

CHAPTER 3: PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Metro’s strategic plan is a blueprint for Metro to improve its public transportation products and services in meaningful and measurable ways. Performance monitoring will help Metro evaluate its progress, plan and budget for the future, and improve agency practices. By making performance reports readily available, Metro can make its progress transparent to internal and external audiences. This section gives an overview of how Metro and its stakeholders can measure the progress and impacts of the strategic plan.



SECTION 3.1

How Metro measures performance

Metro measures the performance of individual routes, of the Metro system as a whole, and of various products and services. Metro reports various measures in the Federal Transit Administration’s National Transit Database, in monthly and annual management reports (see sidebar), and in project-specific performance reports. These reports serve a number of purposes: They comply with federal and state reporting requirements, give public transportation managers the data they need, assess progress towards goals and objectives, inform management and policy decisions, and give the public a way to assess Metro’s performance.

Measuring the strategic plan

Reporting for this strategic plan will focus primarily on Metro’s progress towards its objectives and strategies. Metro will use some of the measures already used for other reporting purposes, augmented by measures specific to the strategic plan. Reporting for this plan will support and enhance Metro’s ongoing measurement and use of performance data.

This plan provides for performance measurement at three levels:

- Objectives
- Strategies
- Peer comparison.

The following pages provide a more detailed description of these measurement levels and potential associated measures. Metro will report on strategic plan measures on a biennial basis, and will update this section of the plan as necessary to improve performance measurement.

After January 1, 2012, prior to proposing any budget that includes a change in the system greater than 10 percent of the system hours during the next two-year period, Metro will report on strategic plan measures if a report has not been delivered within the last 12 months.

Metro performance measurement information

Metro launched an online “Monthly Performance Indicators” website to give the public current information about Metro’s performance.

On this site, people can find graphs and data showing trends in ridership, service quality, safety and security, finances, and service effectiveness.

Find this site and links to other Metro reports at <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/reports/monthly-measures>.

Measuring objectives

Each objective in the plan is measured by an outcome that relates to an aspect of Metro’s vision. Metro will measure progress toward these broad outcomes at the systemwide level using metrics and measurement methods that incorporate many factors. The combined results will give an indication of Metro’s overall progress toward achieving its vision. Objectives could be measured in a variety of different ways, and techniques for measurement may change over time. Table 2 shows each objective and its suggested related outcome. These outcomes will be reported in a variety of ways, including maps, graphs and text.

TABLE 2: Objectives and related outcomes

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME
1	Keep people safe and secure.	Metro’s services and facilities are safe and secure.
2	Provide public transportation products and services that add value throughout King County and that facilitate access to jobs, education and other destinations.	More people throughout King County have access to public transportation products and services.
3	Support a strong, diverse, sustainable economy.	Public transportation products and services are available throughout King County and are well-utilized in centers and areas of concentrated economic activity.
	Address the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county.	More people have access to and regularly use public transportation products and services in King County.
	Support compact, healthy communities.	More people regularly use public transportation products and services along corridors with compact development.
	Support economic development by using existing transportation infrastructure efficiently and effectively.	Regional investments in major highway capacity projects and parking requirements are complemented by high transit service levels in congested corridors and centers.
4	Help reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the region.	People drive single-occupant vehicles less.
	Minimize Metro’s environmental footprint.	Metro’s environmental footprint is reduced (normalized against service growth).
5	Improve satisfaction with Metro’s products and services and the way they are delivered.	People are more satisfied with Metro products and services.
	Improve public awareness of Metro products and services.	People understand how to use Metro’s products and services and use them more often.
6	Emphasize planning and delivery of productive service.	Service productivity improves.
	Control costs.	Metro costs grow at or below the rate of inflation.
	Seek to establish a sustainable funding structure to support short- and long-term public transportation needs.	Adequate funding to support King County’s short- and long-term public transportation needs.
7	Empower people to play an active role in shaping Metro’s products and services.	The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.
	Increase customer and public access to understandable, accurate and transparent information.	Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.
8	Attract and recruit quality employees.	Metro is satisfied with the quality of its workforce.
	Empower and retain efficient, effective, and productive employees.	Metro employees are satisfied with their jobs and feel their work contributes to an improved quality of life in King County.

Measuring strategies

The strategies in the plan support the objectives. Strategies will be measured using discrete, quantifiable metrics to determine if they are being successfully implemented and are having the intended impact. Strategies could be measured in a variety of ways and measurement techniques may change over time. The 36 strategies and potential related measures in this strategic plan are listed in Table 3. These measures focus on different aspects of the public transportation system, including transit use, productivity, cost, social equity and geographic value. Specific thresholds and targets for these measures will be established in Metro’s business plans.

TABLE 3: **Strategies and related measures**

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
1	1.1	1.1.1 Promote safety and security in public transportation operations and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventable accidents per million miles • Operator and passenger incidents and assaults
		1.1.2 Plan for and execute regional emergency response and homeland security efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction regarding safety and security • Effectiveness of emergency responses
2	2.1	2.1.1 Design and offer a variety of public transportation products and services appropriate to different markets and mobility needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population with ¼-mile walk access to a transit stop or 2-mile drive to a park-and-ride, reported separately
		2.1.2 Provide travel opportunities and supporting amenities for historically disadvantaged populations, such as low-income people, students, youth, seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, and others with limited transportation options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of jobs with ¼-mile walk access to a transit stop or 2-mile drive to a park-and-ride, reported separately • Number of students at universities and community colleges that are within a ¼-mile walk of transit
		2.1.3 Provide products and services that are designed to provide geographic value in all parts of King County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of households in low-income census tracts within a quarter-mile walk of a transit stop or a 2-mile drive to a park-and-ride, reported separately
		2.1.4 Provide alternative or “right-sized” services in the context of overall system financial health and the need to reduce, maintain or expand the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of households in minority census tracts within a quarter-mile walk of a transit stop or a 2-mile drive to a park-and-ride, reported separately • Accessible bus stops • Transit mode share by market • Student and reduced-fare permits and usage • Access applicants who undertake fixed-route travel training • Access boardings/number of trips provided by the Community Access Transportation (CAT) program • Access registrants • Requested Access trips compared to those provided • Vanpool boardings

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
3	3.1	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit rides per capita • Park-and-ride capacity and utilization (individually and systemwide) • Employees at CTR sites sharing non-drive-alone transportation modes during peak commute hours • Employer-sponsored passes and usage • All public transportation ridership in King County (rail, bus, Paratransit, Rideshare) • Ridership in population/business centers • HOV lane passenger miles
		3.1.2 Work with employers to make public transportation products and services more affordable and convenient for employees.	
	3.2	3.2.1 Expand services to accommodate the region's growing population and serve new transit markets.	
		3.2.2 Coordinate and develop services and facilities with other providers to create an integrated and efficient regional transportation system.	
		3.2.3 Work with transit partners, WSDOT and others to manage park-and-ride capacity needs.	
3.3	3.3.1 Encourage land uses, policies, and development that lead to communities that transit can serve efficiently and effectively.		
	3.3.2 Support bicycle and pedestrian access to jobs, services and the transit system.		
3.4	3.4.1 Serve centers and other areas of concentrated activity, consistent with <i>Transportation 2040</i> .		
4	4.1	4.1.1 Increase the proportion of travel in King County that is provided by public transportation products and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)* • Transit mode share • Average miles per gallon of the Metro bus fleet • Energy use at Metro facilities/kWh and natural gas used in facilities normalized by area and temperature • Total facility energy use • Vehicle energy (diesel, gasoline, kWh) normalized by miles • Vehicle fuel (diesel, gasoline, kWh) normalized by boardings
	4.2	4.2.1 Operate vehicles and adopt technology that has the least impact on the environment and maximizes long-term sustainability.	
4.2.2 Incorporate sustainable design, construction, operating and maintenance practices.			

*Technical amendment: Placement of this measure corrects an error in the version approved by the King County Council.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
5	5.1	<p>5.1.1 Provide service that is easy to understand and use.</p> <p>5.1.2 Emphasize customer service in transit operations and workforce training.</p> <p>5.1.3 Improve transit speed and reliability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Customer complaints per boarding • On-time performance by time of day • Crowding • Utilization of Metro web tools and alerts
	5.2	<p>5.2.1 Use available tools and new technologies to improve communication with customers.</p> <p>5.2.2 Promote Metro’s products and services to existing and potential customers.</p>	
6	6.1	6.1.1 Manage the transit system through service guidelines and performance measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boardings per revenue hour • Cost per boarding • Cost per hour • Service hours operated • Asset condition assessment • Fare revenues • Farebox recovery • Service hours and service hour change per route • Ridership and ridership change per route • Boardings per vehicle hour • Passenger miles per vehicle mile • Passenger miles per revenue mile • ORCA use • Cost per vehicle mile • Cost per vanpool boarding • Cost per Access boarding
		6.1.2 Establish and maintain a long-range transit service and capital plan developed in collaboration with local comprehensive and regional long-range transportation planning.	
	6.2	<p>6.2.1 Continually explore and implement cost efficiencies, including operational and administrative efficiencies.</p> <p>6.2.2 Provide and maintain capital assets to support efficient and effective service delivery.</p> <p>6.2.3 Develop and implement alternative public transportation services and delivery strategies.</p> <p>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.</p>	
6.3	<p>6.3.1 Secure long-term stable funding.</p> <p>6.3.2 Establish fare structures and fare levels that are simple to understand, aligned with other service providers, and that meet revenue targets established by Metro’s fund management policies.</p> <p>6.3.3 Establish fund management policies that ensure stability through a variety of economic conditions.</p>		

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	MEASURES
7	7.1	7.1.1 Engage the public in the planning process and improve customer outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public participation rates* • Customer satisfaction regarding Metro’s communications and reporting • Social media indicators • Conformance with King County policy on communications accessibility and translation to other languages
	7.2	7.2.1 Communicate service change concepts, the decision-making process, and public transportation information in language that is accessible and easy to understand. 7.2.2 Explore innovative ways to report to and inform the public.	
8	8.1	8.1.1 Market Metro as an employer of choice and cultivate a diverse and highly skilled applicant pool. 8.1.2 Promote equity, social justice and transparency in hiring and recruiting activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics of Metro employees* • Employee job satisfaction • Promotion rate • Probationary pass rate
	8.2	8.2.1 Build leadership and promote professional skills. 8.2.2 Recognize employees for outstanding performance, excellent customer service, innovation and strategic thinking. 8.2.3 Provide training opportunities that enable employees to reach their full potential.	

*Technical amendment: Placement of this measure corrects an error in the version approved by the King County Council.

Peer comparison

Comparisons with peer transit agencies provide an additional benchmark for measuring Metro’s performance. Metro currently compares its annual performance with other large bus agencies in the U.S. in three key areas: effectiveness (productivity), efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Peer comparisons provide a general sense of whether Metro is improving, maintaining or falling behind in comparison to national trends. These comparisons often raise questions about why Metro is improving or not. Answering these questions typically requires further analysis, which Metro does by examining its relevant business processes or conducting in-depth research on peer agencies that are making the greatest improvements on the measure in question.

Peer comparison reporting: Strategic plan reporting will compare Metro with transit agency peers in three key areas of performance: effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The specific indicators for each will be calculated using the Federal Transit Administration’s annual National Transit Database reports, as follows:

TABLE 4: **Peer comparison—key areas of performance**

EFFECTIVENESS	EFFICIENCY	COST EFFECTIVENESS
1) Percent change in boardings per capita	1) Percent change in cost per vehicle hour	1) Percent change in cost per boarding
2) Percent change in boardings per vehicle hour	2) Percent change in cost per vehicle mile	2) Percent change in cost per passenger mile
3) Percent change in passenger miles per vehicle mile		

■ SECTION 3.2

Route Performance



Public outreach process for Link light rail integration

In 2009, Sound Transit began service on the new Link Light Rail line, connecting Sea-Tac Airport to Downtown Seattle. Because of this new transit service, Metro restructured many of its bus routes to facilitate connections to Link and reduce duplication of services.

Metro and Sound Transit conducted months of extensive public outreach to help figure out the best ways to integrate the new services. This outreach included two sounding boards—groups of citizens convened to provide a recommendation to Metro on how to proceed.

Metro uses service guidelines to evaluate the performance of individual routes in the fixed-route system. Performance management guidelines are applied to individual routes to identify high and low performance, identify areas where investment is needed, and identify areas where resources are not being used efficiently and effectively. Both productivity and service quality are measured.

Metro may adjust routes to improve the performance of the individual route as well as the performance of the entire Metro fixed-route system. Metro makes service revisions three times a year. Significant changes to routes generally have a large public outreach process (see sidebar) and are subject to approval by the King County Council. Minor changes, as defined by the King County Code, may be made administratively.