



**King County**

**Dow Constantine**

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October 29, 2021

The Honorable Claudia Balducci  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

As required by Ordinance 17143, as amended by Ordinance 17597, this letter transmits the *King County Metro Transit 2021 System Evaluation*. The report also includes the annual progress report on the *King County Metro Transit Five-Year Implementation Plan for Alternatives to Traditional Transit Service Delivery* in response to Motion 13736, and an evaluation of King County Water Taxi services in compliance with Ordinance 18413.

The *2021 System Evaluation* identifies a systemwide need for just 5,500 more annual service hours to improve reliability.

The 2021 evaluation is based on 2020 fall service change data (September 2020 to March 2021)<sup>1</sup>, a period during which all of King County was deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, a majority of Metro service was operating with a number of routes suspended. Consequently, ridership during this time was significantly lower than pre-pandemic ridership levels. Routes that were suspended during the 2020 fall service change have no data to report and are not included in this report. Service will be restored over time as pandemic recovery progresses.

Data from fall 2020 does not represent the full ongoing Metro system due to route and service suspensions. For this reason, the 2021 evaluation does not include three sections included in the 2020 System Evaluation Report and past reports due to data issues and/or because they will not be used to inform future service decisions. The sections not included are: Bus Service – Service Growth; the Peak Analysis; and the Metro Connects Progress Report. The Bus Service – Productivity section was also modified to remove the grouping of routes in the top and bottom 25 percent.

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<sup>1</sup> The report includes performance data for Metro's flexible service pilots that were in the evaluation stage between the September 2020-March 2021 service period.

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Due to these data challenges, Metro did not base any recent service change decisions solely on 2020 fall service change (pandemic era) data included in this report. Instead, Metro used 2019 as the baseline for performance data to inform near-term service change proposals in 2021. Going forward, Metro will also use more recent data available to inform considerations for the Fall 2022 service change and beyond, as communities and the transit system recover from the pandemic and grow over time.

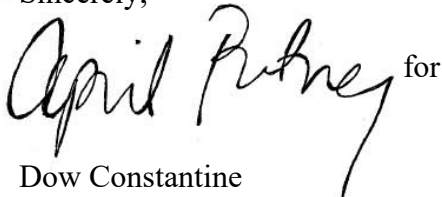
The 2021 report includes a new section highlighting ridership trends and findings from the pandemic era, particularly where ridership was retained due to customers taking essential trips or lacking other transportation options, primarily in south Seattle and south King County. This type of information has emerged as a valuable component of Metro's framework to identify and understand where needs are greatest. This data informed Metro's proposed policy updates, including updates to the Service Guidelines and an emphasis on equity and productivity within those updates.

The System Evaluation supports the King County Strategic Plan mobility objective to preserve and optimize the mobility system. The report supports the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan by identifying investments needed to deliver equitable transit service to provide improved travel options across King County. The report also supports the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan goals by illustrating how Metro is improving reliability and increasing service to gain ridership and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

It is estimated that this report required 200 staff hours to produce, costing approximately \$11,600.

Thank you for your consideration of this Motion. If your staff have any questions, please contact Christina O'Claire, Mobility Division Director, Metro Transit Department, at 206-477-5801 or christina.oclaire@kingcounty.gov.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
ATTN: Janine Weihe, Interim Chief of Staff  
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

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Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive  
Karan Gill, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive  
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
Terry White, General Manager, Metro Transit Department (MTD)  
Christina O'Claire, Director, Mobility Division, MTD