



A message from Metro Transit  
General Manager Kevin Desmond



June 20, 2011

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#### Friday, July 8, noon

Seattle City Hall  
Bertha Landes  
Room

600 Fourth Ave  
Seattle 98104

#### Friday, July 15, noon

HDR Engineering  
12th Floor  
500 108th Ave NE  
Bellevue 98004

## Executive requests Council action to move Metro toward financial stability

King County Executive Dow Constantine this morning asked the King County Council to make important decisions about the future of Metro Transit: approve interim funding to help maintain Metro service near current levels for the next two years, or begin the process of reducing the transit system by 17 percent.

The weak economy has caused a deep and prolonged shortfall in the revenue Metro receives from sales tax. Metro has cut costs, raised fares four times, dug deeply into reserves, found new operating efficiencies, canceled the purchase of replacement buses, and negotiated cost-saving contracts with its employee unions. These actions have generated nearly \$400 million to narrow Metro's budget gap for 2008-2011 and about \$143 million annually for the years ahead, but Metro still faces an ongoing shortfall of \$60 million per year.

King County is working with regional leaders, legislators and the Governor on a long-term funding solution for statewide transportation needs. For the short-term, the Executive asked the Council to adopt a congestion reduction charge for two years, as authorized by the state legislature. This temporary charge of \$20 a year on vehicles licensed in King County would help Metro preserve the transit system near current levels in 2012-2013.

In case the congestion charge is not approved, the Executive also asked the Council to authorize a reduction of 100,000 service hours next February. This would be the first step in a plan he will propose to reduce bus service by a total of 600,000 annual service hours, or 17 percent of the current system, over the next two years. This total reduction would have a big impact on riders: **it would lead to the loss of an estimated 9 million passenger trips annually.** As a consequence, some of our customers would lose service, and many riders would find bus service to be less convenient.

If a congestion reduction charge is not approved, Metro will follow service guidelines in the new 2011-2021 Strategic Plan for Public Transportation to propose service reductions. The guidelines—based on the recommendations of King County's Regional Transit Task Force—were recently approved by the Regional Transit Committee and will be acted on soon by the County Council. They emphasize providing productive service that carries more people per hour, serving communities that depend heavily on transit, and distributing service fairly throughout the county.

Metro is critically important to our region—we provide more than 360,000 passenger rides every weekday, and transit helps keep congestion and vehicle emissions in check and will support our region's economy recovery. I encourage you to become engaged in the process of making decisions about Metro's future.

Sincerely,

Kevin Desmond, General Manager

King County Metro Transit



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