



# KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

## Signature Report

July 12, 2011

### Ordinance 17143

Proposed No. 2011-0114.2

Sponsors Dunn and Phillips

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to public transportation;  
2 adopting the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-  
3 2021 and Metro Transit Service Guidelines; and repealing  
4 Ordinance 12060, Section 1, Ordinance 12060, Section 2;  
5 Ordinance 12060, Section 3, Ordinance 12060, Section 4;  
6 Ordinance 12060, Section 5, Exhibit A to Ordinance  
7 12060, Exhibit B to Ordinance 12060, Exhibit C to  
8 Ordinance 12060, Exhibit D to Ordinance 12060,  
9 Ordinance 14464, Section 1, Ordinance 14464, Section 2,  
10 Ordinance 14464, Section 3, Ordinance 14464, Section 4,  
11 Ordinance 14464, Section 5, Ordinance 14464, Section 6,  
12 Attachment A to Ordinance 14464, Attachment B to  
13 Ordinance 14664, Attachment C to Ordinance 14464,  
14 Attachment D to Ordinance 14464, Ordinance 15047,  
15 Section 1, Ordinance 15047, Section 2, Attachment A to  
16 Ordinance 15047, Attachment B to Ordinance 15047,  
17 Attachment C to Ordinance 15047, Attachment D to  
18 Ordinance 15047, Ordinance 15962, Section 1, Ordinance  
19 15962, Section 2, Attachment A to Ordinance 15962,

20 Ordinance 15963, Section 1, Ordinance 15963, Section 2,  
21 Attachment A to Ordinance 15963, Ordinance 16708,  
22 Section 1, Ordinance 16708, Section 2, Ordinance 16708,  
23 Section 3, Attachment A to Ordinance 16708 and  
24 Attachment B to Ordinance 16708.

25 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

26 **SECTION 1. Findings:**

27 A. A Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation ("Comprehensive Plan") was  
28 adopted by Resolution 6641 on October 21, 1993, by the council of the former  
29 municipality of metropolitan Seattle and ratified by the King County council by adoption  
30 of Ordinance 11032, Section 28.

31 B. On December 11, 1995, the council passed Ordinance 12060, amending the  
32 Comprehensive Plan and adopting a Six-Year Transit Development Plan, which guided  
33 implementation of service changes and improvements in a way consistent with the new  
34 Comprehensive Plan.

35 C. Following periodic updates to the Comprehensive Plan and The Six-Year  
36 Transit Development Plan, the council adopted Ordinance 15963 in November 2007,  
37 replacing the Six-Year Transit Development Plan with a ten-year strategic plan. That  
38 strategic plan included guidance about the priorities for improvements to the public  
39 transportation system consistent with the Transit Now program as established via  
40 Ordinance 15962.

41 D. Beginning in 2008 and 2009, the global recession caused a significant  
42 downturn in sales tax revenues funding the current and future years of the Metro transit

43 system. As a result of these changing conditions, the council engaged in a multi-year  
44 strategy to refocus, make more efficient and save as much transit service as possible.  
45 This strategy involved: a comprehensive audit of the transit division; reductions in  
46 staffing and services that support the delivery of transit service; deferral of non-  
47 RapidRide and Partnership Transit Now services; multiple fare increases; changing the  
48 way transit service is planned and delivered; and appointment of a broad stakeholder  
49 group as a regional transit task force with a charge to make recommendations regarding  
50 the policy framework for the Metro transit system.

51 E. Following seven months of intensive deliberations, the regional transit task  
52 force delivered its final recommendation report with the unanimous support of task force  
53 members. The recommendations in the task force report focused on the following areas:

54 1. Transparency and clarity: that the transit division provide more transparency  
55 and clarity to the public on the agency's decision-making process and develop a set of  
56 performance measures and clear and transparent guidelines to be used in service  
57 allocation decisions;

58 2. Cost control: that the transit division continue to control costs and build  
59 toward a more sustainable financial structure over time; and

60 3. Productivity, social equity and geographic value: that, in making decisions  
61 about service reduction and service growth, the transit division emphasizes productivity,  
62 ensures social equity and provides geographic value.

63 F. In July 2010, the council adopted the first-ever countywide King County  
64 Strategic Plan 2010-2014, establishing prioritized goals, objectives and strategies for the  
65 programs and services of King County government. This countywide plan was also

66 intended to provide a framework for all agency-level strategic planning, including  
67 planning for the transit division.

68           G. The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021, including the King  
69 County Metro Service Guidelines, adopted by this ordinance, builds on the King County  
70 Strategic Plan 2010-2014 and the policy framework and recommendations of the regional  
71 transit task force and is also guided by the challenges King County Metro faces: regional  
72 growth; the evolving transportation system; climate change; diverse customer needs; and  
73 a structural funding deficit.

74           H. The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 modifies the Transit  
75 Now program service implementation phasing plan and revises the description of the  
76 Transit Now program that will occur within the 2011-2021 time frame. The King County  
77 council, as authorized by K.C.C. 4.29.020 and, if passed by a supermajority of at least six  
78 affirmative votes of the council, may allow the proceeds from the Transit Now tax to  
79 fund service consistent with King County Code and King County Metro transit policies  
80 and goals.

81           I. The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 replaces the  
82 Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation, the Strategic Plan for Public  
83 Transportation 2007-2016 and the separately adopted Transit Program Financial Policies,  
84 which are therefore repealed by this ordinance together with the ordinances approving  
85 and amending them.

86           J. The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and King County  
87 Metro Service Guidelines are meant to be living documents setting the policy for and  
88 guiding the implementation of the Metro transit service network while responding to

89 growth throughout the county, while also incorporating regular review of policies by the  
90 regional transit committee.

91 K. Regional transit committee review of policies within the timeframe provided  
92 by the county charter for deliberation of legislation could be challenging due to the  
93 multiple due dates of reports and plan updates required by this ordinance and other  
94 county issues such as budget deliberations or recess commitments. City and county  
95 leaders intend to work cooperatively to ensure that regional committee meetings and  
96 review provide the full time allocated in the county charter for future deliberations on the  
97 Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and King County Metro Service  
98 Guidelines. This intent is recognized in King County council rules, K.C.C. 1.24.065.B.5,  
99 which provide that the chair of a regional committee cannot take a unilateral action to  
100 cancel a regional committee meeting without concurrence of the vice chair or action of  
101 the full committee in lieu of vice chair agreement.

102 SECTION 2. The following are each hereby repealed:

103 A. Ordinance 12060, Section 1;

104 B. Ordinance 12060, Section 2;

105 C. Ordinance 12060, Section 3;

106 D. Ordinance 12060, Section 4;

107 E. Ordinance 12060, Section 5;

108 F. Exhibit A to Ordinance 12060, Six-Year Transit Development Plan for 1996 -  
109 2001;

110 G. Exhibit B to Ordinance 12060, Six-Year Transit Development Plan for 1996 -  
111 2001 Appendices;

112 H. Exhibit C to Ordinance 12060, Six-Year Transit Development Plan for 1996 -  
113 2001 Public Involvement Report;

114 I. Exhibit D to Ordinance 12060, Six-Year Transit Development Plan for 1996 -  
115 2001 Addendum to the Regional Transit System Plan Final Environmental Impact  
116 Statement;

117 J. Ordinance 14464, Section 1;

118 K. Ordinance 14464, Section 2;

119 L. Ordinance 14464, Section 3;

120 M. Ordinance 14464, Section 4;

121 N. Ordinance 14464, Section 5;

122 O. Ordinance 14464, Section 6;

123 P. Attachment A to Ordinance 14464, Six-Year Transit Development Plan for  
124 2002 to 2007;

125 Q. Attachment B to Ordinance 14664, Six-Year Transit Development Plan for  
126 2002 to 2007: Appendices RTC Recommended September 2002;

127 R. Attachment C to Ordinance 14464, Public Involvement Report Summary  
128 Proposed Initiatives for the Six-Year Transit Development Plan King County Metro  
129 Transit Fall 2001;

130 S. Attachment D to Ordinance 14464, Addendum to the Regional Transit System  
131 Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement, Six-Year Transit Development Plan for  
132 2002-2007;

133 T. Ordinance 15047, Section 1;

134 U. Ordinance 15047, Section 2;

- 135 V. Attachment A to Ordinance 15047, Exhibit A - 2002 Six-Year Transit  
136 Development Plan Update;
- 137 W. Attachment B to Ordinance 15047, Exhibit B - 2002 Six-Year Transit  
138 Development Plan Update;
- 139 X. Attachment C to Ordinance 15047, Exhibit C - 2002 Six-Year Transit  
140 Development Plan Update;
- 141 Y. Attachment D to Ordinance 15047, Exhibit D - 2002 Six-Year Transit  
142 Development Plan Update;
- 143 Z. Ordinance 15962, Section 1;
- 144 AA. Ordinance 15962, Section 2;
- 145 BB. Attachment A to Ordinance 15962, Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan  
146 for Public Transportation, dated November 5, 2007;
- 147 CC. Ordinance 15963, Section 1;
- 148 DD. Ordinance 15963, Section 2;
- 149 EE. Attachment A to Ordinance 15963, Strategic Plan for Public Transportation  
150 2007-2016, November, 2007;
- 151 FF. Ordinance 16708, Section 1;
- 152 GG. Ordinance 16708, Section 2;
- 153 HH. Ordinance 16708, Section 3;
- 154 II. Attachment A to Ordinance 16708, Strategic Plan for Public Transportation  
155 2007-2016, dated November 5, 2009; and
- 156 JJ. Attachment B to Ordinance 16708, 2010/2011 Transit Program Financial  
157 Policies, dated October 30, 2009.

158           SECTION 3. The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021, which is  
159 Attachment A to this ordinance, is hereby adopted, superseding the Comprehensive Plan  
160 for Public Transportation and the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan for Transportation.

161           SECTION 4. The King County Metro Service Guidelines, which are Attachment  
162 B to this ordinance, are hereby adopted.

163           SECTION 5. Beginning with a baseline report in 2012 and then annually  
164 thereafter through the duration of the plan, the executive is directed to transmit to the  
165 council, for acceptance by motion, an annual service guidelines report of Metro's transit  
166 system, complementary to the biennial report on meeting the goals, objectives and  
167 strategies identified in chapter three of the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-  
168 2021. This service guidelines report is shaped by the Strategic Plan for Public  
169 Transportation 2011-2021 and the King County Metro Service Guidelines.

170           A. For the period of the report, the service guidelines report shall include:

171           1. The corridors analyzed to determine the Metro All-Day and Peak Network  
172 with a summary of resulting scores and assigned service levels as determined by the King  
173 County Metro Service Guidelines;

174           2. The results of the analysis including a list of over-served and under-served  
175 transit corridors and the estimated number of service hours, as either an increase or  
176 decrease, necessary to meet each underserved corridor's needs;

177           3. The performance of transit services by route and any changes in the King  
178 County Metro Service Guidelines thresholds since the previous reporting period, using  
179 the performance measures identified in Chapter III of the strategic plan and in the  
180 guidelines;



181           4. A list of transit service changes made to routes and corridors of the network  
182 since the last reporting period;

183           5. Network and rider connectivity associated with transit services delivered by  
184 other providers; and

185           6. A list of potential changes, if any, to the strategic plan and guidelines to  
186 better meet their policy intent.

187           B. The report and motion shall be transmitted by March 31 of each year for  
188 consideration by the regional transit committee.

189           SECTION 6. By April 30, 2012, 2013 and 2015, and as necessary thereafter for  
190 the purpose of validating policy intent of the strategic plan, the executive shall transmit to  
191 the council an ordinance to update the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021  
192 and the King County Metro Service Guidelines. At a minimum, the legislation and  
193 update should include:

194           A. Changes necessary to account for separately adopted transit policy documents  
195 including updating the plan and guidelines, and repealing or rescinding, as necessary,  
196 appropriately accounted for policies;

197           B. Any proposed changes to address unanticipated issues associated with  
198 implementing the plan and guidelines, including the factors that implement the concepts  
199 of productivity including land use, social equity and geographic value;

200           C. Changes that may be necessary to achieve the five-year implementation plan  
201 required in Section 7 of this ordinance;

202           D. Changes necessary to address the results of the collaborative process required  
203 in Section 8 of this ordinance; and

204 E. Additional substantive changes that may also be proposed following regional  
205 transit committee discussion.

206 SECTION 7. By June 15, 2012, the executive shall transmit to the council, for  
207 acceptance by motion, a five-year implementation plan for alternatives to traditional  
208 transit service delivery consistent with the recommendations from the 2010 regional  
209 transit task force and guidance from the King County Metro Service Guidelines. This  
210 plan should, at a minimum, include:

211 A. A review of alternative service delivery best practices in the transit industry;

212 B. Consideration of local service needs;

213 C. Stakeholder involvement;

214 D. Costs and benefits of all evaluated alternative service delivery options;

215 E. A summary of constraints to implementation and methods to reduce barriers  
216 for change;

217 F. Strategies to build ridership, such as through marketing, where resources are  
218 available to do so;

219 G. Recommendations for alternative service delivery; and

220 H. A timeline for implementation actions.

221 SECTION 8. By April 30, 2013, and as part of the 2013 transmittal required in  
222 Section 6 of this ordinance, the executive shall transmit to the council an ordinance to  
223 update the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and the King County  
224 Metro Service Guidelines recognizing that the strategic plan and guidelines are based  
225 upon Metro's current network, which will require future changes to meet the 2010  
226 regional transit task force recommendations. Additionally, by October 31, 2012 the

227 executive shall transmit a preliminary results report produced through the collaborative  
228 process identified in Section 8.A. of this ordinance to the regional transit committee. At a  
229 minimum, the legislation and update should include refinements to the guidelines'  
230 methodology to:

231       A. Incorporate input from local jurisdictions as generated through a collaborative  
232 process defined by the executive;

233       B. Address the factors, methodology and prioritization of service additions in  
234 existing and new corridors consistent with Strategy 6.1.1;

235       C. More closely align factors used to serve and connect centers in the  
236 development of the All-Day and Peak Network and resulting service level designations,  
237 including consideration of existing public transit services, with jurisdictions' growth  
238 decisions, such as zoning and transit-supportive design requirements, and actions  
239 associated with but not limited to permitting, transit operating enhancements, parking  
240 controls and pedestrian facilities; and

241       D. Create a category of additional service priority, complementary to existing  
242 priorities for adding service contained within the King County Metro Service Guidelines,  
243 so that priorities include service enhancements to and from, between and within Vision  
244 2040 regionally designated centers, and other centers where plans call for transit-  
245 supportive densities and jurisdictions have invested in capital facilities, made operational  
246 changes that improve the transit operating environment and access to transit, and  
247 implemented programs that incentivize transit use.

248       SECTION 9. When submitting a proposal for reduction of total Metro transit  
249 system service hours greater than ten percent of the current service hours, the executive

250 should include a proposed community outreach and awareness program to be  
251 implemented in support of developing and implementing the service hour reductions.  
252 The program should be appropriate to the size and scale of the transit service reductions  
253 and incorporate a community feedback process. In light of the scope and schedule of the

254 necessary outreach, the program should include consideration of the use of external  
255 professional resources to augment county staffing.  
256

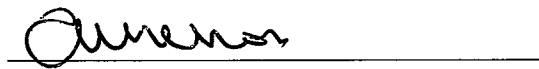
Ordinance 17143 was introduced on 3/7/2011 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 7/11/2011, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague,  
Ms. Patterson, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Dunn and Mr.  
McDermott  
No: 0  
Excused: 0

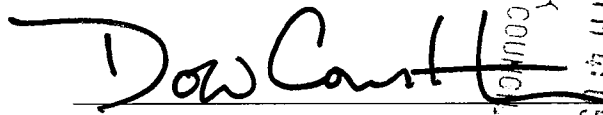
KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Larry Gossett, Chair

ATTEST:

  
Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this 13 day of JULY, 2011.

  
Dow Constantine, County Executive

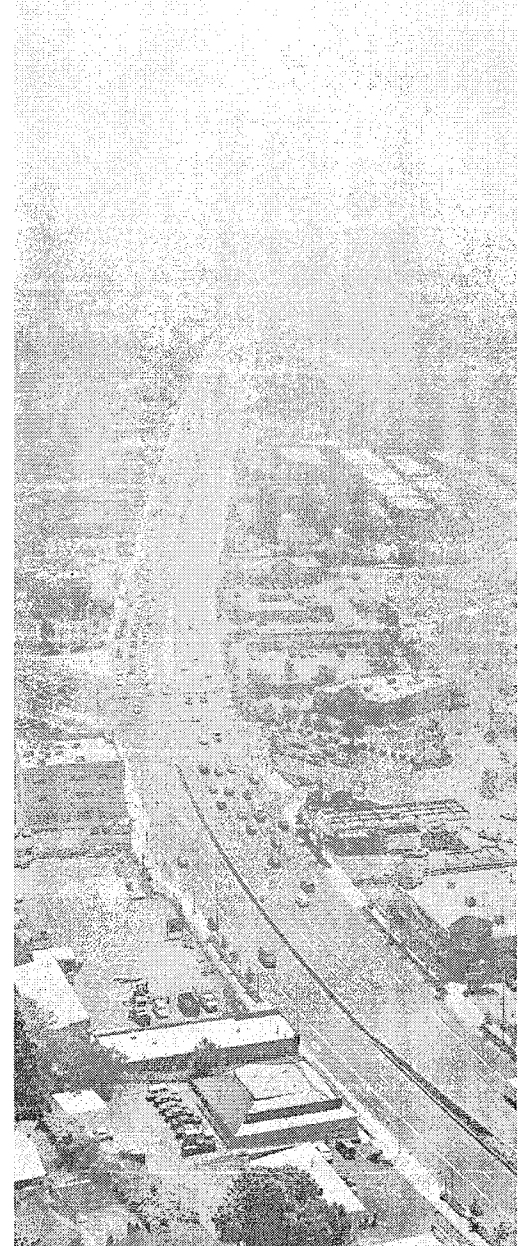
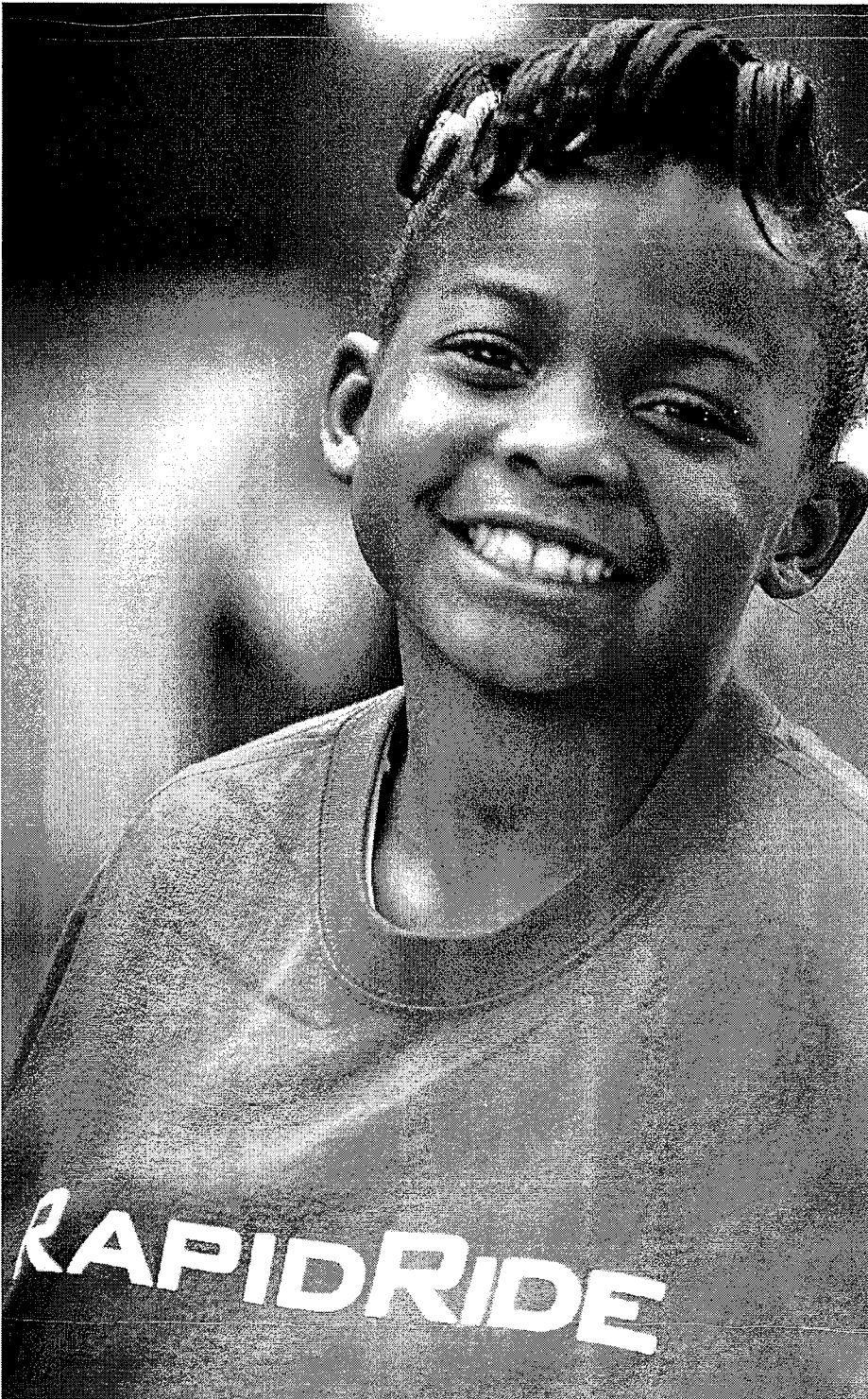
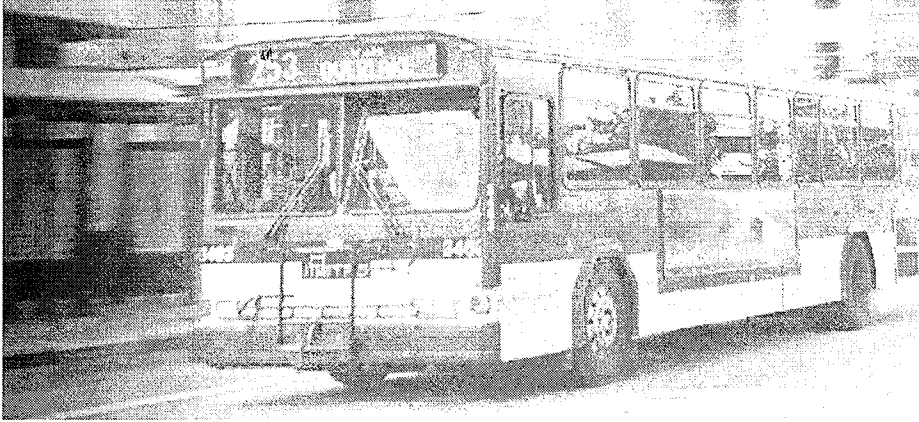
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KING COUNTY COUNCIL CLERK

**Attachments:** A. King County Metro Transit Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021, dated June 15, 2011, B. King County Metro Service Guidelines, dated June 15, 2011



*We'll Get You There*

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



# Letter from the General Manager

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present the ***King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021***. This is the latest in a series of visionary plans Metro has used to imagine the future we want for public transportation, and then achieve it.

Metro's last major strategic planning effort resulted in the *2002-2007 Metro Six-Year Development Plan*, which had updates in 2004, 2007, and 2009. At the time this earlier plan was written, communities and employment centers were growing around the county, and traffic congestion had become one of the region's foremost problems. The 2002 plan set the stage for Metro to enhance mobility by serving more people throughout the King County and by connecting to more destinations.

The 2002 plan led to a number of successful initiatives. Metro extended service to new locations and restructured several local transit networks to boost productivity and better match service with the destinations people wanted to reach. We helped launch a regional fare payment system, ORCA, making it easier for people to travel by bus, train, light rail and ferries throughout the region. We worked to procure hybrid articulated buses so we could carry more passengers while reducing emissions. We attracted new riders by making buses and bus stops more accessible, developing park-and-ride facilities, and expanding employee commute programs. And we took Metro service to a higher level by launching RapidRide, a new generation of service designed to keep people moving throughout the day on heavily used corridors. Metro accomplished all this and more despite two financial downturns that constrained our ability to grow.

People responded positively to the changes we made. Metro set ridership records in three consecutive years, culminating with 118 million rides in 2008 and outpacing growth in jobs, population, and vehicle miles traveled in King County. As a result of our successes, public transportation has become a more robust and better-integrated part of the Puget Sound region's transportation system.

**Now that we have reached this stage, what challenges does our new strategic plan address?** Many of the old ones, like congestion, climate change, and regional growth, are still with us. The region's *Transportation 2040* action plan calls for an ambitious expansion of public transportation to accommodate the large population and job increases expected in King County. And we face the urgent need to craft a new funding structure for public transportation. Metro's current revenue sources cannot supply the funds we need to meet our region's expectations. I am proud of Metro's record of delivering promised services even when funding has fallen far short of expectations over the past decade, but we have exhausted many one-time solutions and cost-cutting measures that we have used to get by. A new funding structure is imperative if we are to fully realize our vision for public transportation.

As we crafted a plan to take on these and other challenges, two recent planning processes gave us invaluable guidance. The *King County Strategic Plan 2011-2014* was developed under the leadership of County Executive Dow Constantine in collaboration with King County Council members and other elected officials and input from thousands of residents and County employees. The County plan's eight goals are the framework for Metro's plan.

Second, the Regional Transit Task Force was formed in 2010 to consider a new policy framework for Metro as we face both growing demand for transit services and a worsening financial outlook. The task force members represented many areas of the county and points of view, but they came together on consensus proposals for Metro. While these recommendations are still under consideration, the themes that emerged in this group's discussions—emphasizing productivity, ensuring that bus services are available for those most dependent on transit, and providing value to the diverse cities and communities throughout the county— influenced our plan in many ways.

Thanks to all the groundbreaking work and forward-looking thinking that has contributed to this strategic plan, I am confident that Metro can continue our tradition of prioritizing the customer and creating the future envisioned for public transportation in King County. We will be reporting on our performance in publications and on our website; I invite you to follow our progress.

Sincerely,

Kevin Desmond, General Manager  
King County Metro Transit

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# Executive Summary

## Public transportation in the Puget Sound region: today and tomorrow

Public transportation is vitally important to the Puget Sound region. It provides connections to jobs, schools, and other destinations, and enables those with limited mobility options to travel. Public transportation enhances regional economic vitality by freeing up roadway capacity and improving the mobility of people, goods, and services. It saves the region time and money. It helps accommodate regional growth by making better use of the region's existing infrastructure and it benefits the environment. Public transportation improves the quality of life for residents and visitors to the Puget Sound region.

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

### **This is Metro's vision:**

Metro provides safe, efficient and reliable public transportation that people find easy to use. The agency offers a cost-effective mix of products and services, tailored to specific market needs. Its fixed-route bus system meets most public transportation needs, particularly in areas of concentrated economic activity or urban development and along the corridors that link them. Metro also offers alternative public transportation options for people who cannot use the fixed-route system. No matter what community they live in or whether they have special needs because of age, disability or income, 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 and use 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 has kept 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 its energy consumption.

The public is engaged with Metro—informed about its 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 its 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.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A pathway to the vision

To guide Metro towards its vision, this plan includes goals, objectives and strategies that build on the work of two major regional planning processes:

**King County's strategic plan:** In 2010, King County adopted its first countywide strategic plan, *King County Strategic Plan 2010–2014: Working Together for One King County*. The plan is a key tool in Executive Dow Constantine's work to reform county government by focusing on customer service, partnerships, and ways to bring down the cost of government. Metro's strategic plan will guide work on portions of the countywide strategic plan that involve public transportation.

**Regional Transit Task Force:** Metro used input from the Regional Transit Task Force in the creation of this plan. The task force was a groundbreaking countywide effort to recommend a new policy framework for transit in King County that took place in 2010. Metro drew on the task force's recommendations as a way to ensure that diverse points of view are well-represented in the strategic plan.

### Navigating the road ahead

Metro faces complex—and often competing—challenges. The Puget Sound region is growing and evolving. Changes in land use and the region's population are having an impact on where public transportation should be located, how service is provided, and who uses that service. Major projects that change the footprint of the transportation system have an impact on public transportation and require regional collaboration during planning and construction and upon completion. Public transportation is called upon to help mitigate climate change and meet diverse customer needs. All the while, Metro's funding structure limits its ability to respond to these challenges.

Metro's strategic plan is intended to address these challenges and chart a path to the future. Metro has formulated eight goals with 17 associated objectives. Each objective has an associated outcome that is related to an aspect of Metro's vision. Metro also has established 36 strategies that are intended to move Metro closer to its objectives, and ultimately to its vision. The table on pages iv-vii summarizes these elements of the plan.

### Ensuring success

Metro will monitor its performance and measure its success in achieving the plan's strategies, objectives, goals, and vision. Metro will measure its objectives through outcomes and its strategies through associated measures. It will compare the performance of its system with that of peer transit agencies. Using this monitoring system, Metro will update and adjust this plan periodically as conditions warrant to ensure that it is moving along the right path.

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

Objective	Strategies	Measures
<b>Goal 1: Safety. Support safe communities.</b>		
<p><b>Keep people safe and secure.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Metro's services and facilities are safe and secure.</p>	<p>Promote safety and security in public transportation operations and facilities.</p> <p>Plan for and execute regional emergency-response and homeland security efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preventable accidents</li> <li>• Operator and passenger incidents and assaults</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction regarding safety and security</li> <li>• Effectiveness of emergency responses</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: Human Potential. Provide equitable opportunities for people from all areas of King County to access the public transportation system.</b>		
<p><b>Provide public transportation products and services that add value throughout King County and that facilitate access to jobs, education and other destinations.</b></p> <p>Outcome: More people throughout King County have access to public transportation products and services.</p>	<p>Design and offer a variety of public transportation products and services appropriate to different markets and mobility needs.</p> <p>Provide travel opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations, such as low-income people, students, youth, seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, and others with limited transportation options.</p> <p>Provide products and services that are designed to provide geographic value in all parts of King County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population with ¼-mile walk access to a transit stop or 2-mile drive to a park-and-ride</li> <li>• % low income population within ¼ mile walk access to transit</li> <li>• % minority population within ¼-mile walk access to transit</li> <li>• Accessible bus stops</li> <li>• Transit mode share by market</li> <li>• Student and reduced-fare permits and usage</li> <li>• Access applicants who undertake fixed-route travel training</li> <li>• Access boardings</li> <li>• Access registrants</li> <li>• Requested Access trips compared to those provided</li> <li>• Number of trips provided by the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Community Access Transportation (CAT) programs</li> <li>• Title VI compliance</li> <li>• % population at 15 dwelling units per acre within ¼ mile walk access of frequent service</li> </ul>

Objective	Strategies	Measures
<b>Goal 3: Economic Growth and Built Environment.</b> Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.		
<p><b>Support a strong, diverse, sustainable economy.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Public transportation products and services are available throughout King County and are well-utilized in centers and areas of concentrated economic activity.</p>	<p>Through investments and partnerships with regional organizations, local jurisdictions and the private sector, provide alternatives to driving alone that connect people to jobs, education and other destinations essential to King County's economic vitality.</p> <p>Partner with employers to make public transportation products and services more affordable and convenient for employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit rides per capita</li> <li>• Effectiveness of partnerships</li> <li>• Park-and-ride utilization</li> <li>• Peak mode share at Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) sites</li> <li>• Employer-sponsored passes and usage</li> <li>• % population at 15 dwelling units per acre within 1/4 mile walk access of frequent service</li> </ul>
<p><b>Address the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county.</b></p> <p>Outcome: More people have access to and regularly use public transportation products and services in King County.</p>	<p>Expand services to accommodate the region's growing population and serve new transit markets.</p> <p>Coordinate and develop services and facilities with other providers to create an integrated and efficient regional transportation system.</p> <p>Work with transit partners, WSDOT and others to manage park-and-ride capacity needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All public transportation ridership in King County (rail, bus, Paratransit, Rideshare)</li> <li>• Centers ridership</li> <li>• Bike rack use</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support compact, healthy communities.</b></p> <p>Outcome: More people regularly use public transportation products and services along corridors with compact development.</p>	<p>Encourage land uses, policies, and development that lead to communities that transit can serve efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Support bicycle and pedestrian access to jobs, services, and the transit system.</p>	
<p><b>Support economic development by using existing transportation infrastructure efficiently and effectively.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Regional investments in major highway capacity projects and parking requirements are complemented by high transit service levels in congested corridors and centers.</p>	<p>Serve centers and other areas of concentrated activity, consistent with <i>Transportation 2040</i>.</p>	

Objective	Strategies	Measures
<b>Goal 4: Environmental Sustainability.</b> Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.		
<p><b>Help reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the region.</b></p> <p>Outcome: People drive single-occupant vehicles less.</p>	<p>Increase the proportion of travel in King County that is provided by public transportation products and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)</li> <li>• Transit mode share</li> <li>• Public transportation energy use per passenger mile</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimize Metro's environmental footprint.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Metro's environmental footprint is reduced (normalized against service growth).</p>	<p>Operate vehicles and adopt technology that has the least impact on the environment and maximizes long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Incorporate sustainable design, construction, operating and maintenance practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average miles per gallon of the Metro bus fleet</li> <li>• Energy use at Metro facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 5: Service Excellence.</b> Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.		
<p><b>Improve satisfaction with Metro's products and services and the way they are delivered.</b></p> <p>Outcome: People are more satisfied with Metro's products and services.</p>	<p>Provide service that is easy to understand and use.</p> <p>Emphasize customer service in transit operations and workforce training.</p> <p>Improve transit speed and reliability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conformance with King County policy on communications accessibility and translation to other languages</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Customer complaints</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve public awareness of Metro products and services.</b></p> <p>Outcome: People understand how to use Metro's products and services and use them more often.</p>	<p>Use available tools, new technologies, and new methods to improve communication with customers.</p> <p>Promote Metro's products and services to existing and potential customers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-time performance by time of day</li> <li>• Load factor</li> <li>• Utilization of Metro web tools</li> <li>• One Regional Card for All (ORCA) usage</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 6: Financial Stewardship.</b> Exercise sound financial management and build Metro's long term sustainability.		
<p><b>Emphasize planning and delivery of productive service.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Service productivity improves.</p>	<p>Manage the transit system through service guidelines and performance measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boardings per platform hour</li> <li>• Passenger miles per platform hour</li> <li>• Boardings per revenue hour</li> <li>• Passenger miles per revenue mile</li> <li>• Access boardings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Control costs.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Metro costs grow at or below the rate of inflation.</p>	<p>Continually explore and implement cost efficiencies, including operational and administrative efficiencies.</p> <p>Provide and maintain capital assets to support efficient and effective service delivery.</p> <p>Develop and implement alternative public transportation services and delivery strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuter van boardings</li> <li>• Cost per boarding</li> <li>• Cost per hour</li> <li>• Service hours operated</li> <li>• Asset condition assessment</li> <li>• Base capacity level of service</li> <li>• Fare revenues</li> <li>• Farebox recovery</li> <li>• Fare parity with other providers in</li> </ul>

		the region
Objective	Strategies	Measures
<p><b>Seek to establish a sustainable funding structure to support short- and long-term public transportation needs.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Adequate funding to support King County's short- and long-term public transportation needs.</p>	<p>Secure long-term stable funding.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Establish fund management policies that ensure stability through a variety of economic conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully allocated costs</li> <li>• Operational and cost efficiency indicators</li> <li>• Service hours and service hour change per route</li> <li>• Ridership and ridership change per route</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 7: Public Engagement and Transparency.</b> Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves and empowers people and communities.</p>		
<p><b>Empower people to play an active role in shaping Metro's products and services.</b></p> <p>Outcome: The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.</p>	<p>Engage the public in the planning process and improve customer outreach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public participation rates</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction regarding their role in Metro's planning process</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction regarding Metro communications and reporting</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase customer and public access to understandable, accurate and transparent information.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.</p>	<p>Communicate service change concepts, the decision-making process, and public transportation information in language that is accessible and easy to understand.</p> <p>Explore innovative ways to report to and inform the public.</p>	
<p><b>Goal 8: Quality Workforce.</b> Develop and empower Metro's most valuable asset, its employees.</p>		
<p><b>Attract and recruit quality employees.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Metro is satisfied with the quality of its workforce.</p>	<p>Market Metro as an employer of choice and cultivate a diverse and highly skilled applicant pool.</p> <p>Promote equity, social justice and transparency in hiring and recruiting activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographics of Metro employees</li> <li>• Employee job satisfaction</li> <li>• Promotion rate</li> <li>• Probationary pass rate</li> <li>• Training opportunities provided</li> <li>• Trainings completed</li> <li>• Employee performance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empower and retain efficient, effective, and productive employees.</b></p> <p>Outcome: Metro employees are satisfied with their jobs and feel their work contributes to an improved quality of life in King County.</p>	<p>Build leadership and promote professional skills.</p> <p>Recognize employees for outstanding performance, excellent customer service, innovation and strategic thinking.</p> <p>Provide training opportunities that enable employees to reach their full potential.</p>	

# Introduction

King County Metro Transit's strategic plan is divided into three sections: **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 vision, goals, objectives and strategies; and **Plan Performance Monitoring**, which describes the process Metro will use to 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 2009, Metro provided more than 110 million passenger trips and carried passengers approximately 496 million miles on its fixed-route system. Metro also meets public transportation needs through an array of other products and services (see sidebar).

Public transportation improves the quality of life in the region by providing mobility to those who need or choose to utilize it. It connects commuters to jobs—more than 30 percent of work trips to downtown Seattle are made on transit. It connects students to schools and residents to recreation. It offers travel options to those who cannot drive, and provides assurance to drivers that other mobility options exist should they need them.

Public transportation reduces transportation costs for individual users and families. In 2009, the Seattle area saved approximately \$323 million in fuel and time costs because of the existence of public transportation. This is more than twice the savings of Portland, San Diego, Houston and Dallas<sup>1</sup>.

Transit enhances the region's economic vitality by freeing up roadway capacity, improving the movement of people and goods. On an average weekday, Metro provides service for more than 113,000<sup>2</sup> people on major state routes. It offers commute options that reduce the need for regional investment in parking infrastructure and roadways. On weekdays in the afternoon, Metro moves more than 21,000<sup>3</sup> people on freeways and major state routes, roughly the equivalent of seven lanes of traffic<sup>4</sup>. And public transportation projects stimulate the economy by creating jobs.

Public transportation will support growth by accommodating the travel needs of a bigger share of the region's projected population, and is an integral part of the regional growth strategy laid out in the Puget Sound Regional Council's *Vision 2040* and *Transportation 2040*.

#### Metro products and services

Metro Transit provides more than 100 million annual fixed-route transit rides—traditional transit service that operates on specific pathways and at specific times—to residents and visitors of King County.

Metro is more than buses. It provides other programs and services that augment the fixed-route transit system, including the largest publicly owned vanpool program in the country, paratransit services, dial-a-ride transit, and other specialized products.

The combination of fixed-route transit service, Metro programs, and other Metro services are referred to as "public transportation" or "Metro's products and services" in the strategic plan. These terms encompass all of the things that Metro does.

<sup>1</sup> Texas Transportation Institute, *Urban Mobility Report 2010* (Texas A&M University System: 2010), 30.

<sup>2</sup> Based on spring APC data for Metro service on major state routes, defined as I-405, I-5, I-90, SR-104, SR-164, SR-167, SR-169, SR-181, SR-202, SR-509, SR-513, SR-515, SR-516, SR-520, SR-522, SR-523, SR-526, SR-599, SR-900, SR-908, and SR-99.

<sup>3</sup> Based on spring APC data for Metro service for one hour during the PM peak period on I-405, I-5, I-90, SR-520, SR-522 and SR-99.

<sup>4</sup> Highway lane equivalent is calculated by taking the total transit riders on I-405, I-5, I-90, SR-520, SR-522 and SR-99 and dividing by average hourly person throughout on each highway, assuming that the average auto occupancy is 1.1.



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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 is committed to improving the quality of public transportation and increasing ridership and use of its products and services, thereby enhancing the entire regional transportation system.

### Metro's mandate

The King County Department of Transportation's Metro Transit Division is directed to perform the "metropolitan public transportation function" as authorized in the Revised Code of Washington 35.58, in alignment with other applicable codes and the financial policies adopted by the Metropolitan King County Council. Metro is required to plan and operate transit services consistent with county, regional, state and federal planning policies.

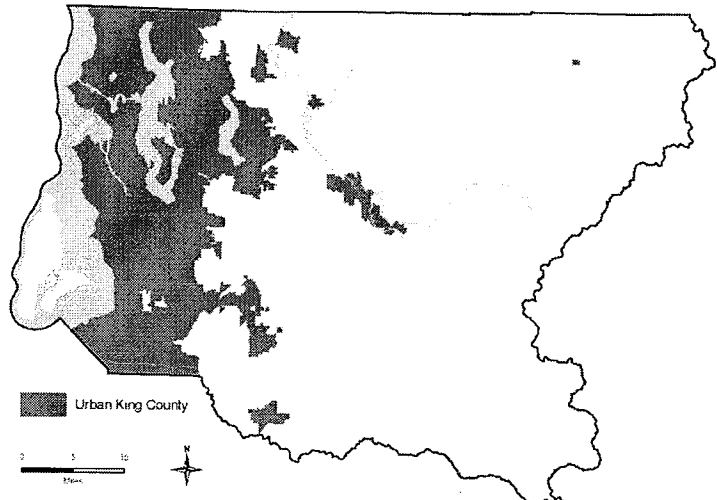
**Countywide planning and policies:** King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) are developed by a group of elected officials from King County and the cities and jurisdictions within the county. These policies are consistent with state law, state agency guidance, decisions of the Growth Management Policy Council (GMPC) 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 the *Countywide Planning Policies*, the *King County Comprehensive Plan*, the *King County Strategic Plan*, and the *King County Energy Plan*.



**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 establishes federal funding priorities for the region. Metro participates in the planning process and strives to meet the goals of the regional plans, *Vision 2040* and *Transportation 2040*.

**Washington state planning and policies:** In 1990, the Washington Legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA requires that the state's largest and fastest-growing counties conduct comprehensive land-use and transportation planning, to concentrate new growth in compact "urban growth areas," and protect natural resources and environmentally critical areas. King County's UGA is shown in Figure 1. The GMA requires King County to consider

Figure 1: Urban growth area, King County



## INTRODUCTION

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 the County's compliance with the GMA by focusing public transportation services on urban growth areas.

**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), 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 (ADA) 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.

**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."

## Strategic Planning

### Why a strategic plan?

Strategic planning is a process by which an organization assesses how it is doing, figures out where it wants to go, and charts a path to get there. Strategic plans define important goals, set specific directions, and establish the policy framework for the future.

In 2010, King County adopted its first countywide strategic plan, *King County Strategic Plan 2010–2014: Working Together for One King County*. The plan is a key tool in Executive Constantine's work to reform county government by focusing on customer service, partnerships and ways to bring down the cost of government. Metro's strategic plan incorporates King County's guiding principles (see sidebar) and lays out steps for implementing portions of the countywide strategic plan that influence or are influenced by public transportation.

Metro has also used the input of the Regional Transit Task Force in the creation of this plan. The task force was a major regional effort to consider a new policy framework for transit in King County that took place in 2010; it is explained in more detail on pages 12-13. Metro used input from the task force's work a way to ensure that diverse points of view are well-represented in this strategic plan.

Metro has a particular need to create a strategic plan at this time. Metro's structural financing problems affect its ability to deliver existing service and address increasing demand for public transportation into the future.

This strategic plan is a way for Metro to define its role in the delivery of King County's strategic plan, follow through on the recommendations of the Regional Transit Task Force, and navigate the significant challenges it faces, while setting a sustainable course for the future.

### How will this plan be used?

Metro's strategic plan is intended for a variety of audiences. It is meant to do the following:

- Communicate Metro's vision and its intended direction and emphasis over the next 10 years.
- Describe the policy framework in which King County Metro's operational and budget decisions are made.
- Signify Metro's commitment to customer satisfaction and quality service.
- Serve as a baseline to show progress and allow the public to hold Metro accountable.
- Align Metro's employees, services and programs with King

### Guiding principles from King County's Strategic Plan

The following are King County's guiding principles about the roles and responsibilities of county government:

**Collaborative** – We work together effectively within the organization and in collaboration with other governments, private entities and community partners.

**Service-oriented** – We listen and respond to our customers in a culturally responsive way and prioritize their satisfaction as we do our work.

**Results-focused** – We establish community driven goals, measure our performance, and report to the public on our success in meeting those goals.

**Accountable** – We are responsive and transparent to the public in our roles, functions and actions as individuals and as a government.

**Innovative** – We are creative, learn from experience and results, and seek out new and efficient ways to solve problems and serve the public.

**Professional** – We uphold the high standards, skills, competence, and integrity of our professions in doing the work of King County government.

**Fair and Just** – We serve all residents of King County by promoting fairness and opportunity and eliminating inequities.

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County's goals

- Provide a structure to ensure oversight and management of Metro's programs and services.

### **What will this plan achieve?**

This plan lays out a vision and mission for public transportation services in King County and describes the strategies that will move Metro towards that vision. It also defines desired outcomes and how progress will be measured.

Some elements of this plan—the mission, vision, goals and objectives—are expected to be realized over a long-term time frame. The other element of the plan—the strategies—are expected to be realized in a shorter time frame. This 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 will limit Metro's ability to implement every strategy in this 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.

## Challenges

Metro based this strategic plan in part on an assessment of its current environment and the challenges it faces both within and outside the organization; these are described below. The goals, objectives and strategies articulated 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 14th most populous county in the nation. It has a variety of geographic characteristics and diverse communities; land uses, densities and population vary greatly.

The densest parts of the county, where most people live and work, have little room to expand existing transportation infrastructure, so building new highways, roads, and other infrastructure would be both costly and technically challenging. Because of this, the regional growth plans call for more intensive use of existing infrastructure, increasing the number of people using transit services and the proportion of overall regional trips made on transit.

**Regional population and economic growth:** In the past 10 years, King County's population has grown by 11 percent. Cities throughout the county have seen population growth and have annexed large areas that previously were unincorporated. Most cities in the County have increased in population since 2000. Demand for public transportation has increased along with population growth.

More growth is expected throughout the region. The Puget Sound Regional Council estimates there will be an additional 1.5 million people in the region by 2040—a 42 percent increase. Growth in the number of jobs is also expected. An estimated 1.2 million new jobs will come to the region by 2040—a 57 percent increase since 2000. More people and jobs (shown in Figure 2) mean that Metro will have an opportunity to serve more riders and major employment centers.

This growth will be focused in King County's centers (see sidebar). The centers referred to in Metro's strategic plan are shown in Figure 4.

Public transportation ridership tends to fluctuate with changes in fuel prices, population and employment levels, and other changes. As shown in Figure 3, Metro's ridership grew each year between 2002 and 2008, culminating in 2008 with its highest annual ridership of more than 118 million boardings. At that time, Metro's ridership growth per service hour was outpacing that of the 10 largest transit agencies in the nation. Ridership has decreased since then, in part because of high unemployment. As the economy recovers and employment levels return to normal, Metro's ridership is expected to increase again.

**Ridership changes:** Changing demographics, such as income, age, and ethnicity, as well as access to transit and household density, also have an impact on King County's transit system. For example, King County's population is aging; people 65 and older now account for 10 percent of the people who live here. An aging population may rely more on public transportation for its travel needs than a younger population would.

Figure 2: Puget Sound region projected population and employment growth



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King County is also becoming more diverse in its ethnic, cultural and language makeup, and that diversity is increasingly spreading to more areas of King County. Metro's public transportation services will be called upon to address gaps in mobility by serving people who have limited transportation options, including seniors, youth, students, people with disabilities, people of color, those with limited English proficiency and economically disadvantaged communities.

### Centers

Centers are the hallmark of PSRC's *Vision 2040* and its Regional Growth Strategy. Designated regional growth centers have been identified for housing and employment growth, as well as for regional funding. Regional manufacturing/industrial centers are locations for increased employment.

In addition to PSRC's designated centers, Metro has also identified "transit activity centers" in King County. Transit Activity centers are areas of the county that are important for Metro to serve and that are typically associated with higher levels of transit use. 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: Metro Ridership 2000-2010

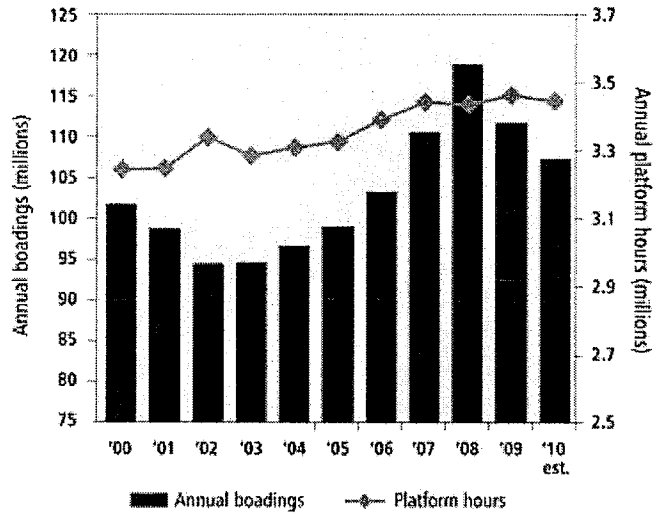
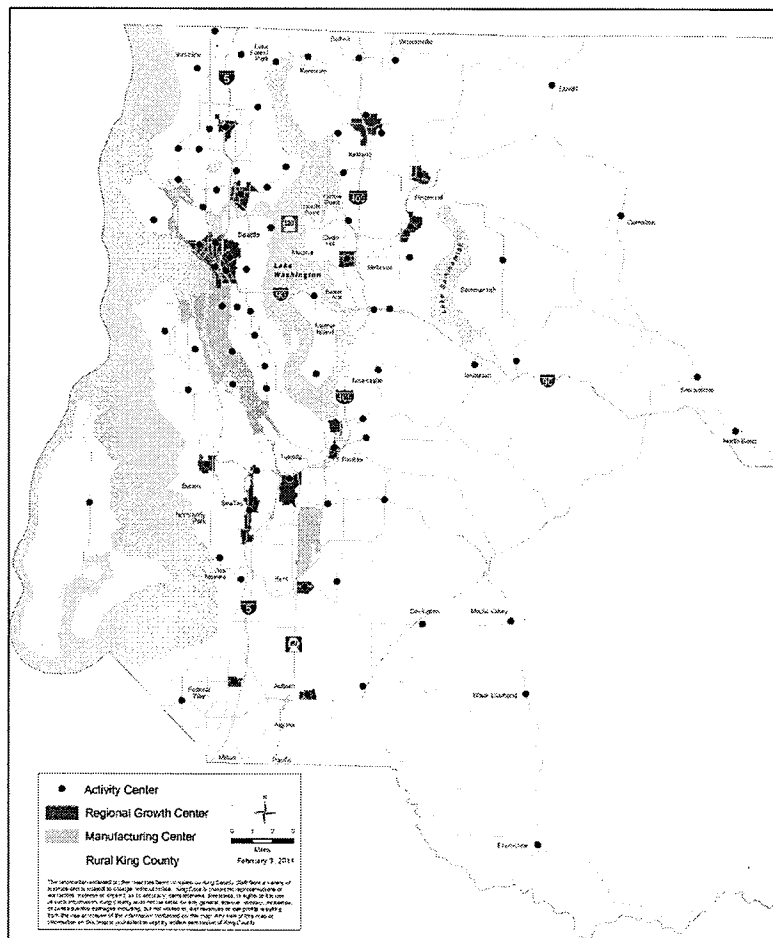


Figure 4: Regional Growth, Manufacturing/Industrial and Transit Activity Centers



**Funding shortfall**

**Increased ridership:** In 2006, voters approved a ballot measure known as Transit Now to increase public transportation services in King County. This measure included funding for five RapidRide lines, additional service for high-ridership routes and rapidly developing areas, service partnerships with cities and businesses, and expanded Access and ridesharing services. Between 2007 and 2009, Metro was on schedule for implementing these improvements.

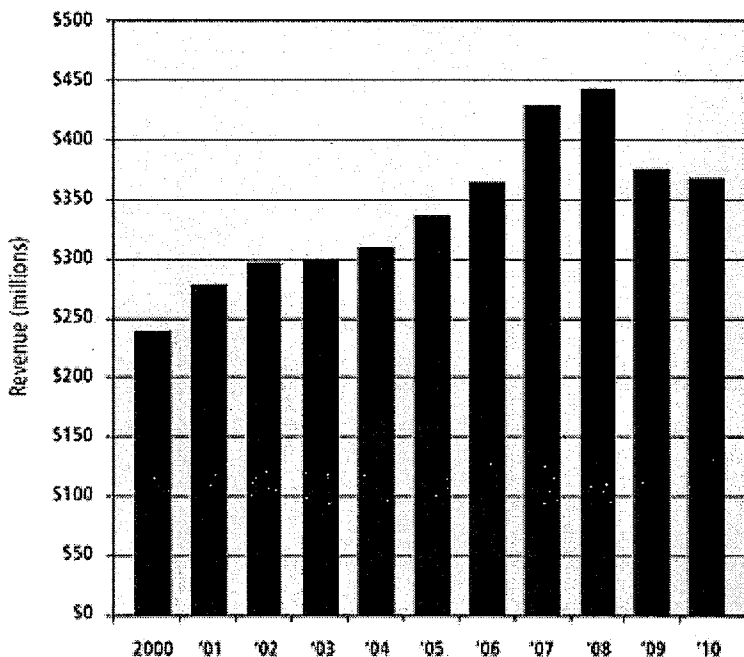
Transit Now investments in public transportation were timely. In 2007 and 2008, Metro experienced unprecedented growth in ridership, largely because people changed their travel habits in response to higher gas prices. At that time, Metro was growing, with ridership increasing more than seven percent each year. Buses were full—people accustomed to getting a seat on the bus found themselves standing, and people used to standing on the bus found themselves passed by. Metro simply could not keep up with the increasing demand for service.

**Financial Challenges:** Even though the economy was booming and ridership was setting all-time records, Metro struggled financially. The same factors that boosted public transportation ridership also increased Metro’s operating costs. High fuel costs, together with increasing wages and benefits, impacted Metro’s ability to respond to increasing demands for public transportation.

Revenue from sales tax (shown in Figure 5), which makes up nearly 60 percent of Metro’s operating funds, is vulnerable to the fluctuations in the economy. Metro experienced a sharp revenue drop of more than \$130 million for the 2008-2009 biennium, which further exacerbated the challenges Metro was facing with higher costs and increased ridership. Metro was able to delay reductions in transit service by increasing fares, reducing operating expenses and scaling back capital projects. These efforts enabled Metro to maintain service levels and sustain modest service growth.

Sales tax revenues continued to fall in the wake of the recession, creating an even larger gap in the 2010-2011 biennium budget. Metro avoided large reductions in transit service by deferring expansion of bus service—including proposed Transit Now investments, making non-service related cuts, increasing transit funding through a King County property tax, increasing fares, using fleet replacement reserves, and implementing findings of a transit performance audit (see sidebar). These actions, along with some temporary, one-time use of reserves and capital

**Figure 5: Annual sales tax revenues 2000-2010**



**2009 Performance Audit of Transit**

In 2009, the King County Auditor's Office released a report with 34 recommendations for ways that Metro could be more efficient and save money. Metro is actively implementing these recommendations, finding efficiencies in the way it schedules buses and operators, performs maintenance, monitors performance, provides Paratransit services, and many other aspects of public transportation. In 2010, over \$10 million in ongoing costs have been reduced as a result.

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fund reductions, were collectively known as the nine-point plan and allowed Metro to balance its budget for the 2010/2011 biennium.

Although the economy appeared to be recovering in early 2011, sales tax revenues are not expected to be greater than what was collected in 2008 until 2014. Recent forecasts predict that sales tax revenues will continue to be well below previous projections. Based on the County's updated revenue forecast through 2015, Metro may have to make significant transit service reductions as soon as 2012 to balance its budget.

**Structural deficit:** From 2009 to 2015, Metro's cumulative loss from lower-than-expected sales tax revenues is projected to be more than \$1 billion. Despite all of the budget actions Metro has taken, it would have to fill a multi-year gap of nearly \$315 million from 2012-2015 just to maintain current service levels and complete service expansions promised to voters in the 2006 Transit Now initiative.

Without additional resources, Metro is facing potential ongoing cuts of approximately 600,000 annual service hours—about 20 percent of the current system. By 2015, countywide bus services would be dramatically reduced, resulting in a system that is 20 percent smaller than in 2009.

These potential service reductions would have a dramatic impact on riders and public transportation use in King County. Difficult decisions would have to be made about where and when services would be reduced.

### The environment

Transportation accounts for nearly half of all greenhouse-gas emissions in Washington. To reduce emissions, significant changes in how we live and travel are necessary. Metro can play a major role by providing transportation options that encourage public transportation ridership and help reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled. In order for the shift from single-occupant vehicles to public transportation to occur in a way that will have an impact on climate change, more areas of the county must adopt compact, dense land uses and encourage development that is more easily served by transit.

Metro also supports King County energy policies that seek to minimize the environmental and carbon footprint of its own operations. Metro does this by operating fuel-efficient vehicles, applying sustainable practices at Metro facilities, and reducing energy consumption. Reducing energy consumption will also help Metro financially. The dynamics of fuel supply, as demonstrated by the 2008 spike in gas prices, are likely to continue affecting transportation costs.

### 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 ensure that a customer's public transportation experience is positive at every stage of a trip. Metro reaches out to customers for input into service and product design and to obtain feedback about how well its services are meeting customer needs and expectations. Public meetings, correspondence, direct interactions and an annual telephone survey of riders help Metro gather planning input and measure how well it is doing in the eyes of its customers.

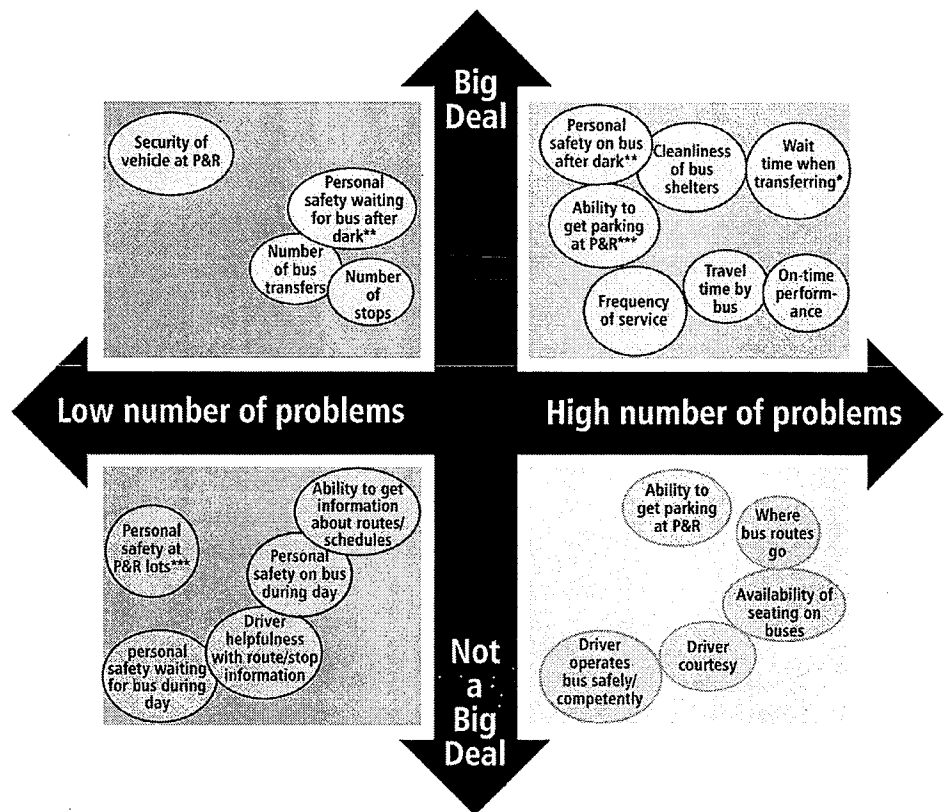
Figure 6 illustrates the issues that have the most impact on customer satisfaction. Vertically, the chart shows which issues are most important to riders. Horizontally, the chart shows the frequency at which customers raise these concerns. Issues in the top right corner, such as long travel times on the bus and poor on-time performance, are most important to riders and are cited frequently. Metro is working towards improving the factors identified in this chart.



## INTRODUCTION

Improving quality is important to increasing customer satisfaction, but budget constraints make it difficult for the agency to do so. Metro must ensure that during times of significant change in the public transportation system, the decision-making process is clear, transparent and based on criteria and objectives that are easy for customers to understand. Whether Metro is expanding or reducing the public transportation system, a transparent decision-making process will help build trust and acceptance of the decisions made. Responding to customers, including the public in the decision-making process, and maintaining quality service are crucial ways for Metro to increase ridership and improve customer service and satisfaction.

Figure 6: What is important to Metro riders?



## Evolving transportation system

The Puget Sound region's transportation system is constantly changing and adapting to the mobility needs of its residents. The many plans and proposals for improving and expanding the transportation system will present opportunities and challenges for Metro.

Metro works closely with other regional transit and transportation agencies to plan and provide efficient, integrated travel options that enhance public transportation services in King County. Metro coordinates most closely with Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, Community Transit, Washington State Ferries and the King County Ferry District. Metro also works with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), PSRC, various local and regional jurisdictions, and businesses such as Microsoft that provide direct transit service to their employees.

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 the following:

- **Sound Transit's Link light rail:** In 2009, Sound Transit opened the Central Link light rail line connecting Seattle-Tacoma International Airport with downtown Seattle. Metro undertook an extensive public engagement effort as part of this project and redesigned transit service to better connect to light rail.

Link will be extended throughout the region over the next 10 years, reaching the University District in 2016 and Northgate by 2021, and connecting Overlake and downtown Seattle beginning in 2021. Sound Transit also plans to extend Link south along the Pacific Highway South/SR-99 corridor. The growth of the light rail

## INTRODUCTION

system offers opportunities for Metro to provide better connections for riders to and from this high-capacity transit service, improving the overall efficiency of the region's transportation system.

- **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. Public transportation will play a major role in the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project and the SR 520 Bridge Replacement project, as well as other transportation infrastructure projects in the next 10 years.

As the region's public transportation system evolves, Metro will continue to actively engage with regional, local and state entities as well as businesses and communities to build an effective system.

## INTRODUCTION

### Section 1.4

## Strategic Plan Development

This strategic plan builds on past planning efforts and policies. In early 2010, the King County Council and Executive formed the Regional Transit Task Force, made up of 31 members (28 voting and three non-voting) who represented a broad diversity of interests and perspectives from across the county. Metro's strategic plan is based in part on the policy framework and recommendations that came out of the task force process.

### Regional Transit Task Force charge

The primary charge to the task force was to recommend a policy framework that reflects the prioritization of key system design factors (see sidebar) and to make recommendations about public transportation system design and function. The overall framework was to include:

- Concurrence with, or proposed changes to, the vision and mission of Metro
- Criteria for systematically growing the public transportation system to achieve the vision
- Criteria for systematically reducing the public transportation system should revenues not be available to sustain it
- State and federal legislative agenda issues to achieve the vision
- Strategies for increasing the efficiency of Metro.

### Process and public involvement

The Regional Transit Task Force conducted its work over a seven-month period, with 12 full-group meetings and eight subgroup meetings. Task force meetings were open to public comment, and a webpage posted on the County's website included an online comment form. The task force set aside time at each meeting to hear the thoughts, ideas, and opinions of anyone who wished to speak, and these comments were included in meeting summaries.

### Transit system design factors

The Council asked the task force to consider six design factors; the task force added one more. The following summarizes the Regional Transit Task Force 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.

## INTRODUCTION

### Task Force recommendations

The task force was unanimous in approving seven recommendations. The major themes are described below. For the full version of the recommendations, visit [www.kingcounty.gov/transittaskforce](http://www.kingcounty.gov/transittaskforce).

- **Transparency and clarity:** The task force recommendations suggest that Metro provide more transparency and clarity to the public on decision-making processes. To this end, the task force suggested that Metro create and adopt a new set of performance measures and clear and transparent guidelines to be used in service allocation decisions.
- **Cost control:** The task force recommendations suggest that Metro control costs and establish a sustainable financial structure that will work over time.
- **Sustainable funding:** The task force recommendations suggest that legislation be pursued to ensure that Metro has a more sustainable financial base and can grow in the future.
- **Productivity, social equity, and geographic value:** The task force recommendations suggest that Metro emphasize productivity, ensure social equity, and provide geographic value in service reduction and growth decisions.
- **Mission and vision:** The task force recommendations suggest that Metro revise its mission statement and create a vision statement in its strategic plan.

Chapter II

## A Pathway to the Future

### ***Metro's vision for public transportation—and goals, objectives and strategies for achieving it***

The transportation system in the Puget Sound region affects not only our ability to get around but also our economy, our environment, and our quality of life. Faced with growing transportation needs and limited space to expand roadway capacity, the region must use the existing transportation system more efficiently and effectively. Public transportation will play a vital role as we move toward a well-functioning, sustainable transportation system that helps our region grow and thrive.

Section 2.1

### **Metro's vision: What public transportation will be like in the future**

This is Metro's vision statement:

Metro provides safe, efficient and reliable public transportation that people find easy to use. The agency offers a cost-effective mix of products and services, tailored to specific market needs. Its fixed-route bus system meets most public transportation needs, particularly in areas of concentrated economic activity or urban development



and along the corridors that link them. Metro also offers alternative public transportation options for people who cannot use the fixed-route system. No matter what community they live in or whether they have special needs because of age, disability or income, 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 and use 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 public transportation has kept 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 its energy consumption.

The public is engaged with Metro—informed about its 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 its 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.

## Section 2.2

### Elements of the plan

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

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

**Goals:** Metro's strategic plan has eight goals that mirror the goals in King County's strategic plan. They include "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 10-year life of this plan.

**Objectives:** Objectives describe what Metro must do to achieve its goals. An objective may serve multiple goals, but each objective is listed with a specific goal to which it is most closely tied. Each of the 17 objectives has an associated outcome. Section III, Plan Performance Monitoring, describes how Metro will measure progress toward the desired outcomes.

**Strategies:** This plan contains 36 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. Section III, Plan Performance Monitoring, describes how Metro will measure its success in carrying out these strategies.

### 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 2.3

## Metro's Goals

### Goal 1: Safety. Support safe communities.

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

#### **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 it 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.

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.

**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. The range of Metro's services is described in the sidebar.

Within the fixed-route system, Metro provides several families of service: very frequent, frequent, local, hourly and peak. Each provides a different frequency of service that can be matched to the community served. Metro has developed a companion piece to the strategic plan, the King County Metro Service Guidelines that consider land use, productivity, social equity and geographic value; these help identify which family of service will be appropriate in specific areas of King County.

**Metro's public transportation products and services**

**Fixed-route:** Traditional transit service that operates on specific pathways and at specific times.

**Ridesharing:** Shared ride to school or work; can be a carpool, vanpool, or vanshipare.

**Paratransit:** Shared rides on Access transportation within 3/4-mile on either side of a non-commuter fixed-route bus service.

**Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART):** Offers variable routing for some transit trips in King County.

**Other specialized products:** Includes other products and services such as the Taxi Scrip Program and Community Access Transportation (CAT).



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 currently planned, 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 find alternative service delivery options such as community vans, taxis, or flexible routings to provide mobility and value.

- **Strategy 2.1.2: Provide travel opportunities 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 range of public transportation services. All buses on the fixed-route system are accessible for people using mobility devices, and complementary paratransit services are available for eligible individuals with disabilities, 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 to ensure 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 recovery 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.

**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: Through investments and partnerships with regional organizations, local jurisdictions and the private sector, provide alternatives to driving alone that connect people to jobs, education and other destinations essential to King County's economic vitality.**

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, business and other 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, as well as community programs such as In Motion, and car-sharing, promote alternative travel options.

Metro augments its own investments by developing partnerships with local jurisdictions, other agencies, employers, and institutions to increase public transportation services and improve service effectiveness. Metro enters into agreements with public and private entities to fund new or improved public transportation services, where the partner contribution may be in the form of direct funding or investment that results in transit speed or reliability improvements. 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 WSDOT and local cities to provide services that help mitigate the impacts of major construction projects.

- **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.

By working with employers, Metro can increase the use of its products and services as well as those of transit partners. 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.**

King County is expected to add more than 185,000 new jobs and more than 180,000 new residents between 2010 and 2020<sup>5</sup>. As the region grows and as the economy recovers, the demand for travel will 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. *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 to create an integrated and efficient regional transportation system.**

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 coordinates with other regional and local public transportation entities on funding, design, construction and maintenance of capital projects. Metro and other agencies have collaborated on the development of facilities such as transit hubs, park-and-rides and stations.

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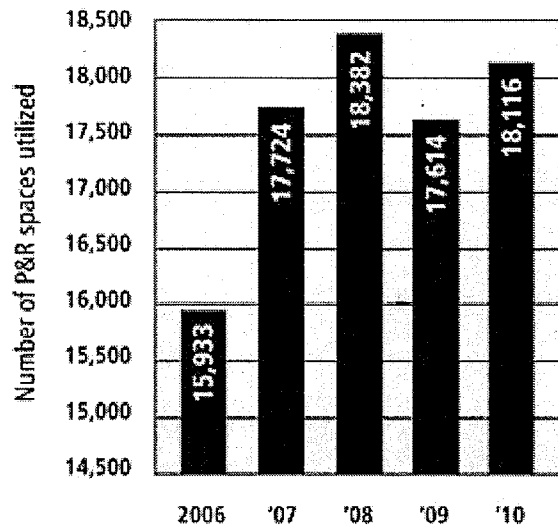
<sup>5</sup> Puget Sound Regional Council. "Populations, Households, and Employment Forecast," last updated 2006, [www.psrc.org/data/forecasts/saf](http://www.psrc.org/data/forecasts/saf).

▪ **Strategy 3.2.3: Work with transit partners, WSDOT and others to manage park-and-ride capacity needs.**

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 an addition to the capacity of the state and interstate highway system. The use of park-and-rides has increased in recent years, and many lots are at or over capacity every day. Figure 6 shows park-and-ride utilization over the past five years.

Metro will work with Sound Transit, WSDOT and others to explore affordable opportunities to increase park-and-ride capacity. Tactics for responding to demand include management of existing lots, education and marketing.

Figure 7: Fourth Quarter Park-and-Ride Utilization 2006-2010



**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 development that lead to communities that transit can serve efficiently and effectively.**

Metro encourages the development of transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly communities by consulting with jurisdictions and serving transit-oriented developments. Metro recommends strategies for jurisdictions and agencies to make communities more transit-friendly. Metro also partners with jurisdictions and the private sector to spur transit-oriented development through redevelopment opportunities at, or adjacent to, park-and-rides.

▪ **Strategy 3.3.2: Support bicycle and pedestrian access to jobs, services, and the transit system.**

Metro develops programs and facilities to improve bicyclists' 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's impact on King County's transportation infrastructure**

- More than 113,000 transit passengers avoid driving alone on major state routes each weekday.
- More than 21,000 transit passengers avoid driving alone on major state routes during the evening peak hours.
- If each transit passenger drove to downtown Seattle instead of taking the bus, parking infrastructure to accommodate these drivers would cost approximately \$2.6 billion<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> \$2.6 billion in parking infrastructure was calculated as follows: Assumption One: Approximately 65,000 people commute on transit to downtown Seattle (using a 36% mode share); Assumption Two: A parking stall in downtown Seattle costs \$40,000; Calculation: 65,000 x \$40,000 = \$2.6 billion.

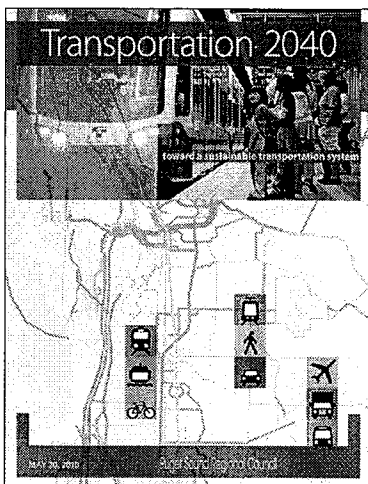
### **Objective 3.4: Support economic development by using existing transportation infrastructure efficiently and effectively.**

Use of transit can increase the efficiency of King County's transportation infrastructure (see sidebar). 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 4 on page 7, 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 for the next 30 years, developed and adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council.

By the year 2040, the region is expected to grow by roughly 1.5 million people and support more than 1.2 million new jobs, which is expected to boost demand for travel within and through the region by about 40 percent.

*Transportation 2040* outlines a long-term vision for how this 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 goal of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 80 percent between 2007 and 2050. The transportation sector is the source of more than half the emissions in the region, so reducing vehicle-miles traveled and emissions are critical parts of achieving this goal. 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.

The *King County Energy Plan* provides a roadmap for improving energy efficiency and expanding the use of greenhouse-gas-neutral energy sources in King County, with new targets adopted by the King County Council. The County has set a goal of reducing energy use in County buildings by 10 percent by 2012 and vehicles by 2015. In support of this plan, Metro is committed to being a leader in green operating and maintenance practices and minimizing its energy use. 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,

#### Electric vehicle charging program

King County will receive \$1 million from the United States Department of Energy to expand on an earlier program and install electric vehicle charging stations at various locations over the next few years to promote the use of electric vehicles.

King County is negotiating with vendors to purchase electric vehicles for Metro's vanpool and vanshare programs and for the County's fleet of vehicles used by employees in County operations.

such as hybrid diesel-electric coaches, in its fleet. Metro is committed to being a leader in the adoption of new energy-efficient and low-emission technologies (see sidebar on previous page).

- **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. 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 its on-time performance 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 (see sidebar). 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.

### **Metro Online**

Metro's website was updated to improve the organization of news and alerts, making it easier to use and understand.

Specific improvements include:

#### **Transit alerts**

A subscription service that sends alerts via e-mail or text message for a specific route or for general information.

#### **Adverse weather alerts**

A color-coded snow, ice and flood map that indicates Metro service re-routes during emergency events. Customers can look up specific routes to see detailed information.

#### **Eye on your Metro commute**

A blog that offers service information during rush hours (6-9 a.m./ 3-6 p.m.).

#### **Third-party applications**

Programs written by individuals or companies outside of Metro using Metro data. A popular example is One Bus Away, found at: <http://onebusaway.org>.

