



A message from Metro Transit
General Manager Kevin Desmond



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November 8, 2010

Regional Transit Task Force sets new course for Metro

King County's Regional Transit Task Force submitted its final report today, making recommendations that, if adopted, will guide Metro's future strategic direction, service allocation decisions and continued improvement in productivity.

The task force included a broad range of community leaders and transit riders from all over the county. The County Council and County Executive formed the group early this year as Metro was facing an ongoing dilemma: demand for transit service is strong, but the stumbling economy has caused a steep drop in our funding. As part of our plan to balance our budget, we have been forced to shelve most of our plans to expand service, and instead make cuts. Financial forecasts tell us that we likely will have to make much deeper service cuts between 2012 and 2015, even as the region's economy improves and demand for transit service increases.

In light of this situation, the County Council asked the task force to recommend a policy framework to guide future reductions or investments in the transit system. The group was asked to address five topics:

- Metro's vision and mission
- Criteria for systematically growing the transit system to achieve the vision
- State and federal legislative agenda to achieve the vision
- Strategies for increasing Metro's efficiency
- Criteria for systematically reducing the transit system if revenues are not available to sustain it.

The task force did a remarkable job. Its members digested a voluminous amount of information, took an unflinching look at the tough issues, and engaged in serious discussions. After seven months of work, they agreed by consensus on seven things Metro should do:

1. Develop a new set of performance measures—in addition to the many we already use—for public reporting.
2. Control costs and continue becoming more efficient, including implementing the recommendations of last year's performance audit.
3. Emphasize productivity, social equity, and providing value to all geographic areas of the county as we make decisions about reducing or adding service. (This is a big change from our current approach, which is to add or reduce service according to set percentages for the east, south, and west subareas of the county.)
4. Create clear guidelines for service allocations.
5. Base the service guidelines on a set of principles that includes transparency, measurability, flexibility, and integration with the regional transportation system.
6. Work with a coalition to pursue state legislation that would provide a long-term, more sustainable revenue base for transit.
7. Revise Metro's mission statement and create a vision statement.

Overall, the focus is on performance. Metro is being asked to make our system as

productive as possible and to distribute services fairly; to spend less and wring the most value we can out of every dollar; and to show the public the basis for our decisions and the results we achieve. I believe the task force is setting Metro on a successful course for the future.

Over the next year these recommendations will be considered by regional policymakers, incorporated into Metro's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans, and acted on by the County Council. The final outcome will be reflected in Metro's 2012-2013 budget.

Sincerely,

Kevin Desmond, General Manager
King County Metro Transit



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