

CHAPTER 2: A PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE

Metro's vision for public transportation—and goals, objectives and strategies for achieving it

The transportation system in the Puget Sound region affects not only our ability to get around but also our economy, our environment, and our quality of life. Faced with growing transportation needs and limited space to expand roadway capacity, the region must use the existing transportation system more efficiently and effectively. Public transportation will play a vital role as we move toward a well-functioning, sustainable transportation system that helps our region grow and thrive.



SECTION 2.1

Metro's vision: What public transportation will be like in the future

This is Metro's vision statement:

Metro provides safe, efficient and reliable public transportation that people find easy to use. The agency offers a cost-effective mix of products and services, tailored to specific market needs. Its fixed-route bus system meets most public transportation needs, particularly in areas of concentrated economic activity or urban development and along the corridors that link them. Metro also offers alternative public transportation options for people who cannot use the fixed-route system. No matter what community they live in or whether they have special needs because of age, disability or income, people can use public transportation throughout King County.

Expanded and improved products and services make public transportation attractive to a growing segment of the population, and public transportation ridership and use increases as a result. With more and more people switching from single-occupant cars to buses, carpools and other alternative transportation options, roadways are more efficient—carrying more people and goods and moving them faster. Less land is paved for parking, and the region can reduce its reliance on highway expansion.



Public transportation is contributing to a better quality of life in the Puget Sound region. The local economy is thriving because public transportation has kept the region moving. Public health is improving because people are walking, biking, and using transit more. Emissions from transportation have leveled off and are starting to decline, and Metro is using new technologies to reduce its energy consumption.

The public is engaged with Metro—informed about its plans and performance and a big part of the decision-making process. Customers find the public transportation experience to be positive at every stage, from trip planning to arrival at a destination. People understand how to use Metro's products and services, and are happy with the variety of transportation options available.

Metro's goals

The “what we deliver” goals are:

- **Safety:** Support safe communities.
- **Human potential:** Provide equitable opportunities for people from all areas of King County to access the public transportation system.
- **Economic growth and built environment:** Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.

The “how we deliver” goals are:

- **Service excellence:** Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.
- **Financial stewardship:** Exercise sound financial management and build Metro's long-term sustainability.
- **Public engagement:** Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.
- **Quality workforce:** Develop and empower Metro's most valuable asset, its employees.



Metro has quality employees who enjoy their jobs. Their satisfaction shows in their good work ethic and responsiveness to customers.

Metro is financially stable—able to sustain its products and services in both the short and long term by emphasizing productivity and efficiency and by controlling costs. Metro receives sufficient funding to fulfill the public's expectations for service and the region's vision for a robust public transportation system.

■ SECTION 2.2

Elements of the plan

The mission, goals, objectives and strategies in this plan reflect the priorities of King County residents, businesses, and leaders. They are designed to guide budget and implementation decisions that move Metro toward its vision.

Mission: Provide the best possible public transportation services and improve regional mobility and quality of life in King County.

Goals: Metro's strategic plan has eight goals that mirror the goals in King County's strategic plan. They include “what” goals that state what Metro intends to accomplish or services it intends to provide, and “how” goals that articulate how Metro intends to conduct its work (see sidebar).

Metro plans to move toward the goals by implementing this plan, but the goals are also intended to endure beyond the 10-year life of this plan.

Objectives: Objectives describe what Metro must do to achieve its goals. An objective may serve multiple goals, but each objective is listed with a specific goal to which it is most closely tied. Each of the 17 objectives has an associated outcome. Section III, Plan Performance Monitoring, describes how Metro will measure progress toward the desired outcomes.

Strategies: This plan contains 36 strategies for achieving the objectives. Even though strategies may serve multiple objectives and goals, each strategy is listed with a specific objective to which it is most closely tied. Section III, Plan Performance Monitoring, describes how Metro will measure its success in carrying out these strategies.

METRO'S GOALS: GOAL 1

SAFETY

Support safe communities.



Metro provides a safe and secure transportation environment and ensures emergency preparedness.





Metro's **All Hazards Response Plan** is designed to ensure the safety of all responders, deter and prevent incidents, guide the response of Metro and partnering agencies so it is quick and effective, and appropriately manage Metro's resources during an incident.

The **Adverse Weather Plan** matches service delivery to the severity of the incident and outlines procedures for internal and external communications.

Objective 1.1: Keep people safe and secure.

Metro protects the safety and security of customers, employees and facilities in a variety of ways, including planning, policing, facility design, operational practices, safety training, and collaboration with local jurisdictions and other agencies on safety-related matters. **Intended outcome: Metro's services and facilities are safe and secure.**

■ Strategy 1.1.1: Promote safety and security in public transportation operations and facilities.

The Metro Transit Police (MTP) protects Metro's operators and riders by patrolling the Metro system and facilities by bus, bike and car. The MTP leverages its resources by creating partnerships with community groups, police and other government agencies, and other public transportation organizations. These partnerships allow the MTP to share information, ideas, and solutions to common safety issues.

Metro educates and trains its employees to improve the safety and security of the public transportation system and Metro's offices and facilities. A major focus of safety efforts is operator training, as transit operators directly impact the safety of riders and other road users. Metro also strives to ensure that its facilities use principles of safe design, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, to maximize environmental safety.

Metro's Accident Prevention Program Plan and System Security Plan guide Metro's efforts to maintain and improve the safe operations of its vehicles and the safety and security of its facilities.



■ Strategy 1.1.2: Plan for and execute regional emergency response and homeland security efforts.

Metro prepares for emergency situations so it can help the Puget Sound region adapt and continue functioning when emergencies happen. Metro has developed two major plans for continuing to provide reliable transportation in "all-hazard" incidents ranging from major service interruptions to civil unrest as well as the more common adverse weather occurrences such as snow or flooding. These are the All Hazards Response Plan and the Adverse Weather Plan (see sidebar).

Metro also regularly conducts emergency-preparedness field exercises with local, county, state and federal agencies.



GOAL 2

HUMAN POTENTIAL

Provide equitable opportunities for people from all areas of King County to access the public transportation system.



Metro provides equitable and accessible transportation options.





Objective 2.1 Provide public transportation products and services that add value throughout King County and that facilitate access to jobs, education, and other destinations.

Metro strives to provide transportation choices that make it easy for people to travel throughout King County and the region. Metro provides a range of public transportation products and services, and coordinates and integrates its services with others. ***Intended outcome: More people throughout King County have access to public transportation products and services.***

▪ **Strategy 2.1.1: Design and offer a variety of public transportation products and services appropriate to different markets and mobility needs.**

The traditional fixed-route transit system is the largest of Metro's services, but it cannot meet every public transportation travel need. Metro provides a range of public transportation products and services to augment the fixed-route transit system and provide geographic value throughout King County. The range of Metro's services is described in the box on page 19.

Within the fixed-route system, Metro provides several families of service: very frequent, frequent, local, hourly and peak. Each provides a different frequency of service that can be matched to the community served. Metro has developed a companion piece to the strategic plan, the King County Metro Service Guidelines that consider land use, productivity, social equity and geographic value; these help identify which family of service will be appropriate in specific areas of King County.

Corridors that have the potential for high ridership give Metro opportunities to focus transit service and facility investments. Metro is pursuing these opportunities through the RapidRide program. Six RapidRide lines are currently planned, and additional lines could be developed in the future. Communities can leverage Metro's transit investments with supportive development along each line.

In other parts of the county, fixed-route transit—even at an hourly or peak-only level—is not efficient. In these cases, Metro will find alternative service delivery options such as community vans, taxis, or flexible routings to provide mobility and value.



▪ **Strategy 2.1.2: Provide travel opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations, such as low-income people, students, youth, seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, and others with limited transportation options.**

Metro serves historically disadvantaged populations with a range of public transportation services. All buses on the fixed-route system are accessible for people using mobility devices, and complementary paratransit services are available for eligible individuals with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Metro offers other services as well, such as the innovative Community Transportation Program which includes the Taxi Scrip Program, Transit Instruction Program and Community Access Transportation (CAT). Metro also provides programs such as Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), a federal program that is intended to connect low-income populations with employment opportunities through public transportation. Metro also works with local school

districts to respond to student transportation needs. Metro regularly reports on its services to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

▪ **Strategy 2.1.3: Provide products and services that are designed to provide geographic value in all parts of King County.**

Metro provides public transportation products and services that offer flexible travel options for King County residents and visitors. Metro makes public transportation investments that are appropriate to the land use, employment densities, housing densities, and transit demand in various communities. Metro will continue to provide public transportation to all communities currently served by transit.

There should be a relationship, but not an exact formula, between the tax revenue created in an area of King County and the distribution of public transportation products and services. Service design should also recognize all of the revenues (taxes and fares) generated in the various areas of King County.

Public transportation investments are critical for economic recovery and the future growth of the region. Metro should get the greatest number of workers to and from job centers. Metro will support access to destinations that are essential to countywide economic vitality.

▪ **Strategy 2.1.4: Seek to provide to the general public an extensive range of transportation alternatives to regular fixed route-transit, such as ridesharing and other alternative or “right-sized” services.**

Innovative public transportation services and delivery strategies can keep costs down while providing mobility to people throughout King County. Metro is exploring opportunities to expand alternative service options to a broader range of users as effective and lower-cost alternatives to fixed-route bus service. Metro currently provides services such as the Community Access Transportation and Taxi Scrip programs for riders who meet certain age, income and/or disability requirements. If Metro had the ability to provide these types of mobility options to the general public in addition to people who meet eligibility criteria, it could have more opportunities to offer cost efficient alternatives to fixed-route bus service. By increasing the flexibility and convenience of other programs, such as Vanpool, Metro could also make these options available to a wider range of customers.

To provide an extensive array of services to the general public, changes may be necessary to current code provisions that limit a service to certain eligible populations. Metro should pursue code changes that clarify eligibility criteria for special programs yet allow the general public to use the programs in other circumstances.



Metro’s public transportation products and services

Fixed-route: Traditional transit service that operates on specific pathways and at specific times.

Ridesharing: Shared ride to school or work; can be a carpool, vanpool, or vanshipare.

Paratransit: Shared rides on Access transportation within ¾ mile on either side of a non-commuter fixed-route bus service.

Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART): Offers variable routing for some transit trips in King County.

Other specialized products: Includes other products and services such as the Taxi Scrip Program and Community Access Transportation (CAT).

GOAL 3

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.



Metro supports economic vitality in the region by moving people efficiently and improving the performance of the transportation system.



Objective 3.1 Support a strong, diverse, sustainable economy.

A transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently is critical to economic vitality and the achievement of the region's vision for growth. The regional growth strategy emphasizes the need for an integrated, multimodal transportation system that links major cities and centers. Metro plays an important role in the growth strategy by offering travel options that connect people to areas of concentrated activity, providing affordable access to jobs, education and important social and retail services. ***Intended outcome: Public transportation products and services are available throughout King County and are well-utilized in centers and areas of concentrated economic activity.***

- **Strategy 3.1.1: Through investments and partnerships with regional organizations, local jurisdictions and the private sector, provide alternatives to driving alone that connect people to jobs, education and other destinations essential to King County's economic vitality.**
Metro provides a range of services to get people to work, school, and other places they want to go. The backbone of Metro's system is a network of all-day, two-way bus routes between residential, business and other transit activity centers. Metro also provides commuter service to major destinations from many neighborhoods as well as from a network of park-and-ride lots. Metro provides local services to connect people to the larger transportation system. Rideshare services such as commuter vans, and Rideshare Online, as well as community programs such as In Motion, and car-sharing, promote alternative travel options.

Metro augments its own investments by developing partnerships with local jurisdictions, other agencies, employers, and institutions to increase public transportation services and improve service effectiveness. Metro enters into agreements with public and private entities to fund new or improved public transportation services, where the partner contribution may be in the form of direct funding or investment that results in transit speed or reliability improvements. Metro also forms partnerships to develop and promote alternative commute programs and to manage parking and traffic to make public transportation more efficient and attractive. Metro works with WSDOT and local cities to provide services that help mitigate the impacts of major construction projects.

- **Strategy 3.1.2: Partner with employers to make public transportation products and services more affordable and convenient for employees.**

Metro develops and pursues market-based strategies with employers, institutions and property managers to encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone. Metro offers employers and organizations technical assistance, marketing and training to establish commute benefit programs. These programs give commuters access and incentives for using transit and rideshare services, cycling, walking and teleworking. Examples are ORCA business products and Home Free Guarantee (Metro's emergency ride home service). Metro also coordinates with employer-sponsored transportation services to avoid duplicating existing public services.



By working with employers, Metro can increase the use of its products and services as well as those of transit partners. Metro can also support progress toward community objectives, while helping employers manage parking and traffic, attract and retain employees, and meet commute trip reduction and sustainability goals.



Objective 3.2: Address the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county.

King County is expected to add more than 185,000 new jobs and more than 180,000 new residents between 2010 and 2020⁵. As the region grows and as the economy recovers, the demand for travel will rise. Metro will prepare for this growth by seeking opportunities to expand service, by being more efficient, and by partnering with others to maximize the travel options available. **Intended outcome:** *More people have access to and regularly use public transportation products and services in King County.*

- **Strategy 3.2.1: Expand services to accommodate the region's growing population and serve new transit markets.**

Population and employment growth are creating emerging and expanding travel markets throughout King County. These markets range from expanding employment centers such as Kirkland's Totem Lake or Seattle's South Lake Union to developing residential communities throughout King County. Metro has many tactics for accommodating growth, such as starting a new route, adding peak trips, extending hours of service to include the midday or evening, or modifying a route to serve a new location.

- **Strategy 3.2.2: Coordinate and develop services and facilities with other providers to create an integrated and efficient regional transportation system.**

Metro collaborates with other agencies and organizations to build the best possible regional public transportation network, to make it easy for people to travel between transportation services, to maximize travel options, and to achieve efficiencies by providing services that are complementary rather than duplicative. For example, when Sound Transit introduces new services, Metro explores opportunities to restructure bus routes, improve service integration, enhance service and increase efficiency. By reconfiguring, reducing or eliminating poorly performing routes, Metro can free up resources to invest in routes with greater demand and unmet service needs. Where parallel services exist, Metro can restructure routes to create service that is more frequent, productive and reliable.



Metro also coordinates with other agencies and jurisdictions to improve the efficiency of the system through transit speed and reliability improvements. Metro works independently and in coordination with local jurisdictions to implement improvements such as traffic signal coordination, transit queue-bypass lanes, transit signal queue jumps, transit signal priority, safety improvements, and stop consolidations.

⁵ Puget Sound Regional Council. "Populations, Households, and Employment Forecast," last updated 2006, www.psrc.org/data/forecasts/saf.

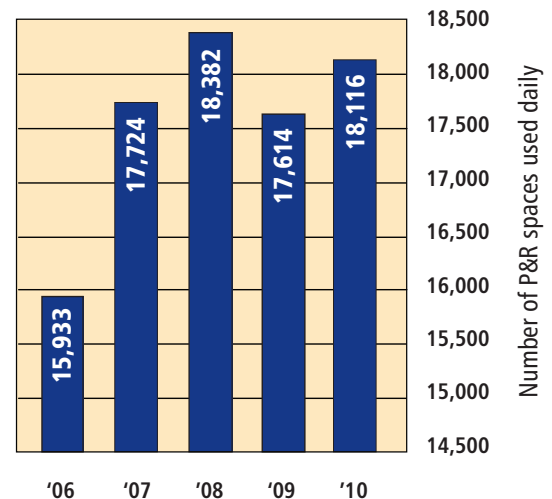
Metro also coordinates with other regional and local public transportation entities on funding, design, construction and maintenance of capital projects. Metro and other agencies have collaborated on the development of facilities such as transit hubs, park-and-rides and stations.

▪ **Strategy 3.2.3: Work with transit partners, WSDOT and others to manage park-and-ride capacity needs.**

Park-and-ride locations provide access to the public transportation system for people who do not live near a bus route or who want the many service options available at park-and-rides. These facilities serve as a meeting place for carpool and vanpool partners and an addition to the capacity of the state and interstate highway system. The use of park-and-rides has increased in recent years, and many lots are at or over capacity every day. Figure 7 shows park-and-ride utilization over the past five years.

Metro will work with Sound Transit, WSDOT and others to explore affordable opportunities to increase park-and-ride capacity. Tactics for responding to demand include management of existing lots, education and marketing.

FIGURE 7: Fourth quarter park-and-ride utilization 2006-2010



Objective 3.3: Support compact, healthy communities.

Communities that are compact and friendly to pedestrians and bicycles are most easily served by transit. Such communities foster healthier, more active lifestyles while reducing auto-dependency and associated road investments. By the same token, transit service can support and encourage development that is more compact.

Intended outcome: More people regularly use public transportation products and services along corridors with compact development.

▪ **Strategy 3.3.1: Encourage land uses, policies, and development that lead to communities that transit can serve efficiently and effectively.**

Metro encourages the development of transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly communities by consulting with jurisdictions and serving transit-oriented developments. Metro recommends strategies for jurisdictions and agencies to make communities more transit-friendly. Metro also partners with jurisdictions and the private sector to spur transit-oriented development through redevelopment opportunities at, or adjacent to, park-and-rides.

▪ **Strategy 3.3.2: Support bicycle and pedestrian access to jobs, services, and the transit system.**

Metro develops programs and facilities to improve bicyclists' connections to transit. Metro also collaborates with public and private partners to enhance the use of bicycles for commute and non-commute purposes to help reduce drive-alone travel. Metro provides three-position bike racks on transit vehicles and is working to increase the availability of secure bicycle parking at new and existing Metro transit facilities.





Metro's impact on King County's transportation infrastructure

- More than 113,000 transit passengers avoid driving alone on major state routes each weekday.
- More than 21,000 transit passengers avoid driving alone on major state routes during the evening peak hours.
- If each transit passenger drove to downtown Seattle instead of taking the bus, parking infrastructure to accommodate these drivers would cost approximately \$2.6 billion⁶.

Objective 3.4: Support economic development by using existing transportation infrastructure efficiently and effectively.

Use of transit can increase the efficiency of King County's transportation infrastructure (see sidebar). By carrying more people in fewer vehicles, transit reduces the need for parking spaces at major employment centers and other activity hubs, keeping development costs down. Transit also moves more people on existing roadways, reducing the need for expansion. **Intended outcome: Regional investments in major highway capacity projects and parking requirements are complemented by high transit service levels in congested corridors and centers.**

▪ Strategy 3.4.1: Serve centers and other areas of concentrated activity, consistent with *Transportation 2040*.

Metro focuses on serving King County's designated centers and other areas of concentrated activity, as shown in Figure 4 on page 6, and as prescribed in *Transportation 2040* (see below).

Metro also works with property owners, building managers and employers on a variety of efforts to increase the use of transit. These include parking management, fare media programs, outreach, incentives, work-option programs such as telework, and community programs such as In Motion.

Transportation 2040

Transportation 2040 is an action plan for transportation in the central Puget Sound region for the next 30 years, developed and adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council.

By the year 2040, the region is expected to grow by roughly 1.5 million people and support more than 1.2 million new jobs, which is expected to boost demand for travel within and through the region by about 40 percent.

Transportation 2040 outlines a long-term vision for how this region should invest in transportation to accommodate rising travel demand. The plan identifies investments in roads, transit and non-motorized travel that will support this growth and improve the transportation system. The document lays out a financing plan with more reliance on user fees to fund transportation improvements. It also proposes a strategy for reducing transportation's contribution to climate change and its impact on air pollution and the health of Puget Sound.



⁶ \$2.6 billion in parking infrastructure was calculated as follows: Assumption One: Approximately 65,000 people commute on transit to downtown Seattle (using a 36% mode share); Assumption Two: A parking stall in downtown Seattle costs \$40,000; Calculation: 65,000 x \$40,000 = \$2.6 billion.

GOAL 4

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.



Metro provides transportation choices and supports travel that uses less energy, produces fewer pollutants and reduces greenhouse gases in the region.





Electric vehicle charging program

King County will receive \$1 million from the United States Department of Energy to expand on an earlier program and install electric vehicle charging stations at various locations over the next few years to promote the use of electric vehicles.

King County is negotiating with vendors to purchase electric vehicles for Metro's vanpool and vanship programs and for the County's fleet of vehicles used by employees in County operations.

Objective 4.1: Help reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the region.

King County has a long-term goal of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 80 percent between 2007 and 2050. The transportation sector is the source of more than half the emissions in the region, so reducing vehicle-miles traveled and emissions are critical parts of achieving this goal. Every step Metro takes to make transit a more accessible, competitive and attractive transportation option helps to counter climate change and improve air quality. **Intended outcome: People drive single-occupant vehicles less.**

■ Strategy 4.1.1: Increase the proportion of travel in King County that is provided by public transportation products and services.

Metro offers an array of alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel, and will continue to improve the attractiveness of Metro's products and services and promote them to existing and potential customers.

Objective 4.2: Minimize Metro's environmental footprint.

The *King County Energy Plan* provides a roadmap for improving energy efficiency and expanding the use of greenhouse-gas-neutral energy sources in King County, with new targets adopted by the King County Council. The County has set a goal of reducing energy use in County buildings by 10 percent by 2012 and vehicles by 2015. In support of this plan, Metro is committed to being a leader in green operating and maintenance practices and minimizing its energy use. Metro also educates its employees about reducing energy consumption at work and using public transportation to commute. **Intended outcome: Metro's environmental footprint is reduced (normalized against service growth).**

■ Strategy 4.2.1: Operate vehicles and adopt technology that has the least impact on the environment and maximizes long-term sustainability.

Metro will continue exploring opportunities to employ energy-efficient vehicles for both fixed-route and other services, such as its commuter van programs. Metro has already reduced vehicle emissions by developing and using clean-fuel bus technologies, such as hybrid diesel-electric coaches, in its fleet. Metro is committed to being a leader in the adoption of new energy-efficient and low-emission technologies (see sidebar).

■ Strategy 4.2.2: Incorporate sustainable design, construction, operating, and maintenance practices.

Metro incorporates cost-effective green building and sustainable development practices in all capital projects that it plans, designs, constructs, remodels, renovates, and operates. Metro will continue seeking opportunities to improve energy efficiency and conservation and to decrease energy use in its facilities. Metro follows King County's Green Building and Sustainable Development Ordinance and strives for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification where possible.

GOAL 5

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.



Metro seeks to provide reliable, safe and convenient transportation services that are valued by customers and responsive to the needs of people, businesses and communities.





Objective 5.1: Improve satisfaction with Metro's products and services and the way they are delivered.

Metro associates customer satisfaction with a favorable public image, customer loyalty, and strong community support, as well as the provision of quality service. Metro is committed to giving its customers a positive experience at every stage, from trip planning to arrival at a destination. **Intended outcome: People are more satisfied with Metro products and services.**

■ Strategy 5.1.1: Provide service that is easy to understand and use.

A public transportation system that is easy to understand and use is important to attracting and retaining riders and increasing market share. People may not try public transportation if they do not know which bus routes or other services to use, how to pay a fare, how to transfer among services, or where to get off. Customer information tools are essential to inform riders about services and help them easily navigate the public transportation system. Products such as the ORCA fare card simplify fare payment and transfers among transit agencies in the Puget Sound region. Customer information tools ease public transportation use for new and existing riders alike.

■ Strategy 5.1.2: Emphasize customer service in transit operations and workforce training.

Every customer experience affects perceptions of the quality of Metro service. Metro operators are at the front lines of transit service, interacting with customers daily. Other Metro employees interact with customers at service centers, over the phone, or at public meetings. Metro will work to achieve high levels of customer service in all of these interactions, and to continually emphasize to employees the importance of good customer service.



■ Strategy 5.1.3: Improve transit speed and reliability.

Transit speed and reliability is an important aspect of customer satisfaction. Metro regularly monitors its on-time performance and strives to achieve its performance guidelines. To help improve transit speed and reliability, Metro is committed to managing transit pathways. Its speed-and-reliability program places high priority on corridors with high ridership and bus volumes, such as Metro's six RapidRide corridors, and on corridors impacted by major construction projects, such as replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the SR-520 bridge. A range of speed and reliability improvements including traffic signal coordination, transit signal priority, bus lanes, queue bypass, safety improvements and stop consolidation can be implemented on a corridor or spot basis. Metro works independently and in coordination with local jurisdictions to make improvements that enhance the speed and reliability of bus service, help maintain even intervals between buses, and reduce overcrowding and delays.

Objective 5.2: Improve public awareness of Metro products and services.

People will use public transportation products and services that meet their needs, but they must first learn about the service that is available. Marketing and customer information tools are critical for increasing ridership by communicating the

GOAL 5: SERVICE EXCELLENCE

availability, value, benefits and “how to” of using public transportation. **Intended outcome: People understand how to use Metro’s products and services and use them more often.**

- **Strategy 5.2.1: Use available tools, new technologies, and new methods to improve communication with customers.**

Metro currently uses a range of tools to give customers up-to-date information on public transportation services and service disruptions and to promote Metro products and services. Internet-based media will offer new opportunities to reach even more people and keep them informed. Independent application developers augment and support Metro’s efforts to improve customer communications (see box below). Metro will continue to improve its communications so that customers can easily access information when they need it most.

- **Strategy 5.2.2: Promote Metro’s products and services to existing and potential customers.**

Effective marketing generates ridership and improves overall awareness and understanding of the public transportation system. Marketing activities include direct promotion, advertising, product branding and positive customer service. These activities can support events such as periodic service changes, major initiatives such as Transit Now, and campaigns focused on target groups. As Metro seeks to grow overall ridership and increase efficiency by attracting riders to services with existing capacity, expanded marketing efforts—including market research and promotion—will make a difference.



Metro Online

Metro’s website was updated to improve the organization of news and alerts, making it easier to use and understand.

Specific improvements include:

Transit alerts

A subscription service that sends alerts via e-mail or text message for a specific route or for general information.

Adverse weather alerts

A color-coded snow, ice and flood map that indicates Metro service re-routes during emergency events. Customers can look up specific routes to see detailed information.

Eye on your Metro commute

A blog that offers service information during rush hours (6-9 a.m./ 3-6 p.m.).

Third-party applications

Programs written by individuals or companies outside of Metro using Metro data. A popular example is One Bus Away, found at: <http://onebusaway.org>.



GOAL 6

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Exercise sound financial management and build Metro's long-term sustainability.



Metro is committed to using resources wisely and increasing the efficiency of its operations.

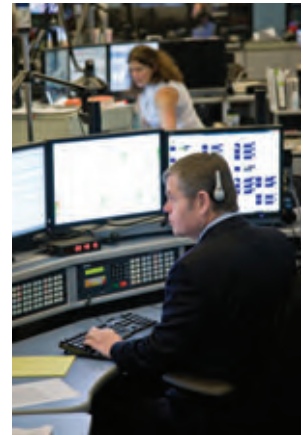


Objective 6.1: Emphasize planning and delivery of productive service.

Metro should create a public transportation system that emphasizes productivity, while ensuring social equity and providing geographic value. A focus on productivity will support regional and local growth and economic development as well as environmental and financial sustainability. **Intended outcome: Service productivity improves.**

- **Strategy 6.1.1: Manage the transit system through service guidelines and performance measures.**

Service guidelines and performance measures will help the public, Metro and King County decision-makers determine the appropriate level and type of service for different corridors and destinations. Guidelines will clearly state the balanced prioritization of emphasizing productivity, ensuring social equity and providing geographic value used for identifying the All-Day and Peak Network and changes to the network. Metro will apply the regional transit committee-recommended and County council-adopted objective service guidelines as it makes decisions about service allocation, managing service quality, the frequency of service, route spacing, the directness of service, and stop spacing. Through the establishment of route, system and peer-comparison performance measures, Metro will also be able to better understand how public transportation is performing on multiple levels.

**Objective 6.2: Control Costs.**

Metro should control costs to provide a structure that is sustainable over time. **Intended outcome: Metro costs grow at or below the rate of inflation.**

- **Strategy 6.2.1: Continually explore and implement cost efficiencies, including operational and administrative efficiencies.**

Metro will continue to seek efficiencies in the administration and operation of the agency, including overhead costs, to ensure that Metro develops a more sustainable financial structure in the long-term. Opportunities to improve service and increase efficiency include restructuring service and implementing the findings of the 2009 King County auditor's performance audit of Metro. This audit identified areas where Metro could achieve cost efficiencies, such as in the way it schedules fixed-route service. Metro has incorporated most of these recommendations into the 2010-2011 biennial budget and will continue striving to maximize cost-efficiency.

- **Strategy 6.2.2: Provide and maintain capital assets to support efficient and effective service delivery.**

Metro's capital program supports service delivery and provides for ongoing replacement of aging infrastructure. Regular maintenance and upgrades keep Metro's facilities in good repair and support efficient, safe and reliable transit operations. Metro also invests in new operations facilities, on-board systems, signal priority improvements, and real-time technology. Strategic investments in new infrastructure allow Metro to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the public transportation system.

Metro will develop a prioritized set of strategic procurement goals to guide procurement processes and decisions. Metro will replace and adjust the transit bus fleet so that the size, fleet mix, and fleet age are consistent with service

projections and operating characteristics of the regular bus system. Metro will replace and expand its vanpool fleet to provide the appropriate mix of vehicle sizes, both to encourage and support vanpool program participants and to minimize costs. Metro will also replace and expand the fleet of Access paratransit vehicles to support efficient operations.



▪ **Strategy 6.2.3: Develop and implement alternative public transportation services and delivery strategies.**

Fixed-route transit service is most cost efficient in areas of King County where housing and employment are concentrated. Land uses that support walking as a mode choice encourage the use of fixed-route transit services. Fixed-route transit service is not cost-effective in some areas of King County because of the type of land uses, infrastructure, or density. However, people in these areas still have mobility needs and, by circumstance or choice, require public transportation services. Metro provides

public transportation products such as ridesharing, community vans, Dial-a-Ride Transit, and Community Access Transportation in these areas. Metro will continue to augment its fixed-route system with these and other innovative public transportation services and delivery strategies that keep costs down while providing mobility to people throughout King County.

▪ **Strategy 6.2.4: Provide alternative or “right-sized” services in the context of overall system financial health and the need to reduce, maintain or expand the system.**

Metro will extend alternative service delivery products to communities according to market characteristics and resources available. Alternative or “right-sized” services can provide cost-effective mobility options for communities. Depending on Metro’s financial standing and six to 10 year financial outlook, it may provide these services as a cost effective alternative to a fixed-route service or as a complement to the public transit network.

When financial challenges require Metro to consider service reductions, alternative services can provide a lower-cost service option in low-density areas that are surrounded by or adjacent to rural areas, or to provide a lower cost service in place of an existing fixed route in other areas. When revenues are stable or growing, Metro will consider alternative services in other corridors where it provides a cost-effective addition to fixed-route service or as a complement to existing public transit services where appropriate markets exist.

Objective 6.3: Seek to establish a sustainable funding structure to support short- and long-term public transportation needs.

New, sustainable funding sources are critical if Metro is to continue current operations and achieve the region’s goals and vision for the future. Additional and sustainable revenue sources, along with changes in the way service decisions are made and public transportation resources are allocated, will allow Metro to support the growth and economic development of King County. ***Intended outcome: Adequate funding to support King County’s short- and long-term public transportation needs.***

▪ **Strategy 6.3.1: Secure long-term sustainable funding.**

Even with efficiency measures, Metro's resources must increase over time to meet growing customer demand. New, sustainable funding sources are crucial to ensure that Metro can support existing transit service and plan for future growth. Metro is exploring several potential revenue sources that would improve Metro's funding situation. Among these potential sources are fares, grants, advertising, and partnerships with local jurisdictions and businesses. Metro prioritizes funding sources that enable sustained operations over time and one-time revenue sources that allow implementation of a particular project or program. Metro will also pursue new revenue sources through state legislation, including sources that are currently authorized and those that may require new legislation. Metro must establish a stable revenue source or program that allows for system growth and keeps pace with changes in regional growth and employment.

▪ **Strategy 6.3.2: Establish fare structures and fare levels that are simple to understand, aligned with other service providers, and meet revenue targets established by Metro's fund management policies.**

Metro's fare structure and fare levels should enable Metro to meet cost-recovery targets that are established by fund management policies adopted by the King County Council. Fares should be set to reflect the cost of service, promote operational efficiency, ensure regional coordination, minimize impacts of fares on those least able to pay, and reduce the cost of fare collection. Metro fare prices should strike a balance between revenue generation objectives and the need to maintain existing service and attract new ridership. Metro's fares will comply with state and federal regulations. The fare structure and level should be reviewed biennially.

Metro works with the region's transit agencies to coordinate fares and schedules. Several transportation agencies including Metro collaborated to introduce One Regional Card for All (ORCA), the regional fare payment method that enables customers to use one card to pay their fare on multiple systems throughout the Central Puget Sound area.

Metro also regularly works with other agencies to coordinate policies, practices and services throughout the Puget Sound region to provide a consistent transit experience for customers. Simple and consistent fares are important to make transit easy to use for both new and existing transit riders.

▪ **Strategy 6.3.3: Establish fund management policies that ensure stability through a variety of economic conditions.**

Metro is committed to comprehensive and prudent financial planning and forecasting that uses reasonable economic assumptions along with specific programmatic plans to project future revenues, expenditures, and resulting fund balances. Metro's fund management policies guide the development of a six-year financial plan that is produced through the budget process and adopted by the King County Council. Metro's fund management policies, planning, and ongoing forecasting allow the transit system to respond effectively to unforeseen emergencies and changes in the economy without large impacts to existing services.



GOAL 7

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.



Metro is committed to informing and engaging the public as it develops products and services.



Objective 7.1: Empower people to play an active role in shaping Metro's products and services.

Metro is committed to being responsive and accountable to the public. One way Metro will meet this commitment is by continuing to conduct a community planning process and public outreach as part of any major service change or new service initiative. **Intended outcome: The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.**



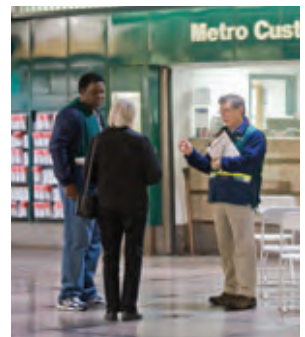
▪ Strategy 7.1.1: Engage the public in the planning process and improve customer outreach.

Metro's community engagement work is consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice Initiative. Metro seeks to build its capacity to engage all communities in a manner that promotes and fosters trust among people across geographic, race, class and gender lines, resulting in more effective policies, processes, and services as well as supporting community-based solutions to problems.

Metro's planning process provides opportunities for the public to help design public transportation services. It involves riders, non-riders, elected officials, community leaders, city and County staff members, and social service agencies. Outreach targets historically under-represented populations, using translated materials or interpretation services as needed. Metro uses public meetings, open houses and a sounding board process to engage customers. Metro also does extensive public communication using direct mail, newspaper and radio ads, surveys and online information, and continually explores new media to reach a larger audience. Metro will strive to involve the public early in any planning process and offer opportunities for ongoing involvement.

Objective 7.2: Increase customer and public access to understandable, accurate and transparent information.

Transparent decision-making processes and information will help build public trust in Metro and acceptance of the decisions made. **Intended outcome: Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.**



▪ Strategy 7.2.1: Communicate service change concepts, the decision-making process, and public transportation information in language that is accessible and easy to understand.

Metro's decision-making process should be clear, transparent and based on criteria that are easy for customers to understand. Metro considers equity and social justice in its decision-making process, particularly for people of color, low-income communities, and people with limited English proficiency, consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice Initiative and federal law. Service guidelines and performance measures provide an outline of Metro's approach to decision-making. Guidelines are based on data that are understandable to the public and provide for a transparent process for making service allocation decisions. Performance measures will give the public a snapshot of Metro's performance on a systemwide level and allow for comparisons between service types and between peer agencies. Using a variety of forums and media channels, Metro will reach out to customers and the public to share information on the decision-making process.

and on the performance measures that are the basis of Metro service changes and new service initiatives.

■ **Strategy 7.2.2: Explore innovative ways to report to and inform the public.**

New forums for public outreach can help Metro reach more new and existing riders and make it easier for them to find the information they need. Metro will continue providing information to the public through various channels including printed materials, Metro Online, social media and other channels.



GOAL 8

QUALITY WORKFORCE

Develop and empower Metro's most valuable asset, its employees.



Metro strives to develop and retain an effective, customer-oriented workforce that embraces collaboration, innovation and diversity.





Objective 8.1: Attract and recruit quality employees.

Metro's products and services are a reflection of the employees who deliver them. To maintain excellent services, Metro recruits quality and committed employees and creates a positive work environment. Metro prides itself as being a great place to work and a fair and just employer that values a diverse and skilled workforce.

Intended outcome: Metro is satisfied with the quality of its workforce.

- **Strategy 8.1.1: Market Metro as an employer of choice and cultivate a diverse and highly skilled applicant pool.**

Metro makes itself a prominent employer through local and national recruiting. Networking with local community-based agencies and professional organizations encourages the development of a highly skilled applicant pool.

- **Strategy 8.1.2: Promote equity, social justice and transparency in hiring and recruiting activities.**

Metro constantly seeks to improve its hiring and recruitment process to ensure that it is open and competitive. Successful candidates are objectively selected on the basis of their qualifications. Metro promotes diversity in its hiring process. Metro believes that its workforce should reflect the populations it serves and recruits from the local workforce.

Objective 8.2: Empower and retain efficient, effective, and productive employees.

Metro strives to support its employees, empower them to excel, recognize their achievements, and help them develop professionally. Metro values input from employees on ways to improve business practices and make Metro more efficient.

Intended outcome: Metro employees are satisfied with their jobs and feel their work contributes to an improved quality of life in King County.

- **Strategy 8.2.1: Build leadership and promote professional skills.**

Metro employs thousands of individuals in management, maintenance and operations positions. Metro management encourages a high level of collaboration with its employees, maintains effective labor relations, and identifies situations for improvement and for employee advancement. Metro recognizes that the next generation of leaders is likely already among us and seeks to identify and develop those leaders.



- **Strategy 8.2.2: Recognize employees for outstanding performance, excellent customer service, innovation and strategic thinking.**

The most effective way for Metro to remain a resilient organization is to develop a work environment where employees are rewarded for high performance and innovation. Metro empowers its employees to engage in problem-solving and service improvement by collaborating with them and recognizing their efforts. Developing a work force driven by excellence will help Metro reduce costs while providing high-quality, customer-driven service.

- **Strategy 8.2.3: Provide training opportunities that enable employees to reach their full potential.**

Training offers opportunities for employees to learn new skills, develop existing skills and grow professionally. Metro offers employees a number of training resources through national transit organizations, county agencies and other professional development groups. A focus of Metro's training efforts is its operators, as they interact most directly with customers. Developing the workforce further is essential to Metro's success as the organization continues to grow and plan for the future.

