



King County

1200 King County
Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Meeting Agenda Regional Transit Committee

Councilmembers:

Steffanie Fain, Chair
Sarah Perry, Pete von Reichbauer

Sound Cities Association:

Vice Chair: Ryan McIrvine, Renton; Neal Black, Kirkland; JC Harris, Des Moines;
Susan Honda, Federal Way; Jim Ribail, Carnation; Pamela Stuart, Sammamish;
Toni Troutner, Kent; Tracy Taylor, Auburn

Alternates:

Vishal Bhargava, Bellevue; Larry Goldman, Lake Forest Park;
Councilmember Julie Hsieh, Mercer Island; Mayor James Mayhew, Snoqualmie;

City of Seattle:

Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Rob Saka
Alternate: Dionne Foster

Lead Staff: Mary Bourguignon (206-263-3296)

Committee Clerk: Blake Wells (206-263-1617)

3:00 PM

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

Hybrid Meeting

Hybrid Meetings: Attend King County Council committee meetings in person in Council Chambers (Room 1001), 516 3rd Avenue in Seattle, or through remote access. Details on how to attend and/or provide comment remotely are listed below.

Pursuant to K.C.C. 1.24.035 A. and F., this meeting is also noticed as a meeting of the Metropolitan King County Council, whose agenda is limited to the committee business. In this meeting only the rules and procedures applicable to committees apply and not those applicable to full council meetings.

HOW TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT: The Regional Transit Committee values community input and looks forward to hearing from you on agenda items.



Sign language and interpreter services can be arranged given sufficient notice (206-848-0355).
TTY Number - TTY 711.
Council Chambers is equipped with a hearing loop, which provides a wireless signal that is picked up by a hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting.



There are three ways to provide public comment:

1. In person: You may attend the meeting and provide comment in the Council Chambers.
2. By email: You may comment in writing on current agenda items by submitting your email comments to committees@kingcounty.gov. If your email is received by 1:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting, your email comments will be distributed to the committee members and appropriate staff prior to the meeting.
3. Remote attendance at the meeting by phone or computer (see "Connecting to the Webinar" below).

You may provide oral comment on current agenda items during the meeting's public comment period. You are not required to sign up in advance. Comments are limited to current agenda items.

You have the right to language access services at no cost to you. To request these services, please contact Language Access Coordinator, Tera Chea at 206-477-9259 or email tera.chea2@kingcounty.gov by 8:00 a.m. three business days prior to the meeting.

CONNECTING TO THE WEBINAR:

Webinar ID: 883 1320 7140

By computer using the Zoom application at <https://zoom.us/join> and the webinar ID above.

Via phone by calling 1-253-215-8782 and using the webinar ID above.

HOW TO WATCH/LISTEN TO THE MEETING REMOTELY: There are several ways to watch or listen in to the meeting:

- 1) Stream online via this link: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/kctv>, or input the link web address into your web browser.
- 2) Watch King County TV on Comcast Channel 22 and 322(HD) and Astound Broadband Channels 22 and 711(HD)
- 3) Listen to the meeting by telephone – See "Connecting to the Webinar" above.

To help us manage the meeting, if you do not wish to be called upon for public comment please use the Livestream or King County TV options listed above, if possible, to watch or listen to the meeting.

1. Call to Order

To show a PDF of the written materials for an agenda item, click on the agenda item below.

2. Roll Call

	Sign language and interpreter services can be arranged given sufficient notice (206-848-0355). TTY Number - TTY 711. Council Chambers is equipped with a hearing loop, which provides a wireless signal that is picked up by a hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting.	
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3. Approval of Minutes p. 4

June 17, 2026 meeting minutes

4. Chair's Report**5. Public Comment****6. General Manager's Report**

Michelle Allison, General Manager, Metro Transit Department

Briefings**7. [Briefing No. 2026-B0076](#) p. 7**

Metro's Next Stop (Planning for Future Investments)

DeAnna Martin, Chief of Staff, Metro Transit Department

8. [Briefing No. 2026-B0086](#) p. 62

Metro's transit safety planning and Regional Transit Safety Task Force update (including efforts to prevent trafficking via transit)

DeAnna Martin, Chief of Staff, Metro Transit Department

Rebecca Frankhouser, Director, Safety, Security, and Quality Assurance Division, Metro Transit Department

Other Business**Adjournment**

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Meeting Minutes Regional Transit Committee

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Lead Staff: Mary Bourguignon (206-263-3296)

Committee Clerk: Blake Wells (206-263-1617)

3:00 PM

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Hybrid Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Fain called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: 15 - McIrvine, Troutner, Honda, Saka, Black, Perry, Fain, von Reichbauer, Turner, Harris, Stuart, Rinck, Bhargava, Goldman and Hsieh

Excused: 1 - Ribail

3. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair McIrvine moved approval of the March 18, 2026 and April 21, 2026 meeting minutes. There being no objections, the minutes were approved.

4. Chair's Report

Chair Fain provided an overview of the agenda and introduced Mayor Ribail as a full member of the Regional Transit Committee.

5. Public Comment

The following people provided public comment:

Stephen Fesler

6. GM's Report

Michelle Allison, General Manager, Metro Transit Department, briefed the committee on World Cup service; ridership; upcoming updates to the long range plan, strategic plan, and service guidelines; and Metro Connects.

Briefings

7. [Briefing No. 2026-B0074](#)

Introduction to Metro's Three Adopted Policy Documents and Plans for 2028 Update

Jacob Brett, Transit Strategy and Policy Lead, Metro Transit Department, and Katie Chalmers, Transit Service Development Manager, Metro Transit Department, briefed the committee via PowerPoint presentation and answered questions from the members.

This matter was presented.

8. [Briefing No. 2026-B0075](#)

Metro's Service Recovery and Growth Planning

Katie Chalmers, Transit Service Development Manager, Metro Transit Department, briefed the committee via PowerPoint presentation and answered questions from the members.

This matter was presented.

9. [Briefing No. 2026-B0076](#)

Metro's Next Stop (Planning for Future Investments)

This matter was deferred.

Other Business

There was no other business to come before the committee.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Approved this _____ day of _____

Clerk's Signature



Metropolitan King County Council Staff Report

Committee:	Regional Transit Committee		
Agenda Item:	7	Analyst(s):	Mary Bourguigno
Proposed No.:	2026-B0076	Meeting Date:	July 15, 2026

OVERVIEW

TOPIC: Today's briefing will provide an overview of Metro's Next Stop, which is the name of Metro's plan to identify and prioritize investments through 2038.

SUMMARY:

Metro's Interim Network is one two future transit networks envisioned in the 2021 update to the Metro Connects long-range plan.¹ The Interim Network was intended to describe the transit system in the late 2030s, when light rail had reached Ballard and West Seattle, and was to be a waypoint to the Metro Connects 2050 Network.

Metro's Next Stop was proposed in June 2026² as a framework to prioritize transit system investments through 2038. Next Stop marks Metro's first step in updating Metro Connects in advance of transmitting a new proposed long-range plan in 2028.³

Next Stop reflects the changes to Sound Transit's Link light rail expansion timeline, as well as changes in ridership patterns and technology, an increasing focus on safety and security, and Metro's current financial outlook. Next Stop states that it prioritizes more bus service, faster and more reliable transit, and improved safety and cleanliness.

Table 1 below provides approximate comparisons meant for illustrative purposes only between existing conditions in 2026 and the transit networks envisioned in the Metro Connects Interim Network and in Metro's Next Stop.

¹ Metro Connects was updated in 2021 as Attachment C to Ordinance 19367 ([link](#))

² Metro's Next Stop, King County Metro, June 2026 ([link](#))

³ Ordinance 19367 asks the Executive to transmit updates to Metro's adopted policy documents within seven years (meaning in 2028 based on the 2021 transmittal of the last updates to the policy documents).

Table 1. King County Metro: Current Conditions, Interim Network, Next Stop
Approximate comparisons, illustrative only

	Current Conditions July 2026	Interim Network Late 2030s	Next Stop 2038
Annual service hours	4 million	5.5 million	4.5 million
Annual ridership	90 million	150 million	135 million
Total bus routes	132	155	145
Frequent routes ⁴	16	35	21
RapidRide routes	8	13-15	12
Metro Flex zones	10	?	?
Zero-emission fleet ⁵	22%	100%	33%
Proximity to transit ⁶	70%	80%	71%
Funding gap	N/A	\$7.1 billion capital \$423 million/yr svc	~\$0.5-\$1 billion/yr starting ~2032

During today's briefing, Metro will share more information about Next Stop.

INVITED

- DeAnna Martin, Chief of Staff, Metro Transit Department

ATTACHMENTS

1. Metro's Next Stop presentation
2. Metro's Next Stop report

⁴ Frequent routes are defined as those that arrive every 15 minutes or less (does not include RapidRide)

⁵ K.C.C. 18.22.010.A.1 sets the goal that 100% of the revenue bus fleet will be zero-emission by 2035. Based on budgetary and technology constraints, Metro has indicated that this goal will need to be delayed.

⁶ This is measured as residents within ¼ mile of a transit stop (for either local or frequent service).



METRO'S >>> NEXT STOP

RTC Meeting Materials

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July 15, 2026

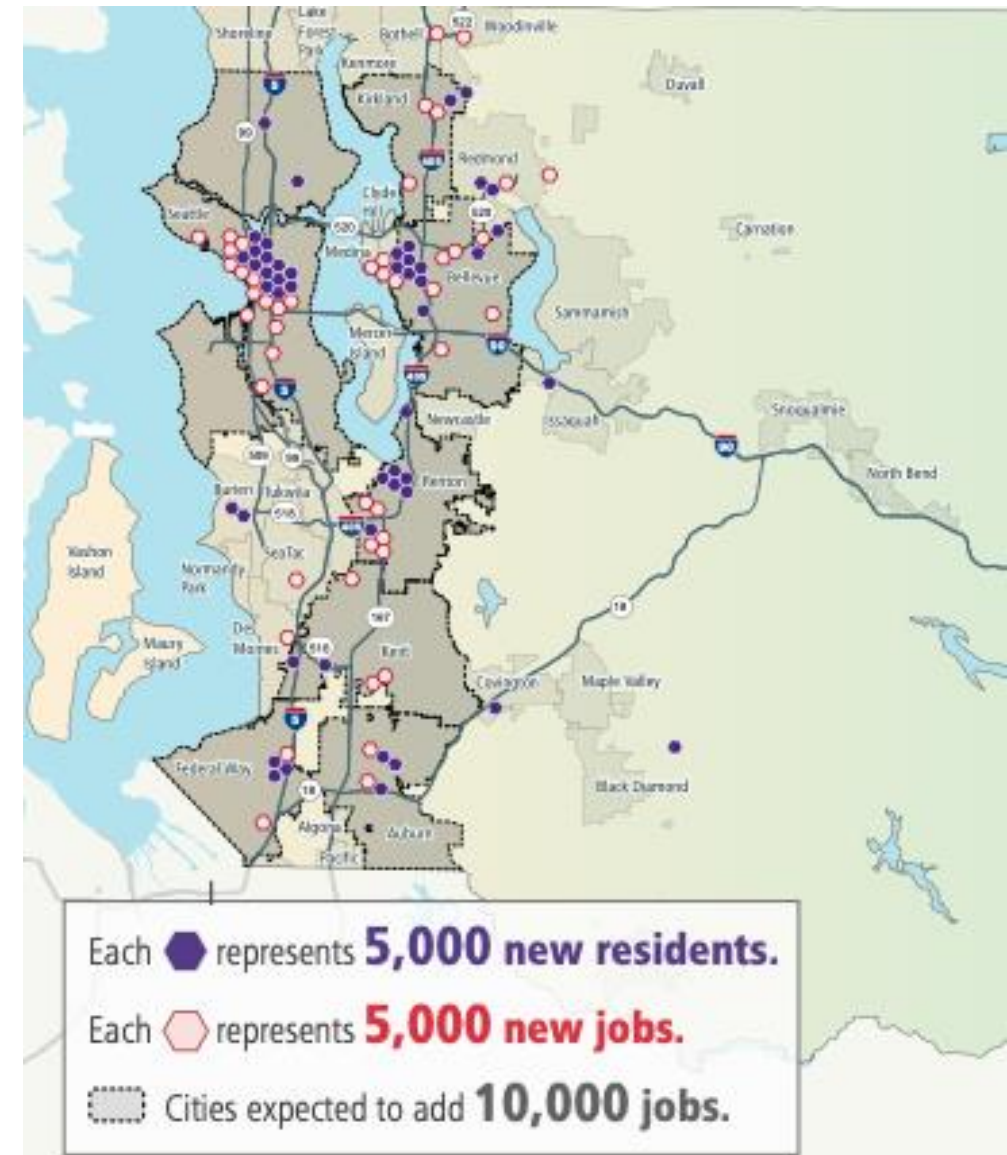
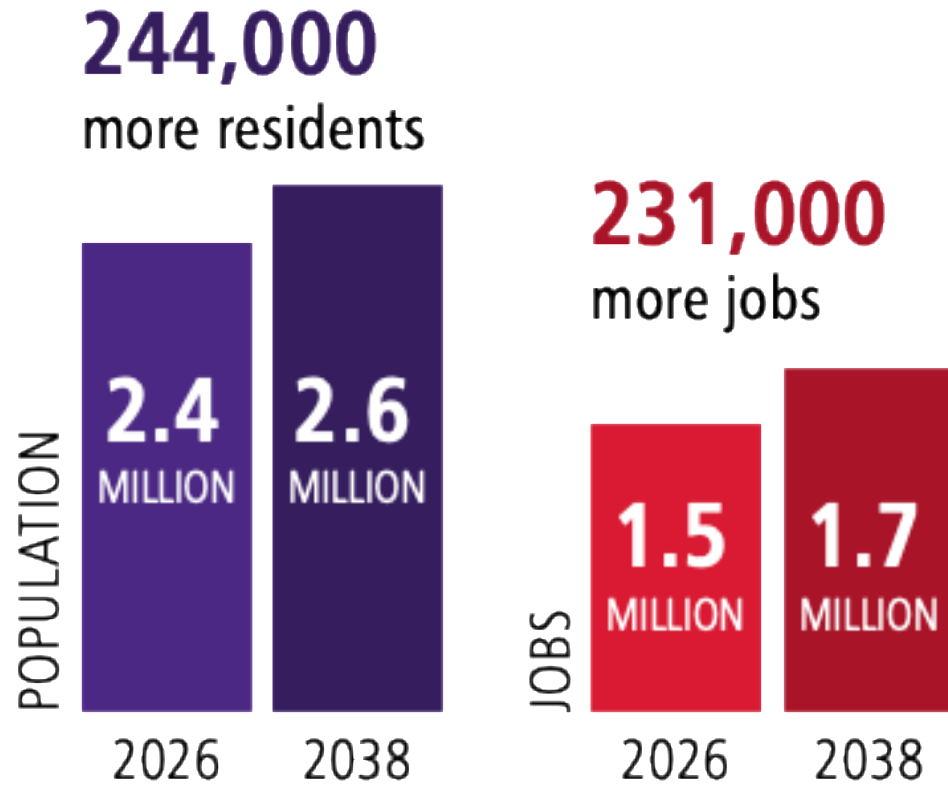
Metro's Next Stop shows
**what transit improvements
we can deliver by 2038
with additional funding.**

The region is changing, and Metro is key to connecting communities

Metro's Next Stop is a tool to help us:

- Communicate our value
- Confirm community priorities
- Identify investments towards our long-term vision, Metro Connects
- Update financial, delivery, and growth assumptions
- Build support and trust of partners
- Improve coordination, clarity, and confidence across Metro

Our region is growing

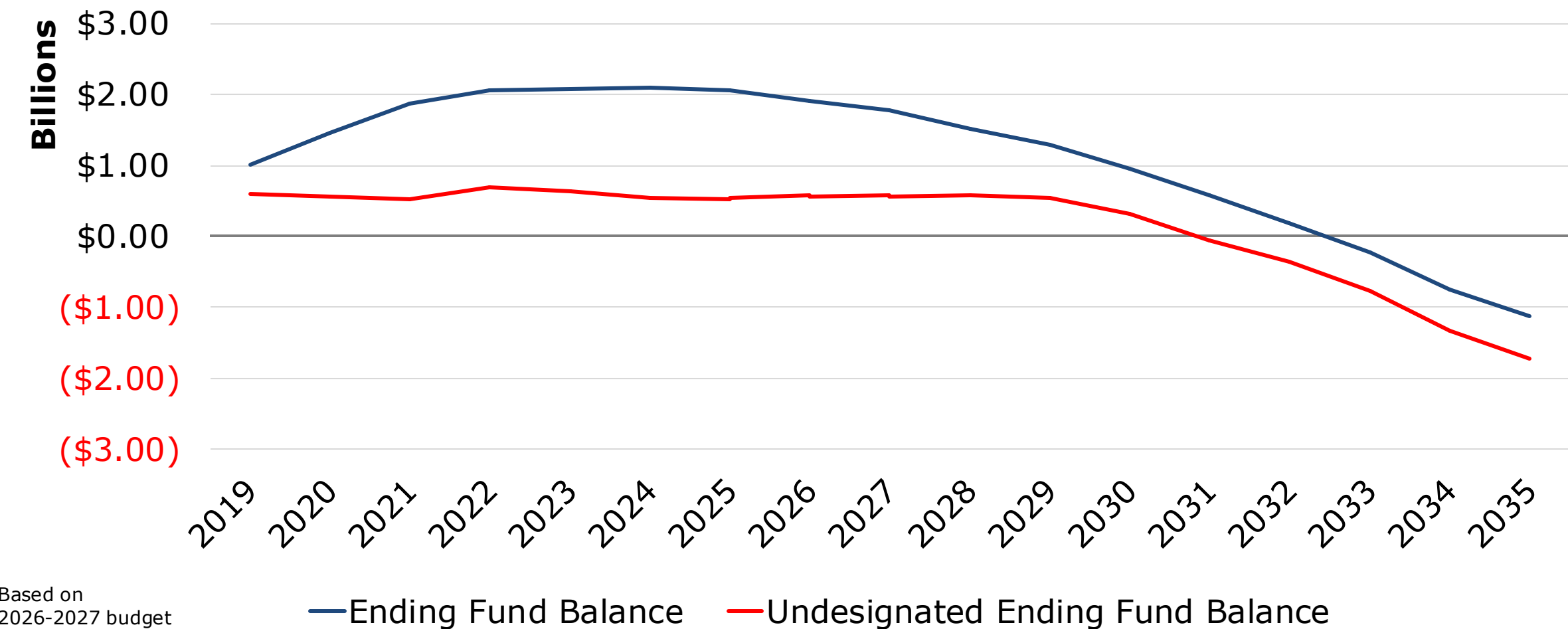


METRO'S >>> NEXT STOP

RTC Meeting Materials

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But funding is needed to meet growth





Metro's Next Stop outlines the investments needed to

- Create a safer, more welcoming transit experience
- Improve speed and reliability of trips
- Expand service and access to transit
- Modernize customer information tools
- Continue efforts to reduce GHG emissions

Transit plays a critical role in helping people access essential places and stay connected to their communities.

Metro's Next Stop represents an important step in planning for that future, shaped not only by quantitative data but also **by the voices and experiences of people in King County who rely on transit every day.**

- Equity Cabinet Co-Chairs

Community engagement is the foundation of Metro's Next Stop

Metro's Equity Cabinet

Seven meetings with the cabinet representing groups of people historically left out of decision-making

Partner Review Board

Six meetings with a board made up of community organizations, institutions, employers, business groups, and agency partners

Staff from local jurisdictions

Three meetings and a survey with staff from King County towns and cities

Top priorities from community engagement



- More bus service



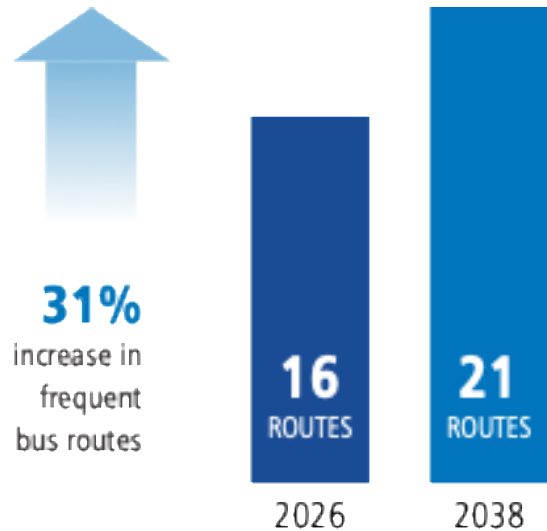
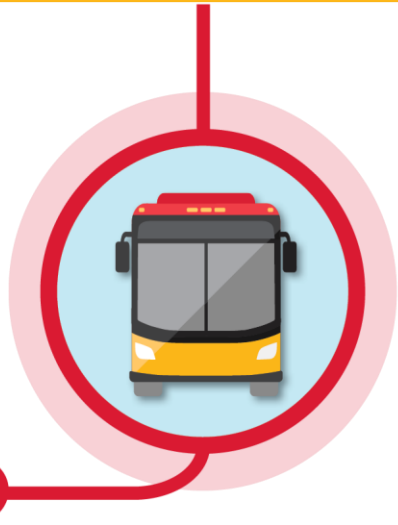
- Faster and more reliable transit



- Improved safety and cleanliness



More frequent bus service



- 9 new bus routes and 4 new RapidRide lines
- 5 more routes running every 15 minutes or better
- 12% overall service increase by 2038
- More midday and weekend service
- Improved transit access, with up to 90% of jobs and 71% of King County residents within a quarter mile of transit.

Faster and more reliable transit

- Dedicated bus lanes and transit signal priority
- Transit trip times expected to improve by 4–8%
- Estimated savings of 3–5 minutes per trip
- 4 new RapidRide corridors planned

9%
slower



4+ %
faster

8 RapidRide routes in 2026



4 new routes by 2038

METRO'S >>> NEXT STOP

RTC Meeting Materials

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Improved safety and cleanliness

- Maintain security and safety personnel
- More Behavioral Health Specialists and Metro Ambassadors
- Better lighting and cleaner facilities



Equity and sustainability



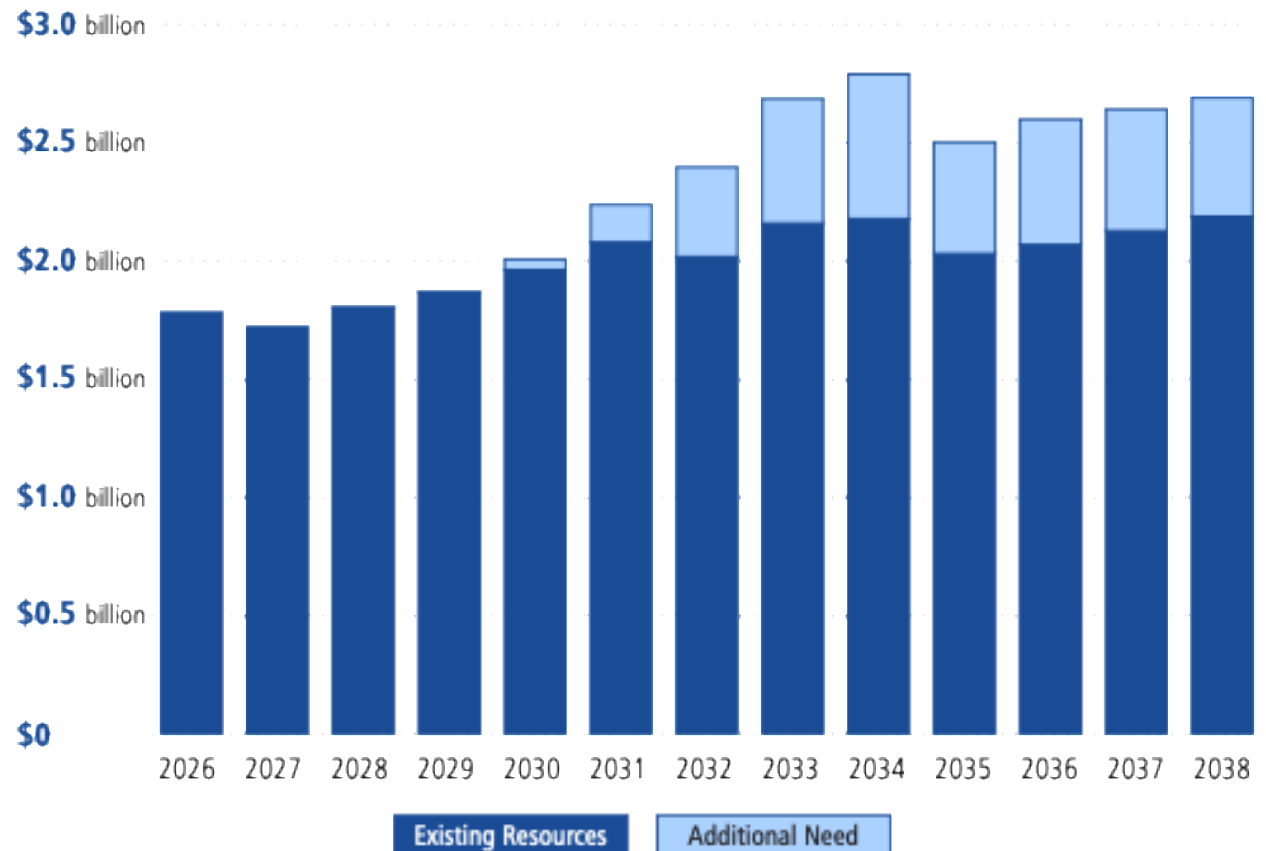
- Investing in historically underserved communities
- One-third of fleet electric by 2038
- Better rider information and multilingual access
- Stronger flexible and on-demand services

1/3 of
Metro's fleet
will be electric
by 2038.



Metro's Next Stop requires additional funding

- Existing funding will not fully cover future needs
- Inflation and operating costs continue to rise
- Potential new funding and partnership strategies
- Metro continues to implement cost-saving measures



Partnerships

- Metro will be working to:
 - Communicate earlier and more often
 - Make the case for transit with qualitative and quantitative data
 - Set clear expectations
- Metro invites partnerships including but not limited to:
 - Speed and reliability improvements
 - Flexible services
 - Rider amenities
 - Cleanliness



Delivering these outcomes will require partnership, innovation, investment and long-term collaboration.

It will require Metro, local governments, community organizations, employers and riders all **working together toward shared goals.**

- Michelle Allison, Metro General Manager

Thank you!



METRO'S >>> NEXT STOP



Letter from the General Manager

At King County Metro, we believe transit should be safe, easy, reliable and built around the people who use it every day. That belief is at the heart of Metro's Next Stop.

This roadmap is about more than buses and infrastructure. It is about the kind of region we want King County to be in the years ahead—a place where people can move through their day with less stress, more freedom and more connection to the opportunities around them.

We know what riders want from transit because you've told us clearly and consistently. You want trips that are dependable and easy to plan. You want buses that arrive when expected, safer and more welcoming places to wait, better connections between services and a system that feels intuitive to use. Most of all, you want a transit system you can trust.

Metro's Next Stop is our framework for building this future. It outlines investments that would expand service, improve speed and reliability, strengthen safety efforts, modernize customer information tools and make transit more accessible and environmentally responsible.

Metro's Next Stop is bigger than transit itself. As our region grows, the choices we make will shape affordability, mobility, economic opportunity and quality of life for decades to come. A strong transit system helps people stay connected to jobs, education, healthcare, recreation and each other—while helping communities grow in a more sustainable and equitable way.

Delivering these outcomes will require partnership, innovation, investment and long-term collaboration. It will require Metro, local governments, community organizations, employers and riders all working together toward shared goals.

I believe King County deserves a transit system that is not only functional, but exceptional—one that people choose because it's safe, dependable, welcoming and easy to use. Metro's Next Stop reflects our commitment to building that future together.

Thank you for riding with us and helping shape what comes next.



Michelle Allison
General Manager



Letter from the Equity Cabinet

Dear Community Members, Partners and Neighbors,

As our region continues to grow and change, so do the ways people move through their daily lives. Transit plays a critical role in helping people access essential places and stay connected to their communities. Metro's Next Stop represents an important step in planning for that future, shaped not only by quantitative data but also by the voices and experiences of people in King County who rely on transit every day.

We are honored to represent the King County Mobility Equity Cabinet, a group of representatives from communities and community-led organizations across the county. Our perspectives and experiences over the past few years have helped to shape key Metro initiatives, including King County Metro's Mobility Framework, the Metro Connects Long Range Transit Plan, Metro's Strategic Plan and updates to the agency's Service Guidelines.

As a cabinet, we were proud to contribute to this process by centering community voice throughout the development of this plan. We brought stories, shared insights grounded in lived experiences and advocated for investments that reflect the needs and priorities of our communities. Our role was to help ensure that this work is rooted in equity and responsive to those most impacted by transit decisions.

Along with Metro, we envision a future where moving around our communities and the region is much easier, safer and more dependable—where buses, Link light rail and other vital regional services work hand in hand, and where every community can access the spaces, resources and opportunities to live a fulfilling life. We see improvements to a system that will reduce barriers, strengthen connections and support the lives of those who rely on it.

Through Metro's Next Stop, we're excited for Metro to continue enhancing an integrated, regional network that reflects community priorities—from housing and climate resilience to health, sustainability, and economic opportunity. As community members living and working throughout the county, we want healthier communities, fewer environmental burdens and expanded access to well-loved community hubs and essential services. Metro's work to electrify its bus fleet, improve and build new infrastructure and design safer environments are all a necessary part of fulfilling these needs.

As you read this report, we invite you to consider not only the plans and investments outlined, but also the people behind them. Continuing to center community voice, equity and lived experience will be essential in building a transit system that works for everyone, a system where mobility opens doors and strengthens the communities we call home.

Sarneshea Evans

Heena Vahora

Equity Cabinet Co-Chairs

Metro's Next Stop

Metro moves people.

King County is on the move: to work and school and play; to doctors' offices and grocery stores; to museums and sporting events. Metro is planning for the future by improving safety, speed and reliability, expanding service and investing in the workforce needed to keep the system running.

To guide this growth, Metro worked with riders, community partners, cities and employers to **shape a shared roadmap for the future of transit: Metro's Next Stop.**

Metro's Next Stop builds a bridge between near-term investments and our long-range plan, Metro Connects, and shows what transit improvements we can deliver by 2038.

It advances Metro's Strategic Plan, applies our Service Guidelines and identifies the resources and partnerships required to deliver and sustain service. It also outlines the service improvements, infrastructure investments and customer-focused projects needed to support a growing region and address the climate crisis.

Metro defines equity as ensuring full and equal access to opportunities, resources and decision-making for communities that have historically faced barriers. This roadmap was shaped through engagement with those communities and reflects what they shared with us.





Metro's Next Stop prioritizes making public transit safer, faster and more reliable.

Metro's Next Stop makes sure decision makers, community partners and the public know the value that Metro provides to riders as the region grows and changes.

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Metro Today

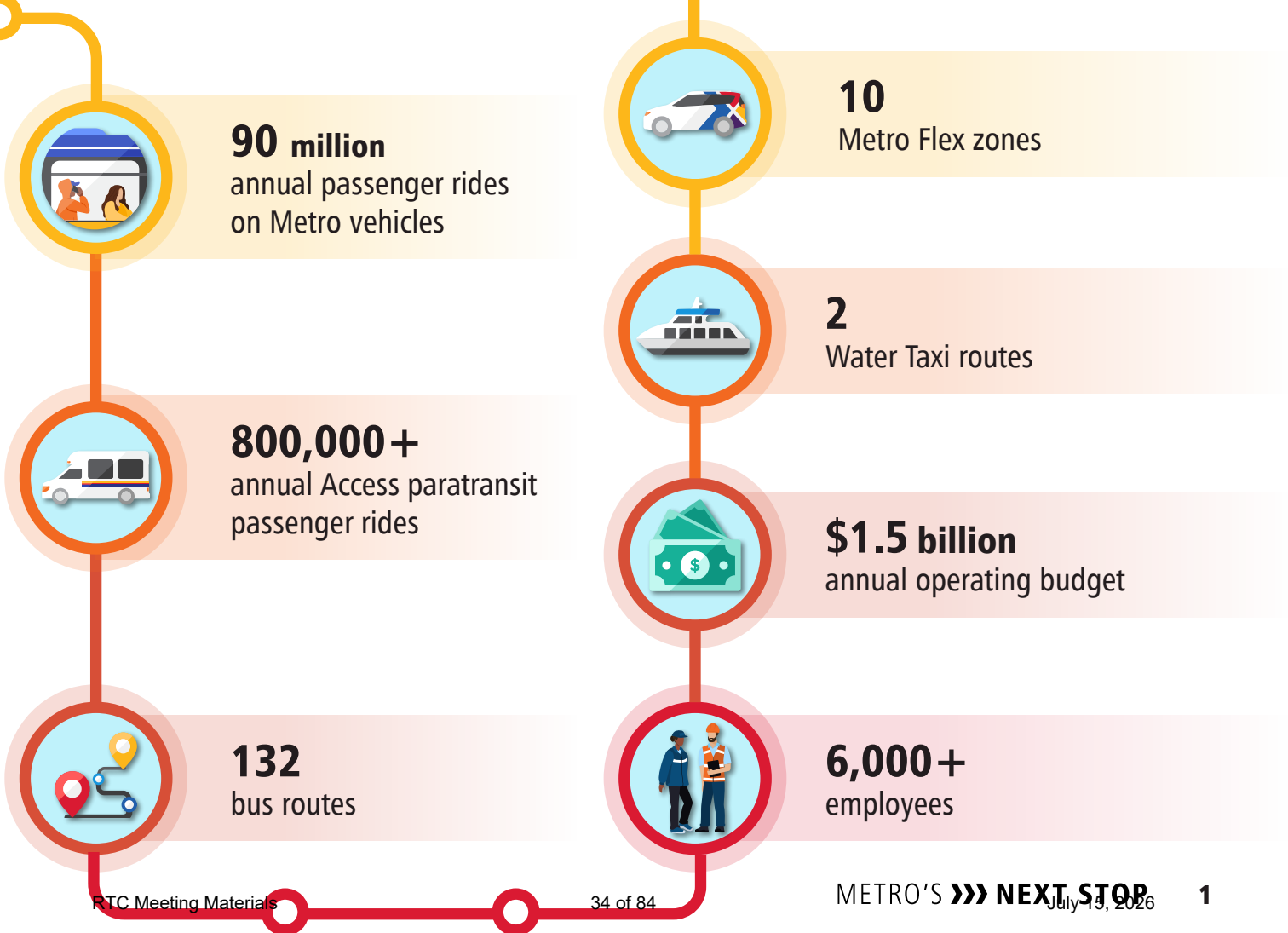
For over 50 years, Metro has provided public transit across King County.

Across the region, each Metro vehicle carries both passengers and this promise: to connect communities with safe, frequent and welcoming service.

While buses, operators and stops are the most visible parts of the system, behind the scenes Metro's diverse services are supported by thousands of employees and critical partnerships, and built through years of planning, responsible budgeting and rider input.

Metro will continue to work with riders, communities and regional partners to understand current and future transportation needs.

METRO BY THE NUMBERS



Metro is your mobility agency.

Metro is creating a world-class, integrated public transportation network that connects our geographically diverse and growing communities across King County. Metro is committed to providing equal access to all of its services. Our buses and water taxis are equipped with bike racks and our services are accessible in accordance with the standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Metro also offers free and reduced-fare options for youth, seniors, riders with disabilities and people with low or no incomes.



RapidRide service provides enhanced service arriving every 5 to 15 minutes. Nearly 25% of rides on Metro services take place on RapidRide lines, which feature more frequent arrivals, dedicated bus lanes, upgraded stops and shelters and technology to improve speed and reliability.



Frequent bus service provides passengers on busy corridors with buses arriving every 15 minutes or better. More frequent arrivals mean passengers spend less time waiting at the bus stop.



Local bus service connects cities and towns across the region with reliable service. Metro's local bus service is tailored to the specific neighborhoods, communities and destinations we serve.



In addition to the services shown below, Metro operates Sound Transit Link light rail, Sound Transit Regional Express buses and the Seattle Streetcar. Together, these services connect our region. For a full list of services, partnerships and transit options, please visit [Metro's website](#).



Water Taxi service

connects travelers across local waterways. Each day, water taxis carry over 1,000 passengers between Downtown Seattle, West Seattle and Vashon Island, making the region's complex geography more accessible to everyone.



Flexible services like Community Van, Metro Flex and others each provide convenient options with smaller vehicles just right for neighborhood streets and specialized trips. Volunteer-driven Vanpool services offer transportation for work, training and work placement programs.



Access Paratransit service is specifically designed to provide reliable transportation for people whose disability prevents them from riding traditional buses and trains. For any place in the region with bus or train services, accessible services are available to qualified customers.



Metro is with you every step of the way.

Every day, people in King County take over 300,000 trips on Metro services.

In many parts of the region, transit plays a key role in daily travel. On average, about 1 in 29 trips in King County are made on a Metro service. In the densest parts of downtown Seattle, as many as 1 in 4 trips are taken on transit.



Planning a trip on Metro is easy. Accessible schedules are posted online and at many transit stops and terminals. Travelers can use transit planning apps on their smartphones to check arrival times, how far away their bus is and pay for a trip.

About 70% of King County residents are within a quarter-mile walk or roll of transit service, **making it convenient to catch a bus.** Metro's nearly 7,000 bus stops connect communities across the region, and each year Metro continues to add amenities such as shelters, seating, lighting and electronic signage with real-time arrival information.



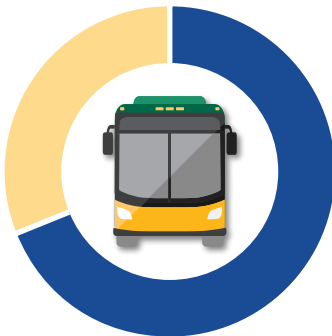
Metro works to **keep your bus moving more reliably.** Transit signal priority and dedicated bus lanes help reduce delays and improve on-time performance, while onboard announcements and signage help riders know when they've reached their stop.

While Metro is a great way to get to work or school, just as many riders report **using transit to reach recreation and social events.**



Metro is for everyone.

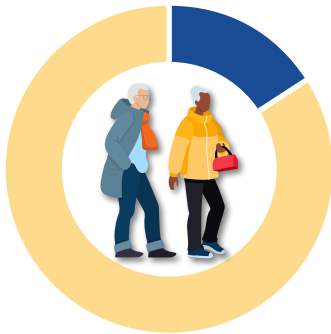
Metro serves riders with a wide range of transportation needs, travel patterns and life experiences. From daily commuters to occasional riders, transit helps people across King County get where they need to go.



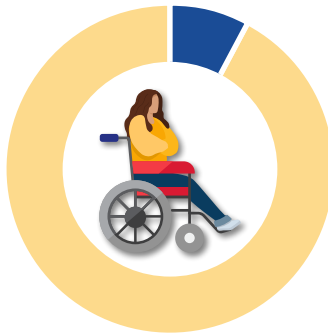
69% of riders reported making at least 3 trips per month on public transit



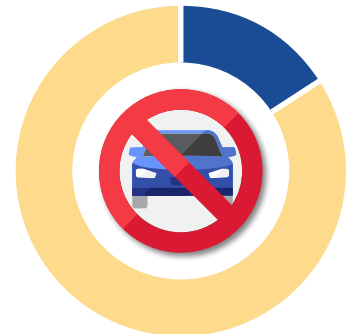
42% of King County commuters reported taking transit to work or school



12% of riders are over the age of 65



9% of riders have a disability



16% of riders do not own a car



What's Next

Metro is continuing to grow and adapt as the needs of King County residents change.

By 2038, King County is expected to have almost 244,000 more residents than today.

That's equivalent to 56 people arriving every day and represents an increase in the county's population of about 11% over the next 12 years. The region is also expected to add 231,000 new jobs, a 16% increase, while continuing to attract visitors from around the world.¹ As the region grows, so does the need to provide safe, reliable and welcoming transit options.

Growth will occur all across King County. While nearly one-third of new residents and jobs are anticipated in Seattle, most growth will happen in

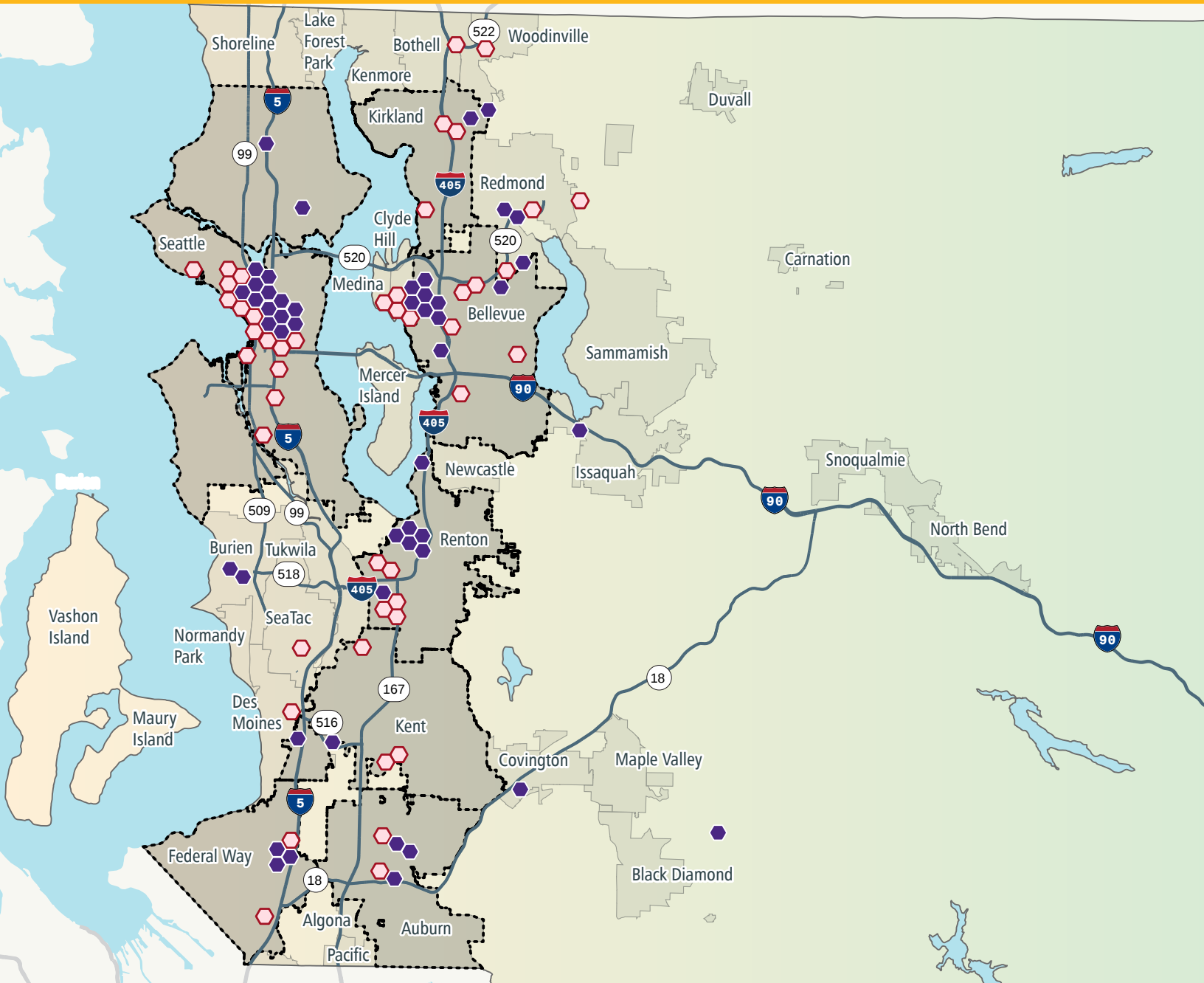
other cities and towns across the region. Cities such as Auburn, Bellevue, Federal Way, Kent, Kirkland and Renton are each projected to add more than 10,000 jobs in the coming years.

At the same time, rising housing costs have pushed many lower-income households and communities of color farther from job centers and frequent transit service. These changes reinforce the need for a transit system that helps people stay connected to opportunity, no matter where they live in King County.

¹ According to 2023–2038 projections from the Puget Sound Regional Council.



EXPECTED GROWTH, 2026–2038

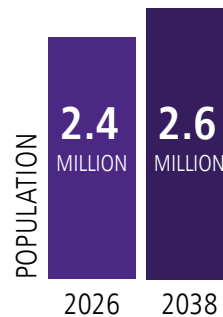


Each represents **5,000 new residents**.

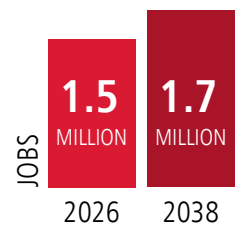
Each represents **5,000 new jobs**.

Cities expected to add **10,000 jobs**.

244,000
more residents



231,000
more jobs



Transit supports growth.

New neighbors bring new jobs and opportunities, a stronger economy and a richer culture. At the same time, steady growth can create transportation challenges across the region.

As King County grows and changes, the region's transportation system must grow with it. By 2038, the average car trip in King County is expected to take 9% longer than today because of congestion. Traffic slows travel, whether someone is riding a bus or driving a car. Metro is working with cities and regional partners to improve mobility in ways that reflect the needs of each community.

In dense, urban areas with high concentrations of jobs and housing, Metro sees the strongest ridership and significant potential for continued growth. Dedicated bus lanes in these areas can

help people avoid traffic and arrive on time, even as congestion increases. Investments such as RapidRide lines, speed and reliability improvements, connections to light rail service and upgraded bus stops can improve mobility, decrease parking demand, support local businesses and reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. When homes and jobs are located near transit, people can more easily use existing service without relying on driving. Vision 2050, the region's long-range plan, calls for most future population growth to occur near urban centers and high-capacity transit.²

In suburban areas, small towns and rural areas, people often need connections to both nearby destinations and regional transit hubs to reach jobs, community assets and essential services.

² Puget Sound Regional Council, [Vision 2050](#).



In these areas, buses may come less often but are complemented by more flexible services that can be tailored to local needs, such as Community Vans and Vanpools. Metro also offers seasonal and specialized services to help residents and visitors reach parks, outdoor recreation and events.

No single transportation solution works for every community in King County. Metro's Next Stop is designed to make everyday trips faster, safer and more reliable, no matter where people live or where they are going.



Community feedback is the foundation of Metro's Next Stop.

Just as growth looks different across King County, so do transit needs. Metro works closely with community members, community-based organizations, city representatives and local leaders to understand the issues that matter most across the region. Metro regularly engages with communities to determine service improvements, future investments and plans, and programs and policies. During the development of Metro's Next Stop, Metro convened three engagement groups and held more than a dozen meetings to gather feedback, including:

- **7 meetings** with Metro's Equity Cabinet, representing groups of people historically left out of decision-making
- **6 meetings** with the project's Partner Review Board, made up of community organizations, institutions, employers, business groups and agency partners
- **3 meetings** with staff from local jurisdictions

Across all three engagement groups, participants consistently identified more service, improved safety and faster, more reliable travel times as top

priorities for improving the rider experience. They also supported a more balanced approach to expanding service, calling for greater frequency on key routes and adding new routes where they are most needed.

Throughout the county, we heard the same message, loud and clear: **people care deeply about high-quality bus service they can trust to bring them to their destinations safely, quickly and reliably.** That feedback directly shaped the investments and priorities included in Metro's Next Stop.



ENGAGEMENT GROUP PRIORITIES



Top priority



Bus service. Participants wanted transit that comes more often and connects them to more places. Engagement participants expressed a slight preference for increased frequency over geographic expansion, while continuing to emphasize the importance of both. Service arriving at least every 15 minutes was viewed as a core part of Metro's transit system.



Speed and reliability. Participants emphasized the importance of shorter waits, faster trips and service people can count on. Metro's strategies for improving travel times and reliability range from intersection upgrades that help buses move more efficiently through traffic to larger corridor improvements and RapidRide projects along major routes.



Safety. Participants wanted to feel safe and comfortable while using transit. Community partners placed a high priority on expanding community-focused safety personnel, specifically behavioral health specialists.



Flexible services. Participants preferred improving existing flexible services—such as reducing wait times and ensuring service matches advertised expectations—before expanding into new service areas.



Rider amenities. Participants identified better lighting and safer pathways as important amenities. Community members also supported redeveloping underused park-and-rides into housing and other community-focused uses, while emphasizing investments where needs are greatest and at bus stops serving key community destinations.



Cleanliness. Participants highlighted a desire for improved waste collection and better landscaping near bus stops. Equity Cabinet members prioritized garbage removal and clean vehicles as the most important cleanliness investments. Participants also supported visible cleaning staff and well-maintained landscaping to help transit spaces feel safer and more accessible.



Rider information. Participants wanted transit information to be available in more languages, to be easier to understand and use, including clearer signs and maps and simpler tools for planning, booking and paying for trips.

Focusing on where needs are greatest.

Metro believes mobility is a human right. For Metro, mobility means the ability to get where you need to go, when you need to go. Unfortunately, in King County, like many places, there are deeply entrenched social, economic and environmental inequities based on race, place, and income. One of Metro's key strategic goals is to invest where needs are greatest. Specifically, Metro prioritizes investing in equity priority areas where there are historically underserved populations.

Metro defines equity as providing full and fair access to opportunities, power and resources. Beyond targeted investments, that means listening closely to people and communities who have historically faced barriers to transportation and opportunity—including Black, Indigenous and people of color; those with low or no income; immigrants or refugees; people with disabilities; or people who speak languages other than English.

Rising rents and home prices have pushed many households farther from jobs, schools and frequent transit service. As a result, many families are spending a large share of their income on housing and transportation costs. Building a transit network that is affordable, reliable and easy to use can help people stay connected to opportunity. Metro always uses community input, service guidelines and data to help guide investments where transit access can have the greatest impact with limited resources.

For Metro's Next Stop, Equity Cabinet members identified priorities and helped shape the investments. Metro then used King County's equity prioritization policies to help guide where service and infrastructure should be focused.



Getting to Metro's Next Stop

Metro's Next Stop is focused on delivering meaningful improvements for communities across King County in the next decade. These investments support regional growth and improve mobility for riders and non-riders alike.

Metro focuses investments where they can make the most impact. This includes adding more frequent service on crowded routes and improving speed and reliability on routes that run late. As resources become available, Metro also increases frequency or launches new services in areas experiencing growth and greater transportation needs.

Metro adds service according to our Service Guidelines. These guidelines help ensure existing routes meet standards for crowding and reliability before new services are added and that investments are prioritized with respect to both effectiveness and equity.

Metro's Next Stop includes a wide range of transit investments. Some improvements—such as new bus stops and rider amenities—grow alongside the system as service expands. Others help maintain and improve the reliability of the system people already depend on every day. Together, these investments support faster trips, more reliable service and a more comfortable transit experience.

By 2038, fully funding Metro's Next Stop could support a total increase in transit ridership of **52% on weekdays, 56% on Saturdays** and **78% on Sundays**.

Behind the scenes, it takes a lot to deliver Metro service. Metro's Next Stop includes continued investment in vehicles, transit bases, maintenance facilities and infrastructure. **As service grows, Metro will continue hiring and training employees, improving technology and maintaining safe, clean, reliable service for riders.** Metro's goal is to be an "employer of choice" that attracts and supports the workforce needed to deliver excellent transit service.

Track how Metro grows with the region by checking out our [data, reports and dashboards](#).





Bus service

Metro's Next Stop would bring more routes, new stops and stations and increase frequency to ensure transit is available when and where people need it most.

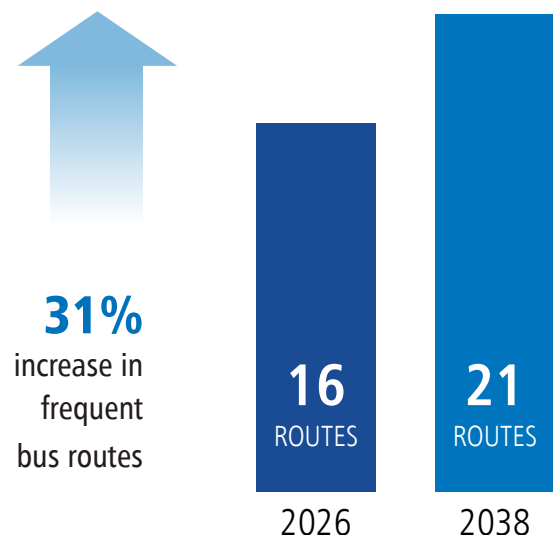
The roadmap includes approximately **9 new bus routes plus 4 new RapidRide routes**. Overall, Metro service would **increase about 12% by 2038**—more trips, more times of day and more frequent service.

More routes create better connections between neighborhoods, jobs, school and regional transit. More frequent service reduces wait times, eases crowding and gives riders more flexibility.

When planning new services, **Metro evaluates how well transit connects people to key community destinations such as grocery stores, schools, assisted living facilities, places of worship, hospitals, libraries and community spaces.**

Beginning in 2026 and 2027, Metro will introduce new routes and adjust existing service to better connect riders with new light rail stations in south King County, on the Eastside, in north Seattle and Shoreline.

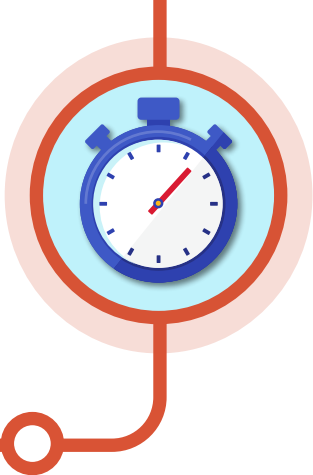
Frequent routes—those arriving every 15 minutes or better—form the core of Metro's bus network. Metro's Next Stop would add up to 5 frequent bus routes, bringing the network to 21 frequent routes. This roadmap also includes more frequent midday and weekend service.



As Metro adds more frequency and service to new areas, access to transit will improve across King County. By 2038, 71% of county residents—including 80% of residents in equity priority areas—will live within a quarter mile of transit services. In addition, 51% of King County residents will live within a quarter mile of transit arriving every 15 minutes or better.

By 2038, nearly **90% of jobs** in King County will be located **within a quarter mile of transit**.

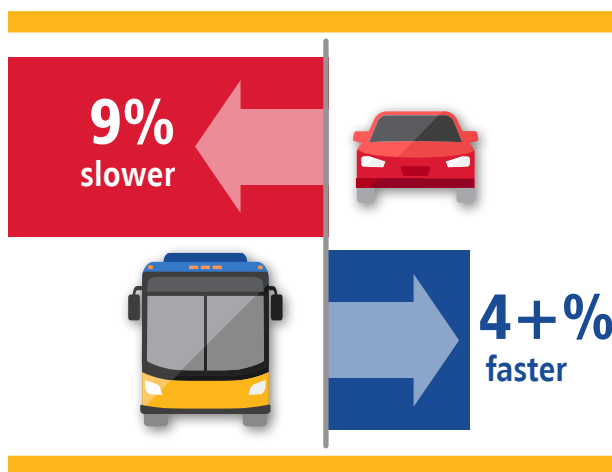




Speed and reliability

Dedicated bus lanes and transit signal priority help RapidRide and other high-ridership routes move faster and more reliably through traffic. Although congestion is expected to increase in the coming years, transit travel time is expected to improve through investments in bus and light rail infrastructure. Transit travel times are expected to improve by 4% to 8%—saving riders an estimated 3 to 5 minutes per trip.

New RapidRide routes will connect Auburn, Kent and Renton (I Line), the University District and Belltown (J Line), South Seattle and Rainier Avenue (R Line) and Bellevue and Kirkland (K Line). Metro is also improving busy corridors through projects that give buses more dedicated space on roadways and help transit move more efficiently. These investments mean less time waiting at stop lights, more consistent arrival times and overall shorter travel times for riders.



8 RapidRide routes in 2026



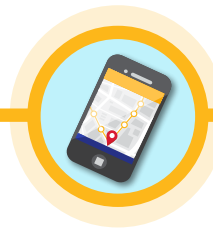
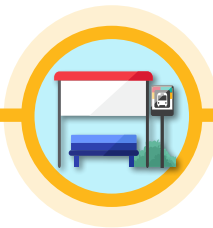
4 new routes by 2038





Safety

Metro is committed to creating a safer, more welcoming transit experience for all riders. To improve response times and incident follow-up procedures, Metro is expanding the presence of law enforcement and security officers across the system. In partnership with the King County Department of Community and Human Services, behavioral health specialists will continue to provide de-escalation support, crisis intervention, peer support and connections to social services for riders experiencing mental health or substance use challenges. Metro Ambassadors also offer in-person assistance, including wayfinding, fare guidance, system information, reporting facility concerns and helping riders feel more confident using the system. In addition, Metro is developing easier ways for riders to report safety concerns and other issues.



Other investments

Metro's investments go beyond service, safety, speed and reliability. The agency is also improving flexible services, rider amenities, cleanliness, rider information and integrating new, low-emissions vehicles to expand its environmentally-sustainable fleet.

Flexible services—including Vanpool, Access paratransit and Metro Flex on-demand service—continue to improve. Metro is planning for a new integrated app that will make it easier to plan and book across flexible services and alongside fixed-route services. Metro Flex will add two new service zones in the fall of 2026.

Investments in transit benefit the broader economy. Studies show that **every \$1 billion invested in transit can generate up to \$5 billion** in economic output, support over 40,000 jobs and generate over \$250 million in additional tax revenue.³



Rider amenities at stops and on vehicles help create a smoother transit experience. Metro is improving lighting at stops and facilities to create a safer, more comfortable experience for riders, especially at night. Other investments include upgraded bus stops and transit hubs serving new RapidRide lines, Link light rail and Stride bus rapid transit stations.

³ [Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment.](#)

Metro's partnerships with local cities and private property owners add about **25 new shelters every year at stops across the county.**

Continued investment in **maintenance and cleanliness** will help create more welcoming transit spaces. Riders should see faster response times to reported cleanliness concerns, increased visibility of frontline staff and cleaner facilities overall.

Metro is also working to make transit information easier to find and use. New digital tools will simplify trip planning and fare payment. Many station areas will receive upgrades including real-time arrival signage, innovative wayfinding and better accessibility for riders with disabilities.

Metro's Next Stop also includes investment in **newer and low-emissions vehicles.** Electric trolley buses, battery-electric buses and hybrid vehicles powered by renewable fuels help reduce emissions and improve air quality. As technology and funding allow, Metro will continue transitioning more of its fleets—from buses to vans and Water Taxi vessels—to lower- and zero-emission vehicles while maintaining reliable service for riders.

Metro plans to replace 80% of its fleet by 2038; one-third of the bus fleet will be electric, delivering a quieter, more sustainable and comfortable ride.

1/3 of
Metro's fleet
will be electric
by 2038.



Moving Forward Together

Metro's Next Stop reflects the needs and values of communities across King County. Metro is advancing projects that support increased bus service, a faster and more reliable network and a safer experience. These investments have been shaped through engagement with youth, Black, Indigenous and people of color, individuals with disabilities and other community members who identify as or work with Metro's priority populations. At the same time, Metro must carefully manage limited resources, strengthen partnerships and build the workforce and funding needed to maintain and expand service over time.

The King County Council adopts Metro's budget as part of the County's biennial budget process. Metro's budget supports both transit service and the systems needed to keep it running. Thousands of employees help operate, maintain, clean and support the transit system every day. Service represents about 82% of Metro's projected spending, including bus, rail and flexible services. System investments include constructing the bus stops, buildings and equipment needed to operate transit service, as well as the technology that powers trip planning tools, real-time arrival information and customer communications. To deliver this roadmap, Metro requires more staff and critical partnerships with cities, employers and others.



Metro's finances.

How Metro is funded.

Most of Metro's funding comes from local taxes. Metro receives a 0.9% sales tax in addition to a portion of the property taxes collected by King County. This revenue funds operations, pays down debt and allows the agency to match additional funding from state and federal grants.

State and federal grants are critical for funding existing and future services. However, the amount received from these sources can fluctuate significantly from year to year.

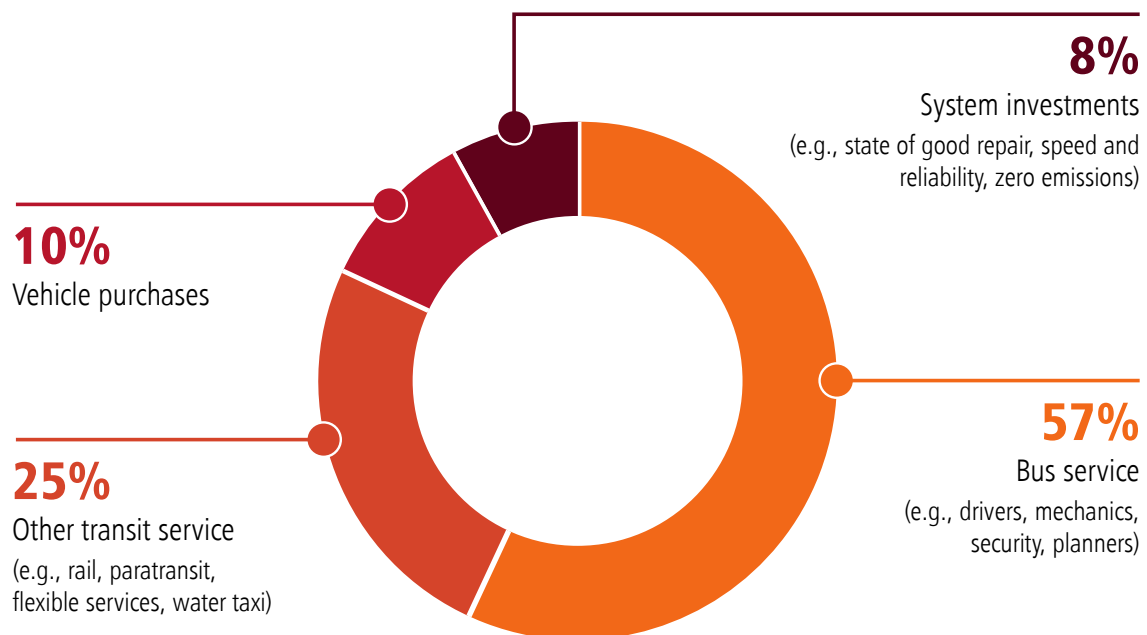
Metro also receives funding to operate and deliver bus, light rail and streetcar services in partnership with Sound Transit and the City of Seattle.

Fares are an important revenue source and will remain essential for Metro's financial sustainability. Our future focuses on keeping transit affordable for those who need it, and ensuring that those who can pay, do. We expect fares to cover a larger share of our operating costs to maintain a strong, reliable system.





PROJECTED SPENDING, 2026–2038



Metro's Next Stop requires more funding.

Delivering Metro's Next Stop will require more than our existing resources can provide. Metro maintains cash reserves and carefully plans spending to balance needs with resources. However, inflation means that over the long term, Metro's revenues will not keep pace with rising costs for staff, operations and construction projects.

The transit investments contemplated in Metro's Next Stop represent the needs of a growing region. Metro's Next Stop is designed to continue the agency's commitment to financial responsibility by carefully prioritizing these investments, while seeking resources that have the least impact on our highest burdened communities.

Metro is exploring strategies to keep existing services and implement new ones. This includes new partnership funds or in-kind investments, new countywide revenues, and working with the

state legislature to get more flexibility with existing funding tools. These approaches would help Metro continue investing in service, facilities and rider priorities as the region grows, subject to King County Council budget appropriation.

In addition to new revenue, Metro continues to find ways to control its cost growth wherever possible to invest more in the community. This means exploring innovative ways to change how services are delivered and implementing cost-saving measures to keep improving how Metro serves its customers and remains worthy of the public's trust. Growing ridership is also critical to support more productive service and boost Metro's fare revenue.

Metro's Next Stop prioritizes investing in service that meets the needs of the region to improve customer experience, expand mobility options and continue to keep our promise to the region.

\$3.0 billion

\$2.5 billion

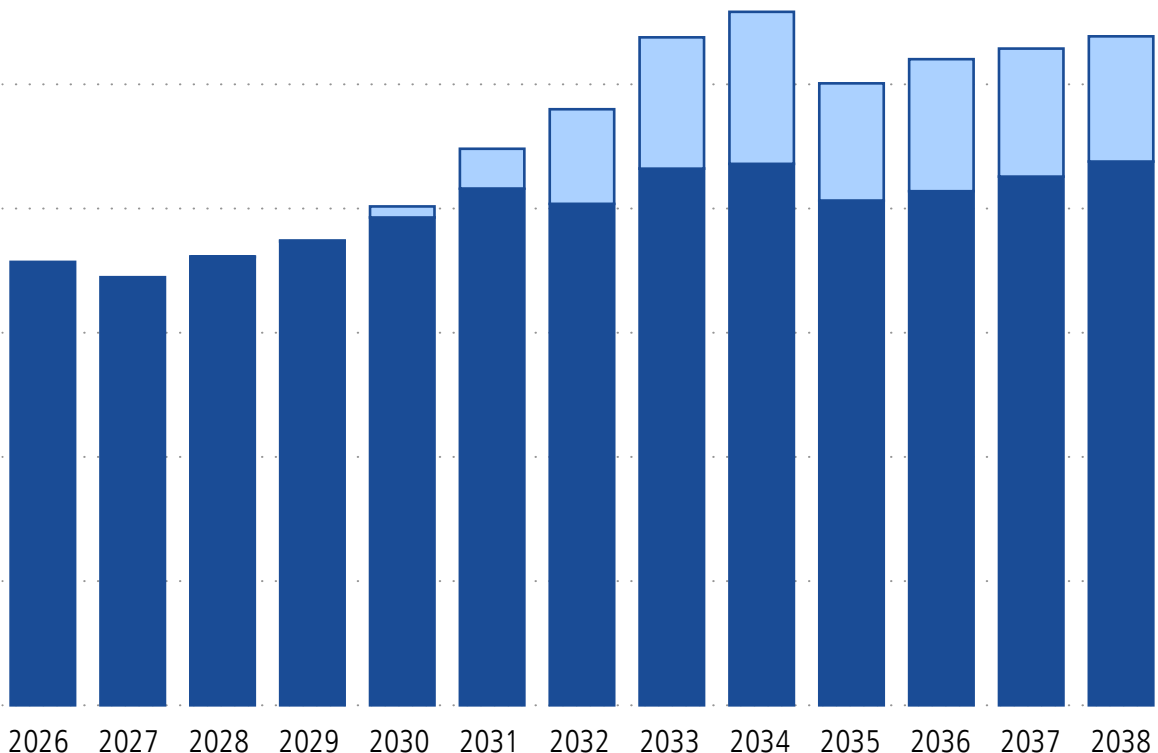
\$2.0 billion

\$1.5 billion

\$1.0 billion

\$0.5 billion

\$0



Existing Resources

Additional Need



FUNDING TOOLS

King County Transportation District.

Washington State law allows cities and counties to establish local Transportation Benefit Districts to raise revenue. Funding options include sales tax, property tax and vehicle license fees (car tabs).

Potential revenue: \$\$\$

Implementation: Requires legislative action and voter approval.

Making current resources more flexible.

State law governs most of Metro's funding tools. Making those tools more flexible can help Metro better respond to community needs.

Potential revenue: \$\$

Implementation: Requires legislative action.

Partnership funds or in-kind investments.

Partnerships with private companies, cities, towns and public agencies can extend Metro's capacity and meet specific targeted needs.

Potential revenue: \$

Implementation: Requires willing partners, may not need legislative action.

Additional state and federal support.

Metro relies on state and federal funding to provide and improve transit services for our region.

Potential revenue: \$\$

Implementation: Requires legislative action.

Metro fares, fees and fines. Metro can enact fares, fees and fines within certain parameters.

Potential revenue: \$

Implementation: Does not require legislative action.

Regional transit requires partnership.

Metro works closely with King County's 39 cities and towns to provide transit service tailored to each city's unique needs. Additionally, Metro supports service in both rural and urban areas, such as providing Community Access Transportation vehicles to rural agencies and operating streetcar service for the City of Seattle. These partnerships help keep the region connected while supporting local growth, mobility and climate goals. Partnership works both ways. Metro relies on cities to maintain the roads and other infrastructure needed for transit operations, issue permits for projects, coordinate safety and human services resources, support service planning and help deliver transit projects and improvements. For that reason, Metro has many formal partnerships with cities and towns.

These partnerships help maximize public investments and support safe, reliable and welcoming transit service. Examples include streamlining permits for transit projects, funding expanded service, adding bus lanes and transit technology improvements, coordinating rider communications and supporting housing and development near transit. Delivering Metro's Next Stop will require even stronger collaboration with local partners.

Metro asked staff from jurisdictions across King County about opportunities to work together. **Three key themes emerged:**



1

Talk earlier, talk often and plan together.

Local governments are open to partnership, but they need consistent communication from Metro to understand when, how and why transit service is changing and how transit can be incorporated in local projects. Cities also want more opportunities to share the needs and priorities of their residents.

2

Make the case for transit.

Metro should provide better information about the outcomes of speed and reliability projects before, during and after implementation so cities can help their communities understand the benefits.

3

Set clear expectations.

As growth continues across the county, local governments want confidence that transit service will continue to meet the needs of current and future residents, even in a challenging financial environment.

Transit-supportive local policies—such as building more housing around transit routes, creating more bus lanes, improving sidewalks and lighting, and streamlining transit permitting—help Metro and jurisdictions work together effectively.

Strong partnerships between Metro and local jurisdictions help maximize public investments while supporting safe, reliable and welcoming transit service. Through Metro's Next Stop, Metro is also identifying ways to strengthen communication and coordination with local partners to follow through on what we've heard from cities.

"We recognize that this work can only be made possible through strong and innovative partnerships. Metro's collaboration with local jurisdictions, community organizations and regional stakeholders will help shape a system that is responsive to growth and changes in our communities, reflective of community needs and values and grounded in equitable investments. We are especially interested in seeing priority equity areas and communities with the greatest needs centered in the investments and decision-making process.

Together, we are thrilled to see changes in our transit system that will welcome new riders, foster the next generation of transit users and advocates and create a more connected, equitable and sustainable region."

Sarneshea Evans & Heena Vahora,
Equity Cabinet Co-Chairs







Come along for the ride.

Metro wants to deliver more: more routes, more frequent service, more comfortable trips, cleaner and safer buses and stops, and faster trips to the places people need to go.

To get there, we need you—our community, our cities and towns, our partners and riders to join us.

Thanks for being part of our journey!

METRO'S >>> NEXT STOP

King Street Center
201 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

206-553-3000 Relay: 711
www.kingcounty.gov/metro





Metropolitan King County Council Staff Report

Committee:	Regional Transit Committee		
Agenda Item:	8	Analyst(s):	Mary Bourguignon
Proposed No.:	2026-B0086	Meeting Date:	July 15, 2026

OVERVIEW

TOPIC: Today's briefing will provide an overview of Metro's transit safety planning, an update on the work of the Regional Transit Safety Task Force, and a description of efforts to prevent trafficking via transit.

SUMMARY

In response to safety and security concerns, Metro has taken a number of steps to enhance safety for its passengers and employees. During today's briefing, Metro staff will provide an update on these efforts.

KEY ISSUES

- A. Transit Safety Planning.** Metro added \$89 million in its 2026-2027 budget for additional Transit Security Officers, Metro Transit Police, bus and facility cleaning, and behavioral support for people in need at transit facilities and on buses. Metro has also added dedicated staff to coordinate on safety efforts with local jurisdictions.
- B. Transit Safety Task Force.** During 2025, Metro participated in the King County Regional Transit Safety Task Force to recommend actions local transit agencies and jurisdictions could take to enhance passenger and employee safety. Metro is working with its partners during 2026 to implement these recommendations.¹
- C. Human Trafficking Prevention.** As part of its expanded transit service during the 2026 FIFA World Cup events, Metro worked with the FIFA Local Organizing Committee to participate in the Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST) effort to recognize and mitigate signs of labor and sex trafficking.²

During today's briefing, Metro staff will provide an update on these safety-related issues.

¹ King County Regional Transit Safety Task Force ([link](#))

² Seattle Local Organizing Committee Human Trafficking Prevention ([link](#))

BACKGROUND

[↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

In response to safety and security concerns, Metro has taken a number of steps to enhance safety for its passengers and employees. During today's briefing, Metro staff will provide an update on these efforts.

KEY ISSUES

[↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

Key Issue A. Transit Safety Planning. Metro added \$89 million to its 2026-2027 budget for additional safety and security measures, including:

- **Transit Security Officers (TSOs):** Metro is funding a total of 275 contracted TSOs during 2026-2027 to conduct fare enforcement; ride high-incident bus routes; monitor transit centers, Third Avenue, and Jackson Street; and provide late-night support at bus terminals.
- **Metro Transit Police (MTP):** Metro added 10 MTP deputies, for a total of 89. MTP deputies patrol in areas with higher incident levels and respond to employee assaults and sexual misconduct violations.
- **Bus and customer facility cleaning:** Metro added 14 FTEs and 21 temporary staff to continue 24/7 cleaning of buses and bus stops, with the goal of responding to incident reports within 24 hours.
- **SAFE Reform Initiative:** Metro is deploying 24 Metro Ambassadors to assist customers in high-traffic areas. In addition, Metro provides behavioral health specialists to assist customers in crisis at the Burien Transit Center, Aurora Village Transit Center, and Lake City Way/NE 130th Street.

Metro has also added dedicated staff to coordinate safety planning efforts with local jurisdictions and transit agency partners.

Key Issue B. Transit Safety Task Force. During 2025, Metro participated in the King County Regional Transit Safety Task Force to recommend actions local transit agencies and jurisdictions could take to enhance passenger and employee safety. In October 2025, the Task Force published 150 regionally developed recommendations³ to address identified transit safety gaps. Metro is working with its partners during 2026 to implement these recommendations.

Key Issue C. Human Trafficking Prevention. As part of its expanded transit service during the 2026 FIFA World Cup events, Metro worked with the FIFA Local Organizing Committee

³ King County Regional Transit Safety Task Force, Recommended Solutions ([link](#))

to participate in the Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST) effort to recognize and mitigate signs of labor and sex trafficking.⁴

INVITED

- DeAnna Martin, Chief of Staff, Metro Transit Department
- Rebecca Frankhouser, Director, Safety, Security, and Quality Assurance Division, Metro Transit Department

ATTACHMENTS

1. Metro Presentation on Transit Safety and Security

⁴ Seattle Local Organizing Committee Human Trafficking Prevention ([link](#))

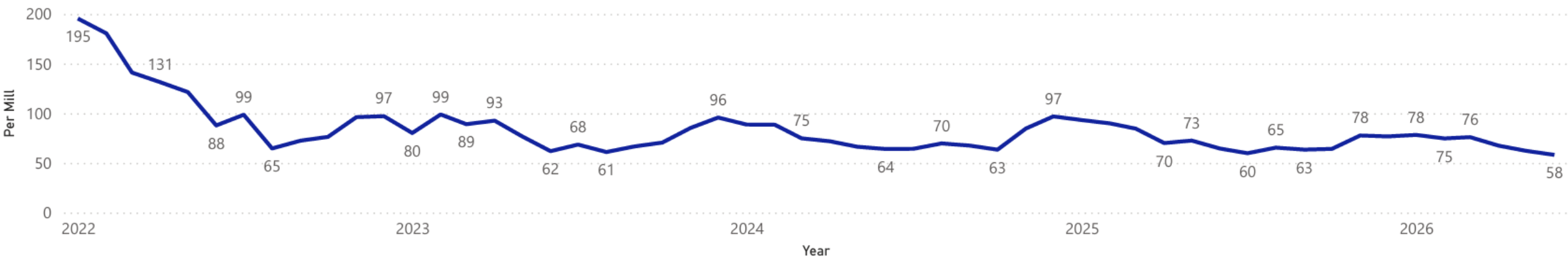
Metro's Transit Safety Planning and Regional Transit Safety Task Force update

Regional Transit Committee
July 15, 2026



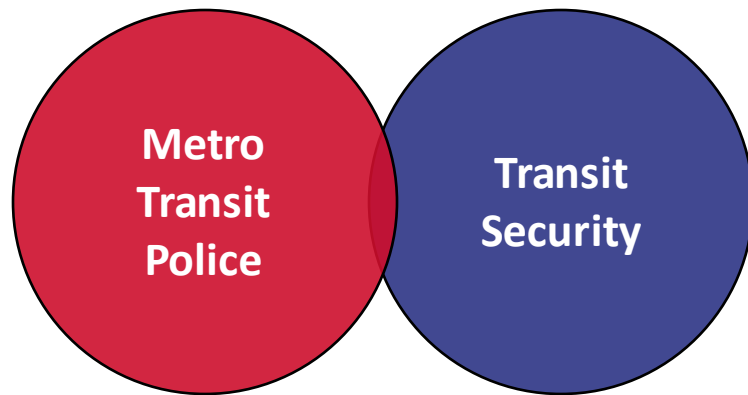
Overall Safety Trends

Incidents Per Million Boardings - System Wide



Presence on Metro's System

Public Safety Model



Care and Presence Model



Transit Control Center

- **Daily Work:**

- Monitoring service operations
- Responding to calls for assistance
- Providing supervisory direction, organizing and directing responses
- Communicating with internal and external parties
- Dispatching appropriate resources



Service Quality Supervisors

- **Daily Work:**
 - Mitigating impacts to transit operations and the community through planning, support and action
 - Monitoring service operations
 - Responding to calls for support from operators, as dispatched by the Transit Control Center
- **Appearance:** Black and safety green shirt, or blue vest



Metro Transit Police

- **Daily Work:**
 - Conducting proactive and reactive policing
 - Collaborating with other jurisdictions to provide policing services
 - Transit Resource Officers work with local CBOs and non-profits to connect non-destinational riders with services
- **Appearance:** Black Sheriff's Office uniform with "Metro" on badge



Transit Security Officers

- **Daily Work:**
 - Providing presence on Metro buses, transit centers, and shelters to deter and report unsafe or illicit activities
 - Providing customer service to riders who may need assistance
 - De-escalating when necessary
 - A portion of Transit Security Officers serve as Fare Enforcement Officers
- **Appearance:** black and bright yellow uniform, headwear optional



Behavioral Health Support

- **Daily Work:**
 - Crisis prevention through relationship building
 - Assisting riders who are sheltering on coaches with compassion and connection to appropriate resources
 - Offering amenity packages with snacks, water, and cold weather items
 - De-escalating in place of Transit Security and Law Enforcement when able
- **Locations:**
 - Burien Transit Center
 - Aurora Village Transit Center
 - Eastgate Park & Ride
- **Appearance:** non-uniformed, plain clothes



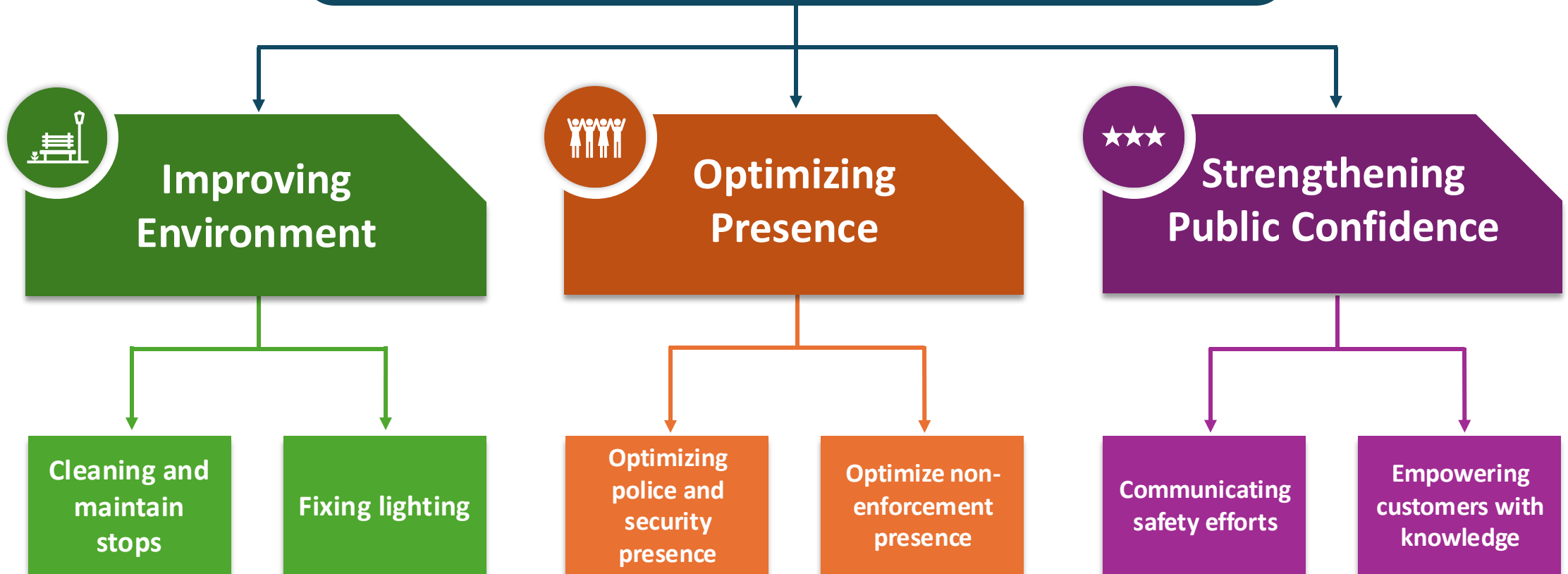
SaFE Ambassadors

- **Daily Work:**
 - Helping customers navigate where they're going, how to pay fares, and if there is a service change or delay
 - Checking in with operators to see how their days are going
 - Helping customers feel safer
- **Locations:**
 - 5th & Jackson/23rd & Jackson
 - Mount Baker
 - University District
 - Renton Transit Center to Skyway Library
- **Appearance:** King County Metro-branded blue uniforms with identification badges.



Metro's Safety Emphasis Program

Improving Safety Emphasis Areas



Regional Transit Safety Task Force

Implementation Plan → 2026 Planned Actions



Previous Progress

Established solutions
roadmap

» **60** Regional
Alignment-focused

» **98** Transit Agency-
focused



Current Status

Established
Implementation
Partners that
prioritized 20 regional
solutions

Progressed on transit
agency focused
solutions



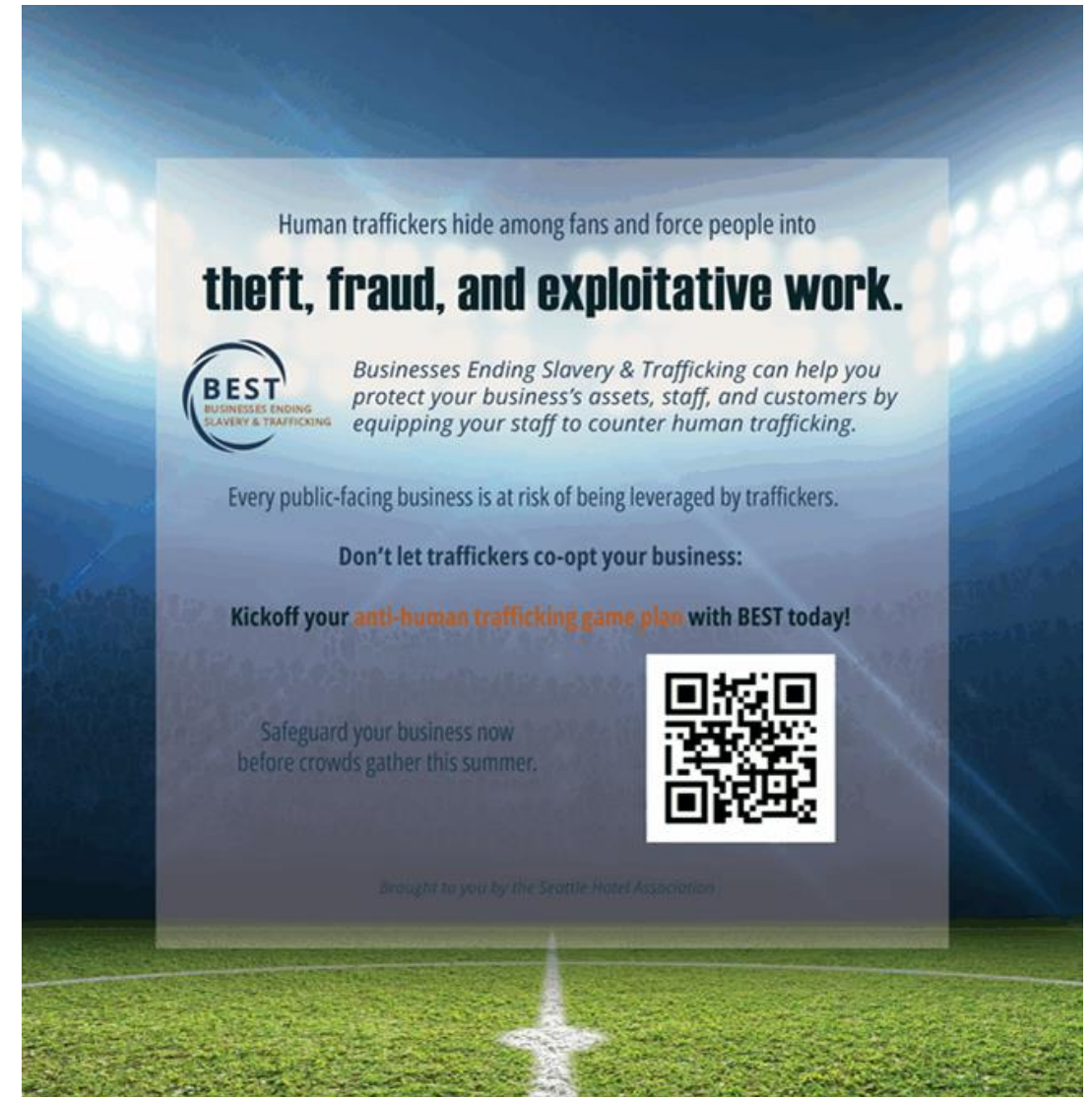
Looking Forward

Establish working
groups

Continue to
transparently share
progress

Combating Human Trafficking

Partnership Campaign



Ways to Help Improve Safety

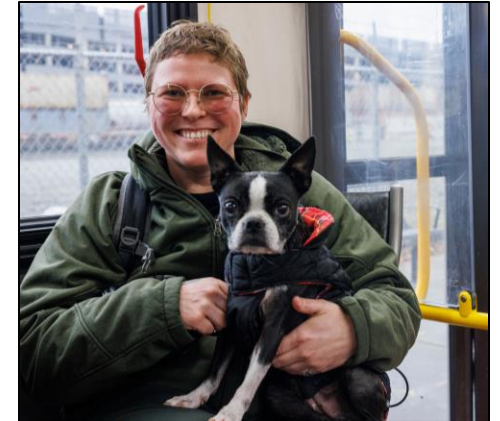
How to Ride and Report

RIDE: The more riders, the safer the experience.

- Plan your trip
- Prepare
- Be aware

REPORT:

- Tell your driver
- Go to kingcounty.gov/metro/contact-us or call 206-553-3000
- Call or text 911 if there is an emergency



Partnership Opportunities

- Share ways for your constituents to report
- Identify safety coordination point of contact(s) for your jurisdiction
- Reach out to Metro with safety coordination requests:
 - **Maria Jimenez-Zepeda**,
Safety Emphasis Manager
maria.jimenez-zepeda@kingcounty.gov
 - **Amanda Pleasant-Brown**,
Government Relations Supervisor –
Jurisdictions and Interagency Partnerships Unit
apleasant-brown@kingcounty.gov

Thank you for riding and reporting

 **Emergency?** Call or text 911

 **Non-emergencies?** Call 206-296-3311

 **Unsafe situation on your ride?** Tell your driver

 kingcounty.gov/metro/safety



Is there a Metro bus stop or bus that needs repairs or cleaning?

 206-553-3000  kingcounty.gov/metro/contact

Feedback is sent to the teams responsible for cleaning and maintaining buses and bus stops. We respond to urgent issues within 24 hours and aim to address other issues within two to seven days.

Safety Contact Cards available upon request

Closing and Questions