



**A message from Metro Transit
General Manager Kevin Desmond**



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Council action will bring stability, new efficiencies

Over the past three years, as a drop in sales tax revenue opened a yawning gap in Metro Transit's budget, we have worked hard to maintain bus service by cutting costs, raising revenue, tapping reserves and becoming more efficient. This week the County Council gave Metro the additional tools we need to preserve service near the current level over the next two years.

It was not easy to vote for the \$20 congestion reduction charge in today's climate. I am grateful to County Executive Dow Constantine and Council members for working together to make sure the approved legislation delivers substantial benefits to taxpayers.

Here's a summary of what the Council's action means:

For more information:

http://metro.kingcounty.gov/council/issues/Transit_Service.aspx

- **The temporary congestion reduction charge will stabilize Metro's finances and service for the next two years.** This will give us time to implement our new Strategic Plan, including shifting resources from routes with few riders to corridors that more people use — using the resources to improve on-time performance, relieve overcrowding, or satisfy unmet transit needs. Routes that see ridership increases as a result of highway tolling will be candidates for added service. We will also shift some service to "right size" alternatives like Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART) and Community Access Transit. These adjustments will help make our system more efficient and productive.
- **After years of debate, the downtown Seattle Ride Free Area will be discontinued in October 2012.** While there are many pros and cons to this change, I believe that now is the time to take this step. It will generate additional fare revenue and help Metro reduce fare evasion. We will be taking a number of steps to ensure a successful transition, including working with social service agencies to mitigate the impact on people without means to get to and from shelter, food and medical services.
- **Metro will start a transit incentive program** that will offer free bus tickets to people when they renew their vehicle registration. They may either use the bus tickets or donate them to Metro's program that provides discounted tickets to human service agencies.

While the temporary new funding enables Metro to avoid deep service cuts over the next two years, our heavy reliance on a volatile funding source remains a problem. King County will continue working with regional and state leaders on a long-term solution for funding transportation needs across the state.

Finally, I want to assure you that we understand the expectation of the Executive, the Council and the public: the action taken this week does not relieve Metro of our ongoing responsibility to control our costs and become more efficient while providing excellent service.

Sincerely,

Kevin Desmond, General Manager
King County Metro Transit