, and productive employees. Outcome: Metro employees are satisfied with their jobs and feel their work contributes to an improved quality of life in King County.	Build leadership and promote professional skills. Recognize employees for outstanding performance, excellent customer service, innovation and strategic thinking. Provide training opportunities that enable employees to reach their full potential.	

CHAPTER 1: **INTRODUCTION**

King County Metro Transit's strategic plan is divided into three chapters: **Introduction,** which provides background and context, summarizes the challenges facing Metro, and describes the strategic planning process; **Pathway to the Future,** which presents Metro's goals, objectives and strategies; and **Plan Performance Monitoring,** which describes how Metro will track progress.

SECTION 1.1

Background and context

The importance of public transportation in the Puget Sound region

Public transportation is vitally important to the Puget Sound region. In 2014, people in the region took about 172 million trips on the fixed-route transit services offered by King County Metro, Community Transit, Pierce Transit, and Sound Transit.

Metro carried 70 percent of these trips, with 121 million boardings in 2014, or about 400,000 passenger trips every weekday. Metro also provides an array of other products and services to meet a range of public transportation needs (see sidebar).

These services improve the quality of life in our region by providing mobility to those who need or choose to use them. Public transportation connects commuters to jobs. In 2014, 45 percent of work trips to downtown Seattle were made on transit. Students take the bus to schools and universities. People also use public transportation to reach shopping, services, and recreation. Transit offers travel options to those who cannot drive, and provides assurance to drivers that other mobility options exist should they need them.

Transit enhances the region's economic vitality not only by getting people to their jobs but also by freeing up roadway capacity, improving the movement of people and goods. Metro's service keeps more than 175,000 vehicles off our roads every weekday. Public transportation is an integral part of the regional growth strategy in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040 action plans. These plans rely on the expansion of public transportation to support growth by meeting the travel needs of a larger share of the region's projected population.

Public transportation also improves the region's air quality by reducing the number of miles people drive. Energy-efficient transit vehicles contribute to the decrease in transportation emissions. Metro service displaces approximately 600,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e) each year.

Metro is committed to working closely with other transit providers to continually enhance our region's public transportation system and attract a growing number of riders.

Metro's mandate

The King County Department of Transportation's Metro Transit Division performs the "metropolitan public transportation function" authorized in the Revised Code of Washington 35.58. Metro is required to plan and operate transit services consistent with county, regional, state and federal policies. As a County agency, Metro complies

Metro products and services

Metro provides a wide range of services: about 190 bus routes including six RapidRide lines, Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART), and operation of the City of Seattle's streetcar system. These fixed-route services delivered 121 million passenger trips in 2014. Metro also operates Sound Transit's Link light rail and most ST Express buses in King County under contract.

For people with disabilities who cannot use Metro's regular buses, Metro offers Access service and supports the Community Access Transportation program.

Metro's commuter vanpool program had 1,450 vehicles in operation in 2014.

Metro also offers a growing suite of alternative services, such as ride-sharing programs and community vans, tailored to local needs.

In this plan, the terms "public transportation" or "Metro's products and services" encompass all of Metro's offerings.

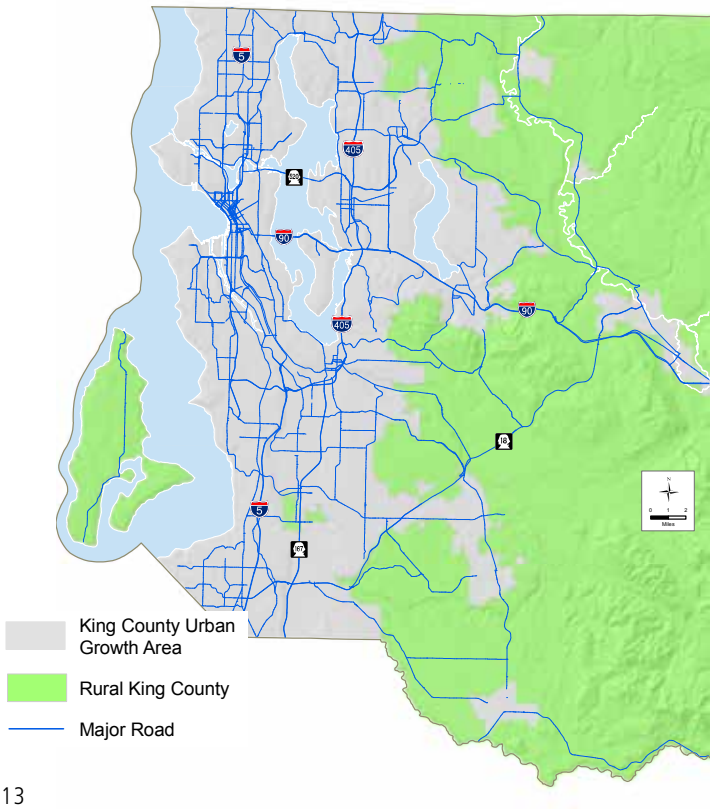
with County law and procedures; the Metropolitan King County Council approves Metro's fund management policies and Metro's biennial budget.

Countywide planning and policies: King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) are established by King County and its cities and jurisdictions. These policies are consistent with state law, state agency guidance, decisions of the Growth Management Policy Council and the regional growth strategy outlined in Vision 2040. The CPPs provide a countywide vision and serve as a framework for each jurisdiction to develop its own comprehensive plan, which must be consistent with the overall vision for the future of King County. Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 is consistent with King County's Countywide Planning Policies, Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Climate Action Plan, Comprehensive Financial Management Policies, and adopted mission, vision, guiding principles and goals.

Regional planning and policies: State law (RCW 47.80.020) designates the four-county Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for federal planning purposes. As the region's MPO, PSRC develops a regional plan and strategies to guide decisions about regional growth management and environmental, economic and transportation issues. As the region's RTPO, PSRC develops long-range transportation and development plans across multiple jurisdictions and allocates federal transportation funds for the region. Metro participates in the PSRC planning process and strives to meet the goals of the regional plans, Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040.

Washington state planning and policies: The 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the state's largest and fastest-growing counties to conduct comprehensive land-use and transportation planning, to concentrate new growth in compact "urban growth areas," and to protect natural resources and environmentally critical areas. King County's urban growth area is shown in Figure 1. The GMA requires King County to consider population and employment growth targets and land uses when determining the future demand for travel and whether such demand can be met by existing transportation facilities. Metro contributes to King County's compliance with the GMA by focusing public transportation services on urban growth areas.

FIGURE 1: **Urban growth area, King County**



Federal planning and policies: Metro complies with federal laws that require the public transportation system to be equitable, accessible, and just. Civil rights statutes, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (see sidebar, p.14), require that Metro provide public transportation in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that Metro ensure equal opportunities and access for

people with disabilities. A 1994 executive order requires that all federal agencies include environmental justice in their missions. This means that Metro cannot disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations and must ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected groups. Metro provides public transportation that adheres to these and other federal requirements.

SECTION 1.2

Challenges and opportunities

Metro based this strategic plan in part on an assessment of the current environment and the opportunities and challenges we face both within and outside the organization; these are described below. The goals, objectives and strategies presented later in the plan address these challenges.

Regional growth, land use and the economy

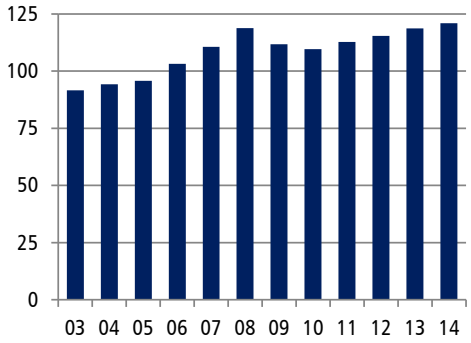
King County is the most populous county in the state and the 13th most populous county in the nation. It has a variety of geographic characteristics and diverse communities; land uses, densities and population vary greatly.

The most densely developed parts of the county, where most people live and work, have little room to expand existing transportation infrastructure. Building new highways, roads, and other infrastructure would be costly, disruptive of existing property uses, and technically challenging. Consequently, the regional growth plans call for more intensive use of existing infrastructure by increasing both the number of people using transit services and the proportion of overall regional trips made on transit.

Regional population and economic growth: Since 2011, when this strategic plan was first produced, King County's population has grown by 5.6 percent to an estimated 2 million people in 2015. Practically every city in the county has seen population growth, and several cities have annexed large areas that previously were unincorporated. The number of jobs in the county has grown more than 10 percent since 2011, to about 1.3 million jobs, reflecting the local economy's recovery from the Great Recession.

Transit ridership tends to fluctuate with changes in population and jobs, as well as fuel prices and other factors. As shown in Figure 2, Metro's ridership grew steadily between 2003 and 2008, then dropped following the recession that began in 2008. Rider growth resumed in 2011 as the economy began to recover and population growth continued. Metro delivered 121 million passenger trips in 2014—a record high number.

FIGURE 2: **Metro ridership 2003-2014**
Annual boardings (millions)



In the broader Puget Sound region, the population is expected to surpass 4 million people in 2016 and then grow to nearly 5 million people by 2040 (2.4 million in King County). The region is expected to support 3 million jobs by 2040. More people and jobs (shown in

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.

Centers

Centers are at the heart of the Puget Sound Regional Council's approach to growth management in Vision 2040. PSRC designates regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers as places that will receive a significant proportion of population and employment growth compared to the rest of the urban area. Concentrating growth in centers allows cities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure, make more efficient investments in infrastructure, and minimize the environmental impact of growth. Consequently, centers receive priority in regional and local investments in the infrastructure and services that support growth.

Regional growth centers are focal points of more dense population and employment. Linking these centers with a highly efficient transportation system allows the region to reduce the rate of growth in vehicle miles traveled by expanding transportation choices.

Manufacturing/industrial centers are employment areas with concentrated manufacturing and industrial land uses that cannot be easily mixed with other activities. They should continue to accommodate a significant amount of regional employment, and good access to the region's transportation system will contribute to their success.

In addition to PSRC's designated centers, Metro has identified **"transit activity centers"** in King County. These are areas of the county that are important for Metro to serve and that are typically associated with higher levels of transit use in their land-use context. Transit activity centers are further explained in the King County Metro Service Guidelines.

Regional growth, manufacturing/industrial, and transit activity centers are collectively referred to as "centers" in this strategic plan.

FIGURE 3: **Regional growth, manufacturing/ industrial, and transit activity centers**

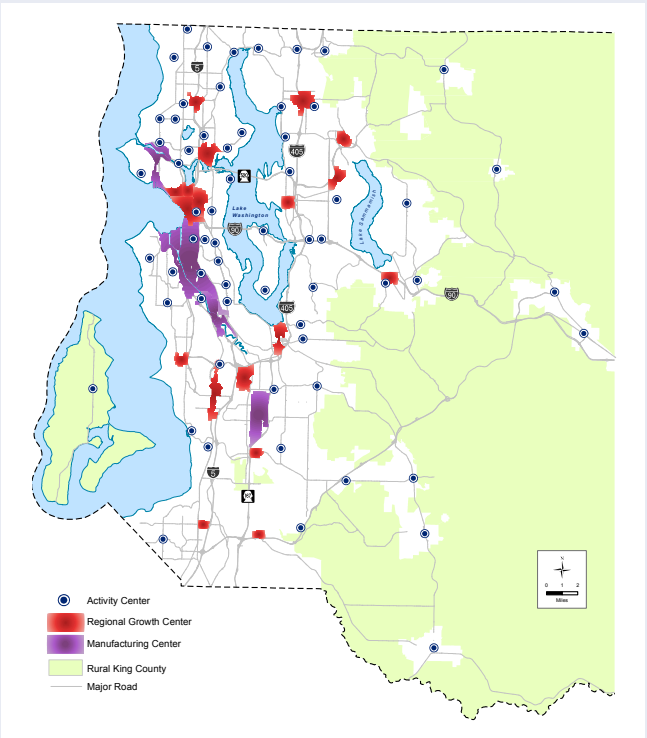


Figure 4) mean that Metro has an opportunity to serve a growing number of riders and major employment centers. Metro's annual service is expected to grow by 2.3 million annual service hours, from about 3.5 million hours in 2015 to 5.8 million hours by 2040—an amount that is beyond Metro's capacity to provide with current funding.

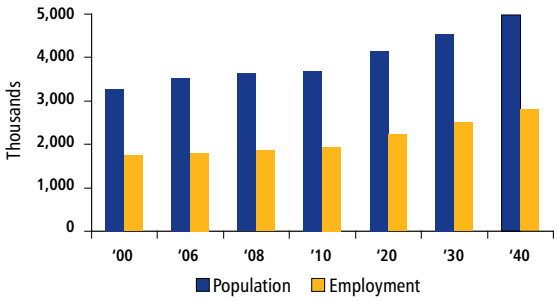
This growth will be focused in King County's centers (see sidebar, p. 15). The centers referred to in Metro's strategic plan are shown in Figure 3.

Demographic changes

King County's population is aging; people 65 and older now comprise more than 12 percent of the people who live here. Over the next 20 years, this age group will grow to about 18 percent of the population. An aging population may rely more on public transportation.

At the other end of the age scale, younger people are increasingly choosing transit. The share of driving trips in the Puget Sound region declined from 86 percent in 1999 to 82 percent in 2014, while the share of transit and nonmotorized trips increased. Between 2006 and 2014, the shift away from automobiles was most pronounced for 18-24 year olds, closely followed by 25-35 year olds.[1]

FIGURE 4: **Puget Sound region projected population and employment growth 2000-2040**



People with low incomes often rely heavily on transit, and while many King County residents are prospering, the percentage of people living in poverty or near-poverty has been growing. In 2013, about 12 percent or 240,000 people living in our county had incomes below the federal poverty level. Nearly 500,000 residents—a quarter of the county's total population—had incomes less than twice the federal poverty level (currently about $23,000 annually for a single person, or about $48,000 for a family of four). A growing number of people in poverty live in suburban areas. According to King County's 2014 Equity and Social Justice Annual Report, more than three in five county residents who are poor live outside of Seattle.

King County is also becoming more diverse. Immigrants from Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Africa, as well as native-born African Americans and Latinos, are making up a large part of our population growth. Overall, compared to White and Asian residents, Black and Latino residents have less education, higher unemployment, and lower incomes. Immigrants may have limited English proficiency. All of these conditions make public transportation critically important for enabling people to reach the jobs, education and services that can help reverse our society's inequities.

Metro plays an essential role in providing mobility to people who, for a variety of reasons, have limited transportation options or are increasingly choosing transit. We continue striving to find innovative solutions, such as the introduction of the ORCA LIFT reduced fare for people with low incomes and the expansion of the Alternative Services Program.

Metro's innovative ORCA LIFT program offers a reduced fare to people whose income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

[1] PSRC 2014 Regional Travel Survey, www.prsc.org/data/transportation/travel-surveys/2014-household

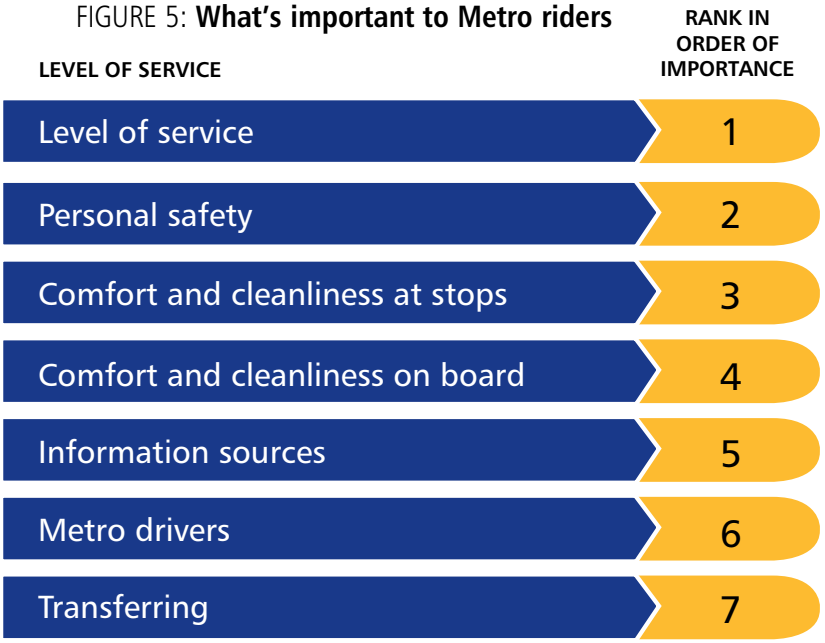
Customer service and satisfaction

Maintaining and improving customer satisfaction with Metro services is an ongoing process. Every experience a customer has on a Metro bus, at a Metro facility, or with Metro employees and information services affects perceptions about the quality of public transportation. Metro strives to make every customer's public transportation experience positive at every stage of a trip.

Metro continually gathers feedback about how well our services are meeting customer needs and expectations. We track customer correspondence and interactions and conduct an annual telephone survey of riders—including nonriders every two years.

Figure 5 illustrates the issues that have the most impact on customer satisfaction.[2]

FIGURE 5: **What's important to Metro riders**



Another key to customer satisfaction is public involvement. Whenever we plan major changes to service, we conduct robust public engagement processes and use what we learn to shape our plans. Service change proposals are also guided by objective data and guidelines that help make the decision-making process transparent.

Funding

Approximately 55 to 60 percent of Metro's funding comes from local sales tax. This source has grown increasingly important since 2000, when the Washington legislature eliminated the motor vehicle excise tax for transit, which had provided nearly one-third of Metro's revenue.

About 20 percent of Metro's revenue comes from fares. Other sources include federal and state grants—which can fluctuate significantly—and contributions from service partners, vanpool operations, investment income, and a small portion of county property tax.

Metro's heavy reliance on sales tax makes it challenging to provide sustainable bus service because revenue from this source is dependent on economic conditions. Since 2000, two economic downturns forced Metro to scale back planned service

[2] King County Metro Transit 2014 Rider Survey

expansions. In the six years following the 2008 recession, Metro took numerous actions to cut costs, increase revenue and preserve most service. Although service reductions were necessary in September 2014, improved economic conditions enabled the County Council to adopt a 2015-2016 budget that maintained service.

In 2015, following Seattle voters' approval of a transit funding ballot measure, the City of Seattle entered into a Community Mobility Contract with Metro to purchase approximately 270,000 additional hours of bus service annually, about 8 percent of the Metro system, through 2020. Other economic improvements enabled Metro to invest in additional service in suburban areas around the county.

These developments enable Metro to sustain and enhance service during the 2015-2016 biennium and for some years beyond. However, funding from the City of Seattle will expire unless extended by Seattle voters in 2020, future economic downturns will again cause sales tax revenues to drop, and even today demand for transit service exceeds Metro's funding capacity. For these reasons Metro and other transit agencies continue to need long-term, sustainable and sufficient funding to deliver the public transportation services our region expects.

90%

of customers Metro surveyed said they are satisfied with our service

Source: 2014 Rider Survey

The environment

Metro strives to provide solutions to urgent environmental challenges: reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimize energy consumption, shrink Metro's environmental footprint and improve the sustainability of transit operations.

King County's 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan makes a strong commitment to taking action to prevent and respond to the impacts of climate change. It establishes the targets in the Countywide Planning Polices that were adopted by the King County Growth Management Planning Council in 2014. These targets are: reduce countywide sources of greenhouse emissions by 25 percent by 2020, 50 percent by 2030, and 80 percent by 2050; and reduce emissions from County operations by at least 15 percent by 2015, 25 percent by 2020, and 50 percent by 2030. (Targets are compared to a 2007 baseline.)

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in King County, and our community must make major changes in how we live and travel if we are to significantly reduce emissions. Metro will play a leading role by providing transportation options that encourage transit ridership and help reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled. Fast, frequent RapidRide service and innovations like the Real-Time Rideshare app exemplify the strategies Metro will continue to pursue.

Metro can also support the development of compact, pedestrian-friendly communities that are easily served by transit by working closely with King County cities to coordinate development and transit plans.

The acquisition of hybrid buses and electric trolleys, and efforts to make Metro facilities more energy-efficient, advance King County's goal of reducing energy consumption. Metro is also testing zero-emission, battery-electric buses to determine how they will be used in Metro's fleet in the future.

Metro has developed a Sustainability Plan that calls for ongoing efforts to reduce energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, water use and waste and to increase transit ridership.

Access to transit

If people are going to use the public transportation system, they must be able to reach transit service and then get from transit service to their final destinations.

People's access depends on factors such as their proximity to bus stops or train stations, the quality of walking and biking pathways they can use to reach those places, the availability of parking spaces at park-and-rides, and the type and amount of transit service provided at the access point.

Metro has been exploring how to identify where improvements are needed and actions that can be taken to address them. Partnerships among Metro, other transit agencies and local jurisdictions will be essential to improving transit access.

Evolving transportation system

The Puget Sound region's transportation system is constantly changing and adapting to the mobility needs of its residents, presenting numerous opportunities and challenges for Metro.

Metro has long worked closely with other agencies to plan and provide efficient, integrated travel options that enhance public transportation in King County. Metro works particularly closely with Sound Transit to realize efficiencies, achieve savings, and deliver better transit service for the people of our region. We also partner with Pierce Transit, Community Transit, Kitsap Transit, Everett Transit, Washington State Ferries and the King County Water Taxi as well as the Washington State Department of Transportation, PSRC, local and regional jurisdictions, and businesses such as Microsoft that provide direct transit service to their employees. The focus is on customers—offering them information about various agencies' services in one place, coordinating schedules for convenient transfers between agencies and modes, making fare payment simple, and collaborating in other ways to create a seamless, easy-to-use transportation network. This form of integration is critical because so many people cross county lines as part of their work commutes.

Metro collaborates on some of the region's most important transportation projects to ensure that public transportation continues to play a vital role in the region's broader transportation system. These projects include:

- **Sound Transit's Link light rail:** Sound Transit extended Central Link light rail to Seattle's Capitol Hill and the University of Washington in 2016 and has funding to extend Link north to Lynnwood, east to Redmond/Overlake and south to Kent/Des Moines by 2023. The agency is developing plans to further expand. To optimize the public's investments in fast, high-capacity transit services, Metro will continue to work with Sound Transit and local jurisdictions to revise bus networks and supporting infrastructure in coordination with Link extensions. The goal is to improve the public transportation system's efficiency, effectiveness and ease of use.

- **Major highway projects:** Public transportation is an essential part of major transportation projects in the Puget Sound region. Metro provides public transportation service to mitigate the impacts of major projects—and is also affected by changes to the transportation infrastructure in the region. With financial support from partners, public transportation will continue to play a major role in the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project, the SR-520 Bridge Replacement Project, and other transportation infrastructure projects.

Metro also actively participates in regional fare coordination efforts and in ORCA, the regional fare payment system. The ORCA agencies are continually enhancing services and striving to extend the benefits of seamless fare payment to more people.

As the region's public transportation system evolves, Metro will actively engage with regional, local and state entities as well as businesses and communities to build an effective system. Development of Metro's long-range plan in 2015–2016 is a nexus for this process. This plan looks at projections about how communities in King County will change and defines what types of service will best serve the people who will live, work and visit those areas in the future. The collaborative plan development process has involved broad public outreach as well as an intensive process with local city staff members who served on a technical advisory committee.

SECTION 1.3

Strategic plan development

Metro developed this strategic plan to define how we will meet the challenges and pursue the opportunities ahead.

Guiding principles from King County's strategic plan

Financially sustainable
Aligning funding, policy and operational goals of King County government.

Quality local government
Providing effective, efficient local governance and services to unincorporated areas.

Equitable and fair
Addressing the root causes of inequities to provide for equal access to opportunities for all.

Regionally collaborative
Engaging with partners, stakeholders, and public and private organizations to achieve goals.

Our plan builds on the foundation of King County's mission, vision, guiding principles (see sidebar), and goals, which were adopted in 2010 and updated in 2015. It defines specific goals, objectives and strategies for meeting the County's Mobility goal: Deliver a seamless, reliable network of transportation options to get people where they need to go, when they need to get there.

This plan and associated service guidelines also respond to the recommendations of two important task forces:

Regional Transit Task Force. King County formed the Regional Transit Task Force in March 2010 to consider a policy framework to guide service investments or—if necessary—reduction of the Metro system. The group was made up of community members who represented a diversity of interests and perspectives from across the county.

The task force was asked to identify short-term and long-term objectives for transit service investment, and to formulate a service implementation policy based on those objectives.

The task force unanimously approved seven recommendations reflecting the following themes:

- Metro should make its decision-making processes transparent to the public by adopting new performance measures and clear guidelines to be used in service allocation decisions.
- Metro should control costs and establish a sustainable financial structure that will work over time.
- Legislation should be pursued to ensure that Metro has a more sustainable financial base and can grow in the future.
- Productivity, social equity, and geographic value should be emphasized in service reduction and growth decisions.
- Metro should revise its mission statement and create a vision statement.

The task force also defined key system design factors (see sidebar on p. 22).

For the Regional Transit Task Force's full report, visit www.kingcounty.gov/transittaskforce.

Transit system design factors

The Council asked the Regional Transit Task Force to consider six design factors; the task force added one more. The following summarizes the task force's definitions of these factors:

Factor 1: Land use. To support regional and local growth plans by concentrating transit service coverage and higher service levels in corridors where residential and job density is greatest.

Factor 2: Social equity and environmental justice. To support social equity and environmental justice by providing mobility options to those who have no or limited transportation options.

Factor 3: Financial sustainability. To support financial sustainability through transit that achieves higher ridership and fare revenues combined with lower costs per rider.

Factor 4: Geographic value. To support geographic value by facilitating service allocation decisions (both for reductions and growth) that are perceived as "fair" throughout the county. This involves balancing access with productivity; maintaining some relationship between the tax revenue created in a subarea and the distribution of services; and providing access to job centers and other destinations that are essential to countywide economic vitality.

Factor 5: Economic development. To support economic development by achieving the largest number of work trips at all times of the day and all days of the week via transit.

Factor 6: Productivity and efficiency. To support productivity and efficiency by focusing on a system that results in high productivity and service efficiency based on performance measures for different types of transit services.

Factor 7: Environmental sustainability. To support environmental sustainability by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing vehicle travel, reducing congestion, and supporting compact development.

Service Guidelines Task Force. In 2015, after Metro had used the adopted service guidelines for several years, the County Council formed a Service Guidelines Task Force to further analyze how transit service is evaluated and allocated and to consider changes in the guidelines.

The task force developed consensus recommendations that are incorporated into both this plan and Metro's service guidelines. In brief, the recommendations were:

- Modify the way transit corridors are evaluated to better reflect productivity, social equity and geographic value.

- Change the definition of "low income" used in setting target service levels from 100 percent of the federal poverty level to 200 percent of the federal poverty level, in line with Metro's ORCA LIFT program.
- Modify the definition of Metro's service types so that comparable services are measured against one another.
- Expand alternative services as a way to meet diverse needs.
- Establish a minimum service level of every 60 minutes for corridors and routes.
- Provide greater protection for peak-only services in the event of major service reductions.
- Improve Metro's planning process, focusing more attention on information about where riders start and end their trips, for example, and let local governments know in advance about potential changes.
- Give more consideration to the relative impacts to all parts of the county when making service reductions.
- Describe more fully the different factors Metro considers when making investments.
- Expand partnerships between Metro, communities, and private entities.
- Seek new resources to support growth of the transit system, while continuing to focus on efficiency and accountability.

The path ahead

Some elements of this plan—the mission, vision, goals and objectives—are expected to be realized over many years. The strategies are expected to be realized in a shorter time frame. The plan will be reviewed periodically as circumstances warrant, and plan elements may be modified, added or substituted if needed.

Although this plan is intended to inform the biennial budget process, funding constraints may limit Metro's ability to implement every strategy in the plan in any given year. Many of the goals and objectives represent ideals that Metro will continually strive to achieve, and which are likely to be included in subsequent plans.

TRIPPOOL

WHAT'S THE RIGHT MIX OF TRANSIT SERVICE?
Express
Local

King County
METRO

4315
METRO

CHAPTER 2: **A PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE**

Metro's goals

The "what we deliver" goals are:

- **Safety:** Support safe communities.
- **Human potential:** Provide equitable opportunities for people from all areas of King County to access the public transportation system.
- **Economic growth and built environment:** Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.

The "how we deliver" goals are:

- **Service excellence:** Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.
- **Financial stewardship:** Exercise sound financial management and build Metro's long-term sustainability.
- **Public engagement:** Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.
- **Quality workforce:** Develop and empower Metro's most valuable asset, its employees.

SECTION 2.1

Goals, objectives and strategies

The goals, objectives and strategies in this plan reflect the priorities of King County residents, businesses, and leaders. They are designed to guide budget and management decisions that help Metro fulfill our mission and move us toward our vision.

Goals: The strategic plan has eight goals, including "what" goals that state what Metro intends to accomplish or services it intends to provide, and "how" goals that articulate how Metro intends to conduct its work (see sidebar).

Metro plans to move toward the goals by implementing this plan, but the goals are also intended to endure beyond the life of this plan.

Objectives: Objectives describe what Metro must do to achieve the goals. An objective may serve multiple goals, but each objective is listed with a specific goal to which it is most closely tied. Each objective has an associated outcome. Chapter 3, Plan Performance Monitoring, describes how Metro will measure progress toward the desired outcomes.

Strategies: This plan contains 40 strategies for achieving the objectives. Even though strategies may serve multiple objectives and goals, each strategy is listed with a specific objective to which it is most closely tied. Chapter 3 describes how Metro will measure our success in carrying out these strategies.

METRO'S GOALS: GOAL 1

SAFETY

Support safe communities.

Metro provides a safe and secure transportation environment and ensures emergency preparedness.

Metro's **All Hazards Response Plan** is designed to ensure the safety of all responders, deter and prevent incidents, guide the response of Metro and partnering agencies so it is quick and effective, and appropriately manage Metro's resources during an incident.

The **Adverse Weather Plan** matches service delivery to the severity of the incident and outlines procedures for internal and external communications.

Objective 1.1: Keep people safe and secure.

Metro protects the safety and security of customers, employees and facilities in a variety of ways, including planning, policing, facility design, operational practices, safety training, and collaboration with local jurisdictions and other agencies on safety-related matters. ***Intended outcome: Metro's services and facilities are safe and secure.***

Strategy 1.1.1: Promote safety and security in public transportation operations and facilities.

The Metro Transit Police (MTP) protects Metro's operators and riders by patrolling the Metro system and facilities by bus, bike and car. The MTP leverages its resources by creating partnerships with community groups, police and other government agencies, and other public transportation organizations. These partnerships allow the MTP to share information, ideas, and solutions to common safety issues.

Metro educates and trains its employees to improve the safety and security of the public transportation system and Metro's offices and facilities. A major focus of safety efforts is operator training, as transit operators directly impact the safety of riders and other road users. Metro also strives to ensure that its facilities use principles of safe design, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, to maximize environmental safety.

Metro's Accident Prevention Program Plan and System Security Plan guide Metro's efforts to maintain and improve the safe operations of its vehicles and the safety and security of its facilities.

Strategy 1.1.2: Plan for and execute regional emergency response and homeland security efforts.

Metro prepares for emergency situations so we can help the Puget Sound region adapt and continue functioning when emergencies happen. Metro has developed two major plans for continuing to provide reliable transportation in "all-hazard" incidents ranging from major service interruptions to civil unrest as well as the more common adverse weather occurrences such as snow or flooding. These are the All Hazards Response Plan and the Adverse Weather Plan (see sidebar).

Metro also regularly conducts emergency-preparedness field exercises with local, county, state and federal agencies.

GOAL 2

HUMAN POTENTIAL

Provide equitable opportunities for people from all areas of King County to access the public transportation system.

Metro provides equitable and accessible transportation options.

Objective 2.1 Provide public transportation products and services that add value throughout King County and that facilitate access to jobs, education, and other destinations.

Metro strives to provide transportation choices that make it easy for people to travel throughout King County and the region. Metro provides a range of public transportation products and services, and coordinates and integrates its services with others. ***Intended outcome: More people throughout King County have access to public transportation products and services.***

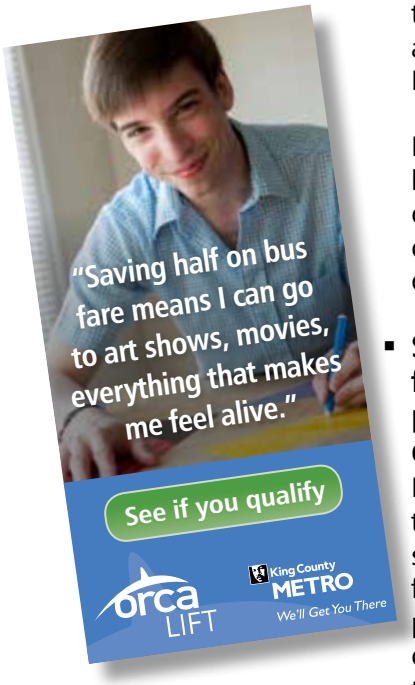
- **Strategy 2.1.1: Design and offer a variety of public transportation products and services appropriate to different markets and mobility needs.**

  The traditional fixed-route transit system is the largest of Metro's services, but it cannot meet every public transportation travel need. Metro provides a range of public transportation products and services to augment the fixed-route transit system and provide geographic value throughout King County.

  Within the fixed-route system, Metro provides several levels of service: very frequent, frequent, local, hourly and peak. Each level can be matched to the community served. Metro's companion piece to the strategic plan, the King County Metro Service Guidelines, considers data for productivity, social equity, and geographic value to help identify which level of service will be appropriate for transit corridors throughout King County.

  Corridors that have the potential for high ridership give Metro opportunities to focus transit service and facility investments. Metro is pursuing these opportunities through the RapidRide program. Six RapidRide lines are in operation, and additional lines could be developed in the future. Communities can leverage Metro's transit investments with supportive development along each line.

  In other parts of the county, fixed-route transit—even at an hourly or peak-only level—is not efficient. In these cases, Metro will foster local partnerships to create alternative service options such as community shuttles, real-time rideshare, community vans, or other innovative ways to provide mobility responsive to community needs.



- **Strategy 2.1.2: Provide travel opportunities and supporting amenities for historically disadvantaged populations, such as low-income people, students, youth, seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, and others with limited transportation options.**

  Metro serves historically disadvantaged populations with a wide variety of public transportation services and supporting amenities such as bus stops, bus shelters, seating, lighting, waste receptacles. and public information. All buses on the fixed-route system are accessible for most people with disabilities, complementary paratransit services are available for eligible individuals with disabilities who cannot use regular bus service, and facilities are accessible in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Metro offers other services as well, such as the innovative Community Transportation Program which includes the Taxi Scrip Program, Transit Instruction Program, and Community Access Transportation (CAT). Metro also provides programs such as Jobs Access and Reverse Commute

(JARC), a federal program that is intended to connect low-income populations with employment opportunities through public transportation. Metro also works with local school districts to respond to student transportation needs. Metro regularly reports on its services in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Strategy 2.1.3: Provide products and services that are designed to provide geographic value in all parts of King County.
Metro provides public transportation products and services that offer flexible travel options for King County residents and visitors. Metro makes public transportation investments that are appropriate to the land use, employment densities, housing densities, and transit demand in various communities. Metro will continue to provide public transportation to all communities currently served by transit.

There should be a relationship, but not an exact formula, between the tax revenue created in an area of King County and the distribution of public transportation products and services. Service design should also recognize all of the revenues (taxes and fares) generated in the various areas of King County.

Public transportation investments are critical for economic prosperity and the future growth of the region. Metro should get the greatest number of workers to and from job centers. Metro will support access to destinations that are essential to countywide economic vitality.

- **Strategy 2.1.4: In areas that are not well-served by fixed-route service, seek to complement or "right-size" transportation service by working with partners to develop an extensive range of alternative services to serve the general public.**
Innovative public transportation services and delivery strategies may meet mobility needs more effectively than regular bus service does in areas not well-suited to fixed-route transit. Metro will seek to replace poorly performing fixed-route services under certain circumstances, to provide better connections between centers, to serve rural communities, and to seed new routes that would serve emerging markets. These services may also be less costly and more cost-effective than traditional bus service. Metro is exploring opportunities to expand effective and lower-cost alternatives to fixed-route bus service to a broader range of users.

Partnerships are essential to expanding alternative services to these new users. A local partner organization, such as a municipality, nonprofit or business, must be actively engaged and contribute to the development and implementation of the project. Partnerships may include sharing the cost of community engagement, planning, equipment, contracted services, promotions, or other project elements and may involve either cash or in-kind contributions from the partner organization. Local partners may also enact transit-supportive land-use policy or may make infrastructure investments that support transit. Metro will invite certain communities to partner on alternative services projects based on a defined set of allocation criteria. Metro will also create opportunities for local partners to submit alternative services project ideas for consideration. When considering where to implement alternative services projects, Metro will give special consideration to communities with high proportions of low-income or minority populations who depend on public transportation.

To provide an extensive array of services to the general public, changes may be necessary to current code. Metro should consider code changes that clarify eligibility criteria for special programs to allow use by the general public when appropriate.

Metro's suite of alternative services and products

Alternative services are a combination of traditional and innovative mobility services. Metro has been offering rideshare services like VanPool, Rideshare Matching, and VanShare for many years. Under the Alternative Services program Metro will be developing a new suite of products that leverage emerging technologies and trends. Current products, shown above, include: Community Shuttles, Community Vans, Real-Time Rideshare, and TripPool.

GOAL 3

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.

Metro supports economic vitality in the region by moving people efficiently and improving the performance of the transportation system.

Objective 3.1 Support a strong, diverse, sustainable economy.

A transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently is critical to economic vitality and the achievement of the region's vision for growth. The regional growth strategy emphasizes the need for an integrated, multimodal transportation system that links major cities and centers. Metro plays an important role in the growth strategy by offering travel options that connect people to areas of concentrated activity, providing affordable access to jobs, education and important social and retail services. ***Intended outcome: Public transportation products and services are available throughout King County and are well-utilized in centers and areas of concentrated economic activity.***

- **Strategy 3.1.1: Encourage land uses, policies, and development that lead to communities that have good access to transit and that transit can serve efficiently and effectively.**

  Metro provides a range of services to get people to work, school, and other places they want to go. The backbone of Metro's system is a network of all-day, two-way bus routes between residential centers, business centers and transit activity centers. Metro also provides commuter service to major destinations from many neighborhoods as well as from a network of park-and-ride lots. Metro provides local services to connect people to the larger transportation system. Rideshare services such as commuter vans and Rideshare-Online.com, as well as community programs such as In Motion and car-sharing, promote alternative travel options.

  Metro augments its own investments by developing mutually beneficial partnerships with public and private entities to improve public transportation. Partners may include local jurisdictions, other agencies, employers, and institutions. Metro enters into agreements in which partners may contribute funding directly for service, including service that complements fixed-route service, that increases service in communities where corridors are below their target service levels, or that supports more service hours or service efficiencies. Partners also may invest in transit speed or reliability improvements. Partnerships may include local government land-use policy changes that promote higher concentrations of residential and employment density, which is conducive to transit. Metro also forms partnerships to develop and promote alternative commute programs and to manage parking and traffic to make public transportation more efficient and attractive. Metro works with the Washington State Department of Transportation and local cities to provide services that help mitigate the impacts of major construction projects. Metro also works with private transportation operators (employee and residential shuttles, transportation network companies, taxis, and other commercial transportation entities) to enable complementary use of Metro services and facilities with those operators.

Strategy 3.1.2: Partner with employers to make public transportation products and services more affordable and convenient for employees.
Metro develops and pursues market-based strategies with employers, institutions and property managers to encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone. Metro offers employers and organizations technical assistance, marketing and training to establish commute benefit programs. These programs give commuters access and incentives for using transit and rideshare services, cycling, walking and teleworking. Examples are ORCA business products and Home Free Guarantee (Metro's emergency ride home service). Metro also coordinates with employer-sponsored transportation services to avoid duplicating existing public services. Metro seeks to identify potential new community and employer-based partnerships that would support transit options for low-income workers.

By working with employers, Metro can increase the use of its products and services as well as those of other transit agencies. Metro can also support progress toward community objectives, while helping employers manage parking and traffic, attract and retain employees, and meet commute trip reduction and sustainability goals.

Objective 3.2: Address the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county.

The number of people and jobs in King County is growing, and the demand for public transportation continues to rise. Metro will prepare for this growth by seeking opportunities to expand service, by being more efficient, and by partnering with others to maximize the travel options available. Metro will also strive to improve access to transit—the ability of people to get to transit service and to get from transit service to their final destinations using a range of modes such as walking, biking, driving and other public transportation services. Access is affected by the environment—such as surrounding land use and connectivity, by the safety and security of the surrounding street and sidewalk network, by the availability of service at the access point, and other factors. ***Intended outcome: More people have access to and regularly use public transportation products and services in King County.***

- **Strategy 3.2.1: Expand services to accommodate the region's growing population and serve new transit markets.**
  Population and employment growth are creating emerging and expanding travel markets throughout King County. These markets range from expanding employment centers such as Kirkland's Totem Lake or Seattle's South Lake Union to developing residential communities throughout King County. Metro has many tactics for accommodating growth, such as starting a new route, adding peak trips, extending hours of service to include the midday or evening, or modifying a route to serve a new location.

- **Strategy 3.2.2: Coordinate and develop services and facilities with other providers, local jurisdictions and the private sector to create an integrated and efficient regional transportation system that takes innovative approaches to improving mobility.**

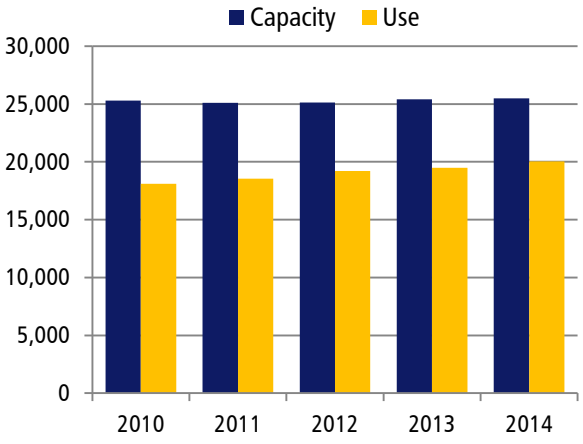
  Metro collaborates with other agencies and organizations to build the best possible regional public transportation network, to make it easy for people to travel between transportation services, to maximize travel options, and to achieve efficiencies by providing services that are complementary rather than duplicative. For example, when Sound Transit introduces new services, Metro explores opportunities to restructure bus routes, improve service integration, enhance service and increase efficiency. By reconfiguring, reducing or eliminating poorly performing routes, Metro can free up resources to invest in routes with greater demand and unmet service needs. Where parallel services exist, Metro can restructure routes to create service that is more frequent, productive and reliable. Metro also coordinates with other agencies and jurisdictions to improve the efficiency of the system through transit speed and reliability improvements. Metro works independently and in coordination with local jurisdictions to implement improvements such as traffic signal coordination, transit queue-bypass lanes, transit signal queue jumps, transit signal priority, safety improvements, and stop consolidations. Metro also supports investments that improve service, attract transit riders, and achieve land-use goals that support transit services.

  Metro also coordinates with other regional and local public transportation entities and the private sector on funding, design, construction and maintenance of capital facilities such as transit hubs, park-and-rides and stations to optimize intermodal connections, promote efficient operation and enhance access. Metro will take innovative approaches to improving mobility.

- **Strategy 3.2.3: Facilitate convenient and safe access to transit by all modes.**

  Metro will work with public and private partners to promote access to transit through all modes, including walking, bicycling, taking connecting transit or paratransit services, or driving to a pick-up/drop-off point or park-and-ride. Tactics include facility design and infrastructure investments to enhance safety, security and connectivity.

FIGURE 6: **Fourth quarter park-and-ride capacity and use, 2010-2014**
(number of parking spaces)



- **Strategy 3.2.4: Work in collaboration with transit partners, WSDOT and other public and private partners to address transit parking capacity demand through a range of approaches that use resources efficiently and enable more people to access transit.**

  Park-and-ride locations provide access to the public transportation system for people who do not live near a bus route or who want the many service options available at park-and-rides. These facilities serve as a meeting place for carpool and vanpool partners, and add to the capacity of the state and interstate highway system. The use of park-and-rides continues to grow, and many lots are at or over capacity every day.

Metro will work with Sound Transit, WSDOT, local cities and others to explore affordable opportunities to increase park-and-ride capacity and enhance transit access. Tactics for responding to demand include managing existing lots, maximizing occupancy of existing spaces, considering additional potential for leased lots and shared parking, and creating new parking stalls. When creating new capacity, Metro will strive to meet multiple goals that respond to parking capacity demand while also creating mixed-use, transit-supportive development.

Metro will also pursue strategies to improve first/last mile connections and improve education and marketing. Metro will explore opportunities to improve bike and pedestrian access to park-and-rides and other hubs through improved connections, internal circulation, and enhanced facilities such as secure bike storage.

Objective 3.3: Support compact, healthy communities.

Communities that are compact and friendly to pedestrians and bicycles are most easily served by transit. Such communities foster healthier, more active lifestyles while reducing auto-dependency and associated road investments. By the same token, transit service can support and encourage development that is more compact. ***Intended outcome: More people regularly use public transportation products and services along corridors with compact development.***

- **Strategy 3.3.1: Encourage land uses, policies, and practices that promote transit-oriented development and lead to communities that have good access to transit and that transit can serve efficiently and effectively.**
  Metro encourages the development of transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly communities by working with jurisdictions and providing services to transit-oriented developments. Metro recommends strategies for jurisdictions and agencies to make communities more transit-friendly. Metro also partners with jurisdictions, other agencies and the private sector to spur transit-oriented development through redevelopment opportunities at, or adjacent to, park-and-rides, transit hubs and stations along major transit corridors.

- **Strategy 3.3.2: Support bicycle and pedestrian access to jobs, services, and the transit system.**
  Metro collaborates with local jurisdictions, transit agencies and others to enhance bike and walk connections to transit. Metro develops programs and facilities to improve bicyclists' and pedestrians' connections to transit. Metro also collaborates with public and private partners to enhance the use of bicycles for commute and non-commute purposes to help reduce drive-alone travel. Metro provides three-position bike racks on transit vehicles and is working to increase the availability of secure bicycle parking at new and existing Metro transit facilities. Metro will also explore opportunities to coordinate with local jurisdictions to address safety and security concerns and improve wayfinding measures for all populations. Metro will seek opportunities to improve nonmotorized access and facilities at park-and-rides and major transit hubs.

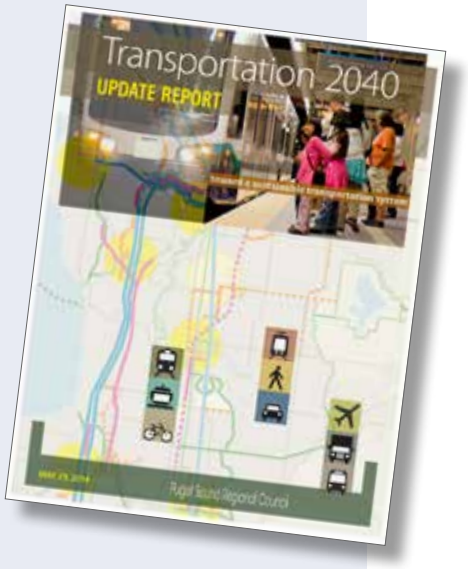
Objective 3.4: Support economic development by using existing transportation infrastructure efficiently and effectively.

Use of transit can increase the efficiency of King County's transportation infrastructure. By carrying more people in fewer vehicles, transit reduces the need for parking spaces at major employment centers and other activity hubs, keeping development costs down. Transit also moves more people on existing roadways, reducing the need for expansion. ***Intended outcome: Regional investments in major highway capacity projects and parking requirements are complemented by high transit service levels in congested corridors and centers.***

- **Strategy 3.4.1: Serve centers and other areas of concentrated activity, consistent with Transportation 2040.**
  Metro focuses on serving King County's designated centers and other areas of concentrated activity, as shown in Figure 3 on page 15 and as prescribed in Transportation 2040 (see below).

  Metro also works with property owners, building managers and employers on a variety of efforts to increase the use of transit. These include parking management, fare media programs, outreach, incentives, work-option programs such as telework, and community programs such as In Motion.

Transportation 2040



Transportation 2040 is an action plan for transportation in the central Puget Sound region that was developed and adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council.

The region's population is projected to grow from 3.9 million in 2015 to nearly 5 million by the year 2040. The number of jobs in projected to increase from 2.2 million in 2015 to 3 million in 2040. This growth is expected to boost demand for travel within and through the region. Metro's annual service is expected to grow by 2.3 million annual service hours, from about 3.5 million hours in 2015 to 5.8 million hours by 2040. Metro expects to serve about 800,000 weekday boardings.

Transportation 2040 outlines a long-term vision for how the Puget Sound region should invest in transportation to accommodate rising travel demand. The plan identifies investments in roads, transit and non-motorized travel that will support this growth and improve the transportation system. The document lays out a financing plan with more reliance on user fees to fund transportation improvements. It also proposes a strategy for reducing transportation's contribution to climate change and its impact on air pollution and the health of Puget Sound.

GOAL 4

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.

Metro provides transportation choices and supports travel that uses less energy, produces fewer pollutants and reduces greenhouse gases in the region.

Objective 4.1: Help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

King County has a long-term target of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions from countywide sources by 80 percent by 2050 (compared to a 2007 baseline), and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its operations by at least 50 percent by 2030 (also compared to a 2007 baseline). The transportation sector is the source of more than half the emissions in the region, so reducing vehicle-miles traveled and emissions is critical to achieving these goals. Every step Metro takes to make transit a more accessible, competitive and attractive transportation option helps to counter climate change and improve air quality. ***Intended outcome: People drive single-occupant vehicles less.***

- **Strategy 4.1.1: Increase the proportion of travel in King County that is provided by public transportation products and services.**
  Metro offers an array of alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel, and will continue to improve the attractiveness of Metro's products and services and promote them to existing and potential customers.

Objective 4.2: Minimize Metro's environmental footprint.

King County's 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan provides a roadmap for confronting climate change in King County, with new targets adopted by the King County Council. These targets include: reduce normalized energy use in County-owned facilities by at least 5 percent by 2020 and 10 percent by 2025, and reduce normalized energy use in Metro's vehicle operations by at least 10 percent by 2020 (all target reductions are compared to a 2014 baseline). In support of this plan, Metro is committed to being a leader in green operating and maintenance practices and minimizing both energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Metro also educates its employees about reducing energy consumption at work and using public transportation to commute. ***Intended outcome: Metro's environmental footprint is reduced (normalized against service growth).***

- **Strategy 4.2.1: Operate vehicles and adopt technology that has the least impact on the environment and maximizes long-term sustainability.**
  Metro will continue exploring opportunities to employ energy-efficient vehicles for both fixed-route and other services, such as its commuter van programs. Metro has already reduced vehicle emissions by developing and using clean-fuel bus technologies, such as hybrid diesel-electric coaches and zero-emission electric trolleys. Metro is committed to being a leader in the adoption of new energy-efficient and low-emission technologies.

- **Strategy 4.2.2: Incorporate sustainable design, construction, operating, and maintenance practices.**
  Metro incorporates cost-effective green building and sustainable development practices in all capital projects that it plans, designs, constructs, remodels, renovates, and operates. Metro will continue seeking opportunities to improve energy efficiency and conservation and to decrease energy use in its facilities. Metro follows King County's Green Building and Sustainable Development Ordinance and strives for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification where possible.

GOAL 5

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.

Metro seeks to provide reliable, safe and convenient transportation services that are valued by customers and responsive to the needs of people, businesses and communities.

Objective 5.1: Improve satisfaction with Metro's products and services and the way they are delivered.

Metro associates customer satisfaction with a favorable public image, customer loyalty, and strong community support, as well as the provision of quality service. Metro is committed to giving its customers a positive experience at every stage, from trip planning to arrival at a destination. ***Intended outcome: People are more satisfied with Metro products and services.***

- **Strategy 5.1.1: Provide service that is easy to understand and use.**
  A public transportation system that is easy to understand and use is important to attracting and retaining riders and increasing market share. People may not try public transportation if they do not know which bus routes or other services to use, how to pay a fare, how to transfer among services, or where to get off. Customer information tools are essential to inform riders about services and help them easily navigate the public transportation system. These include tools that remove barriers for people with disabilities, such as auditory stop announcements. Products such as the ORCA fare card simplify fare payment and transfers among transit agencies in the Puget Sound region. Customer information tools ease public transportation use for new and existing riders alike.

- **Strategy 5.1.2: Emphasize customer service in transit operations and workforce training.**
  Every customer experience affects perceptions of the quality of Metro service. Metro operators are at the front lines of transit service, interacting with customers daily. Other Metro employees interact with customers at service centers, over the phone, or at public meetings. Metro will work to achieve high levels of customer service in all of these interactions, and to continually emphasize to employees the importance of good customer service.

- **Strategy 5.1.3: Improve transit speed and reliability.**
  Transit speed and reliability is an important aspect of customer satisfaction. Metro regularly monitors the on-time performance of its bus routes and strives to achieve its performance guidelines. To help improve transit speed and reliability, Metro is committed to managing transit pathways. Its speed-and-reliability program places high priority on corridors with high ridership and bus volumes, such as Metro's six RapidRide corridors, and on corridors impacted by major construction projects, such as replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the SR-520 bridge. A range of speed and reliability improvements including traffic signal coordination, transit signal priority, bus lanes, queue bypass, safety improvements and stop consolidation can be implemented on a corridor or spot basis. Metro works independently and in coordination with local jurisdictions to make improvements that enhance the speed and reliability of bus service, help maintain even intervals between buses, and reduce overcrowding and delays.

Objective 5.2: Improve public awareness of Metro products and services.

People will use public transportation products and services that meet their needs, but they must first learn about the service that is available. Marketing and customer information tools are critical for increasing ridership by communicating the availability, value, benefits and "how to" of using public transportation. ***Intended outcome: People understand how to use Metro's products and services and use them more often.***

- **Strategy 5.2.1: Use available tools, new technologies, and new methods to improve communication with customers.**
  Metro currently uses a range of tools to give customers up-to-date information on public transportation services and service disruptions and to promote Metro products and services. Internet-based media will offer new opportunities to reach even more people and keep them informed. Independent application developers augment and support Metro's efforts to improve customer communications. Metro will continue to improve its communications so that customers can easily access information when they need it most.

- **Strategy 5.2.2: Promote Metro's products and services to existing and potential customers.**
  Effective marketing generates ridership and improves overall awareness and understanding of the public transportation system. Marketing activities include direct promotion, advertising, product branding and positive customer service. These activities can support events such as periodic service changes, major initiatives such as Transit Now, and campaigns focused on target groups. As Metro seeks to grow overall ridership and increase efficiency by attracting riders to services with existing capacity, expanded marketing efforts—including market research and promotion—will make a difference.

GOAL 6

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Exercise sound financial management and build Metro's long-term sustainability.

Metro is committed to using resources wisely and increasing the efficiency of its operations.

Objective 6.1: Emphasize planning and delivery of productive service.

Metro should create a public transportation system that emphasizes productivity, while ensuring social equity and providing geographic value. A focus on productivity will support regional and local growth and economic development as well as environmental and financial sustainability. ***Intended outcome: Service productivity improves.***

- **Strategy 6.1.1: Manage the transit system through service guidelines and performance measures.**
  Service guidelines and performance measures will help the public, Metro and King County decision-makers determine the appropriate level and type of service for different corridors and destinations. Metro will use the service guidelines to plan and manage the transit system. The Guidelines will clearly state how the priorities of productivity, social equity and geographic value will be used to establish service levels for the All-Day and Peak-Only Network. The guidelines also provide direction for evaluating system performance, restructuring service, designing service, planning alternative services, planning service changes, and working with partners. The establishment and use of route, system and peer-comparison performance measures will enable Metro and the public to better understand how Metro's services are performing.

- **Strategy 6.1.2: Establish and maintain a long-range transit service and capital plan developed in collaboration with local comprehensive and regional long-range transportation planning.**
  To implement the vision for public transportation, as established in the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, King County shall establish and maintain a long-range plan that: (1) reflects regional transit service and capital plans identified through Sound Transit's adopted long-range plan and incorporates transit service needs identified through adopted local comprehensive and other transportation plans; (2) uses, as a starting point, today's transit network and needs as defined by the King County Metro Service Guidelines; and (3) remains consistent with the policies and values of the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation. The Metro Transit long-range plan adopted by the King County Council should include the unmet transit service needs throughout King County as identified by the existing Metro Service Guidelines, as well as the service and capital elements of a future Metro transit network at various funding levels that support local jurisdiction and regional plans. The plan shall take into consideration the Puget Sound Regional Council's economic, growth management, and transportation plans.

  King County shall develop the long-range plan in coordination with local jurisdictions and regional transit agencies. Development of the long-range plan shall be based on the principle that jurisdiction comprehensive and transportation plans inform the long-range plan and the long-range plan informs jurisdiction comprehensive and transportation plans. The specific approach to coordination shall be subject to the financial and staffing constraints of Metro as specified at the time of developing or updating the plan. In order to provide a realistic funding framework for addressing existing unmet and future system needs, this plan shall reflect resource availability and financial estimates of the total Metro transit need to support regional and local comprehensive and other transportation plans.

This strategy shall be implemented within the approved financial, staffing and policy framework of King County Metro, especially as it pertains to inputs from other plans and jurisdictions. Nothing in this strategy is intended to infer a responsibility for jurisdictional planning beyond King County's direct authority.

Objective 6.2: Control costs.

Metro should control costs to provide a structure that is sustainable over time. ***Intended outcome: Metro costs grow at or below the rate of inflation.***

- **Strategy 6.2.1: Continually explore and implement cost efficiencies, including operational and administrative efficiencies.**
  Metro will continue to seek efficiencies in the administration and operation of the agency, including overhead costs, to ensure that Metro develops a more sustainable financial structure in the long term. Opportunities to improve service and increase efficiency include restructuring service and maintaining the practices that were recommended in the 2009 King County auditor's performance audit of Metro and subsequently adopted by Metro. This audit identified areas where Metro could achieve cost efficiencies, such as in the way it schedules fixed-route service. Metro will continue striving to maximize cost-efficiency in all sections of the agency through the use of Lean and other process improvement methods.

- **Strategy 6.2.2: Provide and maintain capital assets to support efficient and effective service delivery.**
  Metro's capital program supports service delivery and provides for ongoing replacement of aging infrastructure. Regular maintenance and upgrades keep Metro's facilities in good repair and support efficient, safe and reliable transit operations. Metro also invests in new operations facilities, on-board systems, signal priority improvements, and real-time technology. Strategic investments in new infrastructure allow Metro to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the public transportation system.

  Metro will develop a prioritized set of strategic procurement goals to guide procurement processes and decisions. Metro will replace and adjust the transit bus fleet so that the size, fleet mix, and fleet age are consistent with service projections and operating characteristics of the regular bus system. Metro will replace and expand its vanpool fleet to provide the appropriate mix of vehicle sizes, both to encourage and support vanpool program participants and to minimize costs. Metro will also replace and expand the fleet of Access paratransit vehicles to support efficient operations.

- **Strategy 6.2.3: Develop and implement alternative public transportation services and delivery strategies.**
  Fixed-route transit service is most cost-efficient in areas of King County where housing and employment are concentrated, and where neighborhood design supports walking as the first- and last-mile mode choice. Fixed-route transit service is not cost-effective in some areas of King County because of the type of land uses, infrastructure, or density. However, people in these areas still have mobility needs and, by circumstance or choice, require public transportation services. Metro provides alternative service products such as ridesharing, community vans, community shuttles, Dial-A-Ride Transit, and Community Access Transportation in

these areas. Metro will continue to complement the fixed-route system with these and other innovative public transportation services and delivery strategies that keep costs down while providing mobility to people throughout King County.

- **Strategy 6.2.4: Provide alternative or "right-sized" services in the context of overall system financial health and the need to reduce, maintain or expand the system.**
  Metro will extend alternative service delivery products to communities according to market characteristics and resources available. Alternative or "right-sized" services can provide cost-effective mobility options for communities. Depending on Metro's financial standing and financial outlook, it may provide these services as a cost-effective alternative to a fixed-route service or as a complement to the public transit network.

  When financial challenges require Metro to consider service reductions, alternative services can provide a lower-cost service option in low-density areas that are surrounded by or adjacent to rural areas, or provide a lower-cost service in place of an existing fixed route in other areas. When revenues are stable or growing, Metro will consider alternative services in other corridors to provide a cost-effective complement to existing public transit services.

Objective 6.3: Seek to establish a sustainable funding structure to support short- and long-term public transportation needs.

New, sustainable funding sources are critical if Metro is to continue current operations and achieve the region's goals and vision for the future. Additional and sustainable revenue sources, along with changes in the way service decisions are made and public transportation resources are allocated, will allow Metro to support the growth and economic development of King County. ***Intended outcome: Adequate funding to support King County's short- and long-term public transportation needs.***

- **Strategy 6.3.1: Secure long-term sustainable funding.**
  Even with efficiency measures, Metro's resources must increase over time to meet growing customer demand. New, sustainable funding sources are crucial to ensure that Metro can support existing transit service and plan for future growth. Funding that reduces Metro's reliance on sales tax revenue, which fluctuates significantly as economic conditions change, is also critically important for maintaining the transit system. Metro is exploring several potential revenue sources that would improve Metro's funding situation. Among these potential sources are fares, grants, advertising, and partnerships with local jurisdictions and businesses. Metro places high priority on funding sources that enable sustained operations over time and on one-time revenue sources that allow implementation of a particular project or program. When revenue-backed funding expires or a partner ends a partnership with Metro, Metro will seek efficiencies in existing service, or propose a restructure, to support successful revenue-backed service. If these options are not feasible, Metro may reduce service to pre-grant or partner-contribution levels.

Metro will also pursue new revenue sources through state legislation, including sources that are currently authorized and those that may require new legislation. Metro must establish a stable revenue source or program that allows for system growth and keeps pace with changes in regional growth and employment.

- **Strategy 6.3.2: Establish fare structures and fare levels that are simple to understand, aligned with other service providers, and meet revenue targets established by Metro's fund management policies.**
  Metro's fare structure and fare levels should enable Metro to meet cost-recovery targets that are established by fund management policies adopted by the King County Council. Fares should be set to reflect the cost of service, promote operational efficiency, ensure regional coordination, minimize impacts of fares on those least able to pay, and reduce the cost of fare collection. Metro fare prices should strike a balance between revenue generation objectives and the need to maintain existing service and attract new ridership. Metro's fares will comply with state and federal regulations. The fare structure and level should be reviewed biennially.

  Metro works with the region's transit agencies to coordinate fares and schedules. Several transportation agencies, including Metro, collaborated to introduce ORCA, the regional fare payment method that enables customers to use one card to pay their fare on multiple systems throughout the Puget Sound area.

  Metro also regularly works with other agencies to coordinate policies, practices and services throughout the Puget Sound region to provide a consistent transit experience for customers. Simple and consistent fares are important to make transit easy to use for both new and existing transit riders.

- **Strategy 6.3.3: Establish fund management policies that ensure stability through a variety of economic conditions.**
  Metro is committed to comprehensive and prudent financial planning and forecasting that uses reasonable economic assumptions along with specific programmatic plans to project future revenues, expenditures, and resulting fund balances. Metro's fund management policies guide the development of a six-year financial plan that is produced through the budget process and adopted by the King County Council. Metro's fund management policies, planning, and ongoing forecasting allow the transit system to respond effectively to unforeseen emergencies and changes in the economy without large impacts to existing services.

GOAL 7

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.

Metro is committed to informing and engaging the public as it develops products and services.

Objective 7.1: Empower people to play an active role in shaping Metro's products and services.

Metro is committed to being responsive and accountable to the public. One way Metro will meet this commitment is by continuing to conduct a community planning process and public outreach as part of any major service change or new service initiative. ***Intended outcome: The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.***

- **Strategy 7.1.1: Engage the public in the planning process and improve customer outreach.**
  Metro's community engagement work is consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice ordinance. Metro seeks to build its capacity to engage all communities in a manner that promotes and fosters trust among people across geographic, race, class and gender lines, resulting in more effective policies, processes, and services as well as supporting community-based solutions to problems.

  Metro's planning process provides opportunities for the public to help design public transportation services. It involves riders, non-riders, elected officials, community leaders, city and County staff members, and social service agencies. Outreach targets historically under-represented populations, using translated materials or interpretation services as needed. Metro uses public meetings, open houses and a sounding board process to engage customers. Metro also does extensive public communication using direct mail, newspaper and radio ads, surveys and online information, and continually explores new media to reach a larger audience. Metro will strive to involve the public early in any planning process and offer opportunities for ongoing involvement.

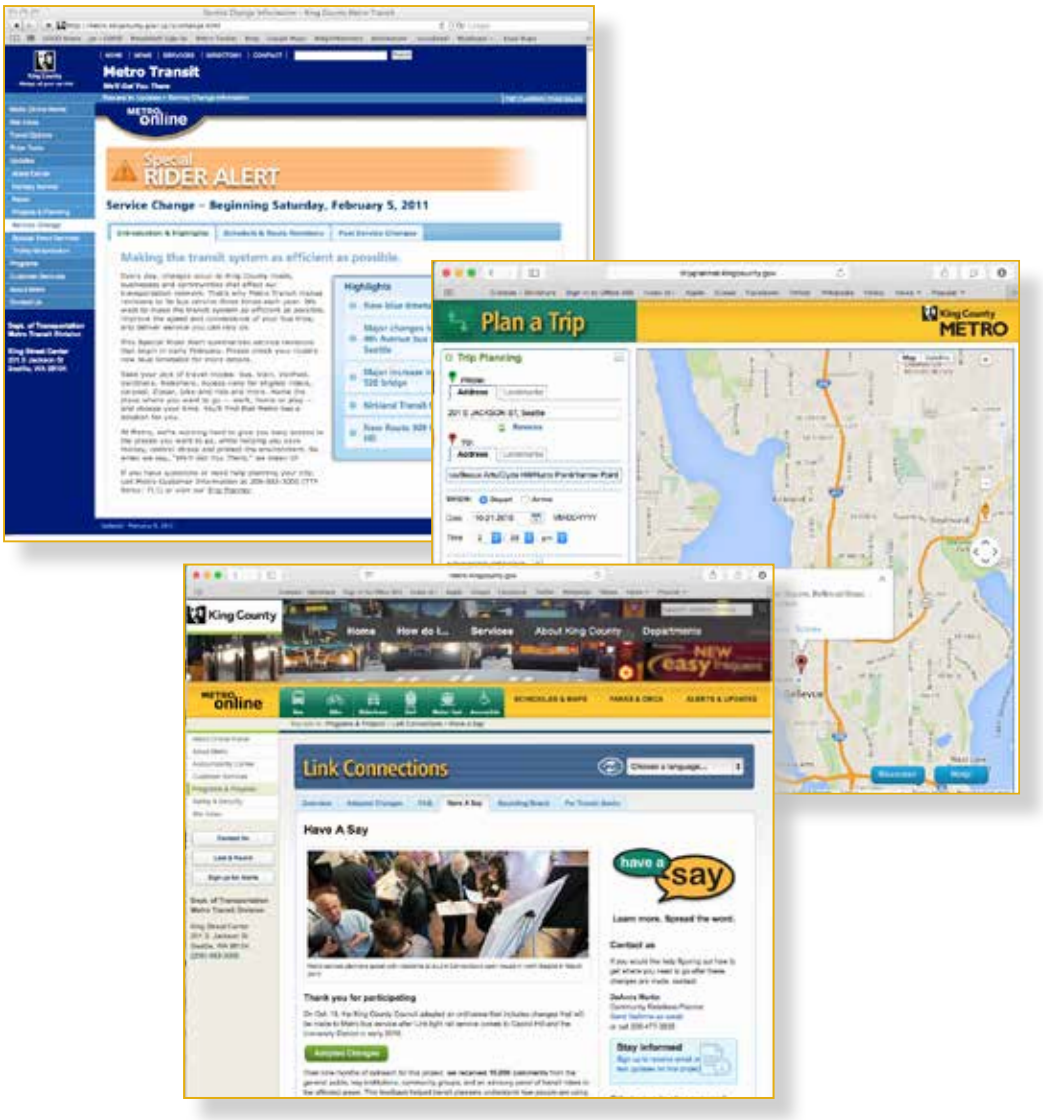
Objective 7.2: Increase customer and public access to understandable, accurate and transparent information.

Transparent decision-making processes and information will help build public trust in Metro and acceptance of the decisions made. ***Intended outcome: Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.***

- **Strategy 7.2.1: Communicate service change concepts, the decision-making process, and public transportation information in language that is accessible and easy to understand.**
  Metro's decision-making process should be clear, transparent and based on criteria that are easy for customers to understand. Metro considers equity and social justice in its decision-making process, particularly for people of color, low-income communities, people with limited English proficiency, and people with other communications barriers consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, Executive Order on Translation, and federal law. Service guidelines and performance measures provide an outline of Metro's approach to decision-making. Guidelines are based on data that are understandable to the public and provide for a transparent process for making service allocation decisions. Performance measures will give the public a snapshot of Metro's performance on a systemwide level and allow for comparisons between service types and between peer

agencies. Using a variety of forums, media channels and accessible formats, Metro will reach out to customers and the public to share information on the decision-making process and on the performance measures that are the basis of Metro service changes and new service initiatives.

- **Strategy 7.2.2: Explore innovative ways to report to and inform the public.**
  New forums for public outreach can help Metro reach more new and existing riders and make it easier for them to find the information they need. Metro will continue providing information to the public through various channels including printed materials, Metro Online, social media and other channels.



GOAL 8

QUALITY WORKFORCE

Develop and empower Metro's most valuable asset, its employees.

Metro strives to develop and retain an effective, customer-oriented workforce that embraces collaboration, innovation and diversity.

Objective 8.1: Attract and recruit quality employees.

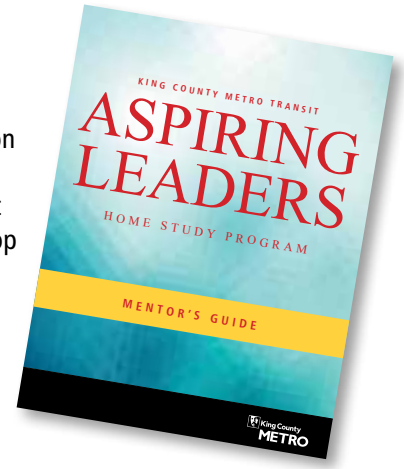
Metro's products and services are a reflection of the employees who deliver them. To maintain excellent services, Metro recruits quality and committed employees and creates a positive work environment. Metro prides itself as being a great place to work and a fair and just employer that values a diverse and skilled workforce. ***Intended outcome: Metro is satisfied with the quality of its workforce.***

- **Strategy 8.1.1: Market Metro as an employer of choice and cultivate a diverse and highly skilled applicant pool.**
  Metro makes itself a prominent employer through local and national recruiting. Networking with local community-based agencies and professional organizations encourages the development of a highly skilled applicant pool.

- **Strategy 8.1.2: Promote equity, social justice and transparency in hiring and recruiting activities.**
  Metro constantly seeks to improve its hiring and recruitment process to ensure that it is open and competitive. Successful candidates are objectively selected on the basis of their qualifications. Metro promotes diversity in its hiring process. Metro believes that its workforce should reflect the populations it serves and recruits from the local workforce.

Objective 8.2: Empower and retain efficient, effective, and productive employees.

Metro strives to support its employees, empower them to excel, recognize their achievements, and help them develop professionally. Metro values input from employees on ways to improve business practices and make Metro more efficient. ***Intended outcome: Metro employees are satisfied with their jobs and feel their work contributes to an improved quality of life in King County.***



- **Strategy 8.2.1: Build leadership and promote professional skills.**
  Metro employs thousands of individuals in management, maintenance and operations positions. Metro management encourages a high level of collaboration with its employees, maintains effective labor relations, and identifies situations for improvement and for employee advancement. Metro recognizes that the next generation of leaders is likely already among us and seeks to identify and develop those leaders.

- **Strategy 8.2.2: Recognize employees for outstanding performance, excellent customer service, innovation and strategic thinking.**
  The most effective way for Metro to remain a resilient organization is to develop a work environment where employees are rewarded for high performance and innovation. Metro empowers its employees to engage in problem-solving and service improvement by collaborating with them and recognizing their efforts. Developing a work force driven by excellence will help Metro reduce costs while providing high-quality, customer-driven service.

- **Strategy 8.2.3: Provide training opportunities that enable employees to reach their full potential.**

  Training offers opportunities for employees to learn new skills, develop existing skills and grow professionally. Metro offers employees a number of training resources through national transit organizations, county agencies and other professional development groups. A focus of Metro's training efforts is its operators, as they interact most directly with customers. Developing the workforce further is essential to Metro's success as the organization continues to grow and plan for the future.

PACE

The Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE), is a partnership between Metro employees, labor unions and managers who are working together to build and sustain an inclusive, fair and equitable workplace for everyone.

PACE asks employees to help identify barriers they see to inclusion and to recommend strategies for overcoming those barriers. PACE is also a platform for learning about sensitive issues like cultural competence, implicit bias, and power and privilege.

Formed in 2013, PACE seeks to:

- Respect, engage, and empower employees
- Create shared responsibility for the work culture
- Use proven processes for transforming organizations
- Be intentionally inclusive

In the culture PACE strives to achieve, all Metro employees will be respected, engaged, and empowered at work, enabling them to provide the best possible service to the community.

An example of a PACE-driven initiative was a recruitment effort to fill seven Transit Chief vacancies in 2015. Metro's Human Resources group focused on increasing transparency about the hiring process and helping applicants learn about the chief position and navigate the recruitment process. The result was a highly qualified and diverse group of new Transit Chiefs.

CHAPTER 3: **PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

Metro's strategic plan is a blueprint for Metro to improve its public transportation products and services in meaningful and measurable ways. Performance monitoring will help Metro evaluate its progress, plan and budget for the future, and improve agency practices. By making performance reports readily available, Metro can make its progress transparent to internal and external audiences. This section gives an overview of how Metro and its stakeholders can measure the progress and impacts of the strategic plan.

SECTION 3.1

How Metro measures performance

Metro measures the performance of individual routes, of the Metro system as a whole, and of various products and services. Metro reports various measures in the Federal Transit Administration's National Transit Database, in monthly and annual management reports (see sidebar), and in project-specific performance reports. These reports serve a number of purposes: They comply with federal and state reporting requirements, give public transportation managers the data they need, assess progress towards goals and objectives, inform management and policy decisions, and give the public a way to assess Metro's performance.

Measuring strategic plan progress

Reporting for this strategic plan will focus primarily on objectives and strategies. Metro will use some of the measures already used for other reporting purposes, augmented by measures specific to the strategic plan. Reporting for this plan will support and enhance Metro's ongoing measurement and use of performance data.

This plan provides for performance measurement at three levels:

- **Objectives**
- **Strategies**
- **Peer comparison.**

The following pages describe these measurement levels and associated measures. Metro will report on strategic plan measures annually, and will update this section of the plan as necessary to improve performance measurement.

After January 1, 2012, prior to proposing any budget that includes a change in the system greater than 10 percent of the system hours during the next two-year period, Metro will report on strategic plan measures if a report has not been delivered within the last 12 months.

Metro performance measurement information

Metro launched an online "Monthly Performance Indicators" website to give the public current information about Metro's performance.

On this site, people can find graphs and data showing trends in ridership, service quality, safety and security, finances, and service effectiveness.

Find this site and links to other Metro reports at www.metro.kingcounty.gov/metro/accountability

Measuring objectives

Each objective in the plan has an intended outcome that relates to an aspect of Metro's vision. Metro will measure progress toward these broad outcomes at the systemwide level using metrics and measurement methods that incorporate many factors. The combined results will give an indication of Metro's overall progress toward achieving its vision. Objectives could be measured in a variety of different ways, and techniques for measurement may change over time. Table 2 shows each objective and its related outcome. These outcomes will be reported in a variety of ways, including maps, graphs and text.

TABLE 2: **Objectives and related outcomes**

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME
1	Keep people safe and secure.	Metro's services and facilities are safe and secure.
2	Provide public transportation products and services that add value throughout King County and that facilitate access to jobs, education and other destinations.	More people throughout King County have access to public transportation products and services.
3	Support a strong, diverse, sustainable economy.	Public transportation products and services are available throughout King County and are well-utilized in centers and areas of concentrated economic activity.
	Address the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county.	More people have access to and regularly use public transportation products and services in King County.
	Support compact, healthy communities.	More people regularly use public transportation products and services along corridors with compact development.
	Support economic development by using existing transportation infrastructure efficiently and effectively.	Regional investments in major highway capacity projects and parking requirements are complemented by high transit service levels in congested corridors and centers.
4	Help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region.	People drive single-occupant vehicles less.
	Minimize Metro's environmental footprint.	Metro's environmental footprint is reduced (normalized against service growth).
5	Improve satisfaction with Metro's products and services and the way they are delivered.	People are more satisfied with Metro products and services.
	Improve public awareness of Metro products and services.	People understand how to use Metro's products and services and use them more often.
6	Emphasize planning and delivery of productive service.	Service productivity improves.
	Control costs.	Metro costs grow at or below the rate of inflation.
	Seek to establish a sustainable funding structure to support short- and long-term public transportation needs.	Adequate funding to support King County's short- and long-term public transportation needs.
7	Empower people to play an active role in shaping Metro's products and services.	The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.
	Increase customer and public access to understandable, accurate and transparent information.	Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.
8	Attract and recruit quality employees.	Metro is satisfied with the quality of its workforce.
	Empower and retain efficient, effective, and productive employees.	Metro employees are satisfied with their jobs and feel their work contributes to an improved quality of life in King County.

Measuring strategies

The strategies in the plan support the objectives. Strategies will be assessed using discrete, quantifiable metrics to determine if they are being successfully implemented and are having the intended impact. Strategies could be assessed in a variety of ways and measurement techniques may change over time. The performance measures for assessing strategies are listed in Table 3. These measures focus on different aspects of the public transportation system, including transit use, productivity, cost, social equity and geographic value. Specific thresholds and targets for these measures will be established in Metro's business plans.

TABLE 3: **Strategy performance measures**

GOAL 1: SAFETY	
1	Preventable accidents per million miles
2	Operator and passenger incidents and assaults
3	Customer satisfaction regarding safety and security
4	Effectiveness of emergency responses
GOAL 2: HUMAN POTENTIAL	
1	Population within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop
2	Number of jobs within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop
3	Number of students at universities and community colleges that are within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop
4	Percentage of households in low-income census tracts within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop
5	Percentage of households in minority census tracts within a ¼-mile walk to a transit stop
6	Population within ½ mile of stops with frequent service
7	Number of jobs within ½ mile of stops with frequent service
8	Households within specific ranges of distance from frequent service
9	Average number of jobs and households accessible within 30 minutes countywide (total population, low-income population, minority population)
10	Average number of jobs and households accessible within 30 minutes from regional growth centers, manufacturing/ industrial centers, and transit activity centers
11	Vanpool boardings
12	Transit mode share by market
13	Student and reduced-fare permits and usage
14	Accessible bus stops
15	Access registrants
16	Access boardings/number of trips provided by the Community Access Transportation (CAT) program
17	Requested Access trips compared to those provided
18	Access applicants who undertake fixed-route travel training

GOAL 3: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
1	All public transportation ridership in King County
2	Transit rides per capita
3	Ridership in population/business centers
4	Employees at CTR sites sharing non-drive-alone transportation modes during peak commute hours
5	Employer-sponsored passes and usage
6	Park-and-ride capacity and utilization (individually and systemwide); capacity and utilization of park-and-ride lots with frequent service
7	HOV lane passenger miles
8	Bike locker capacity and utilization (including number of locations with bike lockers)
GOAL 4: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	
1	Average miles per gallon of Metro's bus fleet
2	Vehicle energy use (diesel, gasoline, kWh) normalized by miles
3	Vehicle fuel use (diesel, gasoline, kWh) normalized by boardings
4	Total facility energy use
5	Energy use at Metro facilities: kWh and natural gas used in facilities, normalized by area and temperature
6	Per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
7	Transit mode share
GOAL 5: SERVICE EXCELLENCE	
1	Customer satisfaction
2	Customer complaints per boarding
3	On-time performance by time of day
4	Crowding
5	Use of Metro's web tools and alerts
GOAL 6: FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP	
1	Service hours operated
2	Service hours and service hour change per route
3	Boardings per vehicle hour
4	Boardings per revenue hour
5	Ridership and ridership change per route
6	Passenger miles per vehicle mile
7	Passenger miles per revenue mile
8	Cost per hour
9	Cost per vehicle mile
10	Cost per boarding
11	Cost per passenger mile
12	Cost per vanpool boarding
13	Cost per Access boarding
14	Fare revenues
15	Farebox recovery

GOAL 6: FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP CONTINUED	
16	ORCA use
17	Asset condition assessment
18	For new or nontraditional alternative services, cost per boarding, ride or user, as appropriate (Note: different performance measures may be used to evaluate different types of services.)
GOAL 7: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY	
1	Public participation rates
2	Customer satisfaction regarding Metro's communications and reporting
3	Social media indicators
4	Conformance with King County policy on communications accessibility and translation to other languages
GOAL 8: QUALITY WORKFORCE	
1	Demographics of Metro employees
2	Employee job satisfaction
3	Promotion rate
4	Probationary pass rate

Peer comparison

Comparisons with peer transit agencies provide an additional benchmark for measuring Metro's performance.

Peer comparisons provide a general sense of whether Metro is improving, maintaining or falling behind in comparison to national trends. These comparisons often raise questions about why Metro is improving or not. Answering these questions typically requires further analysis, which Metro does by examining its relevant business processes or conducting in-depth research on peer agencies that are making the greatest improvements on the measure in question.

TABLE 4: **Peer comparison–key areas of performance**

EFFECTIVENESS	EFFICIENCY	COST EFFECTIVENESS
1) Percent change in boardings per capita	1) Percent change in cost per vehicle hour	1) Percent change in cost per boarding
2) Percent change in boardings per vehicle hour	2) Percent change in cost per vehicle mile	2) Percent change in cost per passenger mile
3) Percent change in passenger miles per vehicle mile		

Strategic plan reporting will compare Metro with other large bus agencies in the U.S. in three key areas of performance: effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The specific indicators for each will be calculated using the Federal Transit Administration's annual National Transit Database reports.

SECTION 3.2

Route performance

Metro uses service guidelines to evaluate the performance of individual routes in the fixed-route system. Performance management guidelines are applied to individual routes to identify high and low performance, areas where investment is needed, and areas where resources are not being used efficiently and effectively. Both productivity and service quality are measured.

Metro may adjust routes to improve the performance of the individual route as well as the performance of the entire Metro fixed-route system. Metro revises service two times a year. Significant changes to routes generally have a large public outreach process and are subject to approval by the King County Council. Minor changes, as defined by the King County Code, may be made administratively. More information is available in the service guidelines.