



**King County  
METRO**

*We'll Get You There*



# King County Metro Transit

## **Strategic Plan for Public Transportation**

### 2011-2021

### **SUMMARY**

King County is growing and changing, and its public transportation system must evolve as well. The *Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021* will guide Metro over the next decade. It lays out a new vision of what the region's public transportation system should become and sets goals, objectives and strategies for attaining that vision. The plan includes quantitative performance measures that Metro will use to report progress to the public.

Metro also has developed service guidelines—objective standards that it will use to design and change transit services that are productive and equitable and provide value throughout the county.

This brochure includes highlights of the strategic plan and a description of the service guidelines.

### **Metro's vision for public transportation**

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 transit 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 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.

## Metro's Service Guidelines

Along with the strategic plan, Metro has produced service guidelines that it will use to make decisions about expanding or reducing service and to determine if service revisions are needed because of changes in rider demand or route performance.

Service guidelines help Metro make sure that its decision-making is objective, transparent, and aligned with regional goals for the public transportation system. They address productivity, social equity and geographic value, and help Metro respond to changing financial conditions, while integrating its services with the regional transportation system.

The guidelines are grouped into the following categories:

### All-Day and Peak Network

The All-Day and Peak Network is the centerpiece of the transit system that Metro is building to meet the region's current and future public transportation needs. Guidelines in this category are intended to ensure that transit supports household and employment density, connects centers, and provides service levels appropriate to the population and ridership throughout King County. The guidelines establish the service levels

needed to support growth, ensure social equity, and provide geographic value.

### Performance Measurement

These guidelines establish standards for productivity, passenger loads, and schedule reliability. Metro will use them to evaluate individual routes and recommend changes needed to maintain service quality and deliver effective and efficient service.

### Service Restructures

These guidelines define the circumstances that will prompt Metro to restructure multiple routes along a corridor or within an area.

### Route Design

These are qualitative and quantitative guidelines for designing specific transit routes and the overall transit network.

The service guidelines also describe how Metro will use all of the guidelines, how they will be prioritized to make recommendations about adding or reducing service, and how performance of individual bus routes and the Metro system as a whole will be reported.

## Laying the foundation for Metro's plan

Metro's strategic plan builds on two major regional planning processes:

**King County's Strategic Plan 2010–2014** was completed last year under the leadership of County Executive Dow Constantine. It focuses on customer service, partnerships, and ways to bring down the cost of government. The goals in Metro's strategic plan mirror those in the County plan.

Find King County's strategic plan at [www.kingcounty.gov/strategicplan](http://www.kingcounty.gov/strategicplan)



*A meeting of the 31-member Regional Transit Task Force.*

The **Regional Transit Task Force** was convened in 2010 to recommend a new policy framework for Metro as the agency faced both strong demand for service and a worsening financial outlook. The task force members, who represented many different perspectives and parts of King County, developed seven consensus recommendations. Metro drew on the task force's work as it prepared its strategic plan.

Find the Regional Transit Task Force report at [www.kingcounty.gov/transittaskforce](http://www.kingcounty.gov/transittaskforce)

# Summary of Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

## Goal 1: Safety. Support safe communities.

### Objective: Keep people safe and secure.

**Outcome:** Metro's services and facilities are safe and secure.

**Strategies:**

- Promote safety and security in public transportation operations and facilities.
- Plan for and execute regional emergency-response and homeland security efforts.

### Performance measures:

- Preventable accidents
- Operator and passenger incidents and assaults
- Customer satisfaction regarding safety and security
- Effectiveness of emergency responses

## Goal 2: Human Potential. Provide equitable opportunities for people from all areas of King County to access the public transportation system.

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

**Outcome:** More people throughout King County have access to public transportation products and services.

**Strategies:**

- Design and offer a variety of public transportation products and services appropriate to different markets and mobility needs.
- 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.
- Provide products and services that are designed to provide geographic value in all parts of King County.

### Performance measures:

- Population with ¼-mile walk access to a transit stop or 2-mile drive to a park-and-ride
- % low-income population within ¼-mile walk access to transit
- % minority population within ¼-mile walk access to transit
- 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
- Access registrants
- Requested Access trips compared to those provided
- Number of trips provided by the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute and Community Access Transportation programs
- Title VI compliance
- % population at 15 dwelling units per acre within ¼-mile walk access of frequent service

## Goal 3: Economic Growth and Built Environment. Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.

### Objective: Support a strong, diverse, sustainable economy.

**Outcome:** Public transportation products and services are available throughout King County and are well-utilized in centers and areas of concentrated economic activity.

**Strategies:**

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

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

**Outcome:** More people have access to and regularly use public transportation products and services in King County.

**Strategies:**

- Expand services to accommodate the region's growing population and serve new transit markets when financially feasible.

### Performance measures:

- Transit rides per capita
- Effectiveness of partnerships
- Park-and-ride utilization
- Peak mode share at Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) sites
- Employer-sponsored passes and usage
- % population at 15 dwelling units per acre within ¼-mile walk access of frequent service
- All public transportation ridership in King County (rail, bus, paratransit, rideshare)
- Centers ridership
- Bike rack use

### Goal 3: Economic Growth and Built Environment, cont.

- Coordinate and develop services and facilities with other providers to create an integrated and efficient regional transportation system.
- Work with transit partners, WSDOT and others to manage park-and-ride capacity needs.

#### **Objective: Support compact, healthy communities.**

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

#### **Strategies:**

- Encourage land uses, policies, and development that lead to communities that transit can serve efficiently and effectively.
- Support bicycle and pedestrian access to jobs, services, and the transit system

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

**Outcome:** Regional investments in major highway capacity projects and parking requirements are complemented by high transit service levels in congested corridors and centers.

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

### Goal 4: Environmental Sustainability. Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment.

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

**Outcome:** People drive single-occupant vehicles less.

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

#### **Objective: Minimize Metro's environmental footprint.**

**Outcome:** Metro's environmental footprint is reduced (normalized against service growth).

#### **Strategies:**

- Operate vehicles and adopt technology that has the least impact on the environment and maximizes long-term sustainability.
- Incorporate sustainable design, construction, operating and maintenance practices.

#### **Performance measures:**

- Per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Transit mode share
- Public transportation energy use per passenger mile
- Average miles per gallon of the Metro bus fleet
- Energy use at Metro facilities

### Goal 5: Service Excellence. Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs

#### **Objective: Metro's products and services and the way they are delivered.**

**Outcome:** People are more satisfied with Metro's products and services.

#### **Strategies:**

- Provide service that is easy to understand and use.
- Emphasize customer service in transit operations and workforce training.
- Improve transit speed and reliability.

#### **Performance measures:**

- Conformance with King County policy on communications accessibility and translation to other languages
- Customer satisfaction
- Customer complaints
- On-time performance by time of day
- Load factor
- Utilization of Metro web tools
- One Regional Card for All (ORCA) usage

## Goal 5: Service Excellence, cont.

### **Objective: Improve public awareness of Metro products and services.**

**Outcome:** People understand how to use Metro's products and services and use them more often.

**Strategies:**

- Use available tools, new technologies, and new methods to improve communication with customers.
- Promote Metro's products and services to existing and potential customers.

## Goal 6: Financial Stewardship. Exercise sound financial management and build Metro's long term sustainability.

### **Objective: Emphasize planning and delivery of productive service.**

**Outcome:** Service productivity improves

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

### **Objective: Control costs.**

**Outcome:** Metro's costs grow at or below the rate of inflation.

**Strategies:**

- Continually explore and implement cost efficiencies.
- Provide and maintain capital assets to support efficient and effective service delivery.
- Develop and implement alternative public transportation services and delivery strategies.

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

**Outcome:** Adequate funding to support King County's short- and long-term public transportation needs.

**Strategies:**

- Secure long-term stable funding.
- 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.
- Establish fund management policies that ensure stability through a variety of economic conditions.

### **Performance measures:**

- Boardings per platform hour
- Passenger miles per platform mile
- Access boardings
- Commuter van boardings
- Cost per boarding
- Cost per hour
- Service hours operated
- Asset condition assessment
- Base capacity level of service
- Fare revenues
- Farebox recovery
- Fare parity with other providers in the region

## Goal 7: Public Engagement and Transparency. Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities

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

**Outcome:** The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.

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

### **Performance measures:**

- Public participation rates
- Customer satisfaction regarding their role in Metro's planning process
- Customer satisfaction regarding Metro's communications and reporting

## Goal 7: Public Engagement and Transparency, cont.

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

**Outcome:** Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.

**Strategies:**

- Communicate service change concepts, the decision-making process, and public transportation information in language that is accessible and easy to understand.
- Explore innovative ways to report to and inform the public.

## Goal 8: Quality Workforce. Develop and empower Metro's most valuable asset, its employees.

### **Objective: Attract and recruit quality employees.**

**Outcome:** Metro is satisfied with the quality of its workforce.

**Strategies:**

- Market Metro as an employer of choice and cultivate a diverse and highly skilled applicant pool.
- Promote equity, social justice and transparency in hiring and recruiting activities.

### **Objective: Empower and retain efficient, effective, and productive employees.**

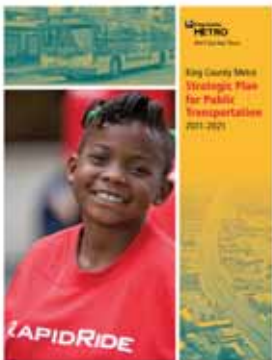
**Outcome:** Metro employees are satisfied with their jobs and feel their work contributes to an improved quality of life in King County.

**Strategies:**

- Build leadership and promote professional skills.
- Recognize employees for outstanding performance, excellent customer service, innovation and strategic thinking.
- Provide training opportunities that enable employees to reach their full potential.

**Performance measures:**

- Demographics of Metro employees
- Employee job satisfaction
- Promotion rate
- Probationary pass rate
- Training opportunities provided
- Trainings completed
- Employee performance



For a copy of the full strategic plan and service guidelines, visit <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/planning>



*We'll Get You There*

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