

Actions to improve efficiency and preserve service

Metro's service is funded primarily by sales tax, and the recession caused a substantial drop in Metro's revenue. To preserve as much service as possible, Metro has acted vigorously to cut costs, increase efficiency, and improve productivity.

Metro saved or gained nearly \$800 million between 2009 and 2013 by scheduling fewer buses to deliver the same amount of service, negotiating cost-saving labor agreements, reducing staff positions and programs, controlling the growth of health care benefit costs, cutting the capital program, digging deeply into reserves, ending the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle, raising fares four times, and other actions.

Using new service guidelines that emphasize productivity, Metro restructured much of the bus system to get the most value from every transit dollar.

Metro has lowered energy and water consumption and reduced waste disposal, cutting or avoiding costs. From 2009–2013 Metro reduced energy use at its facilities by 17 percent and reduced energy use by transit service vehicles by 6 percent.

Metro continues taking action to stretch every dollar. Recent achievements reflected in the proposed 2015-2016 budget include:

- **Reducing the number of replacement buses purchased** – As a result of scheduling efficiencies, Metro is able to purchase 40 fewer replacement buses without affecting service over the next two years. **Estimated savings: \$40 million**
- **Favorable bus pricing** – Metro negotiated bus and trolley purchase prices that are lower than earlier projections. **Estimated savings: \$50 million**
- **Claims and workers' comp costs** – Through improved risk management, safety training for bus drivers, and more effective efforts to get injured employees back to work, Metro is cutting liability claims and workers' compensation costs. **Estimated two-year savings: \$8 million next biennium, \$5 million ongoing**
- **Access service** – Metro has created opportunities for people with disabilities to use lower-cost alternatives—regular bus service, dial-a-ride transit, and Metro-supported community shuttles—and raised the Access fare. Lower fuel costs will also reduce Access costs. **Estimated two-year savings: \$7 million**
- **Health care benefits** – The County has worked with its employees and unions to reduce growth in health care costs. The County contribution to health care is capped at a 4 percent annual increase through 2016—significantly lower than in previous years. **Estimated two-year savings: \$3 million**
- **Bus base automation** – This project, launched in 2013 and completed one year ahead of schedule, is realizing benefits by eliminating redundant data entry. **Estimated two-year savings: \$1 million**
- **Lean** – Metro's Vehicle Maintenance group used Lean techniques to improve vehicle repair and parts inventory management practices. **Estimated two-year savings: \$1 million**