



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Ordinance 19367

Proposed No. 2021-0286.2

Sponsors Upthegrove, Zahilay and
Balducci

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to public transportation; adopting
2 updates to the King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public
3 Transportation, the King County Metro Service Guidelines
4 and METRO CONNECTS – King County Metro's Long-
5 Range Plan; and setting requirements for reporting and
6 updates.

7 **STATEMENT OF FACTS:**

8 1. In 2011, via Ordinance 17143, the King County Metro Strategic Plan
9 for Public Transportation 2011-2021 ("the strategic plan") and the King
10 County Metro Service Guidelines ("the service guidelines") were adopted.
11 In 2016 – following recommendations made by the regional transit task
12 force in 2011 and the service guidelines task force in 2015, as well as with
13 input from the King County council and executive, local jurisdictions and
14 public transit riders – both the strategic plan and the service guidelines
15 were updated via Ordinance 18301.
16 2. In 2017, via Ordinance 18449, METRO CONNECTS - King County
17 Metro's Long-Range Plan ("Metro Connects") was adopted. As a long-
18 range transit service and capital plan, Metro Connects was developed with

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19 input from transportation stakeholders, the King County council and
20 executive, local jurisdictions and public transit riders.

21 3. The strategic plan, the service guidelines and Metro Connects, as
22 adopted, build on the King County Strategic Plan 2010-2014 and the King
23 County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022.

24 4. The strategic plan, the service guidelines and Metro Connects are also
25 informed by significant ongoing and emerging challenges the Metro
26 transit department ("Metro") faces in continuing to work toward a
27 regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe,
28 equitable, and sustainable. These challenges include a growing and
29 diversifying population, transportation challenges resulting from the
30 displacement of low-income populations from existing urban locations to
31 more affordable but potentially less transit-integrated and accessible
32 geographic areas within the county, the worsening climate crisis, the need
33 to integrate fixed-route transit with new mobility services and regional
34 transportation partners, the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for new,
35 sustainable funding sources.

36 5. The strategic plan, the service guidelines and Metro Connects are
37 meant to be living documents setting the policy for and guiding the
38 implementation of the Metro transit service and capital networks while
39 responding to growth throughout the county.

40 6. In November 2018, the King County council passed Motion 15253,
41 which required Metro to develop a regional mobility framework to ensure

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42 that innovations in mobility put people first, use public space equitably
43 and efficiently, and are coordinated with transit policies and regional
44 funding strategies. Metro developed the required mobility framework and
45 the executive transmitted it to the council in October 2019. In March
46 2020, through Motion 15618, the council adopted the Metro Mobility
47 Framework Recommendations Summary and outlined a process to update
48 the strategic plan, the service guidelines and Metro Connects.

49 7. In November 2018, the King County council passed Motion 15252,
50 which expressed support for regional planning, coordination and funding
51 efforts to address the implementation of Metro Connects and required
52 Metro to prepare updated information to supplement Metro Connects to
53 adjust for increased population growth, increasing regional congestion,
54 inflation and construction costs, regional mobility needs, and innovations
55 in transportation. In response, Metro presented updated information to
56 supplement Metro Connects in February 2020. That updated information
57 was finalized in 2021 and could be used to support future conversations
58 about additional regional funding for transit.

59 8. The recommendations adopted as part of Metro's mobility framework
60 have been used to develop updates to the strategic plan, the service
61 guidelines and Metro Connects during 2020 and 2021. Those updates,
62 which have been guided and informed by regional elected leaders,
63 community members, including the mobility equity cabinet, local
64 jurisdictions and agency partners, seek to meet regional mobility needs

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65 while advancing equity, addressing the climate crisis and responding to
66 innovations in transportation technology.

67 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

68 SECTION 1. The King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation
69 2021-2031 is hereby adopted as provided in Attachment A to this ordinance.

70 SECTION 2. The King County Metro Service Guidelines are hereby adopted as
71 provided in Attachment B to this ordinance.

72 SECTION 3. The Metro transit department's long-range transit service and
73 capital plan, Metro Connects, is hereby adopted as provided in Attachment C to this
74 ordinance.

75 SECTION 4. The following are each hereby repealed:

76 A. Ordinance 17143, Section 5, as amended;

77 B. Ordinance 17143, Section 6, as amended;

78 C. Ordinance 17143, Section 9;

79 D. Ordinance 18301, Section 1;

80 E. Ordinance 18301, Section 3;

81 F. Ordinance 18449, Section 1; and

82 G. Ordinance 18449, Section 4.

83 SECTION 5. The plans and documents adopted in sections 1, 2 and 3 of this
84 ordinance apply to the passenger ferry service function carried out by the marine division
85 of the Metro transit department as authorized in chapter 36.54 RCW and the King County
86 Code. These plans and documents replace the King County Ferry District 2014-2018

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87 Strategic Plan adopted by the board of the King County Ferry District through resolution
88 FD 2014-05 which is hereby repealed.

89 SECTION 6. To provide information on the implementation of the plans attached
90 to this ordinance and the performance of transit services, Metro transit department staff
91 shall appear before the regional transit committee and the mobility and environment
92 committee, or its successor, on request, and shall assist the executive in preparing the
93 following performance reports:

94 A. A Metro Connects implementation report, which shall be transmitted by May
95 5, 2022, for acceptance by motion, and which shall include:

96 1. A description of the funding needed to implement Metro Connects, the gap
97 between the funding that is available and the total amount needed and a description of
98 potential funding sources that could be used to fill the funding gap; and

99 2. A description of the strategy the King County executive has implemented to
100 consult with community members and regional leaders to develop a plan to implement
101 Metro Connects, which should describe outreach and engagement with representatives
102 from communities historically lacking in access to or underserved by transit, the Sound
103 Cities Association, the city of Seattle, King County's regional transportation boards and
104 any other organization necessary to ensure that a broad representation of regional leaders
105 is consulted;

106 B. A RapidRide prioritization plan, which shall be transmitted by June 30, 2024,
107 for acceptance by motion, and which shall include:

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108 1. Corridor evaluations of RapidRide candidate corridors based on the five
109 factors used in Metro Connects, which are equity, sustainability, service demand, capital
110 and implementation;

111 2. Preplanning level studies of candidate corridors that consider route
112 alignment, capital investment needs and cost estimates;

113 3. A description of stakeholder engagement with community members, affected
114 jurisdictions and partner agencies; and

115 4. A list of the RapidRide candidate lines organized by tier, with a description
116 of the priority level;

117 C. A system evaluation report, which shall be transmitted each year by October
118 31, for acceptance by motion, and which shall include:

119 1. For routes identified as RapidRide candidates, highlight and summarize the
120 performance of the current equivalent routes based on what is reported in the System
121 Evaluation and provide a status update on planned RapidRide lines;

122 2. The routes analyzed to determine the target service levels with a summary of
123 resulting scores, including route-level equity metrics, and assigned service levels as
124 determined by the service guidelines;

125 3. The results of the analysis including a list of transit routes and the estimated
126 number of service hours necessary to meet each route's needs;

127 4. The performance of transit services by route and any changes in the service
128 guidelines thresholds since the previous reporting period; and

129 5. A list of transit service changes made to routes since the last reporting period;
130 and

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131 D. A performance measurement dashboard, which shall be made available on the
132 internet and on which the Metro transit department shall provide an oral report to the
133 council at least annually, and which shall include:

134 1. Data and a description of each performance measure identified in the strategic
135 plan;

136 2. Data and a description of how the Metro transit department's plans and
137 policies are aligned with VISION 2050, the Puget Sound region's growth management
138 policy;

139 3. A peer agency summary prepared annually for the thirty largest North
140 American transit bus agencies, including Metro and twenty-nine peer agencies, using data
141 contained in the National Transit Database; and

142 4. A summary of progress towards key performance measures associated with
143 Metro Connects.

144 SECTION 7. The executive shall transmit to the council an ordinance to update
145 the strategic plan, the service guidelines and Metro Connects within seven years of
146 transmittal. In the interim, the executive may authorize amendments to the strategic plan,

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147 the service guidelines and Metro Connects, that do not materially affect the policies and
148 intent of these documents.

Ordinance 19367 was introduced on 8/17/2021 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 12/7/2021, by the following vote:

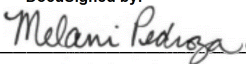
Yes: 8 - Ms. Balducci, Mr. Dembowski, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Kohl-Welles,
Mr. McDermott, Mr. Upthegrove, Mr. von Reichbauer and Mr.
Zahilay
Excused: 1 - Ms. Lambert

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DocuSigned by:

7E1C273CE9994B6...
Claudia Balducci, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

8DE1BB375AD3422...
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this _____ day of 12/15/2021, _____.

DocuSigned by:

4FBCAB8196AE4C6...
Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: A. King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031, dated November 17, 2021, B. King County Metro Service Guidelines, dated November 17, 2021, C. King County Metro Long-Range Plan Metro Connects, dated November 17, 2021

King County Metro

Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031

November 17, 2021



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Letter from the General Manager

Dear Friends,

I know public transit can help people connect to opportunity because I personally lived it. I grew up in a single-parent household, and my mom had a disability that prevented her from driving. We didn't own a car. I like to say that I was raised on buses because my family depended on King County Metro to go everywhere. My mom wanted me to have the same cultural opportunities as everyone else, and I fondly remember riding the bus to church, zoos, museums, and events. I also took Metro to school.

While I could go many places on the bus growing up, I also remember the places I couldn't get to—simply because routes or timeframes didn't allow it. I know firsthand that this region will not give everyone an opportunity to thrive without universal access to mobility.

The COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent economic downturn, and the nation's reckoning with racial justice have resulted in significant change. These events reinforce the importance of Metro developing an innovative and integrated system of mobility for our region that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. The transit system must advance equity and address climate change by giving everyone easy and accessible options for travel via transit, which will help support equitable economic development. Metro remains focused on meeting these needs.

Metro will prioritize putting service where it's needed most. COVID-19 provided a crystal-clear view of the transportation modes, routes, and trips that essential

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workers and customers need to get groceries, medicine, and other critical needs. Metro is committed to doing more for these customers and will be intentional about understanding—and correcting—how race and place have determined who gets access to mobility.

Transit customers want to travel as quickly and efficiently as possible. Metro is adapting the transit system to better respond to customer demand and traffic conditions in real-time. The goal is to make sure buses are on time and get passengers to their destinations without getting hung up in traffic.

While the changes over the past few years pose many challenges and opportunities, Metro is not starting from scratch in working toward its ambitious goals. Since the 2015 update of this Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Metro has:

- Moved hundreds of thousands of people daily—more than 430,000 trips every weekday before COVID-19; 100,000 trips daily at the peak of the pandemic.
- Transitioned to a mobility agency by providing a suite of services and innovative solutions to help people get to where they need to go.
- Partnered with communities and jurisdictions to bring Metro Connects, Metro’s long-range plan for more service, to life in a community-driven way through restructures, new RapidRide lines, and flexible service projects.
- Reaffirmed Metro’s commitment to safe, equitable, and sustainable mobility; providing service where needs are greatest; and contributed to healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.
- Committed to being an anti-racist and pro-equity organization.
- Began its transition to an all zero-emissions bus fleet powered by renewable energy by 2035.
- Reduced energy use in the operations of our facilities by 17.5 percent, exceeding our targets and reducing operating costs.
- Co-created the Mobility Framework with an Equity Cabinet comprising 23 community leaders representing priority populations, which directed Metro to center advancing equity and addressing climate change.
- Adapted quickly to support and protect customers and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn.
- Increased affordable access to transit by eliminating zones, moved to a flat fare for full-fare adults, and expanded our income-based fares for eligible customers.
- Decriminalized fare evasion and removed it from the court system, offering more equitable and effective options for people to ride right and pay their fares.
- Won the “Best Large Transit Agency in North America” award and “Performance Excellence” for equity and sustainability awards from the American Public Transportation Association.

Thirty-four years ago, I began my career with Metro as an on-call customer service representative. I haven’t forgotten that our primary responsibility is to get our customers—who depend on us every day—safely to their destinations.

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The earlier edition of this strategic plan didn't sit on the shelf—Metro actively used it. I'm excited about the vision, goals, and strategies in this updated version, which builds upon the excellent work of Metro's Equity Cabinet and past task forces. I look forward to implementing it with our passengers, employees, and the region we serve. Together, we will build a system that supports healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.

With much appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Terry" being more prominent than the last name "White".

Terry White, General Manager
King County Metro

Executive Summary



A Plan for Moving Toward Metro's Mission and Vision

This Strategic Plan for Public Transportation directs Metro to work toward its mission and vision. This Strategic Plan was developed in the context of specific opportunities and challenges facing King County residents. The Strategic Plan establishes 10 goals, along with objectives, outcomes, and strategies to achieve them and measures to track progress.

Mission

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

Vision

Metro will advance its mission by delivering a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. This network will help Metro contribute to healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable

environment. Metro plans to do this by building towards its long-range plan, Metro Connects, bringing more and better mobility services to King County over the next 30 years. Metro will grow in alignment with its core values, use data to inform decisions, modernize the system, and engage with customers and the community to ensure the future system meets people’s needs and prioritizes investments where needs are greatest.

Opportunities and Challenges

A growing, diversifying population and historic inequities: King County expects more than 870,000 more people and 680,000 new jobs by 2050.¹ King County is also becoming more diverse and, despite having some of the most prosperous communities in the world, there are deeply entrenched social, economic, and environmental inequities based on race, place, and income. These inequities hold back those within affected communities and threaten King County’s collective prosperity.

Transportation challenges resulting from displacement: Data shows that many households in King County that have low incomes are being displaced from densely populated and expensive areas, such as Seattle. They are moving into areas that are more affordable, such as communities in south King County. Race also factors into such displacement. People who have been displaced often face longer and more challenging journeys to get to work, school, or other opportunities.

The worsening climate crisis: In King County and globally, climate change is affecting the environment, economy, and human health.² The overall transportation sector generates more than one-third of climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions in King County. Public transit fleet generates less than one percent of countywide greenhouse gas emissions. Priority populations³ tend to bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of climate change.⁴

The need to integrate a wide range of mobility services, including connecting with regional transportation partners: High-capacity bus and rail service will remain the backbone of the regional mobility system. However, new technologies and new types of services—including on-demand services—are enabling a wider range of mobility options. These innovative services complement the fixed-route system and connect many more people to transit, including those for whom fixed-route service does not meet community needs and/or is not cost-effective, and broadens the destinations available to residents. Additionally, Metro’s regional

¹ Puget Sound Regional Council *VISION 2050* growth projections (technically 872,000 people, 682,000 jobs from 2017-2050)

² Snover, A.K. et al., *No Time to Waste: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C and Implications for Washington State*, a briefing paper by the Climate Impacts Group. University of Washington, Seattle, 2019. Available at: <https://ciq.uw.edu/resources/special-reports/no-time-to-waste/>

³ As defined in the Mobility Framework, priority populations include people who have low or no income; are Black, Indigenous, or other people of color; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.

⁴ University of Washington Climate Impacts Group, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, *An Unfair Share: Exploring the disproportionate risks from climate change facing Washington state communities*. University of Washington, Seattle, 2018. Available at: <https://ciq.uw.edu/our-work/applied-research/an-unfair-share-report/>

transportation partners will continue to grow and update their systems, including expanding light rail.

The COVID-19 pandemic: The Puget Sound region was home to the United States' first confirmed case of COVID-19, requiring Metro to quickly make sweeping changes to keep riders and employees safe, adjust service, partner creatively, and wisely steward financial resources during the subsequent economic downturn. Looking ahead, there remains sizable uncertainties related to the Puget Sound region's recovery from COVID-19, its economic impacts, and the racial and social disparities it exposed.

The need for new, sustainable funding sources: Metro's existing revenue structure relies heavily on sales tax—a volatile and regressive revenue source. Transit demand exceeds Metro's funding capacity, and the gap will increase as Metro seeks to build toward the 2050 service network envisioned in Metro Connects. Metro also must recover from the economic and ridership impacts of COVID-19.

Strategic Plan Goals

- Invest upstream and where needs are greatest.
- Address the climate crisis and environmental justice.
- Innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability.
- Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe.
- Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development.
- Improve access to mobility options.
- Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services.
- Build a skilled, diverse, and well-supported workforce that has opportunities to grow.
- Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals.
- Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement.

Outcomes, objectives, strategies, and performance measures for each of these goals are summarized in Table 1, "Summary Table of Metro Strategic Plan Elements".

Despite the changes and challenges facing King County, Metro's mission, vision, and belief that mobility is a human right have not changed. Metro is committed to working closely with communities, other transit providers, jurisdictions, employers, community-based organizations, and others to build a mobility agency that allows everyone an opportunity to thrive.

Pathway to the Future

This Strategic Plan, together with Metro Connects, addresses the aforementioned challenges and opportunities and moves Metro toward its vision for regional mobility. Metro Connects, Metro's adopted long-term plan for service and capital growth by 2050, contains more detail about Metro's future mobility network. Metro will continue

growing and improving its services, including bus, vanpool, flexible services, Access Paratransit, and water taxi.

Metro's Strategic Plan builds on King County's mission, vision, guiding principles, and goals, which were adopted in 2010 and updated in 2015 and 2021. The revised County goals highlight the importance of transportation by adding a new goal: Deliver a seamless, reliable network of transportation options to get people where they need to go, when they need to get there.

Metro's Strategic Plan reflects the recommendations of several advisory groups:

- **The Equity Cabinet**, which co-created the Mobility Framework, directed Metro to center advancing equity and addressing climate change and worked with Metro to update its policies in 2019-2021. Implementing the Mobility Framework Metro systemically provided resource support to community-based organizations and individuals to leverage their expertise toward advancing equity and social justice outcomes.
- **The Regional Transit Task Force** proposed a groundbreaking new policy framework and service guidelines in 2010.

The Mobility Framework articulates a vision for a regional mobility system that is innovative, integrated, equitable, and sustainable. In this Strategic Plan, Metro describes a vision for a regional, integrated, and innovative system of mobility that is equitable, sustainable, and safe. The Mobility Framework includes guiding principles and recommendations for achieving that vision and was informed by changing demographics, travel trends and needs, best practices, emerging mobility technologies, and public input in partnership with the Equity Cabinet.

The Strategic Plan goals reflect the sentiment of the Mobility Framework guiding principles, developed with the Equity Cabinet, and themes from the goals in the previous version of the Strategic Plan. In response to stakeholder input, the goals are intentionally not numbered to avoid implying priority order. They are listed in the order of the adopted Mobility Framework guiding principles.

The updated Strategic Plan also aligns with King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan and its Strategic Plan for Equity and Social Justice. The Strategic Plan takes a "targeted universalism" approach consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, which defines targeted universalism as "defining outcomes for all, identifying obstacles faced by specific groups, and tailoring strategies and building on assets to address barriers."⁵ Metro's universal outcomes are captured in its mission to "provide the best possible public transportation services and improve regional mobility and quality of life in King County" and vision to "deliver a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable." The plan outlines how Metro will develop and enact targeted approaches and investments with and for communities with the greatest needs—priority populations. By making investments tailored to community needs, Metro can improve mobility and thereby priority populations' access to the determinants of equity.

⁵ [King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan](#)

Priority populations: people who are Black, Indigenous, and of color; have low- or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.






Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.


Performance Measurement and Continuous Improvement


This Strategic Plan sets performance measures to track progress towards the key outcomes for each of the ten goals, which will be displayed in an interactive, web-based dashboard. This dashboard will also illustrate progress towards Metro Connects. Sharing data like this will help increase transparency with the staff, the public, elected officials, and other stakeholders. There may be slight variations in phrasing and language between the dashboard and this Strategic Plan to ensure the public facing dashboard uses plain language that can be easily understood by all users. Goal titles used in the public dashboard are indicated in Table 1 (e.g., (INVESTMENTS)). This plan also describes other ways in which Metro manages performance and uses data to make decisions, such as internal Monthly Business Review process and annual evaluation of the service networks' performance through the System Evaluation report. Through continuous improvement as a value-driven and data-informed organization, performance measures may continue to be refined and evolve.


Table 1 Summary Table of Metro Strategic Plan Elements


Objectives	Strategies	Measures
Goal: Invest upstream and where needs are greatest (INVESTMENTS) 		
<p>Invest in and measure the outcomes of services, programs, and improvements in geographic areas, at times of day, and within priority populations where there are unmet needs. Lead with racial justice.</p> <p>Outcome: Priority populations have greater access to mobility products and services and use them to meet their needs.</p>	<p>To support access to mobility, use a targeted universalism approach and lead with racial justice, prioritizing services, programs, policies, and products that tailored to the needs of priority populations.</p> <p>Continue complying with all legal requirements related to serving priority populations.</p> <p>Regularly evaluate the unmet needs of priority populations and how populations shift across King County.</p> <p>Prioritize service in geographic areas that have highly dense, transit-supportive development; a high proportion of priority populations; and limited midday and evening service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commute Times: from Rider/Non-rider survey, broken down by priority populations* and all riders countywide ▪ Accessibility: meaning a measure of scheduled travel times using transit to connect to jobs, opportunities, and community assets (schools, grocery stores, medical facilities, places of worship, food banks, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Highlight areas of priority populations
<p>Create and promote products, services, programs, and partnerships that are accessible and easy to use and understand.</p> <p>Outcome: Metro better serves customers by reducing barriers to mobility.</p>	<p>Engage with communities to understand barriers to transit ridership.</p> <p>Develop, evaluate, and adjust products, services, and programs that address barriers and increase mobility, especially among priority populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced Fare Trips: Number by youth, Regional Reduced Fare Permit (RRFP), ORCA LIFT, subsidized annual pass, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit
Goal: Address the climate crisis and environmental justice (SUSTAINABILITY) 		
<p>Reduce demand for single-occupant and high-emissions transportation modes and increase transit ridership.</p> <p>Outcome: Transportation-related emissions decrease, in part because fewer people drive alone, and more people ride transit.</p>	<p>Prioritize investments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), to include providing more frequent service and expanding service areas, as funding allows.</p> <p>Support equitable policies and programs for pricing vehicle usage to disincentivize driving alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation Emissions: Countywide transportation GHG emissions and avoided countywide transportation emissions from Metro's contribution to mode shift, congestion relief, and land use change ▪ Vehicle Miles Traveled: by passenger and light-duty vehicles.
<p>Help King County achieve its GHG emissions reduction and other climate goals through Metro's operations.</p> <p>Outcome:</p>	<p>Reduce vehicle emissions in all of Metro's fleets transition to zero-emissions, efficient operations, and other strategies.</p> <p>Reduce energy use in Metro facilities, make investments to reduce fossil fuel use in buildings,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro Operational Emissions: GHG emissions and energy use, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fleet (bus and non-bus) and water taxi – Facilities



Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>King County and Metro achieve GHG reduction targets for government operations.</p>	<p>and produce more renewable energy.</p> <p>Build, maintain, and operate Metro facilities consistent with the highest practices for green building and equitable development.</p> <p>Minimize use of resources in operations, maximize reuse and recycling, and choose products and services with low environmental and carbon impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Percentage of Metro and contracted fleets that are electric vehicles ▪ Green & Equitable Infrastructure: Percentage of capital projects achieving Green Building Ordinance required standards
<p>Partner with communities to prepare for the impacts of climate change and support resilience in disproportionately affected communities.</p> <p>Outcome: Metro’s efforts help King County communities become more resilient to climate change impacts.</p>	<p>Consider and reduce climate justice impacts of Metro’s actions on communities disproportionately affected by climate change.</p> <p>Incorporate climate preparedness into policies, plans, processes, and practices that influence decision-making and outcomes at Metro.</p>	
<p>Goal: Innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability (INNOVATION) </p>		
<p>Metro and partners adopt innovative services and products that complement and support transit and make efficient, equitable use of public spaces.</p> <p>Outcome: Metro pilots innovative mobility services, products, and programs that improve regional mobility, complement transit, and advance safety, equity, and sustainability.</p>	<p>Develop criteria for innovative mobility pilot projects that address community needs, help deliver key outcomes, and align with policy goals.</p> <p>Use guidance in Metro’s service guidelines to design, work with community and partners, and evaluate pilot programs.</p> <p>Enhance communications and outreach to raise awareness about innovations.</p> <p>Support jurisdictions in developing innovation partnerships that center around Metro’s values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pilot Program Ridership: by service name/product ▪ Pilot Program Locations: Map (or other measure) of distribution of innovative services across King County, highlighting areas of unmet need (based on accessibility analysis) ▪ Equity in On-Demand Service: Percentage of on-demand trips that starts or ends in an equity priority area ▪ In development– Accessibility and sustainability analysis – as tracking evolves, it will include how innovations improve access to jobs, opportunities, and physical community assets (i.e., grocery stores) and reduce emissions
<p>Innovative services follow fair labor practices, share data or other accountability measures, and serve priority populations.</p> <p>Outcome:</p>	<p>Develop guidelines and invest in innovative solutions that promote private providers to offer services that align with Metro’s values and labor agreements while ensuring</p>	


Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>Private providers that Metro contracts with to operate services follow guidelines that are consistent with Metro values.</p>	<p>accessibility for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Help partners develop mechanisms for customers to plan and pay for integrated transportation services, including mechanisms that people without bank accounts or smartphones can use.</p>	
<p>Goal: Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe (SAFETY) </p>		
<p>Coordinate safety and enforcement programs in ways that are equitable, culturally appropriate, and focused on the customer experience.</p> <p>Outcomes: Community members perceive and experience safety, security, and fare enforcement as fair and equitable. Metro’s systems of safety and enforcement are anti-racist and produce equitable outcomes.</p>	<p>Partner to reimagine Metro’s approach to transit police, security functions, and fare enforcement to center equity, the customer experience, and safety.</p> <p>With the community, co-create a universal definition of safety with targeted approaches to create safety for priority populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Safety Satisfaction: Personal safety satisfaction score from Rider/Non-Rider survey (broken down by demographics, including priority populations)
<p>Provide a safe and secure experience for passengers, communities, and Metro employees.</p> <p>Outcomes: Customers feel Metro’s services and facilities are safe, welcoming, and comfortable. Employees contribute to and experience a safe working environment.</p>	<p>Promote safety and security equitably in operations and facilities.</p> <p>Expand reporting structure to track non-operator staff assaults and threats.</p> <p>Provide safety-enhancing features that are accessible and responsive to community input on buses, at transit stops, and at transfer locations.</p> <p>Continue exploring technologies that provide safe and convenient ways for passengers to communicate safety information or concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assaults and Disturbances: Employee assaults and passenger physical disturbances (per million boardings) ▪ Preventable Collisions: Preventable collisions and customer injuries per million miles
<p>Be prepared to respond to emergencies and support community resilience in coordination with partners and the public.</p> <p>Outcome:</p>	<p>Review transit emergency plans to ensure Metro is prepared to provide safe and ongoing transportation during all hazards or crises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro’s Emergency Preparedness: Rider/Non-Rider survey data re-rating of Metro’s response to COVID-19 (may evolve into a more general emergency question in future)

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>Metro is prepared to respond to, mitigate, and recover from hazards and emergencies in an effective, equitable, coordinated way.</p>		
<p>Goal: Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development (TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES) </p>		
<p>Support healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.</p> <p>Outcome: Investments support equitable economic development and vibrant, sustainable, mixed-use, and mixed-income transit-oriented communities.</p>	<p>Support Metro’s equitable transit-oriented communities’ policy, using Metro’s authority and influence as a transit provider and property owner.</p> <p>Support jurisdictions and planning organizations in implementing the regional growth strategy that envisions an integrated transportation system linking cities and centers.</p> <p>Support equitable economic development and improved regional mobility through Metro’s mobility services, use of transportation infrastructure, and partnerships.</p> <p>Encourage transit-supportive land use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Units: At Metro-owned properties used for transit-oriented development broken down by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Completed – In development – In planning – Number of affordable housing units ▪ Commercial Space: At Metro-owned properties used for transit-oriented development commercial space square feet by year. ▪ Growth: Measure the percentage of housing units and jobs in regionally or county-designated growth centers and the percentage of jobs within regionally or county-designated manufacturing/industrial centers that are within ½ mile of frequent transit service stops or stations. ▪ Planned Growth: <i>To be developed. Coordinate with the Puget Sound Regional Council to map the alignment of transit service with planned growth.</i>
<p>Partner with local jurisdictions and other organizations to minimize displacement and increase affordable housing in urban areas near transit.</p> <p>Outcome: The amount and types of affordable housing near frequent transit increase.</p>	<p>Enable development of affordable housing on suitable Metro-owned property.</p> <p>Advocate for and support jurisdictions in adopting policies and land uses to minimize displacement near transit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordable Housing Near Transit: Percent of all and new rental units within ½ mile of frequent transit service that are affordable by median income brackets (regional measure)

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>Goal: Improve access to mobility options (ACCESS) </p>		
<p>Support access to mobility in public spaces and with private partners. Outcome: Riders, especially priority populations including people with disabilities, have sustained and easy access to mobility services through multiple modes and throughout the day.</p>	<p>Develop station area guidelines that prioritize passenger access and support access for people with disabilities and discourage single-occupant vehicle access at transit stops and stations. Partner with local jurisdictions to develop plans for transit corridors that provide safe opportunities to walk, roll, or bike safely to transit connections. Use traditional, innovative, and emerging mobility modes to connect people to services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transit Access Methods: Mode share for how riders get to their bus stop (from Rider/Non-Rider survey) ▪ Proximity to Transit: (frequent and infrequent service), for priority populations and other populations (likely including percentage of populations and map)
<p>Increase awareness, use, and accessibility of mobility options, emphasizing priority populations. Outcome: Community members, especially priority populations, know what mobility services are available and use them.</p>	<p>Increase communications about Metro’s services, products, and programs so that people, especially priority populations, know about and how to use them. Ensure marketing campaigns, signs, wayfinding, and other communications are culturally appropriate, provided in multiple languages and formats, accessible to community members, provided in coordination with community-based organizations, and evaluated and upgraded regularly. Ensure customer-facing information systems and services are easy to use, accurate, and integrated. Employ an income-based approach to Metro’s fare structure, ensuring discounts are provided to those who cannot afford to pay full fare.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Communication Satisfaction: Satisfaction with communication-/information-sharing from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority populations.

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>Provide equitable access to parking and other assets that connect people to transit.</p> <p>Outcome: Parking and other assets that connect people to transit are provided and managed equitably.</p>	<p>Actively manage parking to maximize capacity for transit riders and ensure equitable access for priority populations and off-peak travelers.</p> <p>Provide parking programs that are nimble, cost-effective, and in accord with Metro Connects.</p> <p>Integrate parking and other access infrastructure and options with transportation demand management technologies, tools, and incentives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Park and Rides: Number of park and ride spaces by geographic location (form TBD, likely highlight areas of priority population on map)
<p>Goal: Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services (SERVICE QUALITY) </p>		
<p>Grow a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network of traditional and new mobility services that is safe, equitable, and sustainable.</p> <p>Outcomes: Customers can rely on mobility services to get them where they want to go, when they want to go. Customers can easily connect between mobility services, including those offered by Metro and other transportation providers.</p>	<p>Provide a range of mobility services that enable seamless connections among modes and destinations.</p> <p>Invest in flexible services that address community-identified needs and connect people to high-capacity transit.</p> <p>Deliver mobility services that connect people to jobs and job centers, opportunities, and activities of daily living. Improve service during non-peak periods.</p> <p>Be flexible and responsive to changes in demand for service and community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ridership: Ridership/total number of boardings (rail, bus, water taxi, paratransit, and rideshare) ▪ Customer Satisfaction: With Metro generally or specific service elements (TBD) – from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority population* ▪ ORCA Transfers: by ORCA category, which includes low-income and disabled populations)
<p>Make improvements to enhance transit speed and reliability, and support jurisdictions in doing so.</p> <p>Outcome: Transit speed and reliability are improved.</p>	<p>Improve speed and reliability consistent with Metro Connects.</p> <p>Encourage and support jurisdictions in making improvements in and near the right-of way that increase transit speed and reliability.</p> <p>Continue advocating for policies that support fast, reliable, and affordable integrated transit.</p> <p>Develop right-of-way guidelines that prioritize transit and enable people to walk, roll, or bike to transit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of Service Index: Service quality index (one score informed by on-time performance, pass ups, and missed trips)

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>Goal: Build a skilled, diverse, and well-supported workforce that has growth opportunities (WORKFORCE) </p>		
<p>Partner with employees, unions, contractors, and communities to offer high-skill, high-wage careers that support a high quality of life. Outcome: Public and private mobility services offer high-skill, living-wage jobs.</p>	<p>Utilize equitable employment practices and encourage partners to do the same. Help employees benefit from the opportunities offered by new mobility technologies. Implement organizational health framework and develop measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Satisfaction: Employee job satisfaction (from King County employee survey, broken down by race, gender, age)
<p>Use innovation and new pathways to jobs to attract, recruit, and retain quality employees. Outcomes: Metro is an employer of choice, attracting and retaining highly skilled employees, especially from priority populations. Metro employees, especially priority populations, have equitable, consistent access to opportunities for professional development and career advancement.</p>	<p>Cultivate a diverse, highly skilled applicant pool. Hire and onboard in ways that bring in the best talent and promote equity and transparency. Develop a consistent, equitable approach for supporting professional development. Support employees in maximizing their potential through equitable performance management. Support employees' health and well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workforce Demographics: Demographics of new hires, re-hires, and promotions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Race – Gender – Age
<p>Recruit and hire from populations facing the greatest barriers to transit employment. Outcome: Metro employees represent the diversity of King County's population.</p>	<p>Use targeted approaches and partnerships to recruit priority populations for Metro jobs. Leverage and partner with other King County departments and programs to hire employees from diverse backgrounds. Partner with state agencies, colleges, and community-based organizations to support pre-employment career training or innovative programs to connect people with mobility jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workforce Representativeness: Demographics of King County population compared to Metro workforce and leadership by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Race – Gender – Age
<p>Goal: Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals (STEWARDSHIP) </p>		
<p>Budget and invest in ways that deliver Metro Connects safely, equitably, and sustainably. Outcome:</p>	<p>Seek additional funding sources that are equitable and financially sustainable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro Connects Funding Gap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interim Metro Connects vs baseline scenario

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>Metro can implement Metro Connects, meeting regional transportation needs and advancing safety, equity, and sustainability.</p>	<p>Use Metro's Service Guidelines and performance measures to ensure service investments align with needs and values and build toward Metro Connects.</p> <p>Develop and deliver capital projects consistent with the guidance in Metro Connects.</p> <p>Expand RapidRide in accordance with Metro Connects.</p> <p>Plan for Metro's mid-range future by updating its business and other plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2050 Metro Connects vs baseline scenario
<p>Exercise sound financial management and ensure Metro's long-term financial sustainability.</p> <p>Outcomes: Metro is a responsible steward of public resources and protects its financial future.</p>	<p>Develop and deliver services, capital projects, and programs on time, within budget, and in alignment with Metro's values.</p> <p>Adhere to Metro's adopted fund management policies.</p> <p>Continually explore and implement operational and administrative cost efficiencies.</p> <p>Align fares with other service providers, meet revenue targets, and advance equity through Metro's income-based approach to fares.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – per boarding – per passenger mile – per service hour
<p>Align investments with values and measure and communicate progress.</p> <p>Outcome: Metro makes data-informed decisions and demonstrates how its investments can advance safety, equity, and sustainability.</p>	<p>Continue evidence-informed and data-driven decision-making.</p> <p>Track, measure, and communicate progress in a public dashboard toward this Strategic Plan for Public Transportation.</p> <p>Track, measure, and communicate progress within Metro to support value-driven and data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State of Good Repair: Asset management summary, including percent of vehicles, facilities, and equipment that are currently maintained in a State of Good Repair as part of Metro's plan for when assets should be repaired or replaced to demonstrate fiscal responsibility.
<p>Goal: Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement (ENGAGEMENT) </p>		
<p>Be open to shared decision-making and co-creation with community.</p> <p>Outcome:</p>	<p>Seek opportunities for co-creation and upstream engagement.</p> <p>Coordinate with other King County departments and public agencies on engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-creation Engagement: percentage of engagement projects incorporating co-creation (normalized for the size of the project)

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>Metro shares power with communities, especially priority populations, and co-creates policies, services, programs, and products.</p>	<p>processes and communication with communities.</p> <p>Engage with communities that have the greatest needs.</p> <p>Continue commitment to partner with and compensate community-based organizations to mutually build each other's capacity in engagement efforts.</p> <p>Value qualitative information, such as community feedback, in addition to quantitative data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equitable Contracting: As defined by percent of total engagement contracts/funds focused on direct engagement with priority populations and community-based organizations <i>(also in King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan)</i> ▪ Engagement Satisfaction: With the community engagement survey process
<p>Use community-driven approaches to develop, program, and evaluate mobility services and infrastructure that serve priority populations.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <p>Community members, especially priority populations, perceive that Metro's engagement practices are meaningful, inclusive, transparent, and geared toward long-term trust and relationship building.</p> <p>Metro demonstrates how community input has influenced decisions.</p>	<p>Take a long-term approach to engagement, rather than a project-by-project approach.</p> <p>Use best practices for making engagement inclusive, accessible, and community driven.</p> <p>Demonstrate how community input influences decisions.</p> <p>Develop a community liaison program that hires community members to design effective engagement and facilitate engagement of local communities.</p>	

Chapter 1: Introduction



King County Metro's Strategic Plan is divided into three chapters: **Introduction**, which includes background information, Metro's mission, vision, challenges, and opportunities, and the strategic planning process; **Pathway to the Future**, which presents Metro's goals, intended outcomes, and objectives and strategies; and **Performance Measurement and Continuous Improvement**, which describes how Metro will track progress and use data to drive decision-making.

SECTION 1.1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Metro's Evolution as a Mobility Provider

As the largest public transportation agency in the Puget Sound region, Metro is creating a world-class, integrated public transportation network. Metro serves customers with a wide range of mobility services including providing and funding bus, paratransit, vanpool, water taxi, and flexible services; and by operating the Seattle Streetcar, Sound Transit Link light rail, and Sound Transit Express bus services.

Metro Products and Services

Metro operates more than 180 bus routes, and its fixed-route services delivered more than 130 million passenger trips in 2019. Prior to COVID-19, Metro delivered more than 400,000 trips every weekday; roughly half of downtown Seattle commuters relied on transit. Even at the peak of the pandemic, Metro delivered more than 100,000 trips daily. For people with disabilities who cannot use Metro’s regular buses, Metro offers Access paratransit service and additional service for seniors and disabled people via the Community Access Transportation program. Metro’s commuter vanpool program had approximately 1,600 vehicles in operation in 2019. Metro also offers a growing number of flexible services tailored to local needs, such as community vans and on-demand services.

Metro’s Strategic Plan for Public Transportation was first adopted by the King County Council in 2011⁶ and was updated in 2015.⁷ Those earlier editions responded to key challenges and opportunities: population and economic growth, demographic changes, customer service and satisfaction, funding, the environment, access to transit, and the evolving transportation system. Though many of these remain relevant, much has changed for Metro and the Puget Sound region.

Between 2015 and 2020, King County gained about 165,000 people and 195,000 jobs (although employment fell in 2020 because of COVID-19).⁸ With this growth, public transportation must play a growing role in moving people throughout King County; supporting the economy; advancing equitable access to jobs, education, and other opportunities; and reducing GHG emissions and traffic congestion.

In response to these challenges, Metro has evolved. In 2017, the King County Council adopted Metro’s long-range plan, METRO CONNECTS,⁹ which described a plan for 70 percent more service by 2040. The 2021 update to Metro Connects extended the 2040 service network to 2050 to align with the Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2050.¹⁰

In January 2019, Metro became a stand-alone department instead of a division of King County’s Department of Transportation (DOT). The DOT’s Marine division became a part of the new Metro Transit Department.

The new department established three core principles—safety, equity, and sustainability—and four key strategies:

- Make transit easy to use and available to all
- Get things built
- Partner with others
- Enable employees to do top-quality work

⁶ King County Council, [Ordinance 17143](#)

⁷ King County Council, [Ordinance 18301](#)

⁸ King County EconPulse, King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/independent/forecasting/EconPulse.aspx>

⁹ [Link to METRO CONNECTS](#)

¹⁰ Link to [VISION 2050](#)

Simultaneously, Metro redefined itself as a mobility agency, focused on the mission of providing the best possible public transportation services to improve regional mobility and quality of life in King County.

In 2019, Metro co-created the Mobility Framework¹¹ with the King County Mobility Equity Cabinet, a group of 23 leaders representing riders countywide. The cabinet encompasses communities referred to in this plan as “priority populations”.

Priority populations: people who are Black, Indigenous, and of color; have low- or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.

The Mobility Framework addresses several challenges:

- King County’s rapidly growing and diversifying population
- Transportation for households that have been displaced from cities to less dense areas
- The worsening climate crisis
- The need to integrate traditional, fixed-route transit with new mobility services and regional transportation partners.

The Mobility Framework articulates a vision for a regional mobility system that is **innovative, integrated, equitable, and sustainable**. In this Strategic Plan, Metro describes a vision for a regional, integrated, and innovative system of mobility that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. The Mobility Framework includes guiding principles and recommendations for achieving that vision and was developed by reviewing changing demographics, travel trends and needs, best practices, emerging mobility technologies, and public input in partnership with the Equity Cabinet. Consistent with direction in the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan¹² and Ordinance 16948,¹³ the Mobility Framework took a “targeted universalism” approach and centered on priority populations to increase prosperity for all King County residents. This approach is not meant to exclude people with identities that may fall outside these frames, such as LGBTQIA+¹⁴ people, youth, seniors, people who have been involved with the justice system, and others. Instead, targeted universalism acknowledges that identities are often intersectional (e.g., youth with low incomes, or youth of color). By targeting investments tailored to community needs, Metro can

¹¹ [Link to Mobility Framework](#)

¹² [Link to King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016 - 2022](#)

¹³ [Link to Ordinance 16948](#)

¹⁴ A brief explanation of the acronym LGBTQIA+: LGBT means lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. The Q can mean either questioning, uncertainty about sexual orientations, or queer. The I stands for intersex, a term describing people whose anatomy can't be classified as typically male or female. The A represents those who identify as asexual, are agender, or identify as allies of the LGBT community. The plus sign represents those who do not identify with one of the letters in the acronym (for example, those who identify as pansexual or gender-fluid).

improve mobility and thereby priority populations access to the determinants of equity.

The Mobility Framework served as a foundation for the transportation and land use related guidance in King County's adopted 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan.¹⁵

In 2020, when Metro began incorporating the developments described above into this updated Strategic Plan, a three-part crisis emerged: the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent economic downturn, and a nationwide reckoning with racial justice. These transformative events continue to unfold, and Metro's response continues to evolve.

Public transit contributes to a successful recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. By providing increased mobility to historically underserved neighborhoods and populations, Metro can address racial inequities and improve quality of life for all in King County.

Despite the changes and challenges facing King County, Metro's mission, vision, and belief that mobility is a human right have not changed. **For Metro, mobility means the ability to get people where they need to go, when they need to—safely, equitably, and sustainably.** Metro is committed to working closely with communities, other transit providers, jurisdictions, employers, community-based organizations, and others to build a transit system that achieves that vision.

Figure 1 illustrates how Metro's values, organization, policies, and practices will help it deliver Metro Connects and contribute to important community outcomes like healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.

¹⁵ [Link to the 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan](#)

Figure 1 How Metro's Values, Organization, Policies, and Practices Contribute to Key Outcomes



Metro's Mandate

The Metro Transit Department performs the "metropolitan public transportation function" authorized in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 35.58. Metro is required to plan and operate transit services consistent with county, regional, state, and federal policies. As a County agency, Metro complies with County law and procedures. The Metropolitan King County Council approves Metro policies such as the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, fund management policies, and Metro's biennial budget.

Countywide planning and policies: King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) are established by King County and its cities and jurisdictions. These policies are consistent with state law, state agency guidance, decisions of the Growth Management Policy Council, and the regional growth strategy outlined in VISION 2050. The CPPs provide a countywide vision and serve as a framework for each jurisdiction to develop its own comprehensive plan, which must be consistent with the overall vision for the future of King County. Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031 is consistent with King County's Countywide Planning

Policies,¹⁶ King County Comprehensive Plan¹⁷, Strategic Climate Action Plan, Comprehensive Financial Management Policies,¹⁸ Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, and the King County Strategic Plan's¹⁹ adopted mission, vision, guiding principles, and goals.

Regional planning and policies: State law (RCW 47.80.020) designates the four-county Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for federal planning purposes. As the region's MPO, PSRC develops a regional plan and strategies to guide decisions about regional growth management and environmental, economic, and transportation issues. As the region's RTPO, PSRC develops long-range transportation and development plans across multiple jurisdictions and allocates federal transportation funds for the region. Metro participates in the PSRC planning process and strives to meet the goals of the regional plans, VISION 2050, and Transportation 2040 (to be updated in 2022).

Washington state planning and policies: The 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the state's largest and fastest-growing counties to conduct comprehensive land-use and transportation planning, to concentrate new growth in compact "urban growth areas," and to protect natural resources and environmentally critical areas. King County's urban growth area is shown in Figure 2. The GMA requires King County to consider population and employment growth targets and land uses when determining the future demand for travel and whether such demand can be met by existing transportation facilities. Metro contributes to King County's compliance with the GMA by focusing public transportation services in urban growth areas.

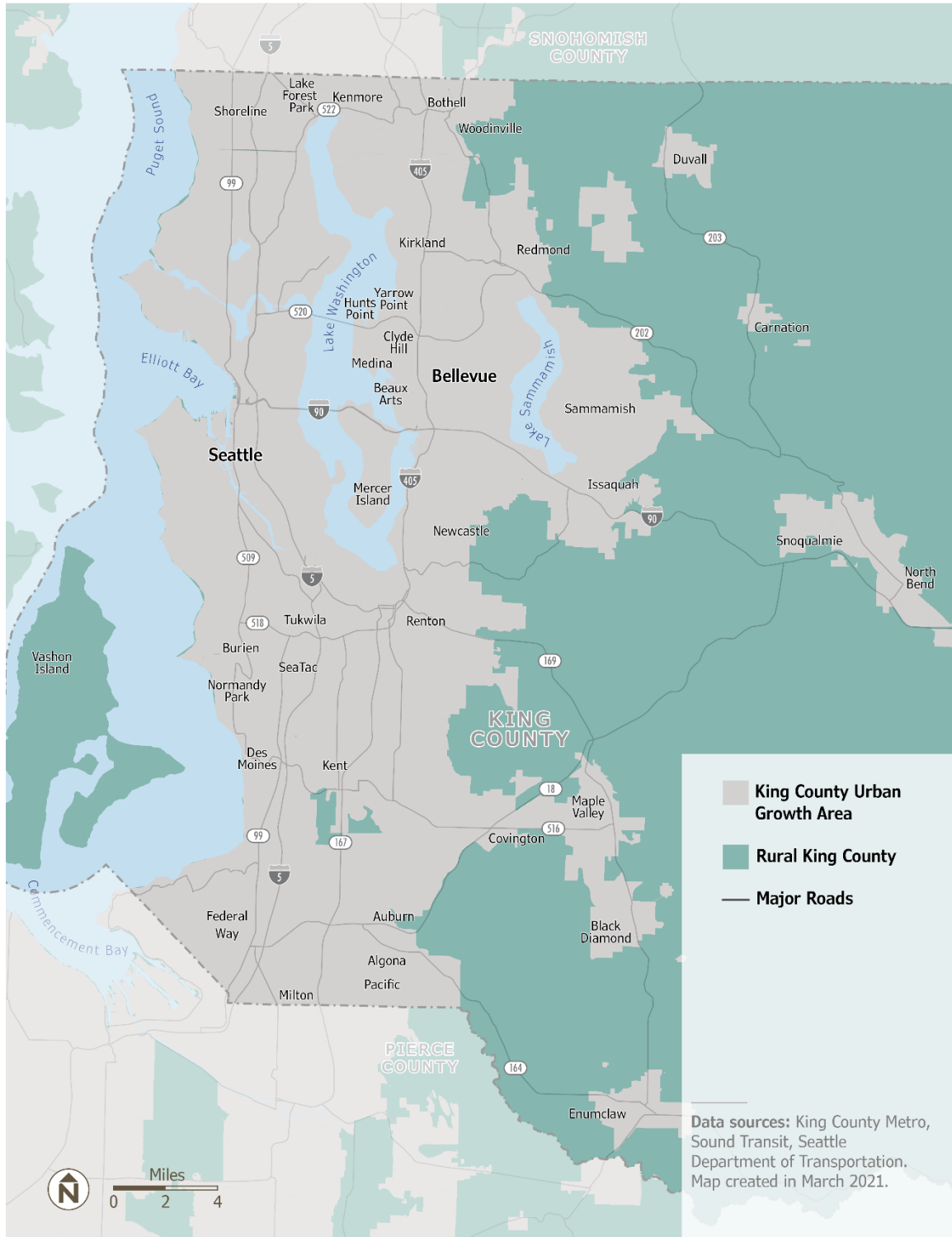
¹⁶ [Link to King County Countywide Planning Policies](#)

¹⁷ [Link to King County Comprehensive Plan](#)

¹⁸ [Link to King County Comprehensive Financial Management Policies](#)

¹⁹ [Link to King County Strategic Plan](#)

Figure 2 Urban Growth Area, King County



Federal planning and policies: Metro complies with federal laws that require the public transportation system to be equitable, accessible, and just. Civil rights statutes, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, require that Metro provide public transportation in a manner that does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, disability, or age. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that Metro ensure equal opportunities and access for people with disabilities. A 1994 executive order requires that all federal agencies include environmental justice in their missions. This means that Metro cannot disproportionately impact minority or low- and no-income populations and must ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected groups. Metro provides public transportation that adheres to these and other federal requirements.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.

SECTION 1.2: MISSION, VISION, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

This Strategic Plan directs Metro to work toward its mission and vision, described below, while recognizing the challenges and opportunities Metro faces.

Mission

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

Vision

Metro will advance its mission by delivering a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. This network will help Metro contribute to healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment. Metro plans to do this by building towards its long-range plan, Metro Connects, bringing more and better mobility services to King County over the next 30 years. Metro will grow in alignment with its core values, use data to inform decisions, modernize the system, and engage with customers and the community to ensure the future system meets people’s needs and prioritizes investments where needs are greatest.

An Innovative Network

Metro’s mobility system incorporates improvements and innovations in mobility technologies. As it delivers Metro Connects, Metro embraces new services that can make travel easier and more convenient and connect more people to transit. Metro will innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability.



Innovations can have detrimental aspects, and Metro and its partners work to mitigate them. Examples include roads crowded by autonomous vehicles or ride-hailing vehicles waiting to pick up passengers, increased carbon pollution, unaffordable or inaccessible services, and people choosing to travel alone in ride-hail vehicles instead of taking transit. Metro and its partners nurture equitable and sustainable innovations. For example, they test through pilot programs and encourage private-sector mobility innovations that advance the region’s goals. Metro requires contractors to honor the agency’s values when operating services for Metro. Examples include requiring living wages, integration with ORCA payment systems and discounted fare structures, apps and information in multiple languages, and provision of child seats.

By incorporating innovations that complement transit and reduce single-occupant vehicle travel, Metro contributes to safety, equity and sustainability.

An Integrated Network

Metro and its partners jointly plan and operate a regional mobility network: one easy-to-use system that enables people to move seamlessly throughout the region using different modes and mobility services.



As a mobility agency, Metro combines its high-capacity, fixed-route transit services with other mobility options. As envisioned in Metro Connects, this integrated transit network includes connections among different services owned and operated by different partners. These include Metro’s RapidRide, frequent, express, local transit, flexible, vanpool, and water taxi services; Sound Transit’s Link light rail, bus rapid transit, express bus, and Sounder services; and the Seattle Streetcar.

The interconnected, high-capacity transit system is universally accessible through walking, biking, rolling, park-and-rides, and other first- or last-mile services. However, Metro recognizes that the many different opportunities to get to transit can be confusing, complicated, and expensive—particularly for people who live in areas with fewer mobility choices, who have disabilities or are elderly, or whose preferred language is not English and/or have hearing or visual impairments. Metro and its partners continually strive to bring people to transit and to ensure that all forms of mobility are as accessible as possible.

As Metro and partner agencies plan service expansions, they continue to embody Metro and King County’s values to ensure seamless, integrated travel options for customers. As a result, the integrated regional mobility network supports healthy communities, a strong economy, and a sustainable environment.

An Equitable Network

Metro addresses systemic racism and other inequities by investing where needs are greatest and by leading with racial justice. Consistent with King County’s Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and Ordinance 16948,²⁰ Metro invests in services, capital projects, and programs where they are most needed. Metro considers the needs of priority populations as it defines where needs are greatest. Metro also centers the transit needs of essential workers, as demonstrated by COVID-19 ridership trends, as it builds an equitable system.



Metro is committed to the values of Equity and Social Justice,²¹ and these values will guide and shape the agency’s work:

- Inclusive and collaborative
- Diverse and people focused
- Responsive and adaptive
- Transparent and accountable
- Racially just
- Focused upstream where needs are greatest

Guided by Metro Connects, Metro expands opportunities for people to thrive by providing frequent, all-day transit options to reach jobs, education, and other destinations. Metro strives toward the goal of growing the transit network so 84 percent of Black, Indigenous, and people of color and 86 percent of people with low- or no-incomes have frequent service nearby.²²

Metro strives to meet the growing demand for transit services in the dense areas of King County. However, in many of these areas the cost of living is high, and residents have high incomes. They often are already better served by transit, and this can exacerbate disparities. Metro also strives to meet the transportation needs of lower-income, more-diverse, and less-dense communities, as well as the needs of workers who do not have traditional peak-hour schedules. Metro listens to community direction and provides high-quality mobility services that align with their input.

Engagement with riders and community members—especially priority populations and communities with the greatest need—is essential to building an equitable mobility system. Metro partners with community-based organizations to design and implement equitable, accessible, and transparent engagement processes. Where possible, Metro seeks opportunities to co-create with communities. Together they refine and build out the vision described in Metro Connects and shape and inform decisions about Metro’s services and programs. By centering equity and racial justice, Metro helps advance King County’s vision of all people having equitable opportunities to thrive and improved quality of life for all.

²⁰ [Link to Ordinance 16948](#)

²¹ [Link to King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016 - 2022](#)

²² “Show-up-and-go” service with speed and reliability improvements; starts early and runs late in the day. Goals for Transit Access Priority Populations based on analysis in Technical Report B (Table B-6)

A Sustainable Network

Metro and its partner transportation providers play a key role in confronting the climate crisis. By reducing vehicle miles traveled by fossil fuel-burning single-occupant vehicles, they help King County move toward its climate goals.²³ Metro Connects envisions a 15 to 20 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled and 1.9 million GHG emissions reduced annually by 2050.



Metro pursues a combination of strategies to achieve the countywide climate goals. Compact, mixed land use, combined with frequent, high-capacity transit, and equitable vehicle usage pricing policies are important contributors to reducing transportation emissions.²⁴ Knowing this, Metro works with local jurisdictions to encourage dense, mixed-use, affordable land use near transit. Metro and its partners support communities in preparing for and developing resilience to climate impacts.

Metro operations are committed to addressing climate change by moving toward a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035, pursuing the transition of its other fleets to zero emission, reducing energy use and emissions from Metro facilities, and building green and equitable infrastructure.

By building a sustainable network, Metro addresses climate change, improves public health, and supports livable communities.

A Safe Network

The safety of Metro's customers and employees remains top priority. Metro makes sure passengers and employees are physically and emotionally safe as they use its services and the places where they access transit. Metro's safety measures range from prevention of accidents to response to incidents on buses to preparation for unforeseen emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.



Metro also works with stakeholders to ensure its security and enforcement systems are equitable and anti-racist. It coordinates with others to respond to emergencies effectively and nimbly. By building the safest system possible—in an equitable way—Metro continues to attract employees and customers.

Challenges and Opportunities

This Strategic Plan responds to significant regional changes, including more population growth and diversity, displacement of low-income households, a worsening climate crisis, new mobility services, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need for new funding sources.

²³ King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan goal is to reduce countywide greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050 (compared to 2007). Specifically, 20 percent reduction in light-duty vehicle miles traveled by 2030, and 28 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled by 2050, in alignment with Washington state goals (RCW 47.01.440).

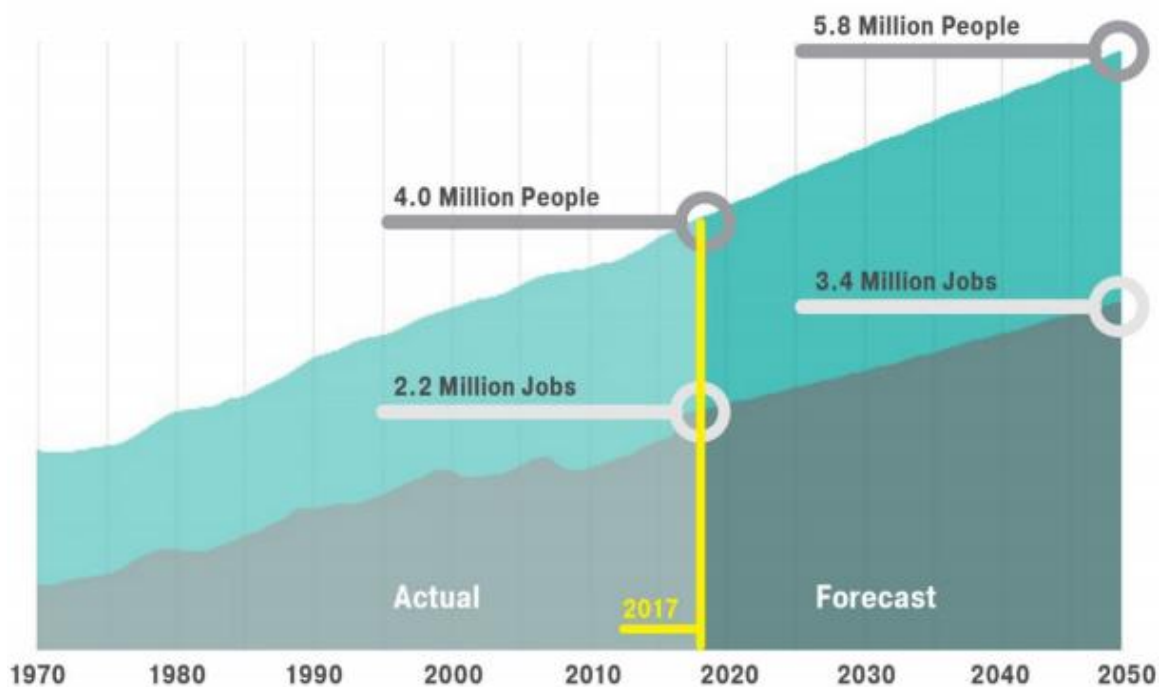
²⁴ Ewing et al., *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*. Urban Land Institute, 2008.

A Growing, Diversifying Population

King County is growing and changing. Between 2010 and 2019, the county gained nearly 300,000 new residents.²⁵ More than half of that growth occurred in dense job and residential areas that are well-served by transit. However, rising housing costs led to displacement of many low-income households to less-urban parts of the county. As described in the next topic, this population shift creates a need for new mobility solutions.

Growth will continue. The Puget Sound region will likely grow to a total of 5.8 million people and 3.4 million jobs by 2050, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Historic and Future Growth, Puget Sound Region²⁶



King County expects more than 870,000 more people and 680,000 new jobs by 2050.²⁷ As a result, demand for a well-integrated network of mobility services will continually increase.

King County has also become more diverse. Nearly one quarter of King County residents were born outside the United States, more than 10 percent have limited English proficiency, and 39 percent are people of color. From 2009 to 2017, King County gained 95,000 residents who are foreign born, which accounts for 40 percent

²⁵ King County Metro Mobility Framework Report, Appendix A, Travel Trends. 2019. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/mobility-framework/metro-mobility-framework-report.pdf>

²⁶ Figure is from Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050

²⁷ Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 growth projections (technically 872,000 people, 682,000 jobs from 2017-2050).

of the County's total population.²⁸ During the same time period, the total number of limited English speaking residents in King County increased by 26,500, though remained constant at 11 percent of total population during this period.²⁹ The percent of the population that identifies as people of color increased from 34 percent in 2010 to 39 percent in 2017.³⁰ Compared to non-Hispanic white workers, these populations use transit more for work.³¹

As King County has grown more diverse, racial disparities and injustices in Puget Sound and across the country have become more pronounced. Data show a strong connection between race, place, income, and health. Communities of color and lower-income communities in King County consistently showing worse health outcomes.³² These include decreased life expectancy, increased rates of preventable hospitalization, diabetes, and obesity. COVID-19 exacerbated existing disparities, disproportionately impacting communities of color in King County. And the painful, chronic, and high-profile deaths of Black and brown people at the hands of law enforcement across the country have cast a spotlight on systemic racism and injustices.

King County's growing and diversifying population creates opportunities for Metro to build an equitable network of mobility services. By centering equity, Metro can strengthen communities where all residents have opportunities to access jobs, education, services, and more.

Transportation Challenges Resulting from Displacement

As demonstrated in Figure 4, data show that many low-income households in King County are being displaced from densely populated and expensive areas, such as Seattle and downtown Bellevue. As a result, they are moving into communities that are more affordable, such as those in south King County.

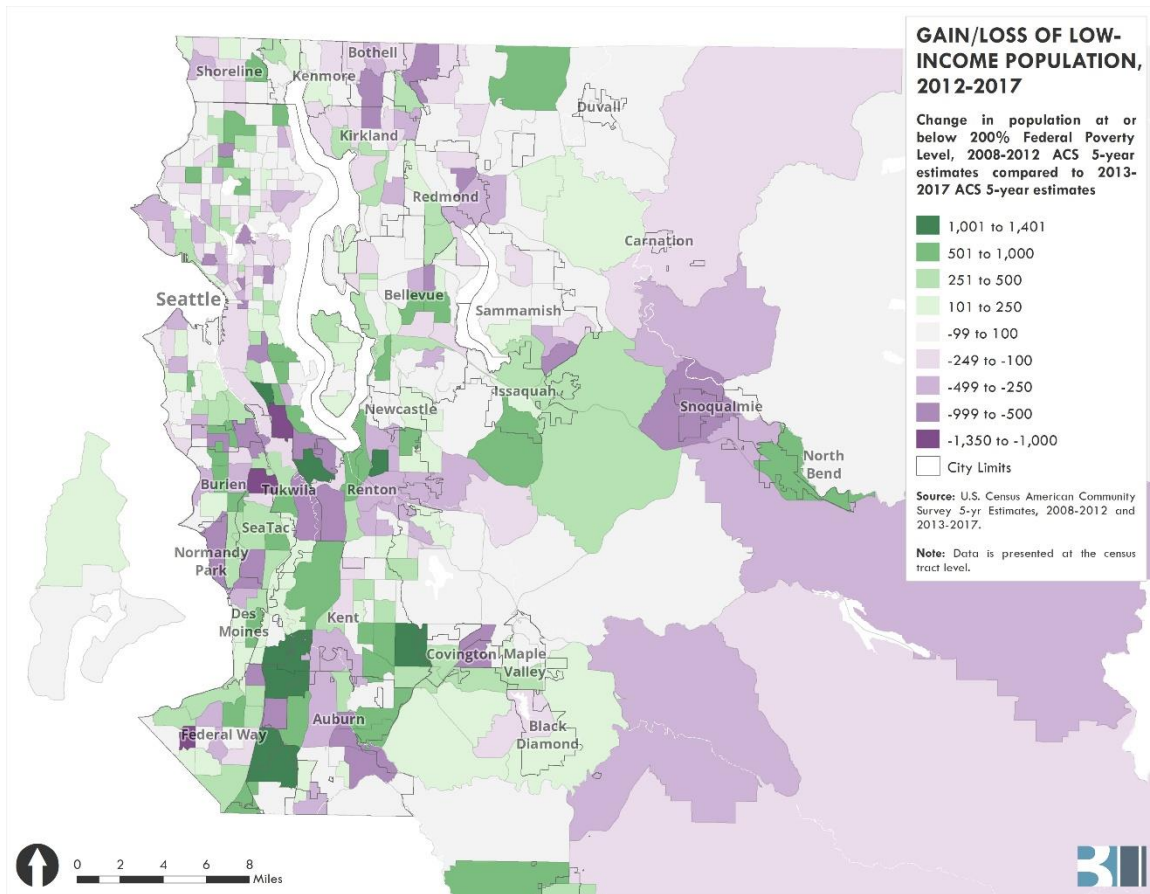
²⁸ King County Metro Mobility Framework Report, Appendix A, Travel Trends. 2019. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/mobility-framework/metro-mobility-framework-report.pdf>

²⁹ King County Metro Mobility Framework Report, Appendix A, Travel Trends. 2019. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/mobility-framework/metro-mobility-framework-report.pdf>

³⁰ King County Metro Mobility Framework Report, Appendix A, Travel Trends. 2019. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/mobility-framework/metro-mobility-framework-report.pdf>

³¹ King County Metro Mobility Framework Report, Appendix A, Travel Trends. 2019. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/mobility-framework/metro-mobility-framework-report.pdf>

³² [Link to King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016 - 2022](#)

Figure 4 Change in Population at or Below 200 Percent of Federal Poverty Level, from 2012 to 2017

Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2008-2012 & 2013-2017; BERK, 2019.

Race also factors into displacement trends. Data show that between 2007 and 2017, many Black people were displaced from urban centers to less expensive areas like south King County.³³ People who are displaced often must travel farther to work, school, or services. Those with low-wage jobs often work midday or late evening shifts.

This population shift creates challenges for Metro. Fixed-route transit is easiest and most efficient to provide in areas with high population and job density and mostly traditional 9-to-5 office schedules. It is less productive in communities that lack high population density and where residents travel farther throughout the day.

As Metro works toward its vision of an equitable mobility system, it will employ strategies that encourage dense, affordable housing near transit and minimize displacement. As areas of greatest need change, Metro must also develop new mobility options tailored to the needs of displaced communities.

³³ King County Metro Mobility Framework Report, Appendix A, Travel Trends. 2019. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/mobility-framework/metro-mobility-framework-report.pdf>

The Worsening Climate Crisis

In King County and globally, climate change is affecting the environment, economy, and human health.³⁴ The Puget Sound region is experiencing rising air temperatures and more heat-related health impacts, including more illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.

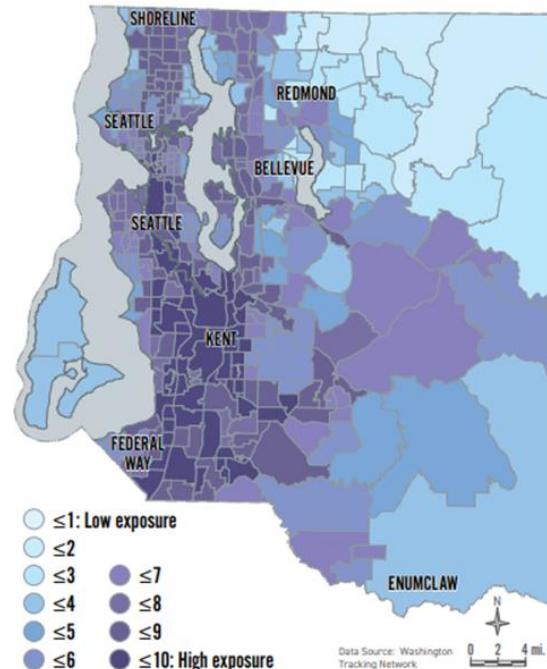
The transportation sector generates more than one-third of climate-altering GHG emissions in King County. Before COVID-19, total vehicle miles for work trips per person had increased, as did the GHG emissions from those vehicles. This may be because people are traveling farther for work, potentially because they moved farther from job centers.

Priority populations tend to bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of climate change.³⁵ This is demonstrated through Figure 5, from King County's 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan. Priority populations are more likely to be exposed to hazards such as flooding or other natural disasters because they live or work with less open space and other amenities and have higher exposure to diesel, industrial processes, and other pollutants. The ability of a family or community to recover after a hazard event can be affected by poverty, language barriers, and access to health care and insurance.

Transportation also has a profound influence on the lives of the adults and children living around fossil fuel emissions. For example, air pollution can be linked to increased asthma, respiratory, and cardiovascular problems.³⁶

Metro can significantly reduce GHG emissions, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and improve public health by building a sustainable mobility network that encourages people to use transit rather than drive. Metro can further increase

Figure 5 Environmental Exposure Index



Source: King County's 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan. It shows that areas with less opportunity, higher pollution exposure, existing inequities, and lower health and economic wellbeing outcomes are often concentrated in south King County.

³⁴ Snover, A.K. et al., *No Time to Waste: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C and Implications for Washington State*, a briefing paper prepared by the Climate Impacts Group. University of Washington, Seattle, 2019. Available at: <https://cig.uw.edu/resources/special-reports/no-time-to-waste/>

³⁵ University of Washington Climate Impacts Group, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, *An Unfair Share: Exploring the disproportionate risks from climate change facing Washington state communities*. University of Washington, Seattle, 2018. Available at: <https://cig.uw.edu/our-work/applied-research/an-unfair-share-report/>

³⁶ Public Health – Seattle & King County, *Blueprint for Addressing Climate Change*. 2019. Available at: https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/~/_media/depts/health/environmental-health/documents/publications/blueprint-climate-change-and-health.ashx

transit's benefits by reducing emissions from its own operations and transitioning to zero emission fleets.

The Need to Integrate a Wide Range of Mobility Services

High-capacity bus and rail service must remain the backbone of a regional mobility system, but they do not make sense in all areas. Flexible services enabled by new technologies can complement the fixed-route system and bring people to transit. Metro faces challenges and opportunities related to integrating bus service with innovative services and integrating Metro's services with those of its partners.

New technologies, services, apps, and innovations—from shared e-scooters to ride-hail options and more—are changing how people and goods move. Innovations will continue to arise, and these new services offer opportunities for greater efficiency and connectivity. However, they can compete with public transit for riders and right-of-way, offer fewer well-paid and secure jobs, increase traffic congestion and GHG emissions, and be unaffordable or inaccessible for some populations.



In addition, Metro's regional transportation partners will continue to grow and change their own systems, presenting opportunities for partnerships to build an integrated regional network. Metro has long worked closely with Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, Community Transit, Kitsap Transit, Everett Transit, and Washington State Ferries. Other partners include the Washington State Department of Transportation, Puget Sound Regional Council, local and regional jurisdictions, and businesses such as Microsoft that provide direct transit service to their employees. Metro will continue partnering to build a regional mobility system that offers seamless connections.

By coordinating with partners and expanding the types of services it provides, Metro can build an integrated network that meets customers' needs, supports growth of the fixed-route network, and supports healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.

The COVID-19 Pandemic



The Puget Sound region was home to the United States' first confirmed case of COVID-19. Metro had to quickly make sweeping changes to keep riders and employees safe, adjust service, partner creatively, and act as financial stewards during the subsequent economic downturn. Moving forward, Metro will play several critical roles. Metro must provide the mobility needed for the region's recovery, address the racial and social disparities that COVID-19 exposed, and help build a strong economy and a sustainable environment.

From the beginning, the pandemic made it clear that public transportation is essential for protecting life. Even at the peak of the pandemic, Metro riders made over 100,000 trips every day. Low-income and racially diverse communities were disproportionately dependent on transit. COVID-19 worsened and illuminated disparities, with communities of color experiencing disproportionate impacts on their health and economic well-being.³⁷

Though Metro services will contribute to successful recovery from COVID-19, significant uncertainties exist. For example, the potential for increased teleworking and decreased use of office space in major urban centers may affect demand for transit, especially at peak commute times, or may alter the time of day when people travel. The potential for structural changes in the regional economy because of COVID-19 may alter travel patterns and the demand for transit.

The pandemic's future impacts on the Puget Sound region remain unknown. Metro is committed to being agile and listening to community and stakeholder input. Metro will use what it has learned to build a safer, more equitable mobility system that better adapts to change and meets customer needs.

³⁷ Public Health – Seattle & King County. (2020 May 1). *New analysis shows pronounced racial inequities among COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths* [Press release]. <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/news/2020/May/1-covid.aspx>

The Need for New, Sustainable Funding Sources

Metro's existing revenue structure relies heavily on sales tax—the source of more than 50 percent of Metro's total revenue. Sales tax is a highly volatile revenue source because it depends on economic conditions. It is also regressive, as lower-income people spend a larger portion of their incomes on sales tax than higher-income people. Metro has had to rely more on sales tax since 2000, when the Washington legislature eliminated the motor vehicle excise tax for transit.

Fares bolster Metro's ability to provide fast and frequent service throughout the county. King County has established a policy requiring a minimum Farebox Recovery Ratio – the percentage of the cost of operating the system that is recovered through fares – of 25 percent, with a target of 30 percent. Particularly as Metro supports programs that promote reduced fares for riders for whom cost is a barrier, robust fare revenue must continue to be a priority to ensure that current and future service expansions and improvements will be achievable.

Other revenue sources include federal and state grants (which can fluctuate significantly), contributions from service partners, vanpool operations, investment income, and a small portion of county property tax.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the region's projected recovery add more uncertainty to Metro's financial situation. However, one fact remains: the need for transit outlined in Metro Connects exceeds Metro's funding capacity for service today, and that gap will only increase as Metro moves towards the 2050 service network as shown in Figure 6.³⁸ This gap also exists for capital costs, as shown in Figure 7. These figures also show the current estimate of what could be funded with currently forecasted existing revenue sources—sales tax, farebox revenue, federal and state grants, and others. The figures show the gap for an interim network (targeted for delivery before Sound Transit's Ballard Link extension, and a long-range 2050 network). Metro will not be able to grow its system as planned without significant amounts of new, sustainable funding. Funding source volatility has a uniquely negative impact on service growth and capital program development.

³⁸ Metro Connects cost estimates for service and capital are from the time of transmittal and are expected to change as Metro implements Metro Connects.

Figure 6 Metro Connects Service Adds and What Could be Funded with Forecasted Revenues

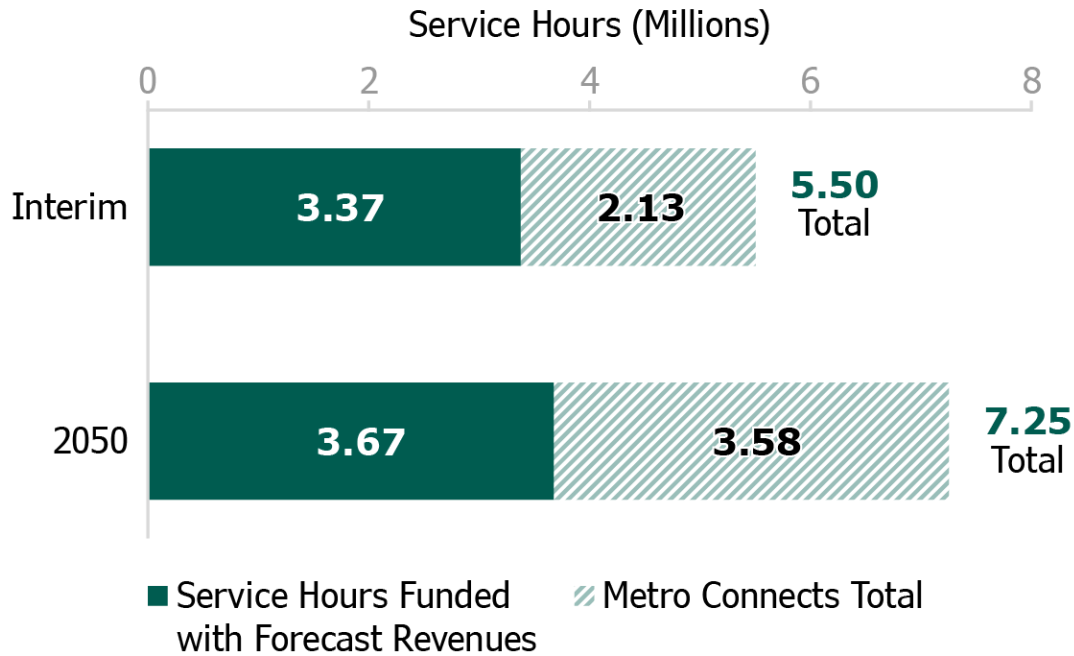
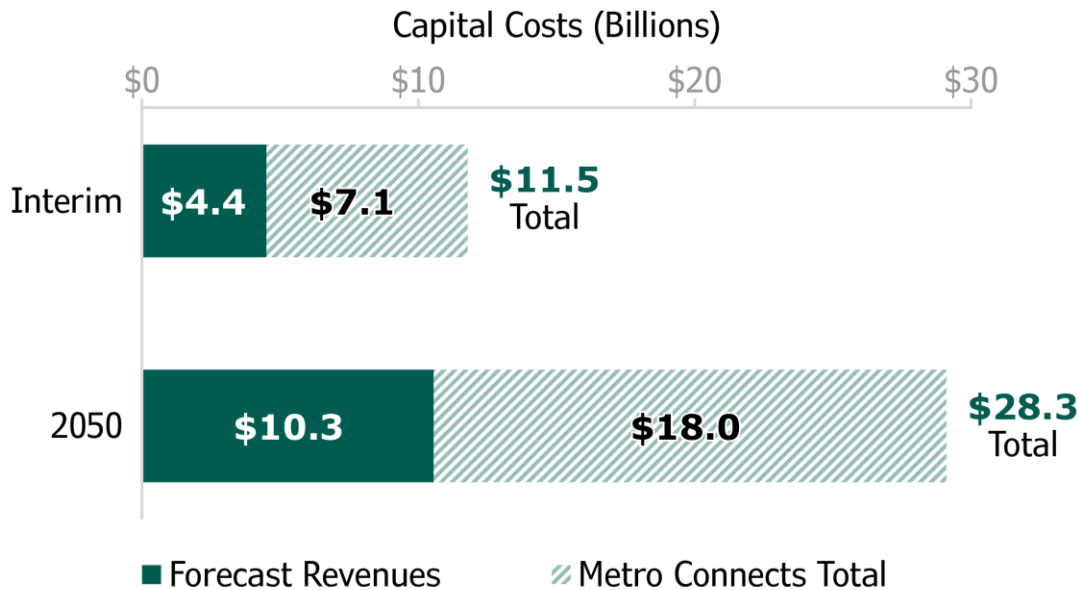


Figure 7 Metro Connects Incremental Capital Costs and What Could be Funded with Forecasted Revenues



Though the financial challenges are significant, they give Metro and King County an opportunity to work with regional partners to develop funding solutions and advocate for more sustainable, stable, and equitable funding sources. This will help Metro recover from COVID-19 and deliver the Metro Connects service network.

SECTION 1.3: STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Metro developed this Strategic Plan to define how Metro will achieve its vision and meet the challenges and pursue the opportunities ahead.

Metro's plan builds on the foundation of King County's mission, vision, guiding principles (see sidebar), and goals. These were adopted in 2010 and updated in 2015 and 2021. Metro's plan defines specific goals, objectives, and strategies for meeting the County's mobility goal: Deliver a seamless, reliable network of transportation options to get people where they need to go, when they need to get there.

Guiding principles from the King County Strategic Plan

- **Equitable and fair:** Address the root causes of inequities to provide for equal access to opportunities for all.
- **Financially sustainable:** Align funding, policy, and operational goals of King County government.
- **Regionally collaborative:** Engage with partners, stakeholders, and public and private organizations to achieve goals.
- **Quality local government:** Provide effective, efficient local governance and services to unincorporated areas.

This plan also responds to the recommendations of Metro's Equity Cabinet and two important task forces:

Equity Cabinet. In 2019, King County Council Motion 15253 directed Metro to develop a framework for the equitable and sustainable implementation of mobility. In 2019, Metro engaged with an Equity Cabinet, a group of 23 community leaders representing priority populations and riders countywide, to co-create the "Mobility Framework", as shown in Figure 8. The Mobility Framework included guiding principles and recommendations. Engagement with community advocates, elected officials, jurisdictions, employers, and other regional partners also informed its development. The King County Council adopted a summary of the Mobility Framework's recommendations in March 2020, which indicated that Metro would update its policies to align with the Mobility Framework.

The 2021 update to Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation incorporates the Mobility Framework's recommendations and guiding principles. The sentiment of the 10 guiding principles become the new goal areas, and the recommendations are included as relevant strategies. Metro engaged the Equity Cabinet, Regional Transit Committee, Metro Connects Technical Advisory Committee (jurisdictional staff), King County Council Mobility and Environment Committee, and others as it updated its Strategic Plan, Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects.

Figure 8 King County Metro Mobility Equity Cabinet



Equity Cabinet members pictured in front row, left to right: Anna Zivarts, Paulina López, Tamieko Cook, Jessica Ramirez, Linwood Robinson, Sarneshea Evans, Michelle Benetua, Sili Savusa, Chalisa Thompson (Not all Equity Cabinet members pictured)

Equity Cabinet members and Metro staff pictured in back row, left to right: Jeff Smith, De'Sean Quinn (Metro), Pah-tu Pitt, Alex Mayo, Rob Gannon (Metro), Mozart Guerrier, Tessa McClellan (Metro)

Regional Transit Task Force. King County formed the Regional Transit Task Force in March 2010 to consider a policy framework to guide service investments or—if necessary—reductions. The group included community members, elected officials, and key stakeholders who represented diverse interests and perspectives from across the county.

The task force identified short- and long-term objectives for transit service investment and formulated a service implementation policy, captured in Metro's Service Guidelines, based on those objectives. They considered transit system design factors and approved several recommendations, explained in more detail in the Strategic Plan (Technical Report A).

For the Regional Transit Task Force's full report, visit kingcounty.gov/transittaskforce.

Service Guidelines Task Force. In 2015, after Metro had used the adopted service guidelines for several years, the County Council formed a Service Guidelines Task Force to further analyze how transit service is evaluated and allocated and to consider changes in the guidelines.

The task force developed consensus recommendations that are incorporated into both this plan and Metro's Service Guidelines, summarized in Appendix B, "Service Guidelines Task Force Recommendations."

The Path Ahead

Some elements of this plan—the mission, vision, goals, and objectives—will be realized over many years. The strategies may be realized in a shorter time frame. The plan will be reviewed periodically as circumstances warrant, and plan elements may be modified, added, or substituted if needed.

Although this plan is intended to inform the biennial budget process and Metro’s longer-term business planning, Metro will need additional funding to deliver progress on and implement every strategy in the plan. Many of the goals and objectives represent ideals that Metro will continually strive to achieve, and which are likely to be included in subsequent plans.

Chapter 2: A Pathway to the Future



SECTION 2.1: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES, AND STRATEGIES

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

Goals: This Strategic Plan has 10 goals. They were developed in partnership with the King County Mobility Equity Cabinet and served as the guiding principles for the Mobility Framework, adopted by the King County Council in 2020. Though the wording of the goals varies slightly from the Mobility Framework guiding principles, the sentiment remains the same. In response to community and stakeholder input, the goals are intentionally not numbered and are in the same order as the guiding principles were described in the Mobility Framework. The themes of the goals in the 2015 version of the Strategic Plan are captured in this updated version.

Metro's Goals

- Invest upstream and where needs are greatest.
- Address the climate crisis and environmental justice.
- Innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability.
- Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe.
- Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development.
- Improve access to mobility options.
- Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services.
- Build a skilled, diverse, and well-supported, workforce that has opportunities to grow.
- Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals.
- Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement.

Metro plans to move toward the goals by implementing this plan, but the goals will also endure beyond the life of this plan.

Objectives and outcomes: Objectives describe what Metro must do to achieve the goals. Each objective has one or more associated outcomes. Objectives in the 2021 update of the Strategic Plan were informed by the Equity Cabinet's recommendations in the Mobility Framework, as well as those in the 2015 version of the Strategic Plan. Chapter 3, Plan Performance Monitoring, describes how Metro will measure progress toward the desired outcomes.

Strategies: This plan contains strategies for achieving the objectives. Although strategies may serve multiple objectives and goals, each strategy is listed with a specific objective to which it is most closely tied. Strategies were informed by the Equity Cabinet's recommendations in the Mobility Framework and many of them focus on improvements for priority populations, as is consistent with targeted universalism. Many of the themes from strategies in the 2015 Strategic Plan are included. Though Metro's performance measurement focuses on progress towards outcomes, Metro's success in carrying out some of these strategies is also captured.

Priority populations: people who are Black, Indigenous, and of color; have low or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.

SECTION 2.2: METRO'S GOALS

Goal: Invest Upstream and Where Needs are Greatest



Invest in services and improvements where there are unmet needs as experienced by priority populations, leading with racial justice. Understand the needs of these populations and create partnerships that make transportation services affordable. Measure outcomes.

Objective: Invest in and measure the outcomes of services, programs, and improvements in geographic areas, at times of day, and within priority populations where there are unmet needs. Lead with racial justice.

Metro strives to invest in and improve mobility in communities where needs are greatest, particularly as experienced by priority populations. This aligns with direction in the King County Equity and Social Justice ordinance to use equity frameworks to identify gaps and prioritize actions. ***Intended outcome: Priority populations have greater access to mobility products and services and use them to meet their needs.***



Strategy: To support access to mobility, use a targeted universalism approach and lead with racial justice, prioritizing services, programs, policies, and products that tailored to the needs of priority populations.

Targeted universalism is based in King County’s Strategic Plan for Equity and Social Justice. It means that Metro can improve prosperity for all King County residents by leading with race (the greatest determinant of social inequities), defining goals for all, identifying obstacles faced by specific priority populations, and tailoring strategies to address those barriers. Metro will build on its existing services and amenities that benefit priority populations. Two examples of how Metro uses targeted universalism include its income-based approach to discounting fares and its prioritization of equity in the Service Guidelines methodology for growing service.

Strategy: Continue complying with all legal requirements related to serving priority populations.

Metro will continue to ensure that all buses are accessible for most people with disabilities. Complementary paratransit services are available for eligible individuals with disabilities who cannot use regular bus service. Facilities are accessible in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Metro regularly reports on its services in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Strategy: Regularly evaluate the unmet needs of priority populations and how populations shift across King County.

Metro will regularly evaluate the unmet needs of priority populations in its policies, services, and programs. For example, the Service Guidelines establish social equity indicators. Metro uses these in its annual system evaluation to determine how well the current system serves areas with concentrations of priority populations.

Strategy: Prioritize service in geographic areas that have highly dense, transit-supportive development; a high proportion of priority populations; and limited midday and evening service.

Metro’s Service Guidelines will provide guidance to prioritize service investments to areas where people need to go— prioritizing access to jobs, housing and schools; to priority populations; and to centers throughout King County. Metro will follow the guidelines while also recognizing that areas of unmet need may shift as priority populations move around and travel patterns change.

Objective: Create and promote products, services, programs, and partnerships that are accessible and easy to use and understand.

Metro will continually assess its customers’ varying needs and evaluate and improve products and services. ***Intended outcome: Metro better serves customers by reducing barriers to mobility.***

Strategy: Engage with communities to understand barriers to transit ridership.

Metro will research the cost and non-cost barriers to transit facing riders and nonriders by gathering information through surveys, focus groups, multiple data sources, and program evaluations. Metro will partner with community to use this information to develop and promote programs and services.

Strategy: Develop, evaluate, and adjust products, services, and programs that address barriers and increase mobility, especially among priority populations.

In partnership with affected communities, Metro will develop, evaluate, and improve products, services, and programs that build on Metro's learnings about customer needs to address cost and non-cost barriers. Metro will ensure its fare system is equitable, understandable, and accessible to customers. Metro will prioritize reaching customers through effective marketing and communications.

Goal: Address the Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice

Metro has a lead role in advancing the county's goal to address the climate crisis as identified in King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan. Metro will partner with communities to prepare for the impacts of climate change, emphasizing those disproportionately affected.

Objective: Reduce demand for single-occupant and high-emissions transportation modes and increase transit ridership.

King County's 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan has specific targets for reducing car trips and increasing transit ridership:

- Reduce total vehicle miles traveled in passenger vehicles and light trucks by 20 percent by 2030, and by 28 percent by 2050, as compared to 2017 levels.
- Increase passenger boardings on transit services in King County, including Metro Transit and Sound Transit, to 231 million boardings by 2025, 269 million boardings by 2030, and 378 million boardings by 2040.

Increased transit service, dense land use, and equitably priced vehicle usage are critical for reducing car trips. Metro will use its investments and influence to support an approach that incorporates those strategies. ***Intended outcome: Transportation-related emissions decrease, in part because fewer people drive alone and more people ride transit.***

Strategy: Prioritize investments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including providing more frequent service and expanding service areas, as funding allows.

Metro will continue to prioritize investments in services and routes that will reduce GHG emissions while advancing equity and other goals. Investments in highly productive services, that is investments in services that carry more riders per hour, would reduce more emissions per hour than services with low productivity would. Investments that advance equity reduce emissions while mitigating the disproportionate impacts of climate change on priority populations. For these reasons, Metro emphasizes equity, productivity, and land use in its Service Guidelines.

Specifically, investments in frequent service, supported by appropriate land use, are one of the most cost-effective ways to significantly reduce GHG emissions.³⁹ Metro will increase frequent service as funding allows, giving people an incentive to take transit instead of driving. Metro will work with regional partners to seek additional funding for more frequent service, as envisioned in Metro Connects.

Achieving the reduction of regional miles traveled and other goals in the Strategic Climate Action Plan will require transit service investments beyond what is currently proposed in Metro Connects, Sound Transit 3, and Vision 2050. However, securing more funding to achieve the Metro Connects network would be a significant start.

Strategy: Support equitable policies and programs for pricing vehicle usage to disincentivize driving alone.

Equitable pricing for vehicle usage will be necessary for King County and Metro to achieve their climate goals. The Strategic Climate Action Plan commits Metro to lead and engage in a regional conversation to evaluate and implement equitable options for vehicle usage pricing and management. Actions might include expanding Metro's park-and-ride pricing program, developing King County's position on pricing tools (e.g., congestion pricing), and seeking opportunities to build incentives for pricing into transit planning and policy agreements (e.g., tolling, HOV lanes).

Objective: Help King County achieve its greenhouse gas emissions reduction and other climate goals through Metro's operations.

The overarching goals in the Strategic Climate Action Plan are to reduce total GHG emissions from government operations by 50 percent by 2025 and 80 percent by 2030, compared to a 2007 baseline. Reducing emissions through Metro's fleet, facilities, infrastructure, and operations will be crucial to achieving these goals.

Intended outcome: King County and Metro achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for government operations.

³⁹ For more information see Technical Report D and [King County Metro Mobility and Fleet Investment Strategies to Reduce GHG Emissions](#)



Strategy: Reduce vehicle emissions in all of Metro’s fleets through transition to zero-emissions, efficient operations, and other strategies.

Consistent with the Strategic Climate Action Plan, Metro has established targets to reduce fleet GHG emissions by 45 percent by 2025 and 70 percent by 2030, compared to a 2017 baseline. All fleets including bus, trolley, vanpool, ACCESS, flexible services, and water taxi are committed to reducing emissions from operations. Metro’s priority actions include: develop standard tools and resources to evaluate life-cycle cost analysis in vehicle purchasing decisions; evaluate operational business needs to maximize fleet vehicle efficiency; expand tracking of emissions from employee travel; and implement a plan for achieving fleet reduction goals.

Metro is committed to electrifying its fleets and expanding charging infrastructure. Consistent with the 2020 SCAP, Metro has established targets to transition to zero emission vehicles, including 100 percent zero emission revenue bus fleet by 2035, 50 percent of light-duty vehicles are electric by 2025 and 100 percent by 2030. The King County Council adopted goals to accelerate vehicle electrification by fleet type, specifically: ADA paratransit fleet transition to 67 percent zero emission by 2030; rideshare fleet transition to 100 percent zero emission by 2030; medium-duty vehicles transition to 50 percent zero emission by 2028 and 100 percent by 2033; and heavy-duty vehicles transition to 50 percent by 2038 and 100 percent by 2043. Achieving these ambitious goals will require technology advancements by manufacturers and industry to meet the operational and service needs of Metro’s customers and facilities.

Metro will explore options to consider expanding the use of alternative fuels when electric vehicles are not feasible, or, as an interim strategy, expand the use of biodiesel and renewable diesel. Metro will optimize use of its zero emission trolleys and has set a target to increase their use on weekends up to 90 percent by 2025.

As a leader in green fleets and electrification, Metro will work with partners to support regional, state, and federal policy to reduce vehicle emissions and ensure electric vehicles are powered by renewable energy. Metro will actively promote

policies that provide equitable access to electric vehicles and shared mobility solutions.

Strategy: Reduce energy use in Metro facilities, make investments to reduce fossil fuel use in buildings, and produce more renewable energy.

Metro will reduce normalized energy use in King County-owned facilities by at least 12.5 percent by 2025 and 17.5 percent by 2030 and reduce fossil fuel use in existing buildings by 20 percent by 2030, 50 percent by 2040, and 80 percent by 2050.

To achieve these targets, Metro will improve energy efficiency and reduce fossil fuel use in capital projects and facility operations. Metro will save energy and reduce GHG emissions through: no new natural gas installation in facilities (with limited exceptions), energy reduction action plans, energy and water resource audits, assessment of the potential to generate solar energy, a fossil fuel inventory and elimination strategy, integration of sustainable operating and maintenance practices, energy commissioning and recommissioning, tracking of embodied carbon use, and assessment of energy performance in capital projects.

Strategy: Build, maintain and operate Metro facilities consistent with the highest practices for green building and equitable development.

Actions Metro will take include:

- Implement the King County Green Building Ordinance with 100 percent of fixed-asset capital projects achieving platinum or equivalent certification.
- By 2025, divert 85 percent of construction and demolition materials in capital projects from landfills, and by 2030, achieve zero waste of resources with economic value.
- Advance King County's equity and social justice priorities in capital projects. Actions might include designing infrastructure that responds to community input and advancing economic justice opportunities.
- By 2030, achieve a net-zero GHG emissions footprint in new construction and whole-building renovation projects.
- Pursue third-party certification of net-positive and net-zero infrastructure. Possibilities include ENVISION certification of RapidRide lines, Living Building Challenge certification of at least one project, and feasibility assessment of net-zero GHG emission certification for all new buildings with more than 5,000 square feet of conditioned space.

Strategy: Minimize use of resources in operations, maximize reuse and recycling, and choose products and services with low environmental and carbon impacts.

Metro will collaborate with King County departments and share actions to standardize waste and recycling at Metro facilities. Metro will strive for responsible sourcing and end of life management for electric vehicle batteries.

Objective: Partner with communities to prepare for the impacts of climate change and support resilience in disproportionately affected communities.

Climate change has disproportionate impacts on priority populations. It multiplies threats to affordable housing, food security, and other social needs. Metro will collaborate with communities to support their resilience as they face climate change, using a climate justice lens. ***Intended outcome: Metro's efforts help King County communities become more resilient to climate change impacts.***

Strategy: Consider and reduce climate justice impacts of Metro's actions on communities disproportionately affected by climate change.

Metro will consider climate justice when investing in projects, programs, and services. Actions will include:

- Deploy zero emission buses first to communities that have experienced disproportionate burdens from air pollution.
- Ensure equity in creating and sharing information about service changes related to extreme weather events. Provide materials in multiple languages through contacts with ethnic media and trusted community sources of information to ensure linguistically diverse populations know what to expect for service during extreme weather events.
- Design bus stops that prepare for more extreme weather events, particularly at stops serving communities disproportionately impacted by those events. Consider mitigation of climate change, such as availability of shade during heat events, when designing and selecting bus shelters.

Strategy: Incorporate climate preparedness into policies, plans, processes, and practices that influence decision making and outcomes at Metro.

Metro will invest in and use the best available science and technical information to inform climate preparedness work. Actions will include:

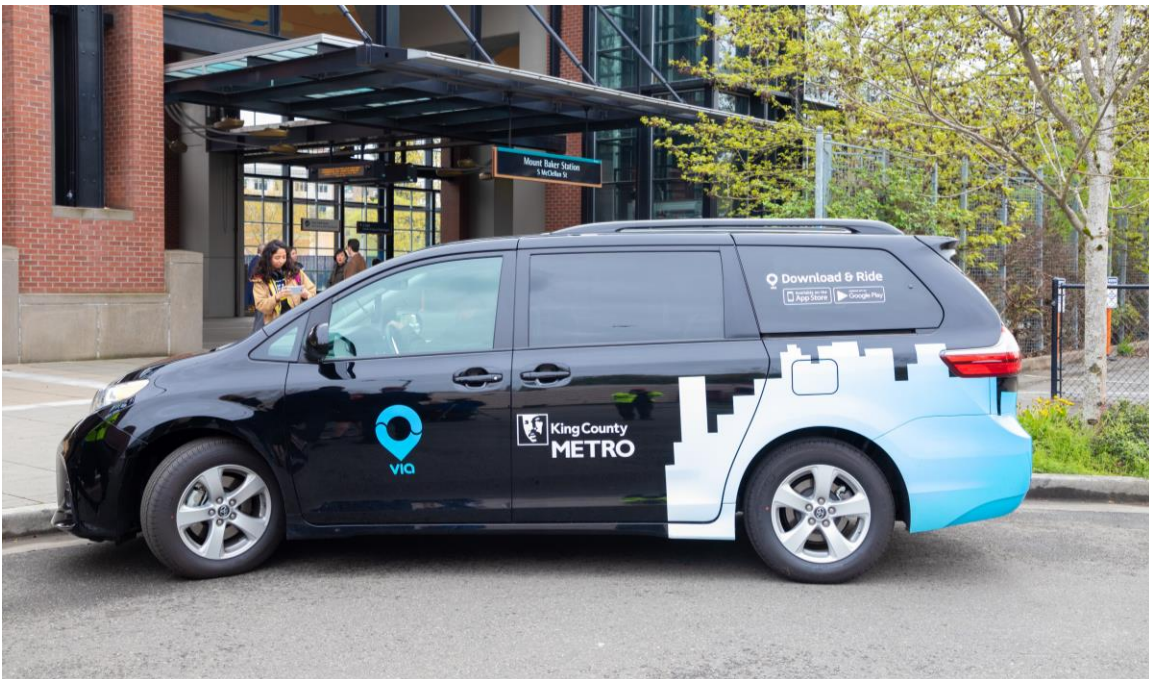
- Update operating protocols and plans for responding to wildfire smoke and other extreme events in its procedures for employees in high-risk parts of Metro's service area.
- Conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment and identify actions that can be taken to address impacts on Metro's facilities and services. This would be part of Metro's asset management program and in coordination with King County's climate preparedness specialist.

Goal: Innovate to Improve Mobility, Complement Transit, and Advance Equity and Sustainability



Implement and partner on innovative new services and products that complement and support transit and use public space equitably and efficiently. Innovations should support fair labor practices, include data-sharing and other accountability measures, and serve priority populations.

Objective: Metro and partners adopt innovative services and products that complement and support transit and make efficient, equitable use of public spaces.



Technological advances have resulted in new mobility models that offer new, convenient, and flexible ways to get around. Examples include autonomous vehicles and e-hailing. They can complement transit by giving riders first- and last-mile connections to and from transit. They can also offer cost-effective ways to serve low-density areas. Other innovations allow real-time bus arrival information, provision of incentives to choose the most sustainable mode, and seamless trip planning using multiple modes. Metro will integrate innovative mobility services with transit equitably. The result: people can get where they need to go, when they need to get there, easily and safely. ***Intended outcome: Metro pilots and implements as part of its network innovative mobility services, products, and programs that improve regional mobility, complement transit, and advance safety, equity, and sustainability.***

Strategy: Develop criteria for innovative mobility pilot projects that address community needs, help deliver key outcomes, and align with policy goals.

Criteria should align with Metro’s Mobility Framework. For example, innovative services and programs should:

- Address the needs of priority populations, parents and guardians, youth, and others with unique travel needs.
- Engage with community stakeholders early in the development of pilots.
- Complement and bring people to the transit system.
- Provide Metro with data for improved planning, operations, and integration.

Strategy: Use guidance in Metro’s Service Guidelines to design, work with community and partners, and evaluate pilot programs.

Metro will follow guidance in its Service Guidelines to plan and evaluate service programs and potentially transition them into permanent services. An example is pilots for on-demand, flexible service. The Service Guidelines create a prioritization methodology and provide a framework for evaluating pilots based on productivity, efficiency, and equity.

Strategy: Enhance communications and outreach to raise awareness about innovations.

Metro will involve communities early in planning, designing, and evaluating pilots and service investments. This will ensure projects support equity goals and address the needs of priority populations. Metro will develop marketing and communications campaigns that promote awareness of the services, especially among priority populations. Resources will be provided for campaigns to build ridership.

Strategy: Support jurisdictions in developing innovation partnerships that center around Metro’s values.

If desired by partners, Metro will work with jurisdictions to develop a framework for engaging with innovative mobility services. The framework could include values of safety, equity, and sustainability that private provider partners should demonstrate. It could also include consistent regulations, such as guidelines for allocating space and right-of-way to meet pedestrian and transit needs and discourage single-occupant vehicles. The framework could also include opportunities to connect with private providers and other resources.

Objective: Innovative services follow fair labor practices, share data or other accountability measures, and serve priority populations.

As a public agency, Metro will ensure that its partnerships with private providers align with its values and help build an integrated mobility system. ***Intended outcome: Private mobility services follow guidelines that enhance equity, sustainability, and access to the transit system.***

Strategy: Develop guidelines and invest in innovative solutions that promote private providers to offer services and products that align with Metro’s values, labor agreements, and ensure accessibility for people with disabilities.

Metro will develop programs and services that align with its values. Attributes like high labor standards, wheelchair-accessible vehicles, zero emissions fleet, information in multiple languages, and high safety standards will be top priorities. Metro should require its private partners to share its values during contracting, designing, and implementing mobility services. For example, requests for proposals for new mobility services should encourage advancing social equity and addressing climate change.

Strategy: Help partners develop mechanisms for customers to plan and pay for integrated transportation services, including mechanisms that people without bank accounts or smartphones can use.

Metro will work with regional and private partners to develop planning and payment mechanisms that are integrated, accessible, and work across platforms and modes. Such products should be accessible for priority populations. Products should leverage existing products and applications commonly used by customers. Although Metro might not create or manage such products, it will provide quality control to ensure their usability, accessibility, and alignment with Metro’s core values.

Goal: Keep Passengers, Employees, and Communities Safe



Provide a safe and secure transportation experience. Partner with communities and stakeholders to create safety and enforcement systems that are equitable, anti-racist, and culturally appropriate.

Objective: Coordinate safety and enforcement programs in ways that are equitable, culturally appropriate, and focused on the customer experience.

Metro’s approach to safety and enforcement should be equitable and ensure all community members, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances, perceive it as such. ***Intended outcomes:***

- ***Community members perceive and experience safety, security, and fare enforcement as fair and equitable.***
- ***Metro’s systems of safety and enforcement are anti-racist and produce equitable outcomes.***

Strategy: Partner to reimagine Metro’s approach to transit police, security functions, and fare enforcement to center equity, the customer experience, and safety.

Metro will work with employees, stakeholders, and partners to reimagine and restructure safety and security functions. These will include Metro Transit Police (MTP), security, and fare enforcement. The engagement process will share power with employees and Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. They will re-envision the right and just role of security, fare enforcement, and the MTP. This process might also result in recommendations for reinvesting resources. The resources could be used in partnerships with service providers and partners that are equipped to address problems in the transit system that affect customers’ perceived sense of safety and security.

Strategy: With community, co-create a universal definition of safety with targeted approaches to create safety for priority populations

Metro will work with employees, partners, and customers to co-define the experience and expectation of safety on Metro services, at or near Metro services. This definition will set a new safety standard that is shared amongst internal and external stakeholders. The experience of priority population is central to the creation of this definition to eliminate harm for Metro employees and customers.

Objective: Provide a safe and secure experience for passengers, communities, and Metro employees.

Metro protects the physical and emotional safety and security of customers, employees, and facilities in various ways. These include planning, policing, facility design, operational practices, safety training, and collaboration with local jurisdictions, community partners, and other agencies on safety-related matters.

Intended outcomes:

- ***Customers feel Metro’s services and facilities are safe, welcoming, and comfortable.***
- ***Employees contribute to and experience a safe working environment.***

Strategy: Promote safety and security equitably in operations and facilities.

Metro will educate its employees to improve the safety and security of the public transportation system and Metro’s facilities. Operator training will be a major focus of this effort. Metro will use principles of safe design, such as crime prevention through environmental design, to maximize the safety of its facilities. Metro will also follow its Accident Prevention Program Plan and System Security Plan to maintain and improve the safety and security of its vehicles and facilities.



Strategy: Provide safety-enhancing features that are accessible and responsive to community input on buses, at transit stops, and at transfer locations.

These features will promote a feeling of physical and emotional safety, improving the customer experience, and helping increase transit usage. Amenities could include lighting, shelters, seating, accessible signage (including real-time information signs), informational campaigns, and setback from traffic lanes. Such amenities will focus on areas with higher proportions of priority populations and will promote greater safety for women and LGBTQIA+⁴⁰ people. Metro's transit stops and transfer points will be designed and located to promote safety.

Metro will aim to engage communities, especially priority populations, to understand their needs when making improvements. Metro will conduct ongoing safety reviews to assess environmental health and potential safety disparities.

Strategy: Continue exploring technologies that provide safe and convenient ways for passengers to communicate safety information or concerns.

Metro will continue exploring texting options, smart phone apps, and other technologies that enable passengers to communicate directly with Metro on safety

⁴⁰ A brief explanation of the acronym LGBTQIA+: LGBT means lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. The Q can mean either questioning, uncertainty about sexual orientations, or queer. The I stands for intersex, a term describing people whose anatomy can't be classified as typically male or female. The A represents those who identify as asexual, are agender, or identify as allies of the LGBT community. The plus sign represents those who do not identify with one of the letters in the acronym (for example, those who identify as pansexual or gender-fluid).

issues. If possible, such technology should integrate with other technologies that improve the customer experience, such as real-time transit information or options to purchase transit fare.

Objective: Be prepared to respond to emergencies and support community resilience in coordination with partners and the public.

Metro prepares for all hazards and emergencies that result in major changes or interruptions in transit service. These include adverse weather events, acts of violence or civil unrest, major infrastructure emergencies, and public health crises. Metro also works with and supports partners in responding to such events.

Intended outcome: Metro is prepared to respond to, mitigate, and recover from hazards and emergencies in an effective, equitable, coordinated way.

Strategy: Review transit emergency plans to ensure Metro is prepared to provide safe and ongoing transportation during all hazards or crises.

Metro will prepare to respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters. It will develop all-hazards and incident or hazard-specific plans, provide crisis management training, and develop and implement a progressive exercise program in accordance with guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Administration Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program. To date, Metro has developed two major plans that support the continuity of operations during crises or incidents that result in major service interruptions. The plans address civil unrest, acts of violence/terrorism, mass casualty accidents, pandemics or other public health crises, or adverse weather (e.g., snow, ice, windstorms, or flooding).

Metro regularly collaborates with partner and stakeholder agencies at the local, county, state, and federal level regarding exercises and real-world incidents. As Metro continues to understand the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change, it will identify opportunities to mitigate, minimize, and improve its resilience to these impacts. Metro will follow established King County code and guidance in its service guidelines when emergencies necessitate service changes.

Metro's **All Hazards Response Plan (AHRP)** provides the framework for an effective, efficient, and coordinated response to crisis incidents both within Metro and when working with other agencies. The AHRP manages resources while mitigating risks to responders and ensuring the safety of all Metro personnel and customers possible.

The **Adverse Weather Plan** matches service delivery to the severity of the incident, outlines procedures for managing the consequences and impacts of a severe weather incident, and outlines procedures for internal and external communications.

Goal: Support Thriving, Equitable, Transit-Oriented Communities that Foster Economic Development



Encourage vibrant, economically thriving, sustainable, mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented communities. Minimize displacement, increase affordable housing options in urban areas, and advocate for community-centered development.



Objective: Support healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.

Metro will work with partners to provide a mobility system that advances equity, addresses the climate crisis, and supports economic vitality and the region's vision and strategy for growth. Metro collaborates with jurisdictions and agencies to develop strategies and make investments to make communities more livable, inclusive, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-supportive. Strategies include encouraging transit-supportive land use and partnering with jurisdictions, other agencies, and the private sector to spur equitable transit-oriented development.

Intended outcome: Investments support equitable economic development and vibrant, sustainable, mixed-use, and mixed-income transit-oriented communities.

Strategy: Support Metro's equitable transit-oriented communities' policy, using Metro's authority and influence as a transit provider and property owner.

On property it owns, Metro will strive to realize equitable transit-oriented communities when appropriate. In communities where Metro provides service but does not own property, Metro should be an advocate, partner, and resource for strengthening transit-oriented communities.

Metro will employ strategies to advance equity in transit communities, increase mobility, advance affordability, consider land-use readiness and commitment to equitable development, and advance sustainability measures.

Metro will strive to support, create, and stabilize vibrant, transit-oriented communities in ways that distribute benefits and impacts equitably. For example, Metro will engage directly affected communities in the planning processes that guide transit-oriented development projects and issues of ownership and site control. It will consider strategies that provide community-driven outcomes and minimize displacement.

Strategy: Support jurisdictions and planning organizations in implementing the regional growth strategy that envisions an integrated transportation system linking cites and centers.

Metro's Strategic Plan and Metro Connects, King County's 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan goal for new construction within the Urban Growth Boundary, and King County's Countywide Planning Policies are all in alignment with PSRC's VISION 2050 regional growth strategy. This strategy emphasizes the need for an integrated, multimodal transportation system that links major cities and centers. It focuses on locating growth near current and future high-capacity transit facilities.

Metro plays an important role in the growth strategy. It offers travel options that connect people to areas of concentrated activity and encourages jurisdictions to take transit-supportive actions like increased zoning capacity.

VISION 2050 incorporates the Metro Connects service network, and the 2021 Metro Connects update includes a revised service network that aligns with VISION 2050 projections. Metro will strive to achieve VISION 2050 by delivering on its equitable transit-oriented communities' policy, and by connecting people to job centers and other opportunities across the county through the Metro Connects network. Metro will also follow King County's Countywide Planning Policies.

VISION 2050

By 2050, the Puget Sound region's population will likely reach 5.8 million people and 3.4 million jobs⁴¹. The Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 provides a framework for long-range transportation planning and sets this goal:

The region has a sustainable, equitable, affordable, safe, and efficient multimodal transportation system, with specific emphasis on an integrated regional transit network that supports the Regional Growth Strategy and promotes vitality of the economy, environment, and public health.

Transportation 2050

The Puget Sound Regional Council is currently extending its Regional Transportation Plan from 2040 to 2050. It will remain an action plan for transportation in the central Puget Sound region and respond to the priorities and growth strategy identified in VISION 2050. PSRC is scheduled to adopt the updated Regional Transportation Plan in 2022.

King County Countywide Planning Policies

The Countywide Planning Policies address growth management issues in King County. They provide a countywide vision and serve as a framework for each jurisdiction to develop its own comprehensive plan, which must be consistent with the overall vision for the future of King County. King County and the local jurisdictions are currently updating the Countywide Planning Policies to reflect VISION 2050. The update is scheduled to be adopted and ratified in late 2021.

Strategy: Support equitable economic development and improved regional mobility through Metro's mobility services, use of transportation infrastructure, and partnerships.

Metro will continue supporting equitable economic development by serving centers and other areas of concentrated activity and by focusing on strategies to connect people—especially priority populations—to jobs. Metro will use transportation infrastructure efficiently, effectively, and equitably.

Use of transit can increase the efficiency of King County's transportation infrastructure. By carrying more people in fewer vehicles, transit reduces the need for parking spaces at major employment centers and other activity hubs, keeping development costs down. Transit also moves more people on existing roadways, reducing the need for expansion.

Metro will also work with partners to improve public transportation and increase transit use. Partners might include local jurisdictions, other agencies, employers, institutions, property owners, building managers, and community-based organizations. Partnerships can range from implementation of transit-supportive land use policies to speed and reliability improvements to direct funding of services. Other efforts include parking management, fare media programs, outreach, incentives, work-option programs, such as telework, and community programs, such as In Motion. By partnering with employers to serve diverse employment markets, Metro can leverage private investment to improve access to and use of mobility services,

⁴¹ Puget Sound Regional Council, VISION 2050. <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/vision-2050-plan.pdf>

advance equity by serving lower-income and essential employees, and reduce GHG emissions by expanding alternatives to driving alone.

The Service Guidelines and Metro Connects contain more information and guidance about service, capital, and other partnership opportunities.

Strategy: Encourage transit-supportive land use.

Metro will continue exploring ways to support and encourage jurisdictions to implement transit-supportive land uses, especially those that support more frequent transit service. The Service Guidelines include land use as a factor in the methodology for service growth. They also outline which types of land uses support different transit service levels.

Objective: Partner with local jurisdictions and other organizations to minimize displacement and increase affordable housing in urban areas near transit.

As the region grows and housing becomes more expensive, displacement can result in the suburbanization of poverty. Suburban land use can complicate Metro's efforts to provide service that connects people to opportunities. Additionally, as transit service improves, communities often become more desirable and expensive, creating a challenging cycle. Affordable, dense, mixed-use zoning near high-capacity transit that minimizes displacement can advance equity and sustainability goals. ***Intended outcome: The amount and types of affordable housing near frequent transit increase.***

Strategy: Enable development of affordable housing on suitable Metro-owned property.

Affordable housing is a critical piece of transit-oriented developments that include residences. Metro will work with developers to include affordable housing on its property when feasible, supporting its equitable transit-oriented communities' policy.

Strategy: Advocate for and support jurisdictions in adopting policies and land uses to minimize displacement near transit.

Metro will encourage jurisdictions to adopt policies to minimize displacement and encourage affordable housing near transit. Examples include land-use policies that include dense, affordable development and low parking ratios near frequent transit service and multimodal access networks. Such policies leverage the transit network and support transit-oriented communities. When Metro works with jurisdictions to develop new policies, deep, collaborative engagement with priority populations should be central to these efforts.

Goal: Improve Access to Mobility Options

Partner with jurisdictions and community organizations to ensure that public spaces are used



equitably and efficiently. Make bike lanes, sidewalks, and other mobility pathways a priority. Increase public access to and awareness of transportation choices, including striving to ensure the cost of transit is not a barrier to use. Strategies should emphasize priority populations including people with disabilities.

Objective: Support access to mobility in public spaces and with private partners.

Safe, equitable, sustainable, and efficient use of public space will be crucial to making the regional mobility system work. Metro encourages cities and others to provide equitable access to transit and mobility services in public spaces. Examples are park-and-rides, streets, bike lanes, sidewalks, and curbs. ***Intended outcome: Riders, especially priority populations including people with disabilities, have sustained and easy access to mobility services through multiple modes and throughout the day.***

Strategy: Develop station area guidelines that prioritize passenger access and support access for people with disabilities and discourage single-occupant vehicle access at transit stops and stations.

Metro will work with public and private partners to promote access to transit via all modes. These modes include walking, bicycling, rolling, taking connecting transit or paratransit services, or driving to a pick-up/drop-off point or park-and-ride location. Tactics include facility design and infrastructure investments to enhance safety, security, and connectivity. Metro envisions that private partners will continue to make investments in benches, shelters, or awnings for customers to wait comfortably for their ride or provide customer information on private property.



Reducing single-occupant vehicle travel is crucial to achieving King County’s goals for reducing GHG emissions. Stations and mobility hubs should prioritize access to pedestrian, biking, wheelchairs, and mobility aids, and other low- or no-emission mobility modes. Single-occupant vehicle access will be discouraged. Metro will encourage local jurisdictions and partner transit agencies to prioritize passenger access at stations they own or operate.

Strategy: Partner with local jurisdictions to develop plans for transit corridors that provide safe opportunities to walk, roll, or bike safely to transit connections.

Metro will partner with local jurisdictions to improve accessibility in public right-of-way. This includes ensuring that transit stops and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities, including people who use mobility aids. One potential project is the addition of traffic-calming improvements at intersections so people can reach transit stops safely in daylight and at night. Another is ongoing maintenance of sidewalks and bike infrastructure.

Metro will evaluate transit access regularly, considering the needs of priority populations and others. In addition to improving accessibility for Metro-designed facilities, Metro will encourage improvements for facilities designed by others. Metro will engage communities—especially priority populations—in such efforts and encourage partners to do the same.

Strategy: Use traditional, innovative, and emerging mobility modes to connect people to services.

Metro will build on its current methods of increasing transit access and usage. An example includes providing more ticket vending machines. Metro will also consider using innovative and emerging mobility modes, such as bike- or scooter-share, to connect people to bus and water taxi services.

Objective: Increase awareness, use, and accessibility of mobility options, emphasizing priority populations.

By improving communications about mobility options—especially among priority populations—Metro can increase transit ridership, reduce drive-alone trips, and advance safety, equity, and sustainability outcomes. ***Intended outcome: Community members, especially priority populations, know what mobility services are available and use them.***

Strategy: Increase communications about Metro’s services, products, and programs so that people, especially priority populations, know about and how to use them.

Metro will increase its communications about mobility options, using both traditional and new approaches. Priority populations will be an important target audience. One way to reach them will be to partner with community-driven organizations to strengthen communications with their members. Metro will continue using a variety of information channels: printed materials, the Metro website, social media, signs on

buses, and others. Metro will explore innovative ways to reach more riders—new and existing.

Strategy: Ensure marketing campaigns, signs, wayfinding, and other communications are culturally appropriate, provided in multiple languages and formats, accessible to community members, provided in coordination with community-based organizations, and evaluated and upgraded regularly.

To ensure that information in multiple languages will be accessible, it will be trans-created rather than translated. That means Metro will partner with community-based organizations, listening and learning from community members how to improve communications and reach diverse communities throughout King County. Metro will test communications and marketing programs with community members before launch and evaluate them afterward.

Strategy: Ensure customer-facing information systems and services are easy to use, accurate, and integrated.

Metro offers several customer-facing information systems, such as its website, Trip Planner, the ORCA system, and mobile ticketing. These should be easy to use, accessible to priority populations, accurate, and integrated with partners. Metro will strive to integrate information and fare payment systems, including those provided by third parties, and will continually review and improve customer information.

Strategy: Employ an income-based approach to Metro’s fare structure, ensuring discounts are provided to those who cannot afford to pay full fare.

Metro supports a regional income-based approach to fares for those in need of a financial subsidy. Metro offers reduced fares for people with financial need through the ORCA LIFT program. Youth, seniors, and people with disabilities also pay a reduced fare. Targeting fare discounts to riders in financial need allows Metro to continue to provide frequent and reliable service throughout the county. Coordinating with partner transit agencies helps lower barriers and ensure smooth interagency transfers for riders throughout the region.

Objective: Provide equitable access to parking and other assets that connect people to transit.

Metro will actively manage parking and other assets to ensure priority populations can have access to them, resulting in connections to transit, decreased GHG emissions, and healthier communities. ***Intended outcome: Parking and other assets that connect people to transit are provided and managed equitably.***

Strategy: Actively manage parking to maximize capacity for transit riders and ensure equitable access for priority populations and off-peak travelers.

As more people use transit, it becomes harder for them to find spaces at many of Metro’s park-and-rides. This is especially true for people who travel off-peak when park-and-rides are often full. To ensure equitable access to its parking lots, Metro

will actively manage parking. Strategies include permit parking, paid parking, and spaces dedicated for short-term parking.

Strategy: Provide parking programs that are nimble, cost-effective, and in accord with Metro Connects.

Metro will apply a range of strategies to provide parking when and where it is needed. Metro Connects envisions substantial growth in the mobility system. Increasing access to parking will be crucial. Nimble and cost-effective parking programs include leased parking and shared parking delivered by transit-oriented development or other partnerships.

Strategy: Integrate parking and other access infrastructure and options with transportation demand management technologies, tools, and incentives.

Transportation demand management (TDM) technologies, campaigns, and products can increase access to transit for priority populations. Thoughtfully designed incentives spread demand beyond peak travel periods and encourage travelers to make more sustainable mobility choices. Integration of access programs and TDM maximizes Metro's ability to deliver mobility to people.

Goal: Provide Fast, Reliable, and Integrated Mobility Services



Partner with other transportation providers to grow an integrated regional network of traditional and innovative mobility services that move people quickly and reliably and increase ridership. Support jurisdictions in making transit-supportive improvements.

Objective: Grow a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network of traditional and new mobility services that is safe, equitable, and sustainable

This regional mobility network will contribute to healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment. Expansion of Metro's services and innovation in how customers access and use services will help accommodate the region's population and job growth and serve new transit markets.

Intended outcomes:

- ***Customers can rely on mobility services to get them where they want to go, when they want to go.***
- ***Customers can easily connect between mobility services, including those offered by Metro and other transportation providers.***

Strategy: Provide a range of mobility services that enable seamless connections among modes and destinations.

Bus service and high-capacity light rail will remain the backbone of the regional mobility system. Metro will continue providing several levels of service, defined in its

Service Guidelines: RapidRide, very frequent, peak frequent, local, hourly, and peak. Metro will use its Service Guidelines and Metro Connects to help identify which level will be appropriate for transit routes throughout King County. Other services that connect people to the high-capacity system, such as flexible services, or complement the system, such as Access, CAT, water taxis, and vanpools, will be integrated into the overall network. Metro will continue to innovate on these services to improve their quality and convenience for customers.

Metro will continue to improve services including Access and CAT and moving towards Access same-day scheduling to allow people with disabilities to access service more seamlessly.

Metro will invest in mobility services and facilities where needs are greatest and ridership potential is high. Metro will encourage communities to leverage transit investments with supportive development.

Metro will continue to collaborate with other agencies and organizations to build the network. Integration with Sound Transit's Link network and other partner services will be a priority. When Sound Transit introduces new services, Metro will explore opportunities to restructure bus routes, improve service integration, enhance service, and increase efficiency. The Service Guidelines outline Metro's goals for restructures, including a focus on creating networks that serve customers better than existing service. As outlined in the Service Guidelines, these changes might free up resources to invest in routes with unmet service needs within the project area or across King County.



Metro revises service twice a year. Metro generally conducts a large public outreach and engagement process when considering significant service changes. The resulting changes are subject to approval by the King County Council. Minor changes, as defined by the King County Code, may be made administratively.

Metro will follow its Service Guidelines when evaluating service, restructuring, and investing in fixed-route and flexible services and will produce an annual System Evaluation report. Metro may also partner with jurisdictions, employers, and others on service investments, following guidance in the Service Guidelines and Metro Connects.

Strategy: Invest in flexible services that address community-identified needs and connect people to high-capacity transit.

Increasing fixed-route transit ridership is one of the most effective ways Metro can reduce GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled. However, some parts of King County do not have the infrastructure, population density, or land use to support traditional bus service—even at an hourly or peak-only level. In those cases, Metro will work with communities and local partners to develop flexible services that meet the needs of communities, especially priority populations, and connect people to the high-capacity transit system. Metro will follow the Service Guidelines as it plans, prioritizes, and evaluates pilot and permanent flexible services.

Flexible service options include community vans, on-demand services, and other innovative ways to provide mobility responsive to community needs. They will connect King County residents to where they need to go (including from and within rural communities), increase access to jobs and physical community assets, seed emerging markets, and provide time-of-day service or geographic coverage where gaps exist within the fixed-route transit system.

Flexible services will respond directly to mobility needs identified by the community and will focus on priority populations. When possible, Metro will co-create solutions with communities and partners such as municipalities, nonprofits, community-based organizations, or businesses. Metro will work to enhance mobility options for residents while optimizing finite transit dollars.

Strategy: Deliver mobility services that connect people to jobs and job centers, opportunities, and activities of daily living. Improve service during non-peak periods.

Metro will connect people to opportunities by moving workers to and from job centers and by providing access to destinations that are essential to countywide economic prosperity. The Service Guidelines describe service restructures as a tool to adjust service to meet changing needs.

Mobility services must do more than get people to work if Metro is to advance equity and address climate change. They should enable travel throughout King County to medical facilities, employment, schools, restaurants, social gatherings, and other opportunities. To do this, Metro will improve services in non-peak periods and work toward the all-day network envisioned in Metro Connects. Investing where needs are greatest will help people move across King County.

Strategy: Be flexible and responsive to changes in demand for service and community engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of Metro being adaptable to changes in the current context and in customer demand. Metro will respond to changes in demand and allow community engagement—especially with priority populations—to drive decision-making. The Service Guidelines and Metro Connects provide a solid foundation for decision-making while allowing Metro to make short-term changes and respond to emerging needs. Metro will use feedback from the Transit Advisory Committee, Access Paratransit Advisory Committee, Mobility

Boards, Equity Cabinet, and other community engagement to guide decisions over time.

Objective: Make improvements to enhance transit speed and reliability, and support jurisdictions in doing so.

Transit speed and reliability matters to customers. By keeping buses moving through congestion and on schedule, Metro can deliver more service and provide an alternative to sitting in traffic. Metro will monitor its service performance, make improvements to enhance speed and reliability, and support jurisdictions in doing the same. ***Intended outcome: Transit speed and reliability are improved.***

Strategy: Improve speed and reliability consistent with Metro Connects.

Metro Connects envisions working with local jurisdictions and agencies to build a regional mobility network that includes more frequent and reliable transit service throughout the day and week. Metro will act independently and in coordination with jurisdictions to manage transit pathways, evaluate the on-time performance of its services, and make improvements that enhance speed and reliability, help maintain headways between buses, and reduce overcrowding and delays.

Enhancements can be implemented on a corridor or spot basis. They could include traffic signal coordination, transit signal priority, bus lanes, queue bypass, safety improvements, and consolidation of stops. Metro will also consider internal strategies like all-door boarding, cashless payment, and actively managed headways. All improvements will be consistent with Metro Connects.

Strategy: Encourage and support jurisdictions in making improvements in and near the right-of way that increase transit speed and reliability.

Jurisdictions play a large role in improving transit speed and reliability. Metro will support them in taking actions to support transit. Metro will explore incentives for increasing speed and reliability, recognizing that jurisdictions have varying resources and that incentives should address historic inequities.

Strategy: Continue advocating for policies that support fast, reliable, affordable, and integrated transit.

Metro will advocate for policies at all levels of government that support fast, reliable, affordable, and integrated transit.

Strategy: Develop right-of-way guidelines that prioritize transit and enable people to walk, roll, or bike to transit.

Transit works best when it moves quickly and reliably and is easily accessible. Although Metro does not control right-of-way in city streets, it will develop guidelines to inform jurisdictions how right-of-way can best support and provide access to transit. Metro will also work with jurisdictions to make right-of-way improvements that support better regional mobility.

Goal: Build a Skilled, Diverse, Well-Supported Workforce that has Growth Opportunities



Collaborate with partners to support a high quality of life for employees. Offer high-skill and high-wage careers, training, and apprenticeships. Recruit and hire from priority populations facing the greatest barriers to transit and employment. Engage the workforce in being innovative and creating new pathways to living-wage, green jobs.

Objective: Partner with employees, unions, contractors, and communities to offer high-skill, high-wage careers that support a high quality of life.

As a major employer in an increasingly expensive region and competitive job market, Metro strives to treat its employees in a way that lives up to its values and compels partners to do the same. This is especially important as innovations in mobility result in different workforce needs and opportunities. **Intended outcome: Public and private mobility services offer high-skill, living-wage jobs.**

Strategy: Utilize equitable employment practices and encourage partners to do the same.

Creating a culture of belonging at Metro means respect, safety, and accountability are priority. Metro will look beyond traditional recruitment strategies to shift culture to one that builds space for racial, gender, and other diverse communities to experience belonging at Metro. Culture will shift to focus on the value of the people at Metro. Metro's ability to embrace anti-racist principles will support retention, promote leadership development, and make Metro a place people want to work. Metro will encourage its partners to do the same by centering equity considerations whenever Metro contracts for private-sector transportation providers or other services.



Strategy: Help employees benefit from the opportunities offered by new mobility technologies.

Mobility options are changing. New technologies will likely mean new workforce opportunities. Metro will plan to meet current and future workforce needs and develop Metro's workforce in response to growth, system changes, and technological

innovations. Metro will partner with unions, private mobility providers, and others to ensure Metro’s employees have the training and assistance they need to benefit from new job opportunities. This will be especially important as Metro adopts “greener” services and practices and as jobs require more knowledge of renewable and sustainable technologies and strategies.

Strategy: Implement organizational health framework and develop measures.

Metro will promote an organization health strategy that focuses on shifting culture to create the conditions for employees from the most oppressed communities to thrive. Leaders must slow down and take stock of what is needed for Metro to truly recover post pandemic and create conditions that support collective health of the organization. Metro will work in collaboration with the Office of Equity and Social Justice to develop measures that reflect centering the wellbeing and belonging of Metro employees.

Objective: Use innovation and new pathways to jobs to attract, recruit, and retain quality employees.

Metro employs thousands of individuals in management, maintenance, and operations. Metro’s employees are its greatest asset. Metro’s products and services reflect the employees who deliver them. To maintain excellent services, Metro will recruit quality and committed employees, especially from priority populations, and create a positive work environment. Metro prides itself as being a great place to work and a fair and just employer that values a diverse and skilled workforce.

Intended outcomes:

- ***Metro is an employer of choice, attracting and retaining highly skilled employees, especially from priority populations.***
- ***Metro employees, especially priority populations, have equitable, consistent access to opportunities for professional development and career advancement.***

Strategy: Cultivate a diverse, highly skilled applicant pool. Hire and onboard in ways that bring the best talent and promote equity and transparency.

Metro will make itself a prominent employer through local and national recruiting. It will focus on partnering with local universities and community colleges, community-based organizations, professional organizations, and others to recruit priority populations. Networking and partnerships with such organizations will help develop a highly skilled applicant pool.

Metro constantly seeks to improve its hiring and recruitment process. It strives to ensure the process is open, competitive, transparent, and based on qualifications. Metro will continue to promote diversity in hiring and to employ best practices to ensure an equitable and transparent process. Metro will follow best practices, including: implement standard processes to decrease bias; ensure that job advertisements are non-biased and include attributes like alternatives to formal

education requirements and a preference for multilingual abilities; and require more than one subject matter expert to review resumes.

Strategy: Develop a consistent, equitable approach for supporting professional development.

As Metro grows toward the Metro Connects vision, equitable development of the workforce will be essential. People leadership and technical expertise will be a must. Metro will offer ongoing training, education, and opportunities for career advancement, focused on ensuring frontline employees and employees from priority populations can access those opportunities. For example, Metro has administered apprenticeship programs that offer career pathways for eligible frontline employees to become mechanics, building operating engineers, and rail electrical workers. Individuals can also try other roles throughout Metro by pursuing Special Duty Assignments (SDAs), career-service roles, or other opportunities.

Training helps employees learn new skills, develop existing skills, and grow professionally. Metro will continue to offer employees training resources through national transit organizations, county agencies, and other professional development groups. A focus of Metro's training will be operators, as they interact most directly with customers. Metro will create, resource, and implement a strategy to provide required equity and social justice training for all employees.

Strategy: Support employees in maximizing their potential through equitable performance management.

Metro will develop a work environment where employees are recognized for outstanding performance, excellent customer service, innovation, and strategic thinking. Metro will ensure equity in performance management by supporting employees within priority populations and by addressing discrepancies between performance management across employee demographics.

Metro management will continue to encourage a high level of collaboration with its employees, maintain effective labor relations, and identify situations for improvement and for employee advancement. Metro recognizes that the next generation of leaders is likely within the organization and will identify and develop those leaders. Metro managers will hold themselves and their employees accountable for delivering on Metro's values.

Strategy: Support employees' health and well-being.

Metro cares about its employees and supports their health and well-being. Metro knows that a healthy workforce supports more effective service delivery. It demonstrates this by developing a culture that increasingly supports work-life balance. King County's health and well-being programs, like "Balanced You," will help meet employee needs and contribute to work-life balance. Metro recognizes that priority populations may face other challenges in the workplace because of systems historically built on racism and oppression. Metro celebrates the diversity of its employees and works to become an anti-racist organization.

Objective: Recruit and hire from populations facing the greatest barriers to transit employment.

Metro's employees should reflect the populations it serves. Metro will focus recruitment efforts on priority populations and others who may have faced barriers to mobility jobs. ***Intended outcome: Metro employees represent the diversity of King County's population.***

Strategy: Use targeted approaches and partnerships to recruit priority populations for Metro jobs.

Metro will analyze barriers that may have kept priority populations from seeking or securing employment at Metro and will develop targeted approaches to overcome those barriers. Innovative recruitment methods might include tailoring job advertisements to specific community groups or using future transportation innovations to attract potential employees. Metro will evaluate the effectiveness of its employment marketing using a pro-equity perspective.

Strategy: Leverage and partner with other King County departments and programs to hire employees from diverse backgrounds.

Metro is developing an equitable and green workforce that represents the diversity of local communities—especially priority populations. King County departments and programs have many connections with potential employees who have diverse skills, knowledge, and experiences. Approaches to recruiting them might include targeted advertising, workforce development, and creation of intentional pathways for priority populations to attain opportunities. Metro could also work with programs such as the Veterans Fellow Program, the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, and others that create opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Strategy: Partner with state agencies, colleges, and community-based organizations to support pre-employment career training or innovative programs to connect people with mobility jobs.

Metro will invest upstream and partner with government agencies, colleges and universities, community-based organizations, apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, and others to build pathways for priority populations to work at Metro. In the longer-term, Metro might develop innovative internship or career training programs to reach priority populations and build awareness of mobility jobs. Metro will partner with community-based organizations and others to identify effective recruitment methods for any innovative programs.

Goal: Be Responsible Stewards of Financial Resources and Invest in Line with Values and Goals



Budget and invest in ways that advance mobility, safety, equity, and sustainability. Be good stewards of taxpayer funds and use resources wisely. Exercise sound financial management and ensure Metro's long-term financial sustainability. Track and measure outcomes.

Objective: Budget and invest in ways that deliver Metro Connects safely, equitably, and sustainably.

Metro's 2015 Strategic Plan included a strategy to create a long-range transit service and capital plan in collaboration with regional transportation planning. In 2017, the King County Council adopted Metro Connects, developed in partnership with jurisdictions, elected officials, the public, and others. Metro has begun investing in services, projects, and programs envisioned in the long-range plan and will continue doing so. Metro will need additional resources to fully develop the Metro Connects networks. ***Intended outcome: Metro can implement Metro Connects, meeting regional transportation needs and advancing safety, equity, and sustainability.***

Strategy: Seek additional funding sources that are equitable and financially sustainable.

Metro needs more, and more stable, financial resources to continue current operations, meet growing customer demand, and achieve the region's vision—including the interim and 2050 Metro Connects service networks. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased uncertainty in Metro's financial outlook and the need for more resources.

Metro must establish stable revenue sources that enable system growth and keep pace with regional growth and employment. Fare revenue, which covers a significant portion of Metro's operating expenses, will continue to be critical to Metro's ability to expand and improve bus service throughout King County. Funding that reduces Metro's reliance on sales tax revenue, a regressive and volatile source, is crucial. Actions Metro will take include:

- Work with regional leaders to consider potential funding sources and develop a plan for funding Metro Connects.
- Work with the King County Executive to pursue new revenue sources through state legislation, including sources that are currently authorized and those requiring new legislation.
- Advocate for more progressive tax sources to build the mobility network more equitably.

- Support efforts to ensure funding for public transit is integrated with any future climate policy revenues generated.
- Continue exploring other potential revenue sources, including fares, grants, advertising, and partnerships with local jurisdictions and businesses.

Strategy: Use Metro’s Service Guidelines and performance measures to ensure service investments align with needs and values and build toward Metro Connects.

The Service Guidelines and performance measures help the public and King County decision-makers see how Metro plans and manages the transit system. Metro uses the guidelines to evaluate and report on its existing network; plan and design service and service changes; and add, reduce, and change service.

The 2021 update to the Service Guidelines maintains the same prioritization order for service investments (crowding, reliability, and growth, in that order). The 2021 update also retains many policies from the 2015 version, such as a commitment to minimizing impacts to last connections when making reductions.

However, throughout the 2021 update, Metro made changes to better address equity and sustainability and align with Metro Connects. Changes include:

- Adding a focus on equity priority areas in the crowding and reliability priorities.
- Prioritizing equity, land use⁴², and geographic value, in that order, when growing service.
- Including equity and sustainability factors in the policy guidance for reducing service (e.g., clarifying that Metro will consider transitioning fixed-route bus service that attracts fewer than 10 riders per hour to DART).
- Using the Metro Connects network levels to set target service levels. In the rare instance that existing service is higher than Metro Connects target service levels, Metro will base targets off existing service. Metro will evaluate the impact of partner-funded service on investments in service growth to ensure that Metro investments are consistent with Service Guidelines policies

They also include guidance for services that more recently became part of Metro’s profile, including marine and flexible services. Metro will continue to produce an annual system evaluation report. Metro is exploring opportunities to transition this to a web-based dashboard.

Strategy: Develop and deliver capital projects consistent with the guidance in Metro Connects.

Metro will provide and maintain capital assets to support efficient and effective service delivery and growth toward the Metro Connects vision. Investments in RapidRide and frequent transit networks, which carry many of Metro’s riders, will be important. Regular maintenance and upgrades will keep Metro’s facilities in good repair and support efficient, safe, and reliable transit operations. Metro will also

⁴² The 2015 update to the Service Guidelines defined land use as “productivity” in the growth methodology. For clarity, Metro has proposed to change this phrasing to “land use.”

invest in new operations facilities, on-board systems, corridor and spot improvements, and real-time technology.

The 2021 Metro Connects update includes new guidance for building the capital improvement program to support system maintenance and growth, guided by Metro's core values of safety, equity, and sustainability. The guidance also identifies how Metro will align capital decisions with broader business and service planning, prioritize based on the Strategic Plan, Metro Connects, and Fund Management Policies, and incorporate community and stakeholder input.

Strategy: Expand RapidRide in accordance with Metro Connects.

The interim and 2050 networks in Metro Connects include candidate RapidRide routes rather than a concrete proposed network. This approach allows for potential changes and uncertainty in community needs, funding, and time needed to implement new routes. Metro Connects also outlines the process Metro will use when prioritizing future RapidRide lines. The process starts with identifying top corridors based on equity and sustainability factors.



Strategy: Plan for Metro's mid-range future by updating its business and other plans.

Metro's planning processes are guided by its Strategic Plan, Metro Connects, and Service Guidelines, which Metro will update every six years. The Service Guidelines and the capital prioritization guidance in Metro Connects drive decisions about service and system changes. Metro's planned capital investments are captured in its six-year Capital Improvement Program. Service and capital decisions influence the

biennial budget. Metro also plans for its mid-range future through its 10 and two-year business plans. The 10-year business plan should align with Metro's long-term vision. It should reflect and influence investments and decisions made through service changes, capital projects, and the biennial budget. Metro will strive to engage with communities and partners in developing its business plan.

Objective: Exercise sound financial management and ensure Metro's long-term financial sustainability.

Metro will control costs, seek efficiencies, invest public resources responsibly and in alignment with its values and community input, employ financial best practices, and follow adopted policies. These measures will ensure that Metro's finances and financial structure are sustainable over time. ***Intended outcome: Metro is a responsible steward of public resources and protects its financial future.***

Strategy: Develop and deliver services, capital projects, and programs on time, within budget, and in alignment with Metro's values.

Metro will align its services, capital projects, programs, and other efforts with the values of equity, sustainability, and safety. To help ensure that expenditures of public dollars have a meaningful impact, Metro will engage with stakeholders to drive the design and delivery of services, projects, and programs. Metro will continue striving to deliver services, capital projects, and other initiatives on time and within budget. When contractors and private providers are delivering service, Metro will strive to deliver cost-effective services that align with Metro values of equity, sustainability, and safety.

Strategy: Adhere to Metro's adopted fund management policies.

The fund management policies set priorities for how Metro spends money. This ensures taxpayer dollars are well-managed and enable Metro to respond to unforeseen emergencies and changes in the economy without large impacts to existing services. The priorities for spending money are:

1. Debt repayment when Metro has borrowed for capital investments
2. Operation and maintenance of the current transit system
3. Reserves, in case there is a recession
4. New spending on service and capital investments to achieve Service Guidelines or Metro Connects goals

Strategy: Continually explore and implement operational and administrative cost efficiencies.

Metro will continue to seek efficiencies in administration, operations, and project planning, including overhead costs, to ensure long-term financial sustainability. Metro will continue striving to maximize cost-efficiency across the department and in contracted services.

Strategy: Align fares with other service providers, meet revenue targets, and advance equity through Metro’s income-based approach to fares.

The structure and levels of fares should enable Metro to align with Metro’s fund management policies. Fares should reflect the cost of service, promote operational efficiency, ensure regional coordination, have minimal impact on those least able to pay, and reduce the cost of fare collection. Metro fare prices should balance generating revenue, maintaining existing service, and attracting new ridership. The fare structure and level will be reviewed biennially.

Metro will continue working with the Puget Sound region’s transit agencies and other partners to create programs and coordinate fares, schedules, policies, practices, and services to provide a consistent transit experience for customers.

Metro will advance equity by making fares affordable for those most in need. When considering additional fare discounts, Metro will build on its existing income-based approach and will prioritize discounts for those with demonstrated income need.

Objective: Align investments with values and measure and communicate progress.

Metro’s investments will align with its core values of safety, equity, and sustainability. Metro will use data to make decisions and track, measure, and communicate progress toward key goals, strategies, and outcomes. ***Intended outcome: Metro makes data-informed decisions and demonstrates how its investments can advance safety, equity, and sustainability.***

Strategy: Continue evidence-informed and data-driven decision-making.

Metro uses modern, enterprise systems to collect, manage, locate, review, analyze and report high quality physical asset information. Metro uses the collective asset information and enterprise systems to monitor asset performance and support sound decision-making. Metro will continue to conduct research and evaluate programs, policies, and services to ensure that they meet customer needs. Metro will drive towards balanced safety, equity, and sustainability outcomes and demonstrate responsible stewardship of public resources. The modernization and increasing maturity of asset management at Metro will enable more cost-effective data driven decisions that will support improved budgeting, maintenance processes, and analytics. Metro will do so by building internal staff capacity and external partnerships. Metro will also focus on equity, relevance, collaboration, rigor, transparency, independence, and use of quantitative and qualitative data.

Strategy: Track, measure, and communicate progress publicly toward this Strategic Plan for Public Transportation.

Metro will measure its performance across the department’s divisions and levels. Using a web-based dashboard, Metro will enable the public to see how well its investments are meeting the goals and outcomes in this Strategic Plan. Metro will maintain metrics, using qualitative and quantitative data, and drive toward transparency and accountability. The Strategic Plan dashboard will demonstrate progress toward the Metro Connects vision. As described previously, a system

evaluation report will be produced annually. For more information on performance measurement, see Chapter 3.

Strategy: Track, measure, and communicate progress within Metro to support value driven data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

Metro will continue its Monthly Business Review process to drive staff toward data-informed actions and continuous improvement. Metrics captured in the reviews will be more granular than those displayed in the externally focused dashboards. The reviews will help Metro manage its operations and projects using data-informed, value-driven methods. Metro tracks adherence to budget targets as part of its commitment to financial stewardship. For more information, see Chapter 3.

Goal: Conduct Deliberate and Transparent Community Engagement



Use meaningful, inclusive, and community-driven approaches to develop, provide, and evaluate mobility choices and supporting infrastructure that serve priority populations.

Objective: Be open to shared decision-making and co-creation with community.

Metro will ensure its offerings respond to community needs, advance equity, and address climate change. It will do so by empowering and co-creating with communities to develop services and programs. ***Intended outcome: Metro shares power with communities, especially priority populations, and co-creates policies, services, programs, and products.***

Strategy: Seek opportunities for co-creation and upstream engagement.

Metro will engage with community stakeholders upstream to shape priorities and desired outcomes for project and program development. This will enable Metro to plan, budget for, and then engage communities on projects and programs that reflect their needs. In this way, Metro will provide greater transparency in mid-range investment decisions.



Projects and programs identified upstream by community stakeholders will be further developed through a deliberate and transparent public engagement process. Metro will co-create with impacted priority populations and others where there is authentic opportunity to shape outcomes. Co-creation shares power by involving community members early, being accessible to people with different language needs and abilities, building on what was learned in previous engagement processes, and seeking cross-division or interagency coordination opportunities. Co-creation also enables community members to shape initial priorities, desired outcomes, project concepts, alternatives, and the engagement processes themselves.

Strategy: Coordinate with other King County departments and public agencies on engagement processes and communication with communities.

Metro will coordinate more effectively across its own divisions and with other County departments and public agencies. Such coordination will provide opportunities to engage, listen to, and learn from communities in a coordinated and holistic way. Coordination can also prevent duplicative engagement processes that overburden communities. It will help agencies retain and share knowledge learned about community-identified plans, priorities, and visions. Such coordination will encourage the centering of community priorities in Metro, cross-divisional, and interagency decision-making processes.

Strategy: Engage with communities that have the greatest needs.

Metro's engagement strategies will include potentially impacted stakeholders and prioritize priority populations with the greatest needs. This is consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and targeted universalism, which

recognize the need to lead with racial justice to confront the historical and racial inequities affecting everyone's ability to thrive. By centering engagement with communities where needs are greatest, Metro's services, programs, capital projects, and other initiatives will build a strong regional service network that connects all users to opportunities countywide. When making service changes, Metro will follow guidance on engagement in the Service Guidelines. Metro Connects also articulates a vision for future community engagement.

Strategy: Continue commitment to partner with and compensate community-based organizations to mutually build each other's capacity in engagement efforts.

Metro will work with stakeholder groups, such as the Mobility Equity Cabinet to center on community voices—especially priority populations. Doing so will inform and maintain accountability around Metro's values and will shape upstream policies, priorities, and project and program decisions. This approach supports Metro's strategy to work more effectively across divisions and departments and with other agencies.

Metro will work with the King County Executive's Office of Equity and Social Justice and other County departments to continue providing forums to closely involve priority population leaders in Metro's work.

Customer and stakeholder engagement groups should be intergenerational and focus on building a new generation of leadership. Metro's approach to empowering community members and working with stakeholder groups could include providing community organizations and leaders with tools, materials, compensation, professional development, and technical assistance. This can enable them to effectively engage and share their expertise with Metro, King County, and others. Consistent with King County's Strategic Plan for Equity and Social Justice, Metro will systematically provide resource support to community-based organizations to leverage their expertise in engagement processes.

Strategy: Value qualitative information, such as community feedback, in addition to quantitative data.

Metro will combine quantitative data, such as results from technical analysis or engagement efforts like online surveys, with qualitative data. The latter provides a more complete understanding of the customer and community experience. Qualitative information is important because historically marginalized groups may be less likely to be represented in quantitative data sources. Qualitative data may be more difficult to evaluate, summarize, and report through traditional statistical formats. However, Metro will be treating it as equally important and necessary for a complete analysis to support equitable decision making.

Objective: Use community-driven approaches to develop, program, and evaluate mobility services and infrastructure that serve priority populations.

Metro strives for its engagement to be customized, equitable, informative, transparent, responsive, and focused on long-term relationship building. Metro will

strive to engage all people affected by a potential change, investing extra resources to ensure priority populations can easily and meaningfully participate in decision-making. At each step of an engagement process, Metro will show how community input has shaped decisions and results. **Intended outcomes:**

- ***Community members, especially priority populations, perceive that Metro’s engagement practices are meaningful, inclusive, transparent, and geared toward long-term trust and relationship building.***
- ***Metro demonstrates how community input has influenced decisions.***

Strategy: Take a long-term approach to engagement, rather than a project-by-project approach.

A long-term approach to engagement will support more opportunities for co-creation and trust-building with communities. Metro will dedicate resources and staff time to build relationships outside of project-by-project engagement. Metro staff, including senior leadership, will participate in regular community organization meetings or events as appropriate. Actions like these will result in a deeper understanding of community history, demographics, leadership, experiences, and priorities.

Metro will partner with community-based organizations to develop engagement efforts for projects, programs, and plans. It will compensate community-based organizations and community members for their time and expertise.

Strategy: Use best practices for making engagement inclusive, accessible, and community driven.

Best practices for in-person or virtual engagement might include:

- Engage upstream so communities can help shape Metro’s plans and priorities.
- Engage early to maximize opportunities for input to shape outcomes.
- Have a consistent presence in communities to be accessible; to understand community-defined visions, priorities, and concerns; and to bring awareness of those to Metro.
- Compensate members of Metro-associated stakeholder groups.
- Contract with community-based organizations to develop and implement engagement approaches.
- Make engagement inclusive and reduce barriers to participation for all populations, including people with disabilities and people who speak languages other than English. Provide in-language materials, interpretation and captioning services, stipends for transportation, technological support, food, and childcare for in-person or virtual events.
- Tailor engagement approaches based on community demographics and needs, including offering in-person or virtual opportunities to participate.
- Meet communities in spaces where they regularly visit.
- Provide time and opportunities for community-led discussion at meetings or events.

Strategy: Demonstrate how community input influences decisions.

When beginning a new engagement process, Metro will demonstrate what it has learned from that community in past engagement as a starting point. At each phase of engagement, Metro will show what it learned previously and how qualitative and quantitative data has been used to shape concepts, proposals, or decisions.

Strategy: Develop a community liaison program that hires community members to design effective engagement and facilitate engagement of local communities.

Hiring should include youth, multilingual speakers, and other people from the communities with which Metro and other County departments are engaging. Liaisons will bring local knowledge about best engagement practices and language skills to increase participation from priority populations. They will act as a conduit between local communities and Metro's planning, programs, and projects. Metro should invest in liaisons, offering skill development, resume building, professional development, certifications, and career pathways.

Chapter 3: Performance Measurement and Continuous Improvement

Metro is committed to being a value-driven, data-informed, and transparent organization. It will continually monitor performance and communicate progress toward the desired outcomes outlined in this Strategic Plan, as well as Metro Connects. Performance monitoring and data analysis inform decision-making, planning, and budgeting. They improve agency practices and hold Metro accountable internally and to the public.

Metro has a comprehensive performance measurement system that analyzes the following using key performance measures:

- Continuous improvement
- Peer comparison
- Route performance
- Gaps—Metro’s current state compared to its target state.

Metro will communicate performance internally and externally through reports and dashboards. These will include visual tools, like charts and graphs, that make the data easy to understand. This will help the public, stakeholders, and Metro employees understand Metro’s progress and make data-informed decisions. As part of its commitment to advancing equity through targeted universalism, Metro will track progress for all populations and priority populations when possible.

Priority populations: people who are Black, Indigenous, and of color; have low or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.

This section provides more information about Metro’s performance measurement.

SECTION 3.1: PROVIDING EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND DATA TO THE PUBLIC

Metro will improve transparency and accountability by providing more data to stakeholders and the public in a timely manner. Metro will do this through public-facing, web-based dashboards that use charts and graphs to make data easy to understand. Metro will report rich, interactive data through:

- The Strategic Plan dashboard (including progress toward Metro Connects)
- Other dashboards tailored to specific purposes.

These dashboards will become the primary way external audiences can interact with and explore Metro's data and see Metro's performance. The dashboards will keep Metro accountable for adherence to the Strategic Plan, Metro Connects, laws, regulations, and policies.

Strategic Plan Dashboard

The 2015 Strategic Plan included 68 measures focused on objectives, outcomes, and strategies. To streamline reporting, this updated 2021 Strategic Plan reduces the number of measures. It focuses on tracking progress toward key outcomes for each of the 10 goals.

Metro's dashboard of performance metrics on its website will let the public track progress toward the Strategic Plan goals and the Metro Connects vision. The dashboard aims to enhance transparency and accountability. It will be easy for the public to understand. Metro will update most metrics at least annually. Some may be updated more frequently, and a few, such as projected costs for Metro's baseline budget toward the Metro Connects vision, will be updated less frequently.

Strategic Plan Dashboard

This web-based dashboard captures Metro's progress toward the Strategic Plan goals and outcomes in a visual, easy-to-understand way.

Metro focused on the best measures per goal, which means some outcomes have more than one measure while others have none. Measures may change based on data availability and/or Metro's understanding of the best way to illustrate progress towards an outcome throughout the lifespan of this Strategic Plan.

Data will be reported for the general population and will be broken down by some or all the priority populations when possible. After the updated Strategic Plan is adopted, Metro will work internally and with stakeholders to determine appropriate targets for measures.

Table 2 describes the Strategic Plan goals, outcomes, and associated performance measures.

Table 2 Goals, Outcomes, and Measures

Goal	Outcomes	Measures
INVESTMENTS Invest upstream and where needs are greatest	Priority populations have greater access to mobility products and services and can use them to meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commute Times: from Rider/Non-rider survey, broken down by priority populations* and all riders countywide ▪ Accessibility: meaning a measure of travel times using transit to connect to jobs, opportunities, and physical community assets (schools, grocery stores, medical facilities, places of worship, food banks, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Highlight areas of priority populations
	Metro better serves customers by reducing barriers to mobility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced Fare Trips: Number by youth, RRF, ORCA LIFT, subsidized annual pass, ADA paratransit
SUSTAINABILITY Address the climate crisis and environmental justice	Transportation-related emissions decrease, in part because fewer people drive alone and more people ride transit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation Emissions: Countywide transportation GHG emissions and avoided countywide transportation emissions from Metro's contribution to mode shift, congestion relief, and land use change ▪ Vehicle Miles Traveled: by passenger and light-duty vehicles
	King County and Metro achieve greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for government operations. Metro's efforts help King County communities become more resilient to climate change impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro Operational Emissions: GHG emissions and energy use, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fleet (bus and non-bus) and water taxi – Facilities – Percentage of Metro and contracted fleets that are electric vehicles ▪ Green & Equitable Infrastructure: Percentage of capital projects achieving Green Building Ordinance required standards
INNOVATION Innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability	Metro pilots innovative mobility services, products and programs that improve regional mobility, complement transit, and advance safety, equity, and sustainability. Private providers that Metro contracts with to operate services follow guidelines that are consistent with Metro values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pilot Program Ridership: Innovation pilot ridership by service name/product ▪ Pilot Program Locations: Map (or other measure) of distribution of innovative services across King County, highlighting areas of unmet need (based on equity tracts and accessibility analysis) ▪ Equity in On-Demand Service: Percentage of on-demand service trips that starts or ends in an equity priority zone area (areas of need defined based on concentrations of priority populations) ▪ In development – Accessibility and sustainability analysis – as tracking evolves, it will include how innovations improve access to jobs, opportunities, and physical community assets (e.g., grocery stores) and reduce emissions

Goal	Outcomes	Measures
SAFETY Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe	<p>Customers feel Metro's services and facilities are safe, welcoming, and comfortable.</p> <p>Employees contribute to and experience a safe working environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Safety Satisfaction: Personal safety satisfaction score from Rider/Non-Rider survey (broken down by demographics, including priority populations*) ▪ Assaults and Disturbances: Employee assaults and passenger physical disturbances (per million boardings) ▪ Preventable Collisions: Preventable collisions and customer injuries per million miles
	<p>Metro is prepared to respond to hazards and emergencies in an effective, coordinated way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro's Emergency Preparedness: Rider/Non-Rider survey data re-rating of Metro's response to COVID-19 (may evolve into a more general emergency question in future)
TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development	<p>Investments support equitable economic development and vibrant, sustainable, mixed-use, and mixed-income transit-oriented communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Units: At Metro-owned properties used for transit-oriented development broken down by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Completed – In development – In planning – Number of affordable housing units ▪ Commercial Space: At Metro-owned properties used for transit-oriented development commercial space square feet by year. ▪ Growth: Measure the percentage of housing units and jobs in regionally or county-designated growth centers and the percentage of jobs within regionally or county-designated manufacturing/industrial centers that are within ½ mile of frequent transit service stops or stations. ▪ Planned Growth: <i>To be developed. Coordinate with the Puget Sound Regional Council to map the alignment of transit service with planned growth.</i>
	<p>The amount and types of affordable housing near frequent transit increase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordable Housing Near Transit: Percent of all and new rental units within ½ mile of frequent transit service that are affordable by median income brackets (regional measure)
ACCESS Improve access to mobility options	<p>Riders, especially priority populations including people with disabilities, have sustained and easy access to mobility services through multiple modes and throughout the day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transit Access Methods: Mode share for how riders get to their bus stop (from Rider/Non-Rider survey) ▪ Proximity to Transit: (frequent and infrequent service), for priority populations and other populations (likely including percentage of populations and map)
	<p>Community members, especially priority populations, know what</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Communication Satisfaction: Satisfaction with communication/information-

Goal	Outcomes	Measures
	mobility services are available and use them.	sharing from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority populations.
	Parking and other assets that connect people to transit are provided and managed equitably.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Park and Rides: Number of park and ride spaces by geographic location (form TBD, likely highlight areas of priority population on map)
SERVICE QUALITY Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services	<p>Customers can rely on mobility services to get them where they want to go, when they want to go. Customers can easily connect between mobility services, including those offered by Metro and other transportation providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ridership: Ridership/total number of boardings (rail, bus, water taxi, paratransit, rideshare) ▪ Customer Satisfaction: With Metro generally or specific service elements (TBD) – from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority population* ▪ ORCA Transfers: by ORCA category, which includes low-income and disabled populations)
	Transit speed and reliability are improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of Service Index: Service quality index (one score informed by on-time performance, pass ups, and missed trips)
WORKFORCE Build a skilled, diverse, well-supported workforce that has growth opportunities	<p>Public and private mobility services offer high-skill, living-wage jobs. Metro is an employer of choice, attracting and retaining highly skilled employees, especially from priority populations.</p> <p>Metro employees, especially priority populations, have equitable, consistent access to opportunities for professional development and career advancement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Satisfaction: Employee job satisfaction (from King County employee survey, broken down by race, gender, age) ▪ Workforce Demographics: Demographics of new hires, re-hires, and promotions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Race – Gender – Age –
	Metro employees represent the diversity of King County's population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workforce Representativeness: Demographics of King County population compared to Metro workforce and leadership by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Race – Gender – Age
STEWARDSHIP Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals.	Metro can implement Metro Connects, meeting regional transportation needs and advancing safety, equity, and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro Connects Funding Gap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interim Metro Connects vs baseline scenario – 2050 Metro Connects vs baseline scenario
	Metro is a responsible steward of public resources and protects its financial future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – per boarding – per passenger mile – per service hour
	Metro makes data-informed decisions and demonstrates how its investments can advance safety, equity, and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State of Good Repair: Asset management summary, including percent of vehicles, facilities, and equipment that are currently maintained in a State of Good Repair as part of Metro's plan for when assets should be repaired or replaced to demonstrate fiscal responsibility.

Goal	Outcomes	Measures
ENGAGEMENT Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement	Metro shares power with communities, especially priority populations, and co-creates policies, services, programs, and products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-creation Engagement: percentage of engagement projects incorporating co-creation (normalized for the size of the project) ▪ Equitable Contracting: As defined by percent of total engagement contracts/funds focused on direct engagement with priority populations and community-based organizations (<i>also in King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan</i>)
	<p>Community members, especially priority populations, perceive that Metro's engagement practices are meaningful, inclusive, transparent, and geared toward long-term trust and relationship building.</p> <p>Metro demonstrates how community input has influenced decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement Satisfaction: With the community engagement survey process

*For Rider/Non-Rider survey data, Metro will aim to report data by the general population and four of the priority populations (people who are: Black, Indigenous, or of color, low and no-income, linguistically diverse, and with disabilities). Data for people who are immigrants and refugees or foreign-born is not available.

Progress Toward Metro Connects

The Metro Connects long-range plan is Metro's vision for a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable in a service and capital plan. Metro Connects includes several performance metrics, shown in Table 3. These metrics align with those in this Strategic Plan, and Metro will report on them in the Strategic Plan performance dashboard.

Table 3 Metro Connects Performance Measures

Vision Theme	Performance Measure
Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ridership: Ridership/total number of boardings (rail, bus, water taxi, paratransit, rideshare) ▪ ORCA Transfers: by ORCA category, which includes low-income and disabled populations)
Integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pilot Program Ridership: by service name/product ▪ Customer Communication Satisfaction: Satisfaction with communication/information-sharing from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority populations
Equitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proximity to Transit: (frequent and infrequent service), for priority populations and other populations (likely including percentage of populations and map)
Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation Emissions: Countywide transportation GHG emissions and avoided countywide transportation emissions from Metro's contribution to mode shift, congestion relief, and land use change ▪ Vehicle Miles Traveled: by passenger and light-duty vehicles
Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Safety Satisfaction: Personal safety satisfaction score from Rider/Non-Rider survey (broken down by demographics, including priority populations*)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assaults and Disturbances: Employee assaults and passenger physical disturbances (per million boardings)
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro Connects Funding Gap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interim Metro Connects vs baseline scenario – 2050 Metro Connects vs baseline scenario

Other Dashboards

Metro will publish other dashboards as needed to communicate with key stakeholders and the public. For example, in 2020 Metro launched “The Dash” to provide customers, communities, and partners with up-to-date answers to frequently asked questions about transit. It displays data on ridership, mask use during the COVID-19 pandemic, trips that exceed passenger capacity limits, and bus stop pass-ups.



SECTION 3.2: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Monthly Business Review

Metro has a comprehensive monthly business review system, based on Metro’s values, and informed by data. It aligns with King County performance management processes and practices. It provides performance measures that inform decision-making and facilitate continuous improvement. By reviewing data, Metro leaders and staff can identify areas for improvement, propose corrective actions, modify practices, and monitor results for effectiveness. Through this process, Metro can continuously improve its products and services and advance toward the goals of the Strategic Plan and Metro Connects.

Monthly business reviews will occur at the department and division levels and will be introduced at the section and project levels as well.

Program Evaluation

Metro will continue to report various measures in the Federal Transit Administration’s National Transit Database, in monthly and annual reports, and in project-specific performance reports. These reports serve several purposes. They comply with federal and state reporting requirements, give public transportation managers the data they need, assess progress toward goals and objectives, inform management and policy decisions, and give the public a way to assess Metro’s performance.

Metro will also conduct robust evaluation of its non-fixed-route programs and services, particularly those that start as pilots, to make data-informed decisions. For example, Metro evaluates its innovative mobility pilot programs and the subsidized annual fare pass program.

SECTION 3.3: PEER COMPARISON

Comparisons with peer transit agencies provide an additional benchmark for measuring Metro’s performance.

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. Metro does this by examining its relevant business processes or conducting in-depth research on peer agencies that are making the greatest improvements on a measure.

Strategic Plan reporting will compare Metro with other large bus agencies in the U.S. 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.

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 3.4: ROUTE PERFORMANCE

Metro measures the performance of individual routes, of the system, and of products and services. Metro uses Service Guidelines and the annual system evaluation report to evaluate the performance of its fixed-route, marine, and flexible services. Metro applies performance management guidelines to individual routes to identify high and low performance, areas where investment is needed, and areas where resources are not being used efficiently and effectively. Metro may adjust routes to improve their performance and that of the entire system. Currently, Metro transmits its system

evaluation report to the King County Council annually. Metro may explore opportunities to move this information to a web-based dashboard in the future.

King County Metro

Service Guidelines

November 17, 2021



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Introduction

Metro uses the Service Guidelines to evaluate, design, and modify transit services to meet changing needs and deliver efficient, high-quality service. The updated guidelines reflect key elements of the King County Strategic Plan, Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, and Strategic Climate Action Plan. These plans envision a community that gives all people equitable opportunities to thrive, that confronts climate change by cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and that engages priority populations in achieving climate justice and mobility for all. For Metro, that means building a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. This system will contribute to healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.

Priority populations are people who are Black, Indigenous, or of color; have low or no income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



The guidelines help make sure that decision-making and recommendations to policy makers are objective, transparent, and aligned with King County's goals for public transportation. The guidelines align with Metro's mission, vision, and goals, as outlined in its Strategic Plan, and help Metro grow toward the networks in Metro Connects, its long-range plan.¹ Many terms used in this document are defined in Technical Report A: Glossary, separate from the Service Guidelines.

The Service Guidelines establish criteria and processes that Metro uses to analyze and plan changes to the transit system. The guidelines are divided into these three sections:

Evaluating Existing Services

This section describes how Metro will evaluate and report on the performance of bus and DART² routes. For flexible services and water taxi, see Planning Flexible Services and Planning Marine Services in the Planning and Developing Service section.

Adding, Reducing, and Restructuring Service

This section sets targets for system growth by assessing the market potential of existing and planned routes in Metro's bus network using factors of land use, equity, and geographic value.

¹ See details in Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031.

² DART, or Dial-a-Ride Transit, routes provide fixed-route service and have the ability to deviate from their fixed routing in lower-density areas.

This section also establishes the priority order in which service will be added or reduced depending on available resources, and it includes guidelines for when and how Metro restructures service.

Planning and Developing Service

This section provides qualitative and quantitative guidelines for designing transit services and the overall Metro system.

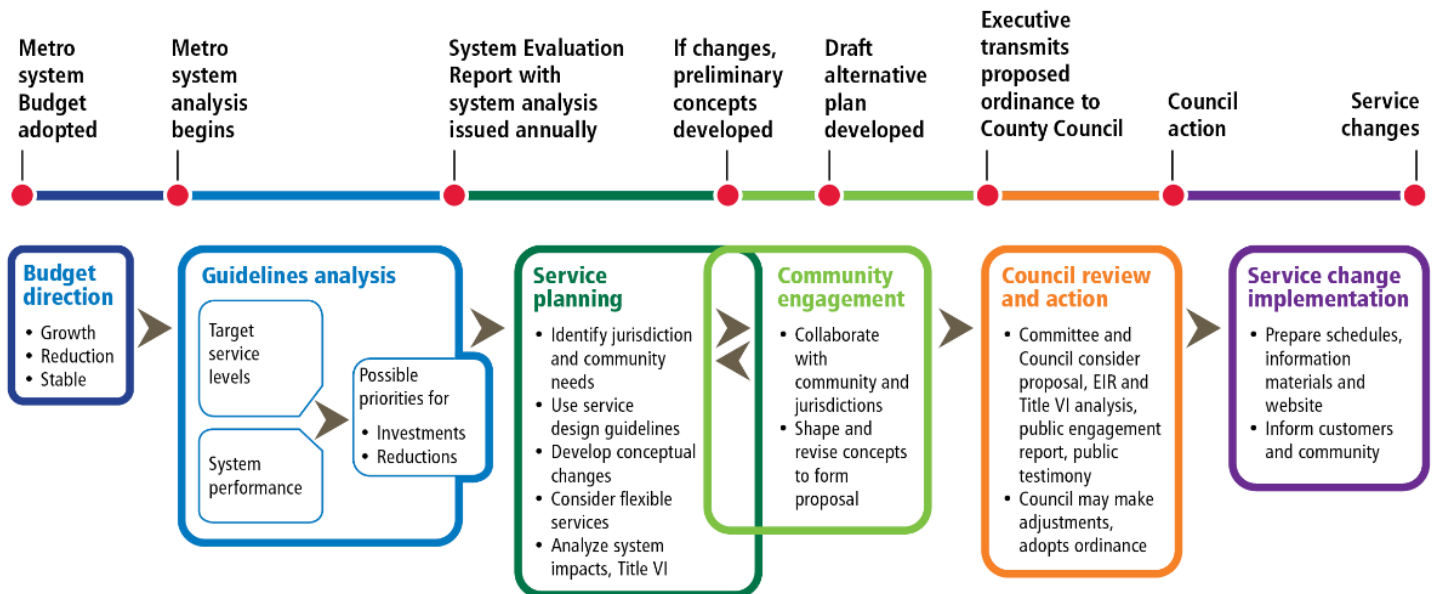
This section also describes how Metro works with the community and stakeholders to plan and to develop partnerships that improve and expand service.

HOW THE GUIDELINES ARE USED

Metro uses the Service Guidelines continuously to review and develop changes to the transit system. Performance information and investment priorities are published in an annual System Evaluation Report that is transmitted to the King County Council and made available to the public.

Metro uses the results of this evaluation, as well as guidelines concerning service design and flexible services, to develop service change proposals. This is one step in a planning process that starts with the adoption of Metro’s budget and results in changes to transit service, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The Service Planning Process



HOW THE GUIDELINES WERE CREATED AND HOW THEY HAVE CHANGED

The King County Council first adopted the Service Guidelines in 2011,³ following the work of the 2010 Regional Transit Task Force. In 2015, the County formed the Service Guidelines Task Force to develop recommendations on further changes to the Guidelines. Council adopted updated Service Guidelines in 2016.⁴

Metro has produced annual performance evaluations each year since the guidelines were adopted. The annual report, now called the System Evaluation Report, has grown from an initial focus on bus service performance to include reporting on flexible and marine services.

- In 2019, the King County Council directed Metro to develop a framework for the equitable and sustainable implementation of mobility services. Metro engaged with an Equity Cabinet, a group of 23 community leaders representing priority populations, to co-create the “Mobility Framework.” The Framework included 10 guiding principles and recommendations for achieving a regional mobility network that is innovative, integrated, equitable, and sustainable. Engagement with community advocates, elected officials, jurisdictions, employers, and other regional partners also informed the Mobility Framework.
- The King County Council adopted a summary of the Mobility Framework’s recommendations in March 2020. The summary indicated that Metro would update its policies to align with the Mobility Framework’s guiding principles and recommendations.
- The 2021 update to Metro’s Service Guidelines includes substantial changes to incorporate a stronger focus on advancing equity and addressing climate change, as outlined in the Mobility Framework’s recommendations and guiding principles.

FUTURE GUIDELINES

When policymakers and Metro created the Service Guidelines, they intended it to be a living document. Regular updates were required by the ordinance approving the guidelines. Updates to the guidelines will continue to be considered along with updates to the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031 and Metro Connects.

³ Ordinance 17143

⁴ Ordinance 18301

Evaluating Existing Fixed Route Services

Metro regularly monitors and manages the performance of the transit system to determine if service changes should be made to meet community needs. Metro evaluates all fixed-route service (bus and DART) annually, measuring ridership, productivity, passenger loads, and reliability. The results are published in an annual System Evaluation Report. (Measures used to monitor performance of flexible and marine services are outlined in the Planning and Developing Services section of this report.)

Table 1 Performance Measures for Fixed-Route Service

Type of Measure	Measures Used
Ridership	Average daily ridership
Productivity	Rides per platform hour
	Passenger miles per platform mile
Passenger loads	Average of maximum load per trip
Reliability	Trips arriving more than 5 minutes late at a time point
Equity	Equity Prioritization Score
	Opportunity Index Score

Measuring Ridership and Productivity

Metro measures ridership and productivity to identify services where performance is strong or weak, to determine if they are candidates for addition, reduction, or restructuring for each service family.

Ridership is measured by counting the average number of riders daily for each route on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Productivity is measured by counting the average number of riders daily relative to the amount of service provided. Two measures are used:

- **Rides per platform hour** measures the number of riders who board a transit vehicle relative to the total number of hours that a vehicle operates (from leaving the base until it returns).
- **Passenger miles per platform mile** measures the total miles riders travel on a route relative to the total miles that a vehicle operates (from leaving the base until it returns).

The two productivity measures reflect the different values that services provide in the transit system. Routes with a higher number of riders getting on and off relative to the time the bus is in operation perform well on the rides-per-platform-hour measure. Routes with full and even loading along the route perform well on the passenger-miles-per-platform-mile measure.

Metro has classified routes into three service families based on the primary market served as well as other characteristics of service described below. These service families enable Metro to compare the performance of routes with similar services to reflect the different land uses and purposes of service throughout the county.

- **Urban** routes serve the regionally designated Regional Growth Centers of Seattle Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, the University District, and Uptown. These areas have the highest densities in the county, the highest historical transit use, and the highest market potential for transit.
- **Suburban** routes serve cities throughout King County or serve Seattle but do not connect to the centers listed above.
- **Rural and DART** routes serve lower-density areas. Rural routes serve as connectors between rural communities and between rural communities and larger cities. They are defined as having at least 35 percent of their route outside the urban growth boundary. DART routes provide fixed-route service and have the ability to deviate from their fixed routing in lower-density areas.

Performance thresholds have been established for peak, off-peak, and nighttime periods and for urban, suburban, and rural/DART service families for each of the two performance measures. Low performance is defined as route productivity that ranks in the bottom 25 percent of all routes within a service family and time period. High performance is defined as route productivity in the top 25 percent.

Fixed-route services in the bottom 25 percent on both route productivity measures are the first candidates for potential reduction if service must be reduced. However, reduction of these routes is not automatic; other factors are considered as well. More detailed information about reduction planning is available on page 15.

Fixed-route transit services that have very low productivity likely have an adverse impact on climate change. Metro found that fixed-route transit services with very low productivity, less than 10 rides per hour, likely emit more greenhouse gasses than if all of those passengers drove vehicles for their trips. These routes would be candidates for potential changes in service type. For example, fixed route bus service may transition to a DART route. Routes with this level of very low productivity are identified in the annual System Evaluation report as candidates for potential changes in service type.

Measuring Passenger Loads

Metro uses two separate measures of passenger loads: number of passengers compared to space on the bus; and the amount of time the bus has a standing load (standing load time).

A passenger load threshold for overcrowding is calculated for each trip, based on the characteristics of the bus type scheduled for the trip. This threshold is determined by:

- The number of seats on the bus, plus
- The number of standing people that can fit on the bus, when each standing person is given no less than four square feet of floor space.

A trip's standing load time is determined by measuring the amount of time that the number of passengers on the bus exceeds the number of seats.

Poor performance is defined as when the average maximum load of a trip exceeds its passenger load threshold, or when a trip has a standing load for more than 20 minutes. Passenger loads are averaged on a per trip basis using counts from an entire service change period, usually a period of about six months. Trips will be identified as overcrowded if they have average maximum passenger loads higher than the passenger load threshold for the entire service change period. Routes with overcrowded trips are candidates for investment.

Measuring Schedule Reliability

Service will adhere to published schedules, within reasonable variance. Metro defines "on time" as arrival at a designated point along a route that is no more than five minutes later or one minute earlier than the scheduled arrival time. A route is defined as unreliable if it operates late more than 20 percent of the time.

For some RapidRide and very frequent services, Metro measures reliability of service based on the consistency of headways—the time between buses—rather than the schedule. This way of measuring reliability better reflects how customers use these services and assess reliability. When headways are seven minutes or less, a bus is considered on time when it comes within two minutes of the intended headway. When headways are between eight to 15 minutes, a bus is considered on time when it comes within three minutes of the intended headway. These routes are defined as unreliable if they are fall outside the headway range more than 20 percent of the time. These performance measures, thresholds, and management techniques may be revised as part of ongoing projects.

Routes identified as unreliable are candidates for investments.

Measuring Equity

Equity factors show how well a route serves equity priority areas, which are areas where historically underserved populations are concentrated, as identified in the Mobility Framework and Metro's 2021-2031 Strategic Plan. This ensures that transit service growth needs consider equity. Equity priority areas are identified using equity priority area scores (EPAS), which use demographic information for the census block groups in which each bus stop is located. These EPAS scores are described in more detail in the "Setting Target Service Levels" section of the Service Guidelines. EPAS scores will be made available to community members or jurisdiction staff or officials upon request.

Each bus route receives two route-level equity scores to measure how well the route serves equity priority areas: the equity prioritization score (EPS) is calculated based on the average of the route's equity prioritization area scores; and the opportunity index score (OIS) is calculated based on the percentage of stops along a route that have the highest equity priority area score. These route-level equity scores are used to help prioritize service investments and reductions and will be included in the annual System Evaluation report.

Adding, Reducing, and Restructuring Service

DEFINING SERVICE CHANGES

Regular Service Changes

Metro revises fixed-route service twice a year, in spring and fall. In rare cases of emergency or time-critical construction projects, Metro may make changes at other times.

Proposed route changes are subject to approval by the King County Council except as follows (per King County code 28.94.020):

- Any single change or cumulative changes in a service schedule which affect the established weekly service hours for a route by 25 percent or less.
- Any change in route location which does not move the location of any route stop by more than 1/2 mile.
- Any changes in route numbers.

The annual System Evaluation Report includes a comprehensive list of the prior years' service changes. It identifies and discusses service changes that addressed performance-related issues.

Flexible and marine services are not guided by the same sections of code, and some changes on these modes may be implemented at times outside of Metro's twice-yearly changes. More information about flexible and marine service changes is available in the Planning and Designing Service section.

Emergency Service Changes

In the rare instance of a countywide emergency, Metro will develop situation-specific policies and adjustments to transit services. Different emergencies require different responses, so flexibility is needed to immediately change service in response to emergencies. This is consistent with King County code 28.94.020 2.a. which reads:

...if, in the opinion of the director, an emergency exists that requires any change to established routes, schedules or classes of service, the director may implement such a change for such a period as may be necessary in the director's judgment or until such a time as the council shall establish by ordinance otherwise. Such changes that the director

intends to be permanent shall be reported in writing to the chair of the council.

ADDING SERVICE

Metro invests in fixed-route service in the following order using the Service Guidelines:

1. Crowding
2. Reliability
3. Service growth

Priority 1: Crowding

Metro's first investment priority is to address consistent crowding identified using the passenger load measures described in the Evaluating Existing Fixed-Route Services section. Routes that are consistently overcrowded have a negative impact on riders and discourage them from using transit. Overcrowded buses may pass up riders waiting at stops, and often run late because it takes longer for riders to board and get off at stops.

Routes with overcrowded trips or standing loads for more than 20 minutes are candidates for investment. They are analyzed in detail to determine appropriate actions to alleviate overcrowding. Actions can include assigning a larger vehicle to the trip, adjusting the spacing of trips, and adding trips.

If funding is not available to address all crowding needs, investments that address where crowding is most severe and advance equity will be given priority.

Priority 2: Reliability

Metro's second investment priority is to address services that are consistently unreliable, as described in the Evaluating Existing Fixed-Route Services section. Consistently late routes might cause passengers to stop using transit.

Routes that operate late more than 20 percent of the time are candidates for investment. Reliability improvements can take several forms, including adding time to schedules to match slower operating conditions, changing route design, or seeking physical or traffic operation improvements. Speed and reliability improvements can include investments such as business access and transit lanes, queue jumps, transit signal priority, and other transit priority treatments. These improvements are often preferable to adding time to schedules. They improve travel time for customers rather than matching schedules to slower travel times, and they increase the efficiency of service hours.

If funding is not available to address all reliability needs, investments that impact the most riders, address where lateness is most severe, and advance equity will be given priority.

Priority 3: Service Growth

Metro's third investment priority is to grow transit countywide. Metro Connects envisions service growth throughout King County that is captured in a more near-term interim network and a 2050 network. The Service Guidelines identify candidate routes for investment in the interim network as well as the existing transit network. Metro will update the guidelines for investing in the 2050 network as it gets closer to that time or more fully implements the interim network.

Service that exists today does not always have an equivalent in the Metro Connects networks. Metro will evaluate the existing service until a service restructure triggers consideration of network adjustments to fully integrate the Metro Connects interim network. Where Metro Connects envisions service where none exists today, the routes from Metro Connects will be evaluated as a service growth need. Areas where Metro Connects shows all-day service where there is peak-only service today will also be evaluated as a service growth need. See page 16 for more information about restructuring service. For information in growing flexible services and water taxi, see Planning Flexible Services and Planning Marine Services.

Identifying Service Growth Needs

Metro projects future service needs and sets target service levels in the annual System Evaluation Report. The target service levels are the highest levels suggested by either 1) the service guidelines growth methodology, which uses the factors of land use, equity and geographic value as described below or 2) the service levels envisioned in the Metro Connects interim network.

In rare instances, existing service levels may be higher than the target service levels determined using the service growth methodology or envisioned in Metro Connects. This could occur if extra trips were added to overcrowded routes or if a partner has funded more service on a route. In these instances, Metro sets the target service level at existing service levels. Metro will evaluate the impact of partner-funded service on investments for service growth to ensure that Metro investments are consistent with Service Guidelines policies.

Setting Target Service Levels

Land use, equity, and geographic value are described below as part of the service growth methodology, which is used to develop target service levels in cases where this analysis envisions higher levels of the service than the Metro Connects interim network.

Table 2 Factors Used to Determine Growth Needs

Factor	Weighting	Purpose	Measures
Land use	50% (20 points)	Support areas of higher employment and household density	(1) Households within ¼ mile (2) Park-and-ride stalls within ¼ mile
		Support areas with high student enrollment Support function of park-and-rides in the transit network	(1) Jobs within ¼ mile (2) Low income jobs within ¼ mile (3) Enrolled students at high schools and colleges within ¼ mile
Equity	25% (10 points)	Serve communities where needs are greatest	Equity prioritization score
Geographic value	25% (10 points)	Provide appropriate service levels throughout King County for connections between all centers	(1) Connection between regional growth centers (2) Connection between activity centers (3) Connection between manufacturing/industrial centers

- Land use factors** demonstrate the potential demand for transit along a route using several measures. Metro uses these factors because areas where many people live, work, or go to school have high potential transit demand. This can help advance equity by moving more people, including priority populations. The addition of a low-income jobs metric to the land-use score increases the emphasis on routes that provide access to low-income employment centers. Points assigned range from four and 20. Households and park-and-rides receive between two and 10 points. Jobs, low-income jobs, and students receive between two and 10 points. Overall, land use makes up 50 percent of the total score in setting target service levels.
- Equity factors** show how well a route serves areas where historically underserved populations are concentrated, as identified in the Mobility Framework and Metro’s 2021-2031 Strategic Plan. This ensures that transit service growth needs consider equity. Each route is given an equity prioritization score, which measures how well a route serves equity priority areas.⁵ Each stop is given the equity priority area score, from one through five, of the block group in which it is located. Equity priority areas are based on a composite of demographic criteria and variable weighting, shown in Table 3. The weighting is consistent with King County’s equity strategy and assigns a higher variable weight to race and income.⁶ The equity prioritization score is the average equity priority area score for all stops along a route. This score is used to assign points, which range from zero to 10, and account for 25 percent of the total score in setting target service levels. Routes that have

⁵ Equity priority areas are the basis for multiple equity factors in adding, reducing, and restructuring service. The equity prioritization score uses the equity priority area score for all block groups served by a route, while the Opportunity Index Score is based on the percentage of a route’s stops in block groups with an equity priority area score of five, the highest score. For more information, see the Reducing Service section.

⁶ This methodology was produced in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice.

higher equity prioritization scores receive more points than routes with lower equity prioritization scores.

“Equity priority area” is defined as an area with a high proportion of priority populations as defined in the Mobility Framework, which includes measures of communities of color, low or no income population, disabled population, foreign born population, and population with limited English proficiency.

Table 3 Composite of Demographic Criteria and Weighting⁷

Priority Population Metric	Variable Weight
Population that is non-white or Hispanic	40%
Population living 200% below the federal poverty line	30%
Population that is foreign-born	10%
Limited-English speaking households	10%
Population living with a disability	10%

- **Geographic value factors** establish how well a route supports connections and service to transit activity centers, regional growth centers, and manufacturing/industrial centers throughout King County. All connections between centers are important and are given value in this process. King County centers are described in Technical Report A: Centers of King County. Points assigned range from two and 10 points and account for 25 percent of the total score in setting target service levels. Routes that have more service, lower travel times, and are the primary connection between centers will receive more points than routes with less service and longer travel times.

Service Types

Metro’s services are categorized by the level of service they provide. Different levels of service are targeted to different routes. Service levels are primarily defined by the frequency and span of service they provide. Table 4 shows the typical characteristics of each service level. Some services may fall outside the typical frequencies, depending on specific conditions in the route served.

The creation of transit-supportive land uses is critical for the long-term success of transit and for advancing equity and addressing climate change. To help jurisdictions plan for transit service, more information about land uses that support each service level is provided in Table 5.

⁷ Equity priority area scores use a weighted method based on the population data provided in US Census Block Groups. A Census Block Group is a geographical unit used by the United States Census Bureau. It is the smallest geographical unit for which the bureau publishes sample data.

Service Guidelines

Adding, Reducing, and Restructuring Service

Table 4 Summary of Typical Service Types

Service Growth Score	Service Level	Service Level: Frequency (minutes between trips) and Time Period				Days of Service	Daily Hours of Service
		Peak	Off-peak	Night	Weekend		
31-40	Very frequent/ RapidRide	<= 10 minutes	<= 15 minutes	<= 15 minutes	<= 15 minutes	7 days	16-24 hours
21-30	Peak frequent	<= 15 minutes	<= 30 minutes	<= 30 minutes	<= 30 minutes	7 days	16-24 hours
11-20	Local	<= 30 minutes	<= 30 minutes	<= 60 minutes	<= 60 minutes	5-7 days	12-18 hours
<11	Hourly	<= 60 minutes	<= 60 minutes	--	--	5 days	8-12 hours
--	Peak-only	8 trips/day minimum	--	--	--	5 days	Peak
--	Flexible services	Determined by demand and collaborative community process					

The Service Level and Land Use Connection

Demand for transit service is linked to the land uses near transit service. More homes, jobs, schools, and other activities (origins and destinations) with access to transit increase the number of potential riders. As a result, the number of transit trips increases. Aligning transit service levels with land use has many benefits for local communities and helps King County realize its economic, environmental, and equity goals. Four characteristics that support transit demand include:

- **Density:** More people and activities in an area increase the number of potential riders.
- **Mix of uses:** More types of uses in an area increase the number of potential origins and destinations, such as home, work, school, shopping, medical, and transit connections, at all times of day.
- **Connections:** More compact development with good multimodal connections for walking and biking increases access to nearby transit service.
- **Transit supportive policies and programs:** These might include zoning changes, affordable housing incentives, and removal of parking requirements. Policies and programs in a corridor or subarea can support the development of equitable transit-oriented communities, improve access for all people—particularly historically disadvantaged communities and people of color—and increase the number of potential riders. These would be consistent with Metro’s Equitable Transit-oriented Communities policy.

Aligning service levels with land use helps ensure transit service is productive and supports the demand for service. Local jurisdictions can improve transit service levels and increase demand by using the four land-use characteristics above. Examples of actions they can take include:

- Rezoning land within walking distance of transit routes to allow for higher densities
- Rezoning land within walking distance of transit routes to allow more types of uses
- Establishing policies and programs to increase the amount of affordable housing and reduce the displacement of existing residents near transit service (e.g. affordable housing incentives)
- Removing or lowering parking minimums for new development near transit service
- Improving street and sidewalk connections around bus stops and corridors.

Table 5 outlines how Metro’s service types relate to the surrounding land use characteristics. While each route will have its own characteristics, areas served by these types of bus service should strive to meet the guidelines in Table 5.

Table 5 Service Types Related to Land Use Characteristics

Service Type	Density	Mix of Uses	Connections	Policies and Programs
RapidRide and very frequent	>20 Pop + Jobs/Acre	Many land use types and destinations, including regional centers	High degree of multimodal connections, including major transportation connections	Transit supportive policies and programs in place
Peak frequent	>15 Pop + Jobs/Acre	Moderate mix of land use types and destinations, including countywide centers	Good multimodal infrastructure and connections	Transit supportive policies and programs in place
Local	<15 & >5 Pop + Jobs/Acre	Primarily one type of use, such as residential	Adequate multimodal infrastructure and connections	Some or no transit supportive policies or programs in place
Hourly	<10 Pop + Jobs/Acre	Primarily one type of use, such as residential	Adequate or limited multi-modal infrastructure and connections	Some or no transit supportive policies or programs in place
Peak-only	Peak-only service provides limited stop connections to regional centers, typically during peak periods.			
Flexible services	Flexible services provide local and feeder-to-fixed-route service in areas with low to moderate land use density or limited connectivity.			

Prioritizing Investments

The identified needs for service growth will far exceed Metro’s ability to grow service in any given year or budget period. For this reason, Metro will set priorities among the future service needs using three factors in the following order:

1. Equity
2. Land use
3. Geographic value

Each route’s score for the three factors is used to set the priority order for future investments. The scores for routes will be updated each year to reflect changes in demographics, land use, and connections. Metro may not fully invest in a route before moving on to the next prioritized route, but will plan to invest in the future as resources become available in each biennium. Metro developed this prioritization as the best way to advance its values of advancing equity and addressing climate change. The priorities respond to the Mobility Framework and feedback from the Equity Cabinet, regional elected officials, community stakeholders, and others.

REDUCING SERVICE

When Metro must reduce service, the guidelines help identify the services to be reduced. However, the guidelines are only a starting point. Metro also considers other factors including community input, opportunities to achieve system efficiencies and to simplify the network through restructures, and the potential for offering flexible services. (Guidelines for reducing flexible and marine services are discussed separately in the Planning and Developing Service section.)

Some factors that Metro considers when reducing service include:

- **The relative impacts to all areas of the county to minimize or mitigate significant impacts in any one area.** Metro seeks to balance reductions throughout the county so that no one area experiences significant negative impacts beyond what other areas experience.
- **Ways to minimize impacts through restructuring service.** Metro considers restructuring service to make it more efficient and equitable. By consolidating service to eliminate duplication, and by closely matching service with demand, Metro may be able to provide needed trips at reduced cost and minimize impacts on riders. Metro also considers potential adjustments to fixed-route service in order to reduce the impact of service reductions on riders. If adjustments to fixed-route service will not likely result in productive service, Metro may consider flexible service as an alternative to low-productivity fixed-route service if it is likely to result in significant cost savings and be successful based on evaluation criteria and considerations outlined in the “Planning Flexible Services” section.
- **The identified investment need on routes.** While no route or area is exempt from change during a large-scale system reduction, Metro will try to avoid reducing service on routes that are high priorities for investment and included in the Metro Connects interim network.

- **Preservation of last connections.** Metro serves some urbanized areas of east and south King County that are surrounded by rural land. Elimination of all service in these areas would significantly reduce the coverage Metro provides. Preservation of last connections will ensure that Metro continues to address mobility needs throughout King County.
- **Route productivity.** Metro uses two measures to determine the productivity of each route: rides per platform hours measures the number of riders who board a transit vehicle relative to the total number of hours that a vehicle operates; and passenger miles per platform mile measures the total miles riders travel on a route relative to the total miles that a vehicle operates. Routes' productivity measures are organized into three service families (urban, suburban, and rural/DART) and three time periods (peak, off-peak, and nighttime). Low performance is defined as route productivity that ranks in the bottom 25 percent of all routes within a service family and time period.
- **Equity needs.** Metro will consider route-level Opportunity Index Scores as it sets priorities for potential service reduction. Opportunity Index Scores are a quintile ranking based on the percentage of stops along a route that serve block groups with an equity priority area⁸ score of five. This will help ensure that Metro continues serving areas where needs are greatest. Routes that have the highest percentage of stops within the highest priority areas are given a score of five. Routes that have the lowest percentage of stops within the highest priority areas are given a score of one. Metro will also use information about physical community assets⁹ to help ensure it provides service to important places throughout the county. More information on how Opportunity Index Scores are used is below.

Reduction Priorities

Priorities for reduction are listed in Table 6. Productivity and equity measures are used to prioritize candidates for service reduction. Routes with low performance on the productivity measures, and specifically those that also have low equity scores, are generally the first to be prioritized for reduction. Within all priorities, Metro ensures that equity is a primary consideration in any reduction proposal, complying with all state and federal regulations.

The priority list is intended to address reductions to multiple trips within a time period, cuts to all service in a time period, or deletion of routes. Individual low-performing trips may also be considered for reductions outside of the priority list.

⁸ For more information on how equity priority area scores are determined, see the Adding Service section.

⁹ Community assets include places such as schools, grocery stores, and cultural centers.

Table 6 Factors and Prioritization Used to Identify Service Reductions Candidates

Priority	Factors
1	Routes within the bottom 25% on both productivity measures and with Opportunity Index Scores of 3 or less
2	Routes within the bottom 25% on both productivity measures and with Opportunity Index Scores of 4 or 5
3	Routes within the bottom 25% on one productivity measure and with Opportunity Index Scores of 3 or less
4	Routes within the bottom 25% on one productivity measure and with Opportunity Index Scores of 4 or 5
5	Routes within the bottom 50% on one or both productivity measures and with Opportunity Index Scores of 3 or less
6	Routes within the bottom 50% on one or both productivity measures and with Opportunity Index Scores of 4 or 5

RESTRUCTURING SERVICE

Service restructures or service redesigns are projects that make coordinated changes to multiple routes and services within a large area, consistent with the service design criteria in this document. A variety of circumstances may prompt restructures. In general, they are done to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit system and to better integrate with the regional transit network, including light rail and bus rapid transit expansions. Restructures may result in the modification, addition, and deletion of services. Any changes that exceed Metro’s administrative authority must be approved by the King County Council as part of a service change ordinance per King County Code Section 28.94.020.

Reasons Metro may restructure service include:

Major Transportation Network Changes

- Partner agencies initiate extension or enhancement of services such as Link light rail, Stride bus rapid transit (BRT), Sounder commuter rail, and Regional Express bus services.
- Metro’s RapidRide BRT network is expanded, partner or grant resources are available for investment, or Metro introduces a significant new service.
- Multiple transit services overlap or provide similar connections.
- Major projects such as highway construction or the opening of new transit centers, park-and-rides, or transit priority pathways affect Metro’s service.

Mismatch Between Service and Ridership

- There may be places where the transit network does not reflect current travel patterns.

- A route may serve multiple areas with significantly different demand characteristics.
- There are opportunities to consolidate or reorganize service so that higher rider demand can be met with improved service frequency and fewer route patterns.
- There are opportunities to serve new areas where development or land use has changed significantly.

Major Development or Land Use Changes

- Construction of a large-scale development, new institutions such as colleges or medical centers, or significant changes in the overall development of an area may occur.

All project areas are different. Metro will develop area-specific goals and strategies for each restructure with affected jurisdictions, partner agencies, and community stakeholders. Common goals for all restructures include:

- Improve mobility for historically disadvantaged populations
- Inform, engage, and empower current and potential customers in decision-making
- Move toward Metro's long-range vision, Metro Connects
- Deliver integrated service that responds to changes community needs and the transit network, such as connections to high-capacity transit services
- When under stable or growing resource scenarios, provide service connections, frequencies, travel times, and span at least similar to existing Metro service unless community-defined priorities in the project area suggest different service characteristics that will better meet their needs
- Increase transit ridership and productivity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the county, and potentially reduce services where transit is not providing a net reduction of emissions over car travel
- Focus frequent service on the service segments with the highest ridership
- Improve transit access to opportunities and address unmet needs of priority populations
- Create convenient opportunities for customers to transfer between services

Metro may refine a restructure project area based on feedback from community stakeholders, affected jurisdictions, and partner agencies. Equity priority areas will be identified within each restructure project area.

Data Considered for Service Restructures

When considering restructures, Metro evaluates data including but not limited to:

- Current and expected future travel patterns
- Service in equity priority areas, compared to the rest of the restructure area
- Existing housing, jobs, and other generators of ridership and the location and density of permitted future development
- Passenger capacity of routes relative to projected ridership
- The cost of added service to meet projected ridership demand relative to cost savings from reductions of other services.

As part of the process of developing a proposed service restructure, Metro will provide a description of all transit services in the project area, both before and after the proposed restructure. This will give jurisdictions, community members, riders, and other stakeholders a clear indication of the transit services that are currently available and that are proposed to be available after the restructure, whether those services are provided by Metro, Sound Transit, or another transit partner. In some instances, Sound Transit or another agency's service may fully or partially replace an existing Metro service and thereby potentially free up Metro service hours to be deployed elsewhere. For example, a Link light rail extension or a new Sound Transit or another agency's service that will offer an option that can replace all or a portion of a Metro route, meeting the standard of duplicative service as defined in the "Route Spacing and Duplication" subsection of the "Planning and Designing Service" section of this document, may make Metro service hours available for redeployment.

If Metro can meet the goals outlined above and have service hours left over, it may redeploy service hours from services replaced by other agencies. By doing so, Metro could meet countywide needs according to the service investment priorities outlined in this document. This approach aligns with guidance in Metro's Strategic Plan and will help the County advance equity, address climate change, and build toward the Metro Connects system.

Metro will describe how the restructure goals have been met and the progress toward achieving the long-range vision of Metro Connects. After a service restructure, Metro will regularly evaluate the resulting transit services as part of the ongoing management of Metro's transit system.

EVALUATING EQUITY IMPACTS

When Metro is making major service changes, it conducts a Title VI analysis in compliance with federal regulations. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires all transit agencies to evaluate major service change impacts on minority and low-income populations. This analysis determines whether changes have adverse effects, disparate impacts, or disproportionate burden, as defined below. Metro also conducts an Equity Impact Review, described further below.

Federal Title VI Analysis

Adverse Effect of a Major Service Change

For the Title VI analysis, an adverse effect of a major service change is defined as a reduction of 25 percent or more of the transit trips serving a census tract or 25 percent or more of the service hours on a route.

Disparate Impact Threshold

For the Title VI analysis, a disparate impact occurs when a major service change results in adverse effects that are significantly greater for minority populations than for non-minority populations. Metro has set this threshold for determining a disparate impact: when the percentage of routes or tracts adversely affected by a major service change and classified as minority is 10 or more percentage points higher than the percentage of routes or tracts classified as minority in the system as a whole. If Metro finds a disparate impact, it will consider modifying the proposed changes to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the disparate impacts of the proposed changes.

Metro will measure disparate impacts by comparing changes in the number of trips serving minority or non-minority census tracts, or by comparing changes in the number of service hours on minority or non-minority routes. Metro defines a minority census tract as one in which the minority population percentage is greater than that of the county as a whole. For regular fixed-route service, Metro defines a minority route as one for which the percentage of inbound weekday boardings in minority census tracts is greater than the average percentage of inbound weekday boardings in minority census tracts for all Metro routes.

Disproportionate Burden Threshold

For the Title VI analysis, a disproportionate burden occurs when a major service change results in adverse effects that are significantly greater for low-income populations than for non-low-income populations. Metro has set this threshold for determining a disproportionate burden: when the percentage of routes or tracts adversely affected by a major service change and classified as low-income is 10 or more percentage points higher than the percentage of routes or tracts classified as low-income in the system as a whole. If Metro finds a disproportionate burden, it will consider modifying the proposed changes to avoid, minimize or mitigate the disproportionate burden of the proposed changes.

Metro will measure disproportionate burden in two ways. One is by comparing changes in the number of trips serving low-income or non-low-income census tracts. The other is by comparing changes in the number of service hours on low-income or non-low-income routes. Metro defines a low-income census tract as one in which the percentage of a low-income population is greater than that of the county as a whole. For regular fixed-route service, Metro defines a low-income route as one for which the percentage of inbound weekday boardings in low-income census tracts is greater than the average percentage of inbound weekday boardings in low-income census tracts for all Metro routes.

King County Equity Impact Review

When Metro makes major service changes, it will conduct an in-depth, project-specific equity analysis using the most current data analysis tools and information. The Equity Impact Review (EIR) process merges empirical (quantitative) data and community engagement findings (qualitative) to inform planning, decision-making, and actions that affect equity. Each project will establish equity-focused goals to guide service planning, scenario development, and engagement—a process derived from the County’s Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan. The goals should target specific outcomes for the project, trade-offs, and accountability to equity and social justice in the planning and decision-making processes. The project team will analyze quantitative and qualitative data to measure the project’s success in meeting the established goals. The Equity Impact Review is designed to be an iterative and evolving process; as new methods and data become available, the EIR process will find ways to consider new information.

Planning and Designing Service

DEVELOPING SERVICE

Metro uses the following service design guidelines to develop transit routes and services. Based on industry best practices for designing service, these guidelines help Metro enhance transit operations and improve the rider experience. The guidelines include both qualitative considerations and quantitative standards for comparing and measuring specific factors.

1. Network Connections

Services should be designed in the context of the entire transit system, which includes local and regional bus routes, Link light rail lines, commuter rail lines, and other modes. Metro strives to make transfers easy. Network design should consider locations where transfer opportunities could be provided to improve mobility and efficiency. Where many transfers are expected between services of different frequencies, timed transfers should be maintained to reduce wait times.

2. Multiple Purposes and Destinations

Routes are more efficient and successful when designed to serve multiple purposes and destinations rather than specialized travel demands. Specialized service should be considered when there is sizeable and demonstrated demand that cannot be adequately met by more generalized service.

3. Easy to Understand

A simple transit network is easier for riders to understand and use than a complex network. Routes should have predictable and direct routings and should provide frequency and span appropriate to the market served. Routes should serve connection points where riders can connect with frequent services, opening the widest possible range of travel options.

4. Route Spacing and Duplication

Routes should be designed to avoid competing for the same riders. In general, routes should be no closer than 1/2 mile. Studies show that riders are often willing to walk up to 1/4 mile, or further for frequent service. Services may overlap or be more

closely spaced where urban and physical geography makes it necessary, where services in a common segment serve different destinations, or where routes converge to serve regional growth centers. Where services do overlap, they should be scheduled together, if possible, to provide shorter waits along the common routing.

Routes are defined as duplicative in the following circumstances:

- Two or more parallel routes operate less than 1/2 mile apart for at least one mile, excluding operations within a regional growth center or approaching a transit center where pathways are limited, or
- A rider can choose between multiple modes or routes connecting the same origin and destination at the same time of day.

Metro should consider transit access in defining a route or route segment as duplicative. Access should be based on the frequency of service. For frequent service, locations within 1/2 mile of a stop or station should be considered as having access. For all other services, locations within 1/4 mile of a stop or station should be considered as having access. These measures are important because they indicate what percent of King County residents could potentially reach transit service within a 5- to 10-minute walk.

5. Route Directness

A route that operates directly between two locations is faster and more attractive to riders than one that takes a circuitous path. Circulators or looping routes do not have competitive travel times compared to walking or other modes of travel, so they tend to have low ridership and poor performance. Some small loops may be necessary to turn the bus around at the end of routes and to provide supplemental coverage, but such extensions should not diminish the overall cost-effectiveness of the route.

Directness should be considered in relation to the market for the service. Where a route deviates away from its major path to serve a specific destination, the delay to riders on board the bus should be considered in relation to the ridership gained on a deviation. Deviations may be used when the delay is less than 10 passenger minutes per person boarding or exiting the bus along the deviation.

$$\frac{\text{Rider Traveling Through} \times \text{Minutes of Deviation}}{\text{Boardings and Alightings Along Deviation}} \leq 10 \text{ Minutes}$$

6. Bus Stop Spacing

Bus stops should be spaced to balance the goals of facilitating transit access, enabling fast and reliable service, and concentrating Metro maintenance and capital resources. Siting stops closer together reduces the distance customers travel to reach transit service. Siting stops further apart increases the speed of service and improves the consistency of arrival times. Greater stop spacing also concentrates ridership at fewer stops, decreases the cost of improving stop amenities for more riders, and minimizes maintenance costs. Metro's desired stop spacing, shown in Table 7, balances these competing needs.

Table 7 Bus Stop Spacing by Service Type

Type of Service	Desired Spacing
RapidRide	1/3–1 mile, depending on context
All other services	1/4 mile

Portions of routes that operate in areas where riders cannot access service, such as along freeways or limited-access roads, are excluded when calculating average stop spacing. Additional considerations for bus stop spacing include transfer points, traffic signals, pedestrian facilities, topography, passenger amenities, and major destinations.

7. Route Length and Neighborhood Route Segments

A bus route should be long enough to provide useful connections for riders and to be more attractive than other travel modes. A route that is too short will not attract many riders, since the bus travel and wait time might not compete with the time it takes to walk. Longer routes offer the opportunity to make more trips without a transfer, resulting in increased ridership and efficiency. However, longer routes may also have poor reliability because travel time can vary significantly from day to day over a long distance.

In some places, routes extend beyond regional growth centers and transit activity centers to serve less dense residential neighborhoods. Where routes operate beyond centers, ridership should be weighed against the time spent serving neighborhood segments, to ensure that the service level is appropriate to the level of demand.

$$\frac{\text{Percent of Time Spent Serving Neighborhood Segment}}{\text{Percent of Riders Boarding or Alighting on Neighborhood Segment}} \leq 1.2$$

8. Operating Paths and Appropriate Vehicles

Buses are large, heavy vehicles and cannot operate safely on all streets. Buses should be routed primarily on arterial streets and freeways, except where routing on local or collector streets is necessary to reach layover areas or turn buses around. Bus routes should also be designed to avoid places where traffic congestion and delays regularly occur, if they can be avoided while still meeting riders' needs. Services should use vehicles that are an appropriate size to operate safely and accommodate demand.

9. Route Terminals

Metro carefully selects the locations where bus routes end and buses wait before starting the next trip (layover). Maintaining existing layover spaces at route terminals is a critical priority to support continued and future service, and expanding layover may be required to support service expansion. People who live or work next to a route end may regard parked buses as undesirable, so new route terminals should be placed where parked buses have the least impact on adjoining properties, if possible. Terminals should be located in areas where restroom facilities are available for operators, taking into account the times of day when the facilities would

be needed. Charging infrastructure may also be needed at terminals for routes served by battery electric buses. Off-street transit centers should be designed to incorporate adequate layover space, operator restrooms, and operations infrastructure, such as zero-emission bus infrastructure.

10. Fixed and Variable Routing

Metro operates fixed routes to provide predictable and reliable service for a wide range of potential riders. However, in low-density areas where demand is widely dispersed, demand-responsive service may provide more effective service than a fixed route could provide. Metro may consider demand-responsive service or flexible service where it is likely to be more successful than fixed-route service or can meet unique conditions more effectively and sustainably.

11. Bus Stop Amenities and Bus Shelters

The minimum ridership threshold for providing a standard shelter and bench at all stops in the county is 25 average daily boardings. Metro prioritizes the installation of eligible standard shelters on the basis of equity, King County policy and planning initiatives, proximity to community assets, service characteristics, and installation feasibility.

Additional stop amenities may include seating, waste receptacles, lighting, information signs, accessibility improvements, maps, and schedules. Metro prioritizes amenities using the same criteria it uses for shelters but does not subject them to the same ridership threshold of 25 daily boardings.

Table 8 Ridership Guidelines for Bus Stop Amenities

RapidRide Routes

Level of Amenity	Weekday Boardings
Large raised station	350+
Large station	105-349
Medium station	50-149
Small station	Less than 50

All Other Metro Routes

Level of Amenity	Weekday Boardings
Standard shelter and bench	25

PLANNING FLEXIBLE SERVICES

Travel demands vary throughout King County. While high-capacity fixed-route bus and light rail service are the backbone of regional mobility, some parts of King County do not have the infrastructure, population density, or land use to support those types of service. Metro provides a range of flexible services that can meet diverse demand more effectively. It seeks to expand on these services, taking

advantage of technological advances and new mobility models to meet diverse customer needs.

Flexible services serve a crucial role in connecting King County residents to where they need to go. The services can provide mobility from and within communities that have low-to-moderate density including rural communities, seed emerging markets, and provide time-of-day service or geographic coverage where there are gaps in the fixed-route system. Metro will work to enhance mobility options for residents while optimizing finite transit resources. Flexible services' priorities are to connect residents to high-capacity, fixed-route transit and to increase access to jobs and community assets.

Adding Flexible Services

Metro will prioritize the expansion of flexible services in equity priority areas. These areas will be identified at the census block group level through an annual analysis using a variety of data sources.¹⁰ Factors used in prioritization indicate where flexible services may be most successful and will be targeted for future flexible services. Prioritization scores will be based on:

- Equity priority area score: the proportion of priority population groups within each block group
- Transit access to jobs
- Transit access to community assets
- Population density, specifically low-to-moderately dense areas
- Available resources and partnerships.

This analysis will be updated and included annually in the System Evaluation Report. The results could be used as part of a comprehensive service restructure planning and engagement effort or as an independent project and process.

More details on community engagement practices can be found in the "Planning and Community Engagement" section on page 32.

Evaluating Flexible Services

Metro will monitor the performance of flexible services on an ongoing basis. It will use the information gathered to make adjustments needed to meet the needs of communities as they change. Flexible services will be measured against similar types of services, as noted below. Metro's evaluations will measure productivity, efficiency, and equity and will consider data from other sources such as the ORCA system or community engagement activities.

¹⁰ Equity priority areas are defined as areas with a high proportion of priority populations as defined in the Mobility Framework, which includes measures of communities of color, poverty, disabled population, foreign born population, and population with limited English proficiency.

Flexible On-Demand

Flexible on-demand services operate without a fixed route; trips are scheduled in response to customer requests. Types of services include feeder-to-fixed route services such as Via to Transit that provide trips to transit hubs. Others are services such as Community Ride that connect riders between two points in a designated service area during service operating hours. These services are driven by a paid driver, either contracted or employed through Metro.

Table 9 Flexible On-Demand Evaluation Criteria

Type of Measure	Measures Used	Description
Productivity	Rides per vehicle hour	Number of total riders who board a vehicle relative to the total number of hours that a vehicle operates
Efficiency	Cost per boarding	Cost per boarding relative to the cost of operating the service
Equity	Percent of riders that are either picked up or dropped off in a designated equity priority area	Total number of boardings or alightings which are in an equity priority area relative to the total number of boardings or alightings

Other Mobility Services

Emerging technologies and service partnerships create new opportunities to provide innovative mobility services to communities. These innovations enable Metro to test new services, establish evaluation metrics, and understand more about community mobility needs. As new services are developed and become available, they will be evaluated based on their performance in the categories listed in Table 10.

Table 10 Other Mobility Service Evaluation Criteria

Type of Measure	Measures Used
Productivity	Service utilization will be measured in a way that allows for total service usage and growth in service usage to be compared to similar Metro services.
Efficiency	Service cost will be measured in a manner consistent with similar existing services and will allow for cross-service comparison.
Equity	When choosing locations for new mobility services, Metro will prioritize service for priority populations. Metro will prioritize external partnerships with organizations and enterprises that share Metro's values in advancing equity and serving priority populations.

In most cases, Metro will also measure integration with the rest of the system. Metrics for these measures will be similar to those for existing services that have a similar purpose. It is possible that these newer services may be folded into an existing or new type of service in the future. Additional measures will be developed prior to the launch of a project, reevaluated once the project is implemented, and continually measured throughout operation.

Pilot Trial Periods

Flexible services will begin with a pilot that enables Metro to learn about how the service operates and how a community uses it. Pilots provide opportunities for continuous improvement of these new, innovative services.

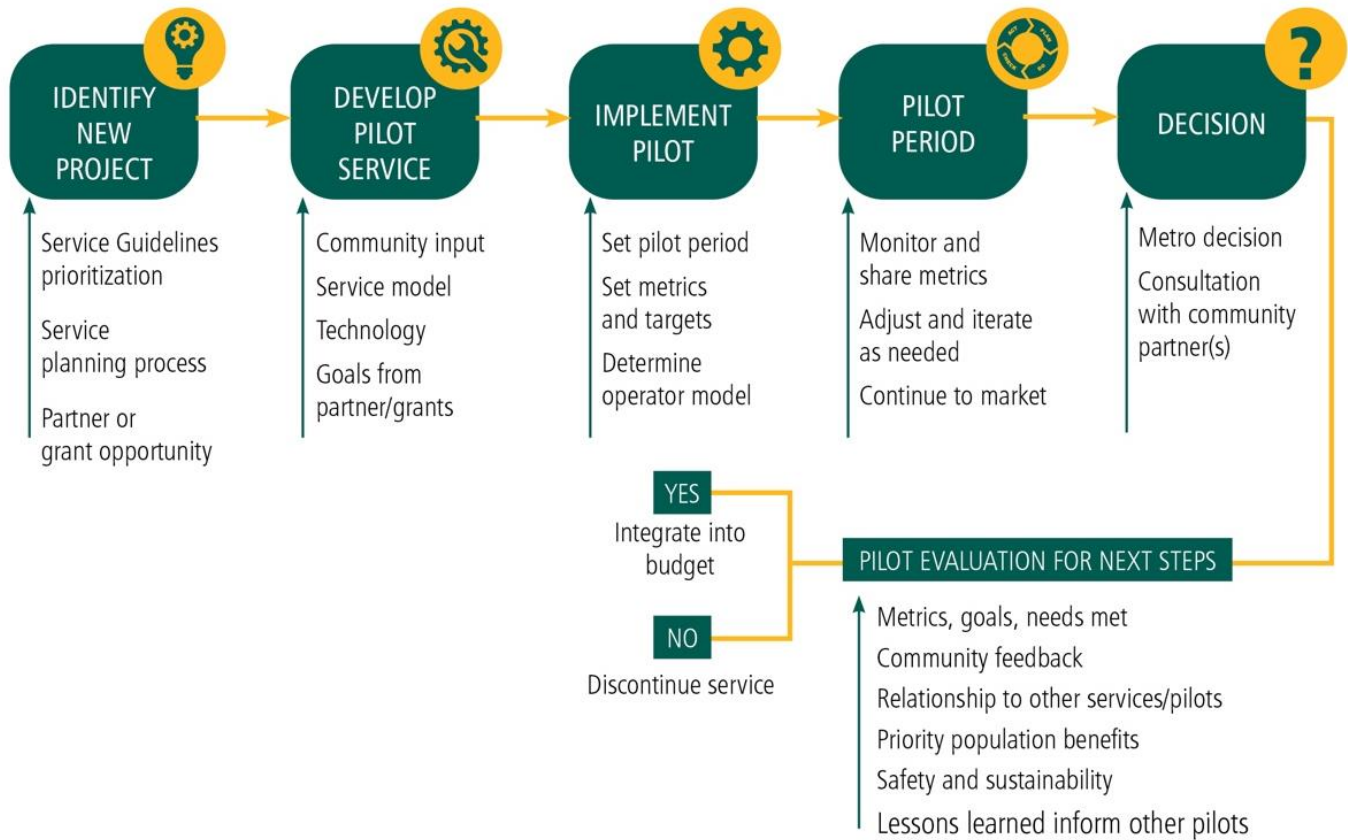
Metro will establish a trial period for each pilot. The trial period will include frequent monitoring, evaluation, and community engagement as well as an annual evaluation. This will allow Metro to adjust the service to better meet the community's mobility needs before a decision is made to discontinue or transition it to a permanent service. Evaluations will measure productivity, efficiency, and equity and may use additional data as well as information gathered from the community.

Transition to Permanent Service

At established evaluation points, Metro will determine if a pilot should be continued, discontinued, or transitioned into a permanent service. In addition to using the evaluation measures described above, Metro will consider other mobility solutions in the area, available resources, and other factors. The evaluation should allow for comparisons among similar service families.

If it becomes permanent, the new flexible service will continue to be evaluated and included in the annual System Evaluation Report.

Figure 2 Life Cycle of a Pilot Project



Reducing Service

When Metro must reduce service, flexible services will follow a process similar to that of fixed-route reductions as outlined in the Adding, Reducing, and Changing Service section. These guidelines help identify the services to be reduced, but they are only a starting point. Metro will also consider other factors including community input, opportunities to achieve system efficiencies and to simplify the network through restructures, and the potential for offering flexible services. It is possible that flexible services may be added in areas where the prioritization analysis has proposed the reduction or removal of fixed-route service.

Factors that Metro considers when reducing flexible services include:

- **The relative impacts to all areas of the county to minimize or mitigate significant impacts in any one area.** Metro seeks to balance reductions throughout the county so that no one area experiences significant negative impacts beyond what other areas experience.
- **Equity needs.** Metro will use the service's applicable equity metrics as a factor for consideration and prioritization of potential service reduction to ensure that Metro continues serving areas where needs are greatest. Metro

will also use information about physical community assets to help ensure service is provided to important places throughout the county.

PLANNING MARINE SERVICES

Metro’s Marine Division operates King County Water Taxi services. The division is funded by a dedicated property tax levy, passenger fares, and federal and state grants. Future marine services will be funded by these sources or other sources dedicated to marine travel. It is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the passenger ferry service and its vessels and terminals.

As of 2021, the water taxi service comprises two routes. It operates out of three terminals with two primary and one back-up vessel. The Vashon Island/downtown Seattle route provides year-round service during weekday commute periods. The West Seattle/downtown Seattle route provides similar weekday commuter ferry service year-round and service 11 to 16 hours daily between April and October.

Evaluating Marine Services

Metro monitors performance and manages marine services using a set of performance measures included in the System Evaluation Report. The Marine Division uses these measures to determine when and where to consider adding service, reallocating service, or adjusting schedules to improve performance.

Three performance measures are used to evaluate ferry service performance: service productivity, passenger loads, and schedule reliability.

Table 11 Marine Service Evaluation Criteria

Type of Measure	Measures Used
Ridership	Average daily ridership
Productivity	Rides per round trip
Passenger loads	Rides per trip
Schedule reliability	Departure within 5 minutes of published schedule

Productivity

Metro measures ridership and productivity to identify services that have strong or weak performance and are candidates for addition or reduction. Average daily ridership is measured and reported for each route for weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

The measure for evaluating ferry service productivity is total passengers per round trip—the initial departure and the return trip. This measure captures average number of riders on a vessel for both trips.

Round trips with a high number of passengers in one direction (such as during peak commute hours) or round trips with passengers going in both directions will perform well on this measure relative to other round trips. Round trips with few people going in either direction will perform poorly on this measure.

Passenger Loads

Passenger loads are a measure of crowding. Vessel passenger capacity for ferry service is regulated by the U.S. Coast Guard, and passenger counts for each trip are tracked and recorded. Trips are considered to be crowded if they reach 95 percent or greater capacity more than five times per month over a 12-month period.

Crowded trips reflect high demand at specific times when customers might be left waiting at the dock for the next trip. These crowded trips will be put on a watch list for potential service adjustments to meet the high demand.

Reliability

The schedule reliability evaluation measures whether a ferry trip departure is within five minutes of the published schedule. These trips are considered to be on time. The overall goal is for 98 percent of all trips to be on time.

All departure times are tracked. If more than 25 percent of departures for a specific trip time are late over 12 months, that trip time will be placed on a watch list. A high number of late trips may mean that more time is needed for loading and unloading passengers, particularly if passenger loads are high for that trip time. Schedules for trips on the watch list may need to be adjusted to ensure trips can depart on time.

Adding, Reducing, or Changing Marine Services

Changes to ferry service levels may be necessary to address changing conditions, improve system performance, and better serve customers. Any plans for adding or changing ferry service will consider Metro's core priorities, including safety, equity, and sustainability.

Factors that drive changes in ferry service levels include overall ridership growth on a route, at-capacity trips, changing travel patterns, competing services, changes in employment centers, and total travel time. The Marine Division may need to change ferry service when it is adding service, reallocating service, or adjusting schedules.

Adding Service

Additional service may be needed to accommodate high demand. The passenger load measure will be the primary indicator for when and where to add service. The Marine Division will also conduct rider outreach via surveys and other outreach methods to inform decisions about service additions. Planning for any expansion of new marine service routes should also consider the cost-benefit comparison of water taxi service to land-based transit services, including fixed-route and flexible service options.

During weekday peak periods, ferry service between West Seattle/downtown Seattle and Vashon Island/downtown Seattle is already running as frequently as possible with one vessel on each route. Additional ferry service could be attained in two ways:

- Adding new ferry trips at the beginning or end of a current service period on an existing route, expanding the service period.
- Adding a second vessel to a route. This would primarily be done to meet demand during peak periods.

Reallocating Service

Ferry services can be reallocated by redeploying existing ferry trips to other times of the day, other times of the year, or between existing ferry routes. The productivity measure will be the primary indicator for high- and low-performing trips eligible for reallocation. High- and low-performing round trips will be based on the top 10 percent and bottom 10 percent of average rides per round trip for all round trips scheduled throughout the year. The bottom 10 percent of trips will be identified annually and put on a watch list and will be eligible for reallocation. The top 10 percent of trips will indicate high-performing routes and time periods that should be considered when reallocating services. Each ferry route has a unique schedule, operating frequency, and seasonal differences, so routes will be evaluated separately.

Adjusting Schedules

The Marine Division must adjust ferry service schedules when travel times change because of growth in ridership demand, increases in ferry terminal use, and other factors that negatively affect schedule reliability. The on-time performance measure will be the primary indicator that ferry schedules must be adjusted to maintain on-time performance. The division will consider making changes to the schedules based on the watch list of late trips that it creates annually.

Implementation

The Marine Division makes service changes twice a year for summer and winter schedules. In rare cases of emergency or time-critical construction projects, the division may make changes at other times as well.

The twice-yearly schedule changes are programmed into the division's biennial budget and approved by the King County Council.

- **Adding service:** Additions of ferry routes are subject to approval by the King County Council. Ferry trips may be added on existing routes if they are within existing budgeted resources and are temporary. Long-term additions to existing routes are subject to approval by the King County Council.
- **Reallocating service:** Ferry trips may be reallocated to existing routes if they are within existing budgeted resources. These types of adjustments would occur at one of the twice-annual service schedule changes.
- **Adjusting service:** Ferry trip schedules on existing routes may be adjusted if they are within existing budgeted resources. These types of adjustments would occur at one of the twice-annual service schedule changes.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Partnerships will help Metro move toward its goals and Metro Connects long-range vision.

Metro will form partnerships with a range of entities. These include transit providers, community-based groups, schools and universities, human service organizations,

property owners and managers, businesses, and local, regional, and state agencies, and jurisdictions.

By working with partners, Metro can leverage public and private resources and discover new opportunities. Metro can expand its accomplishments by collaborating with partners to design and deliver services, facilities, and access improvements, and to develop policies, programs, products, and incentives. Individual partnerships will support Metro's systemwide goals.

Table 12 Example Partnerships

Partnership	Example
Direct financial partnership	Full or partial funding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fixed-route transit service or flexible service ▪ right-of-way and signal infrastructure improvements ▪ passenger facilities and amenities, including leveraging existing capital projects that provide value to Metro ▪ outreach and education to encourage transit and walk and roll access to transit.
Other partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant support from decision-makers and communities to equitably develop and deliver transit service ▪ Community-led and resourced engagement ▪ Zoning and other land-use measures that support increased density and mixed uses within Urban Growth Areas, consistent with the Land Use section of this document ▪ Investments in facilities for walking and rolling, and implementation of street design guidelines that enhance safe and convenient access to transit service ▪ Planning and development of street right-of-way to include transit preferential treatments. Could include bus lanes, signal improvements, bus bulbs, and channelization alternatives to support transit operations and increase access and ridership. ▪ Provision of transit layover facilities and curb space management strategies that support ridership, other mobility usage, or operations.

Engagement and Prioritization

When a proposed or changed partnership agreement addresses specific routes, services, or infrastructure, the partner should incorporate community engagement that is equity-centered, supports lasting community relationships, and builds awareness of and access to services among priority populations. Metro will give special consideration to partnerships that were developed with community and priority populations when it considers which candidate projects to implement. If Metro partners or contracts with private or public entities, these partners should reflect Metro's values of safety, sustainability, and equity.

Service Partnerships

Metro seeks partners that would fully or partially fund mobility services, including fixed-route transit, marine, and flexible services. Services provided through a partnership should reflect the needs identified by the partner or the community.

Implementation may be based on partner priorities and community needs. All service partnerships are subject to Metro's capacity to develop and deliver services.

Goals for Partnerships

- Benefit both the partners and the customers
- Provide mobility services that align with Metro's equity goals, including investment in areas with unmet need
- Advance King County's climate goals to increase ridership, reduce car trips and vehicle emissions, and encourage dense affordable housing near transit
- Support implementation of Metro Connects

Fixed-Route Service

Metro encourages partners to invest in services identified as priorities in the Service Guidelines "Adding, Reducing, and Changing Service" section. However, Metro recognizes that partners may have different priorities.

What Metro Can Offer

Metro will make exceptions to the investment priorities outlined in the Service Guidelines to leverage partner funding as follows:

- Services that are fully funded by Metro's partners generally will be implemented at the next service change if the investment clearly and substantially benefits Metro's goals and if Metro has capacity to deliver added service. The goals include meeting unmet needs of priority populations, advancing King County's climate goal of reduced car trips, increasing ridership, and supporting Metro's long-range vision.
- Metro will ensure that service partnerships have acceptable contract terms, adequate operational infrastructure, and community engagement.
- Metro will prioritize the implementation of partner investments that advance Metro's goals. Metro's priorities are, in this order: services that serve equity priority areas, productive service, and reliable service. If a service partnership is partially funded, Metro will consider the level of contribution and level of support for Metro policy goals in the prioritization of implementation.

Flexible Service

Metro encourages partners to invest in flexible services that work best for priority populations, that complement and bring people to existing and future fixed-route bus service, and that advance King County's climate and equity goals. Metro seeks to partner with cities, communities and private companies to develop these services.

What Metro Can Offer

- Metro will prioritize implementation and investment in partnerships that, in this order: benefit equity priority areas and reduce single-occupant vehicle trips and increase transit ridership by improving connections to transit—especially high-capacity transit.

- Metro will ensure that service partnerships have acceptable contract terms, adequate operational infrastructure, and community engagement.

Infrastructure Partnerships

Partnerships to develop infrastructure are critically important for the Metro Connects long-range vision. In many cases, infrastructure partnerships with jurisdictions and other agencies are necessary for routing changes, service and access improvements, and emissions-reducing service improvements.

Metro seeks to actively support partners in exploring financial or in-kind infrastructure investments that accomplish the following:

- Improve transit speed and reliability
- Leverage existing partner projects to provide Metro improvements at a reduced cost compared to stand-alone projects
- Support implementation of the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan goals and priority actions
- Support implementation of the Metro Connects long-range vision
- Create safe, attractive, and accessible customer facilities
- Support safe and convenient connections to public transportation options via walking, rolling, and other modes.

Table 13 What Metro Seeks in Partnerships

Developing/Funding Projects	Prioritizing Transit	Improving Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contributions from grants or local funds for new RapidRide lines ▪ Corridor and spot improvements to improve transit speed and reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preferential treatments for transit such as bus lanes and queue jumps ▪ Facilities for transit layover and curb space management strategies that support transit operations ▪ Streamlined design and construction approval processes for implementing partnership projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment in facilities that enhance access to a variety of mobility services, such as walking and rolling facilities ▪ Street design guidelines that prioritize and set standards for transit and active transportation ▪ Improved street network connectivity

What Metro Can Offer

- Metro will prioritize implementation of infrastructure projects in equity priority areas or benefiting services focused in equity priority areas. Metro will also prioritize projects that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the use of alternative fuels, efficient operations, and electrification.
- Jurisdictions with partnerships on major efforts to implement Metro’s long-range vision may be prioritized in Metro’s implementation strategy.
- Metro will prioritize partnerships for walk and roll improvements with jurisdictions that have adopted policies and design standard best practices that enable safe use and mobility for all ages, abilities, and modes.

Metro's resourcing and investment in potential partnerships will be subject to its prioritization of projects and available resources.

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Metro will design and implement a planning and engagement process with the public and stakeholders, including jurisdictional partners, partner agencies, and community-based organizations. The purpose of engagement is to better understand community mobility needs, co-create proposals, and share in decision-making about service changes that could have significant impacts on communities.

Goals for Engagement

In order to conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement, engagement processes should be the following:

- **Customized.** Phases, feedback methods, and opportunities for the public to shape the project outcome will be tailored to the size and scope of the change and the affected communities.
- **Equitable.** Metro strives to inform and hear from all communities that will be affected, centering its engagement and listening to the voices of historically unserved or underserved communities.
- **Informative.** Information and ways to participate will be clear, understandable, and accessible.
- **Transparent.** Metro will describe its input, planning, and decision-making processes.
- **Responsive.** At each step, Metro will show how public feedback has informed its decisions.
- **Focused on long-term relationship building.** Metro will approach communities with a commitment to mutual capacity building. All staff members will be ambassadors for all of Metro, not just their project. Being in a community will change how Metro's staff thinks about and designs with and for the community.

Centering Equity in Planning and Engagement

The King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and Metro's Mobility Framework guide Metro to equitably engage communities to shape decisions about service in the following ways:

- **Focus on priority populations.** Metro will use demographic data and information from past engagement experiences and community partners to design engagement strategies and tactics that increase participation from priority populations.
- **Form mobility boards.** For large service restructures, Metro will recruit a mobility board made up of people who live, work, or travel in the area. The board will co-create and share in the decision-making about service changes and new mobility options. It will also advise on ways Metro can engage with

the larger community. Metro will convene a mobility board that equitably represents groups of people who have historically been left out of decision-making conversations related to transit and who are disproportionately affected by these decisions. When resources are available, Metro will compensate mobility board members for their time, input, and lived experience as community members.

- **Engage community as co-creators.** Metro will demonstrate that it values the expertise and time of community members and partners by doing the following:
 - Engaging communities as early as possible to shape initial concepts and to allow sufficient time to participate in the process
 - Working collaboratively and resourcing partners to help design and implement equitable community engagement
 - Being comprehensive and coordinated across Metro divisions, county departments, and partner agencies
 - Meeting people where they are in the community
 - Including time and resources in the engagement for long-term relationship building.

Metro will work with jurisdictions, community-based organizations, and other partners to promote and market the new service to potential riders, ensure that it is welcoming and accessible to riders in priority populations, and gather feedback to continually improve service to meet riders' needs.

Reporting on Engagement

Metro will document and report on public engagement efforts to show how public and stakeholder input shaped plans and decisions along the way. That information will be shared with the involved community stakeholders and made available to the public. For proposals that require an ordinance, a public engagement report will be submitted along with the ordinance package to the King County Council. The Equity Impact Review (described on page 19) will use the public engagement report to document both quantitative and qualitative data and to support accountability for equity and social justice in project planning and decision-making processes.

King County Metro Long-Range Plan

Metro Connects

November 17, 2021



Metro Connects

is King County Metro's vision for providing more service, more choices, and one easy-to-use system over the next 30 years.

As Metro's long-range service and capital vision, Metro Connects describes how Metro will work toward a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. This system will support healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.

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More service, more choices, one system

Expanding our regional transit system to include more frequent Metro bus service to connect more neighborhoods to high-capacity transit is a tangible example of how we are creating an interconnected transportation system that gives our residents and visitors more choices to get to more places.

It's one part of our path to the future of transportation in King County, where public transit is the first choice because it's convenient, safe, reliable, affordable, — and positively impacts our environment and economy.

Metro's mission is to provide the best possible public transportation services to improve regional mobility and quality of life in King County. To do so, we are creating an innovative, integrated, safe, equitable, and sustainable mobility agency that connects people to opportunity, protects our environment, and knits together our growing cities. And, this long-range vision—Metro Connects—is how we will get there.

Decades of Metro's innovation and commitment to eliminating disparities by race and place give us a strong foundation to build on, including the nation's leading low-income fare program, one of the greenest bus fleets in the United States, and our highly successful RapidRide lines.

Metro Connects was shaped by input we received from passengers, King County cities, Sound Transit and other transportation agencies, businesses, and stakeholders working together to achieve a shared vision of better mobility in our region.

Now, we are seeing our collective vision become reality.

Metro Connects gets us where we need to go when we need to get there, supporting healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature reads "Dow Constantine" in a cursive, flowing script.

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Executive Summary

Metro Connects is a vision for bringing more and better mobility services to King County over the next 30 years: frequent, reliable, and fast service—all day, every day—through a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable.

Metro Connects is a long-range service and capital vision developed by Metro, its partners, and the public to provide mobility to all. This is especially important as the region grows - gaining more people and more jobs - and becomes increasingly diverse, and as the climate crisis becomes even more urgent.

The vision creates multimodal connections to the places people want to go. It provides for safe and secure operations and facilities for passengers, employees, and communities. Customer-friendly vehicles, drivers, stops, information, and assistance, as well as an emphasis on modernizing how Metro delivers service, will be essential.

This 2021 update to Metro Connects emphasizes Metro's core values: safety, equity, and sustainability. It incorporates the recommendations of the Mobility Framework¹ and aligns with Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation and its Service Guidelines. The update recognizes that many changes have occurred since Metro Connects was first adopted in 2017 and makes targeted changes to the proposed service networks while updating associated costs.

Highlights include:

- **More than 70 percent increase in service by 2050.** Metro will develop an interim network by the time the West Seattle and Ballard Link extensions have been completed.
- **Increased mobility services of all types to complement the high-capacity transit network.** These will include flexible services that can provide fast and easy connections to the larger public transit system.
- **A commitment to work with partners to improve the quality of services.** Metro and partners will invest in speed and reliability, passenger facilities, equitable transit-oriented communities, and other programs.

¹ Metro co-created the Mobility Framework with an Equity Cabinet, comprised of 23 community leaders, in 2019. The Mobility Framework directed Metro to center advancing equity and addressing climate change in its work. The King County Council adopted a summary of the Mobility Framework's recommendations in 2020 through Motion 15618.

- **Plans to grow Metro’s fleet and operations capacity.** Plans will include charging stations for electric vehicles of all types and the use of greener technologies.
- **A description of how Metro can achieve Metro Connects, which is expensive and not fully funded.** This update includes expected costs. This plan also discusses the need for additional funding, how Metro will work and communicate with partners and communities, and opportunities for cities to help make the Metro Connects vision possible.

Background

Metro Connects responds to critical challenges facing Puget Sound, including:

- A growing, diversifying population and historic inequities
- Transportation challenges resulting from displacement
- The worsening climate crisis
- The need to integrate a wide range of mobility services, including connecting with regional transportation partners
- The COVID-19 pandemic
- The need for new, sustainable funding sources

People across King County helped shape Metro Connects. In 2015 and 2016, transit customers, bus drivers, cities, Sound Transit and other transportation agencies, businesses, and more joined Metro in imagining the future mobility system. Thousands of participants shared their needs, hopes, and ideas for getting around better. Metro met regularly with Technical Advisory Committee participants and Community Advisory Group members. This inclusive process led to a shared vision, and the King County Council adopted Metro Connects in 2017.²

Collaboration continued as Metro updated Metro Connects in 2020-21, through engagement with stakeholders including the Equity Cabinet, a group of 23 community leaders representing riders and priority populations countywide. Metro incorporated recommendations from the Mobility Framework for advancing equity and addressing climate change, aligned Metro Connects with changes and planning done since its adoption, and made targeted adjustments to the service networks and costs.

The Metro Connects update

This iteration of Metro Connects reflects the updated vision and goals described in the 2021-2031 Strategic Plan for Public Transportation. It will help Metro deliver on the goals in King County’s 2016-2022 Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and King County’s 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan. As directed by the Mobility Framework, the updated Metro Connects includes an increased focus on addressing the needs of priority populations as a strategy for improving mobility and prosperity for all.

² Ordinance 18449 adopted Metro Connects.

This focus aligns with a “targeted universalism” approach consistent with King County’s Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan which defines targeted universalism as “defining outcomes for all, identifying obstacles faced by specific groups, and tailoring strategies and building on assets to address barriers.”³ Metro’s universal outcomes are captured in its mission to “provide the best possible public transportation services and improve regional mobility and quality of life in King County” and vision to “deliver a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable.” The plan outlines how Metro will develop and enact targeted approaches and investments with and for communities with the greatest needs—priority populations. By making investments tailored to community needs, Metro can improve mobility and thereby priority populations’ access to the determinants of equity.

Priority populations: people who are Black, Indigenous, and of color; have low or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.

Metro Connects lays the groundwork for next steps by establishing needs for future road, land-use, service, and technology improvements as well as policies that support the vision for future transit. It helps cities understand the service envisioned for their communities and describes the vital role cities play in creating and supporting transit access on their street networks, capital investments and transit-supportive land use and development.

Though the service networks in Metro Connects are important guides, community engagement will drive service changes, ensuring they respond to community-identified needs.

Metro Connects is an intentionally unconstrained vision, reflecting the imagination and input of many stakeholders and partners. Metro Connects is ambitious, expensive, and only partially funded, with the 2050 network expected to cost more than \$28 billion in capital expenses and require more than seven million annual service hours, more than a 70 percent increase from 2019.⁴ Metro will only achieve Metro Connects through a cycle of growing its network and connecting people to mobility services, measuring progress, demonstrating value, securing additional funding, and continuing to grow.

Metro cannot do this alone. Metro, elected leaders, regional partners, and communities must work together to secure additional regional funding and partner on projects and improvements.

³ [King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan](#)

⁴ Estimates are at the time of transmittal of the 2021 updated Metro Connects. Metro expects costs will change as Metro Connects is implemented. Metro updated the cost estimates partly in response to King County Council motion 15252.

Structure of this plan

Metro Connects includes three visioning chapters: “Service Network,” “Service Quality Investments,” and “Fleet, Infrastructure, and Workforce.” They describe what Metro plans to do and the types of investments needed to build the proposed future network of Metro services. The fourth chapter, “Attaining the Vision,” describes how Metro could deliver Metro Connects. Each chapter, explained briefly below, includes an overview of its key elements and how that chapter advances Strategic Plan goals, as well as sections describing individual components of the vision.

Service Network

Metro Connects envisions integrating its expanded mobility system with regional partners—especially Sound Transit—and delivering more than 70 percent more Metro bus service by 2050. This significant service expansion will occur in two phases: an interim service network targeted for implementation before the Ballard Link expansion, and a 2050 service network that completes the Metro Connects vision.

Metro's suite of mobility services will continue to grow and will include RapidRide; frequent, express, and local fixed-route bus service; flexible services; Access paratransit; vanpool and ridesharing; and water taxi service. The Service Network chapter includes updated Metro Connects network maps as well as a section on each of the previously mentioned service types.

Service Quality Improvements

As part of Metro’s commitment to providing fast, frequent, and reliable service, Metro Connects emphasizes improvement of service quality. Metro strives to improve the customer experience and give its workforce the tools and training they need to do their jobs. This chapter describes programs and investments that help improve service quality, connect people to transit, enhance the customer experience, manage the system, and ensure safety. Specific sections include speed and reliability; boarding and fares; innovation, modernization, and technology; customer communications; passenger facilities; connecting to transit; managing demand; and equitable transit-oriented communities.

Fleet, Infrastructure, and Workforce

Metro Connects calls for improvements and expansion of Metro’s physical and people infrastructure to support significant expansion in service growth. Metro must continue growing and electrifying its fleet to keep up with service demand and achieve its goal of a zero-emissions bus fleet by 2035. Base expansion, ensuring bases can support electric vehicles, and targeted on-route charging will be critical, as will increasing the amount of well-maintained layover areas. Finally, supporting and growing Metro’s workforce equitably will be essential. Sections in this chapter include fleet, electrification, facilities, other support systems, layover areas, and Metro’s workforce.

Attaining the Vision

Metro must work with partners to implement and fund Metro Connects. The “Attaining the Vision” chapter describes expected costs for Metro Connects, highlighting the need for a regional conversation about how to close the substantial

funding gap. It also describes how Metro will follow adopted policies and planning processes and engage cities and communities to implement the vision, with a focus on streamlined planning, clear communication, and upstream engagement. It clarifies opportunities for cities to partner with Metro to deliver Metro Connects, outlines how Metro will track progress and demonstrate value, and describes next steps. Specific sections in this chapter include: financial overview, implementation of Metro Connects – policies and planning, implementation of Metro Connects – engagement with communities and partners, measuring progress, and next steps.

Connecting Metro Connects and Metro’s Strategic Plan

As Metro’s long-range service and capital vision, Metro Connects is essential to delivering a system that advances Metro’s mission, vision, and policy goals, as described in Metro’s Strategic Plan for Public Transportation. The Metro Connects service network also helps guide ongoing investment decisions through Metro’s Service Guidelines and service growth investment priorities. Symbols used in this visioning document represent policy goals⁵ outlined in Metro’s Strategic Plan.

Alignment with Strategic Plan Goals

				
Invest upstream and where needs are greatest	Address the climate crisis and environmental justice	Innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability	Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe.	Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development
				
Improve access to mobility options	Provide fast, reliable, integrated services	Build a skilled, diverse, and well-supported workforce that has opportunities to grow	Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals.	Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement

Want more information?
[Visit www.kcmetrovision.org](http://www.kcmetrovision.org)

⁵ The goals in the 2021 update to the Strategic Plan align with the Mobility Framework’s guiding principles, created in partnership with the Equity Cabinet and adopted by the King County Council.



Imagine what it could be like

A world-class mobility system that gives customers more frequent, reliable, and fast service all day, every day throughout King County. A system that offers innovative new travel options; clean, safe, and customer-friendly vehicles and facilities; and information that allows travelers to connect seamlessly across different transportation modes.

A system that intentionally invests where needs are greatest and addresses climate change helps everyone in King County to thrive.

When a customer gets up in the morning, their smart device or computer shows the choices in an area: Take a local bus, or join a vanpool, or take an on-demand service to a transit center to catch a frequent RapidRide or express bus. Their chosen mode goes straight to their work or to a Link station.

Another choice: go with someone who's driving to the same destination using an app to find people to share the ride. This customer could drive to the local park-and-ride—their smart device indicates there are 12 open parking spaces.

Once they leave home, this person's device offers even more information, accessible to people regardless of abilities and language spoken. Every seat is taken on the first bus, but the one coming five minutes later has plenty of room. This rider can make a quick stop at the coffee shop and catch that next bus.

On the way to the bus stop, cyclists pass by on a new bike lane next to the sidewalk. Some will put their bikes in the secure lockers at the stop and board the bus.

The stop is well-lit, so riders can see who's waiting under the large shelter. The father who drops his children at day care every morning is there. The floor of the bus is even with the stop platform so he can roll the stroller on—and there's a place where he can stash it onboard. People who use mobility aids like level boarding, too, as well as the easy mechanism for securing mobility aids by themselves. Level boarding creates safe and easy boarding for everyone.

It doesn't take long for everyone to get on the bus—the passengers tapped their fare cards on the sidewalk kiosk or used mobile ticketing and boarded through all doors. The driver smiles and answers questions for a few riders.

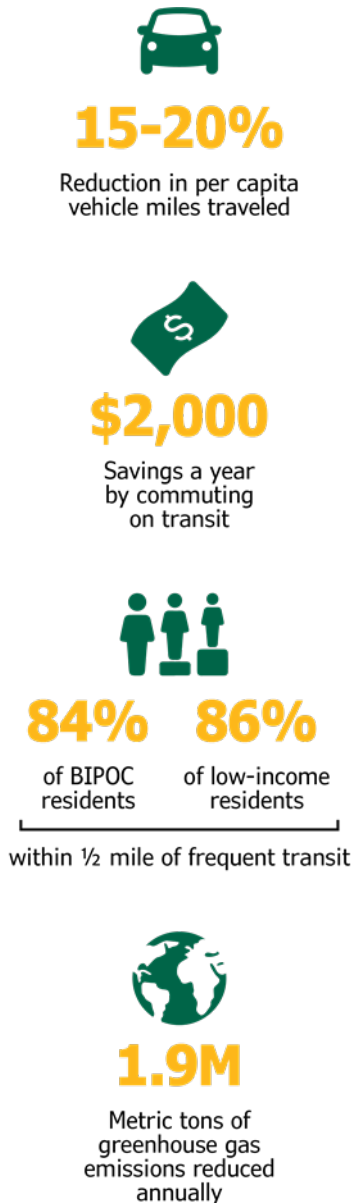
The bus arrives at the destination much faster than it used to. The road now has a bus-only lane and traffic signals that stay green when the bus approaches.

Usually, this person walks the last mile to work for exercise, but it's raining hard. They decide to take an on-demand service that's waiting near the transit center. The driver accepts the ORCA card, so paying is quick and easy.

Compared to 30 years ago, this trip was much faster, easier, and full of options—with choices available all day, any day.

How Metro Connects will help keep the region a great place to live

Figure 1 Impacts of Metro Connects 2050 Network



Advance equity by creating more opportunities for all.

More than 20 percent of people in King County have incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.⁶ Metro will expand opportunities for people to prosper and thrive by offering frequent trips all day to jobs, education, and services. Metro will continue to strive to support those who cannot pay for the system.

Address climate change and protect the environment.

Climate change threatens the global and local environment, economy, health, and safety. Transit, supported by appropriate land use and equitable road pricing, are the best tools for reducing vehicle miles traveled and advancing countywide goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050.⁷ They will also help manage congestion and reduce pollution.

Connect a growing population to fast, high-capacity transit services.

With 1.8 million more people and 1.2 million more jobs expected in central Puget Sound by 2050⁸, enhanced transit will help move more people, faster than today. As light rail and bus rapid transit services expand, Metro can get more people to stations for fast, frequent, and reliable trips to major destinations, within and beyond their own communities. Figure 2 shows examples of how much farther people could go in 2050 than in 2019, traveling in the middle of the day.

Save customers money.

Today, an average drive-alone commute in King County costs approximately \$290 per month, not

⁶ Mobility Framework report, Travel Trends appendix

⁷ [King County Strategic Climate Action Plan](#):

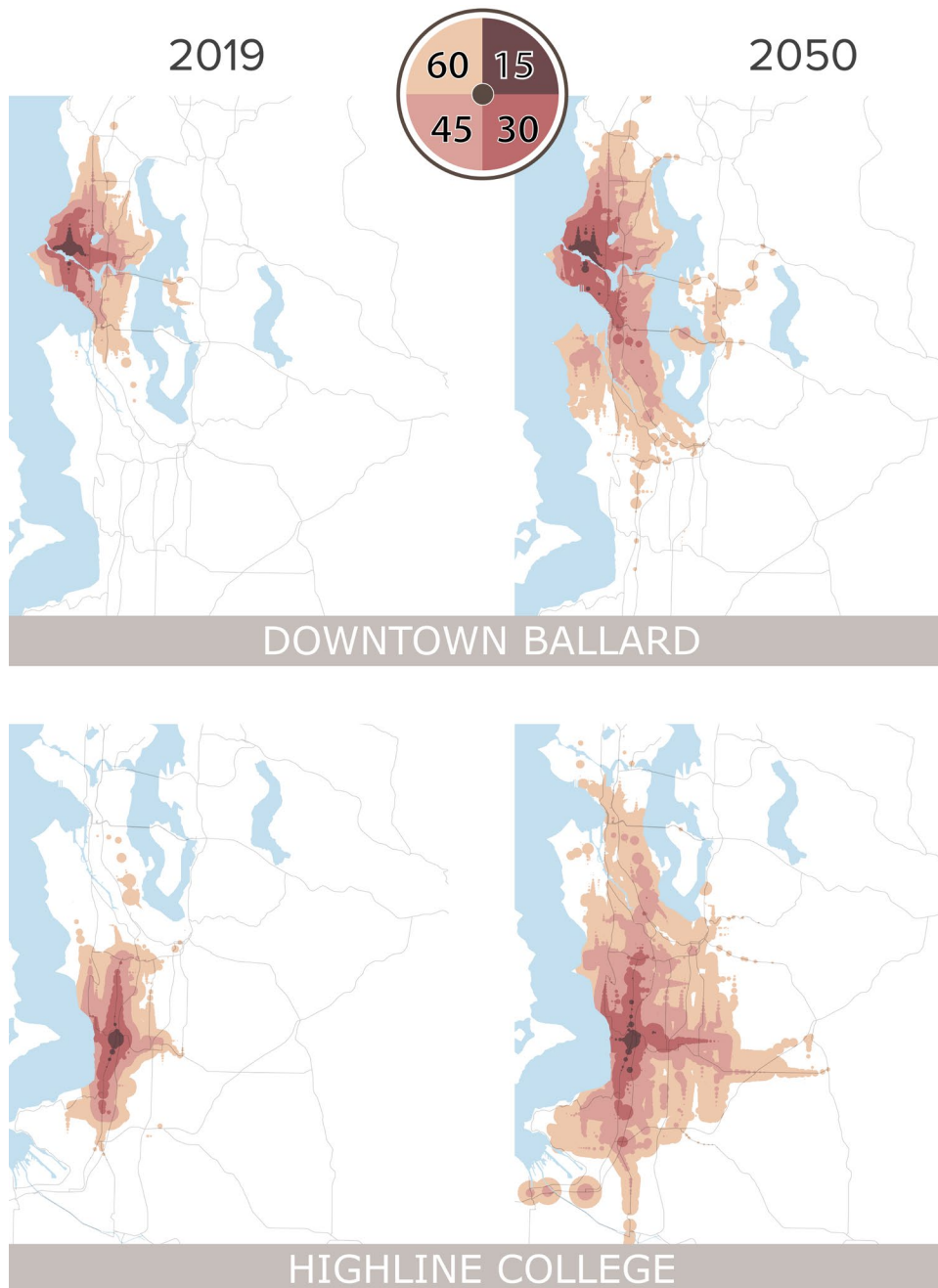
⁸ Puget Sound Regional Council, VISION 2050, www.psrc.org

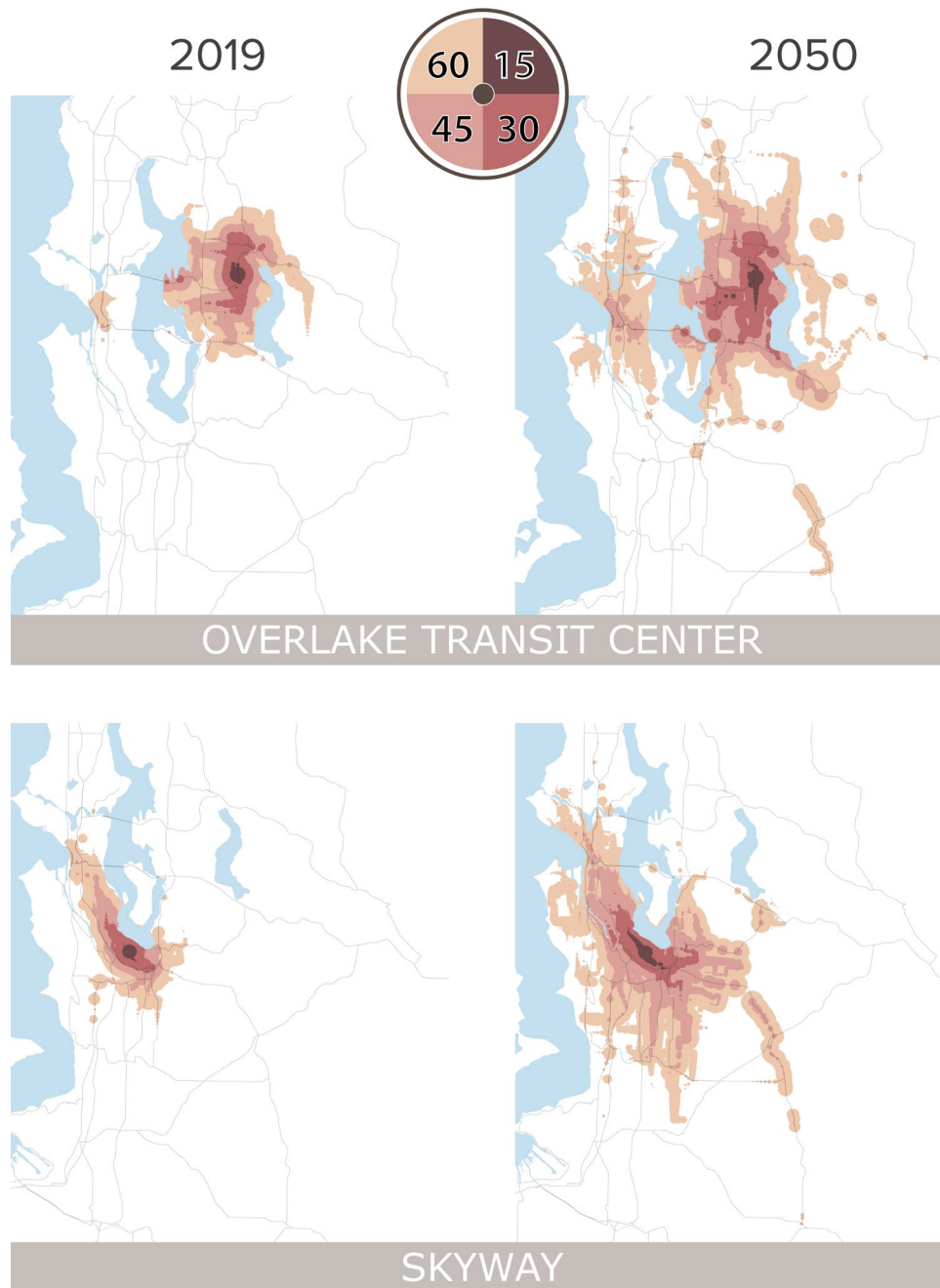
counting parking and tolls. A regional transit pass costs \$117. Expanded transit will allow more people to save more money.

Adopt new technologies that help people get around.

Metro would use emerging technologies—and the most up-to-date data possible—to provide easier, greener, and smarter travel options.

Figure 2 Examples of How Far Customers Could Go at Midday in 15, 30, 45, or 60 Minutes





The travel sheds shown above include walking time, average amount of time waiting for the bus, travel time, and any transfer time between buses starting at noon.

The starting point for each example is:

- Downtown Ballard: 15th Ave NW and NW Market St
- Overlake Transit Center: NE 40th St and 156th Ave NE
- Highline College: S 240th St and Pacific Hwy S
- Skyway: Renton Ave S and 72nd Ave S

The Service Network

OVERVIEW

The expanded service network in Metro Connects is essential to building a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. If implemented, this network will support healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment. There will be more than a 70 percent increase in Metro bus service by 2050, dramatically expanding the number of places people can go and decreasing the time it takes to get there, increasing Metro bus ridership to a projected 200 million annually by 2050.⁹

Metro Connects includes two networks: an interim network (targeted for delivery before Sound Transit's Ballard Link extension) and a long-range 2050 network. Both networks are ambitious, integrated with services of other agencies, and not fully funded. Metro looks forward to working with transit agencies, cities, and other partners to fund and implement the expanded system.

Services included in the Metro Connects networks and described in this section are:

- RapidRide
- Frequent service
- Express service
- Local service
- Accessible transportation options
- Marine service (water taxi)

Local service includes fixed-route and flexible options, such as buses, on-demand services, and community vans. Expanded and improved local service improves mobility by helping people get to destinations in their communities and providing connections to the regional transit network.

How the network will change

Metro Connects will add approximately three million new service hours to Metro's service network by 2050, on top of the approximately four million hours of service Metro provided in 2019.¹⁰

⁹ The Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2050 projects the region will grow by 1.8 million people and 1.2 million jobs by 2050, and Metro's annual service is envisioned to grow from approximately 4.25 million hours to approximately 7.25 million hours annually.

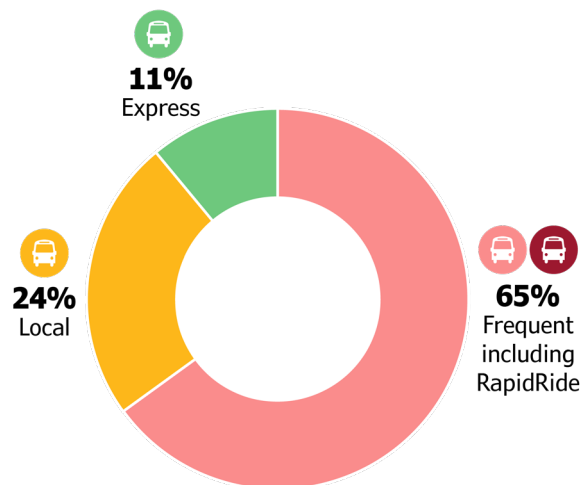
¹⁰ The 4.25 million service hours for Metro bus service was before impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It does not include any Sound Transit service operated by Metro.

The enhanced system will:

- **Advance equity and address climate change** by providing additional service in areas with unmet need¹¹ and making transit a more competitive option to driving alone.
- **Connect people to Sound Transit’s expanding regional transit system** by working in concert with Sound Transit’s existing, planned, and proposed investments.
- **Meet current transit needs** identified in Metro’s annual System Evaluation Report and future transit needs identified in cities’ growth plans.
- **Provide more flexible services** that improve mobility by connecting people to key locations and to the fixed-route network.
- **Move Metro toward an all-day service network** that operates from earlier in the morning to later at night.

Figure 3 illustrates the anticipated percentage of Metro’s fixed-route bus service, by type, in 2050.

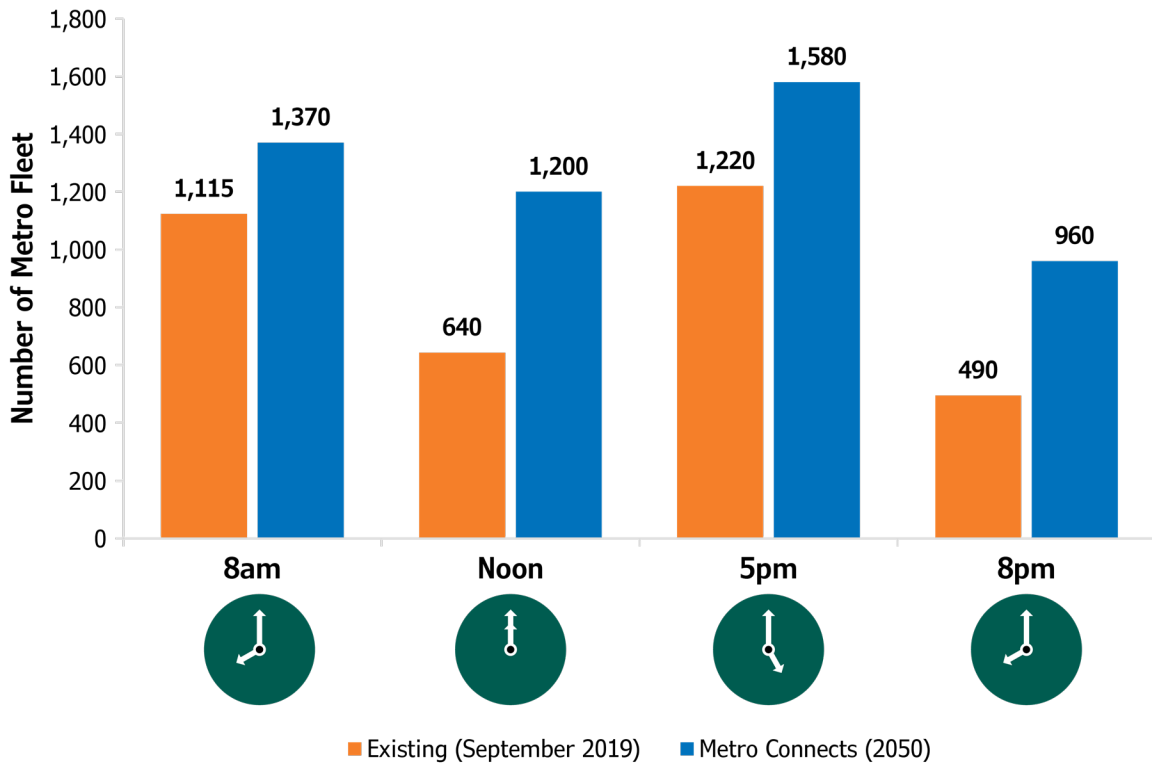
Figure 3 Anticipated Service in 2050 Network



As shown in Figure 4, Metro will provide a more robust all-day network by increasing service throughout the day, with the largest relative increases in the middle of the day and the evening.

¹¹ Per the adopted Mobility Framework, unmet need is defined as areas with high-density, a high proportion of priority populations, and limited midday and evening service.

Figure 4 Growth in Vehicles in Service in 2050



As shown in Figure 5, the proposed Metro Connects network includes: RapidRide, frequent, express, local, accessible transportation options, and marine service (water taxi).

RapidRide is Metro’s arterial bus rapid transit service. Frequent and express are fixed-route bus services that operate on regular schedules and pathways. Local services include fixed-route transit and flexible services that are tailored to local needs and connect riders to regional transit services. The majority of Metro services will continue to be fixed-route transit. However, Metro Connects envisions flexible services, such as on-demand services and community vans, expanding as part of Metro’s suite of travel options in the future.






Metro currently operates some routes that run only when demand is the highest (peak-only routes). These routes might have trips in the morning and evening but little or no service at other times of day. While Metro Connects will expand many express routes to provide all-day service, peak-only service will still be an important tool for serving certain markets.

Metro also operates Access Paratransit service and will continue to focus on improving Access while also making its other fixed-route services more accessible for people of all abilities. Additionally, Metro operates and envisions expanding marine (water taxi) services.

Metro Connects uses a network of local fixed-route bus service to approximate the future locations and quantity of local service. However, guided by community

engagement and further exploration, these services may be developed in different ways according to local needs.

Figure 5 Summary of Service Categories in the Metro Connects Networks

SERVICE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	STOP SPACING	HOURS OF SERVICE
RapidRide 	Bus rapid transit service with the highest level of investment in service, amenities, innovation, and speed and reliability	5-15 MIN	1/2 MILE	16-20 HRS/DAY
Frequent 	Show-up-and-go service that starts early and runs late in the day	5-15 MIN	1/4 MILE	12-16 HRS/DAY
Express 	Limited stop service that runs throughout the day	10-30 MIN	1-2 MILE	15 HRS/DAY
Local 	Fixed-route and flexible options, including buses, on-demand services, and community vans, that improve mobility and provide connections to the high-capacity transit network	15-60 MIN	1/4 MILE	18 HRS/DAY
Marine-Water Taxi 	Passenger ferry service expanding connections	15-60 MIN	N/A	8-18 HRS/DAY

Equity gap analysis

In the 2021 update to Metro Connects, Metro conducted an equity gap analysis on the interim network to identify households in areas of greatest need, as defined in the Mobility Framework, with limited access to transit service. Based on this analysis, Metro made several changes to the interim network in south King County to improve service to priority populations. Equity gaps were defined as areas with high

proportions of priority populations who are farther than one-quarter mile from local service or one-half mile from frequent service.¹²

Priority populations: people who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color; have low or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.

As shown in Table 1, the analysis found that if the interim network was in place today, it would improve access to frequent and local service for priority populations and everyone in King County. Priority populations would have relatively higher access than other households to both frequent and local service in the interim network, which is important because people at lower income levels are less likely to own cars and more likely to depend on transit for mobility. Technical Report B. Metro Connects – Service Network includes a more detailed breakdown of access by priority population.

Table 1 Changes in Access to Frequent and Local Service in the Metro Connects Interim Network

	Access to Frequent Service – 2019	Access to Frequent Service – Interim	Access to Local Service – 2019	Access to Local Service – Interim
Everyone in King Co.	51%	68%	74%	80%
Priority populations	61%	82%	79%	90%

Equity gaps remain across King County for many reasons. These include increased housing costs in central areas that have good access to jobs. This results in people with lower incomes moving farther into suburban areas with lower densities and less street connectivity. These areas are harder to serve with traditional fixed-route transit.

Metro cannot solve these problems alone, or even address all the gaps that could be filled by mobility changes. However, Metro is committed to acting intentionally to build a more equitable system. Through the 2021 update, Metro made targeted updates to the interim network to improve service where it would have the greatest positive impact.

Metro conducted a cluster analysis to identify larger concentrations of households in areas with equity gaps and determine where to make targeted improvements. The results identified three areas for focused improvements: Kent East Hill, SeaTac, and Skyway. Metro staff evaluated bus routes in the interim and 2050 networks that serve these areas to determine how access to transit could be improved. Metro reclassified three routes from local to frequent in the interim network and moved one new route from the 2050 network to the interim network to provide new connections.

¹² Given the challenges in predicting future demographics, Metro used demographic data from 2020 for this analysis. For that same reason, Metro chose to conduct the equity gap analysis on the interim network, rather than the 2050 network.

Understanding and addressing gaps in service to priority populations is essential for advancing equity and improving the quality of life for these populations. Prioritizing service where needs are greatest is also critical to addressing the climate crisis and supporting economic prosperity regionwide.

Equity gaps are the result of historic inequities and are part of a complicated system. Solving them will take more than increased mobility. The solution will require a commitment by partners to address rising housing costs and to support equitable transit-oriented communities, among other things. Metro is committed to doing whatever it can to advance equity across the region.

Metro Connects service network maps

The evolution of the transit service network from 2019, to the interim network, and to the 2050 network is illustrated in Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8. Each of these maps shows the planned extent of these services: Metro RapidRide, frequent, express, local, and water taxi; Sound Transit Link light rail, Stride bus rapid transit, Express, and Sounder; and Seattle Streetcar. The maps also illustrate how Metro and Sound Transit will integrate services to deliver the greatest mobility to customers.

Figure 6 King County Transit Service Network – 2019

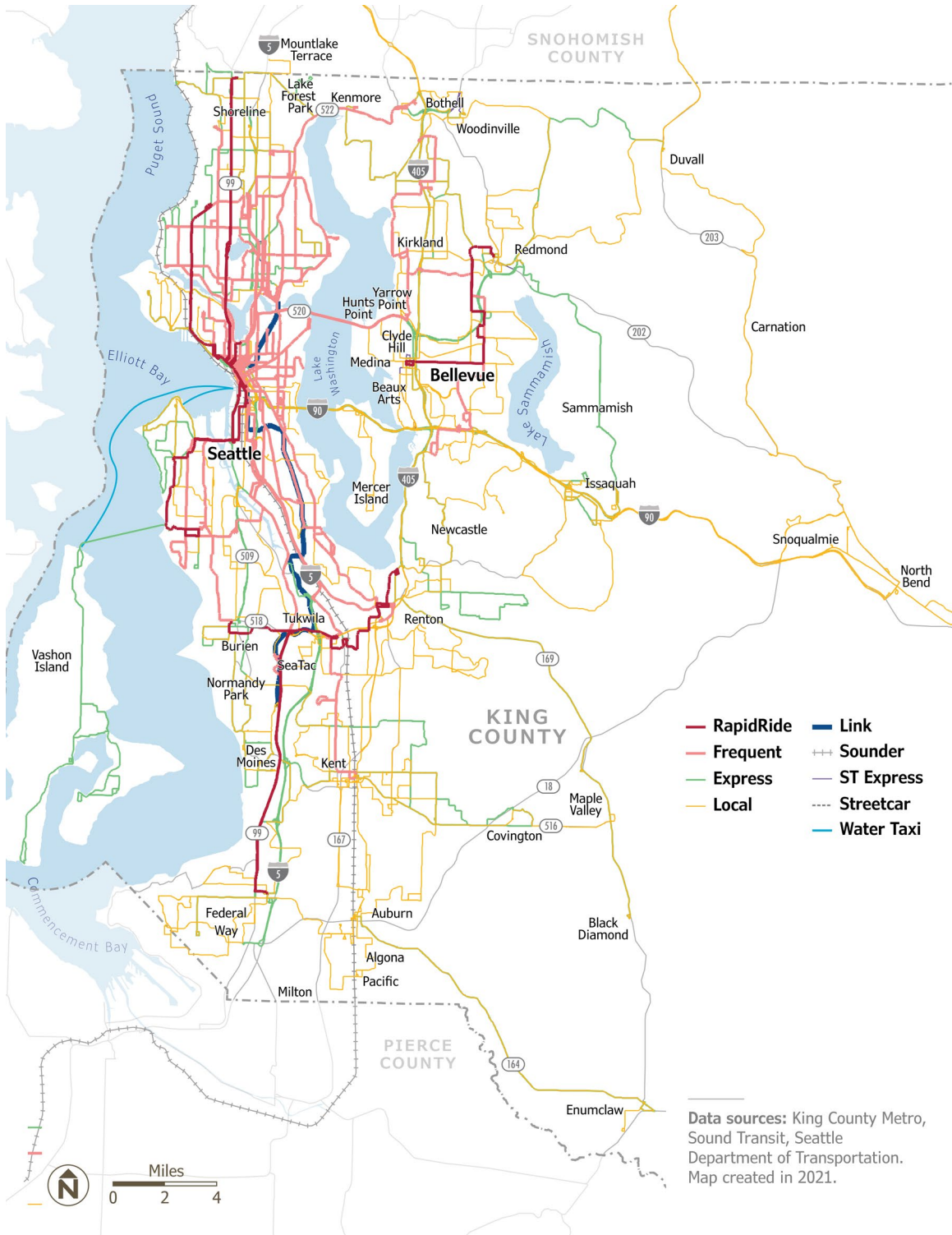


Figure 7 Metro Connects Interim Network

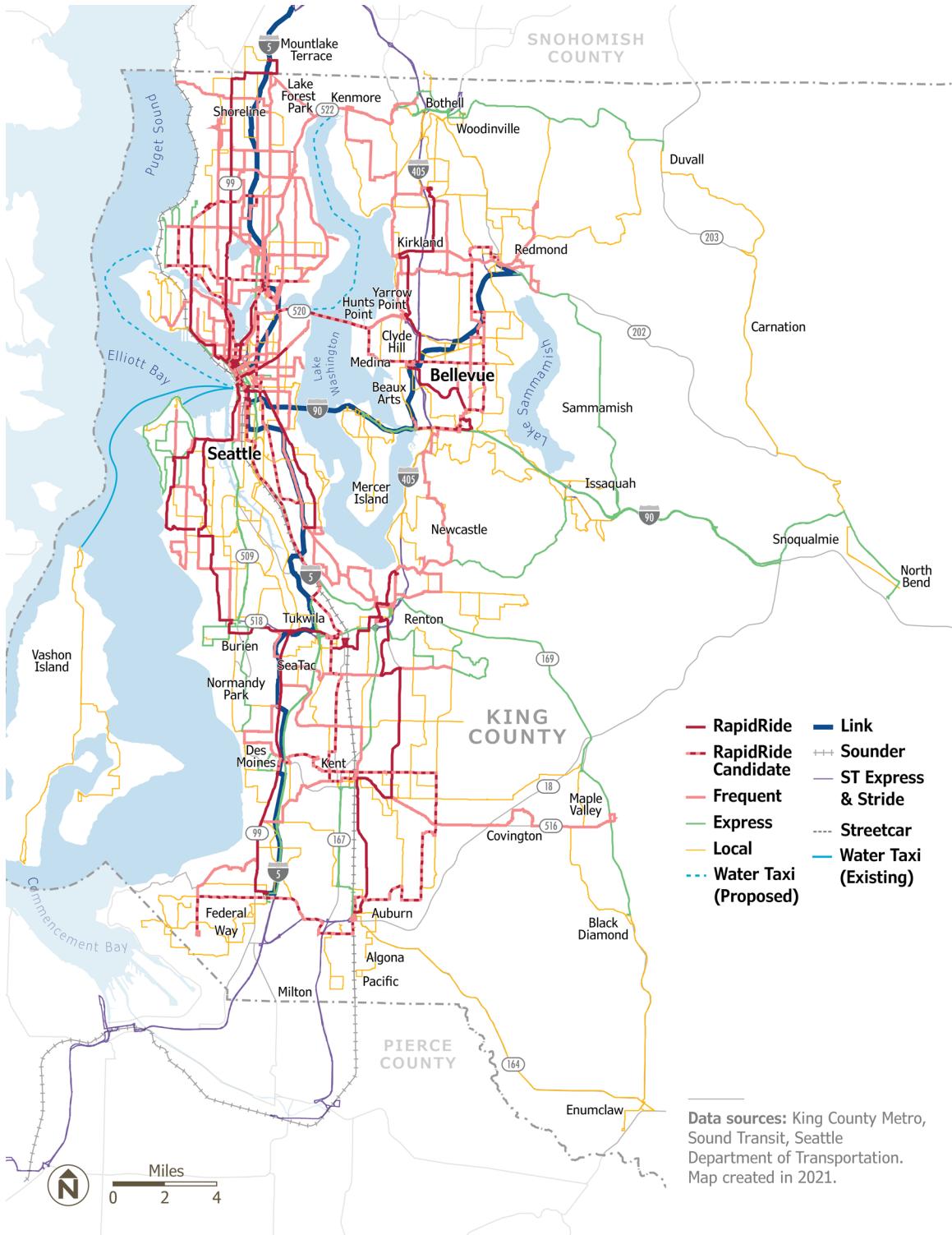


Figure 8 Metro Connects 2050 Network

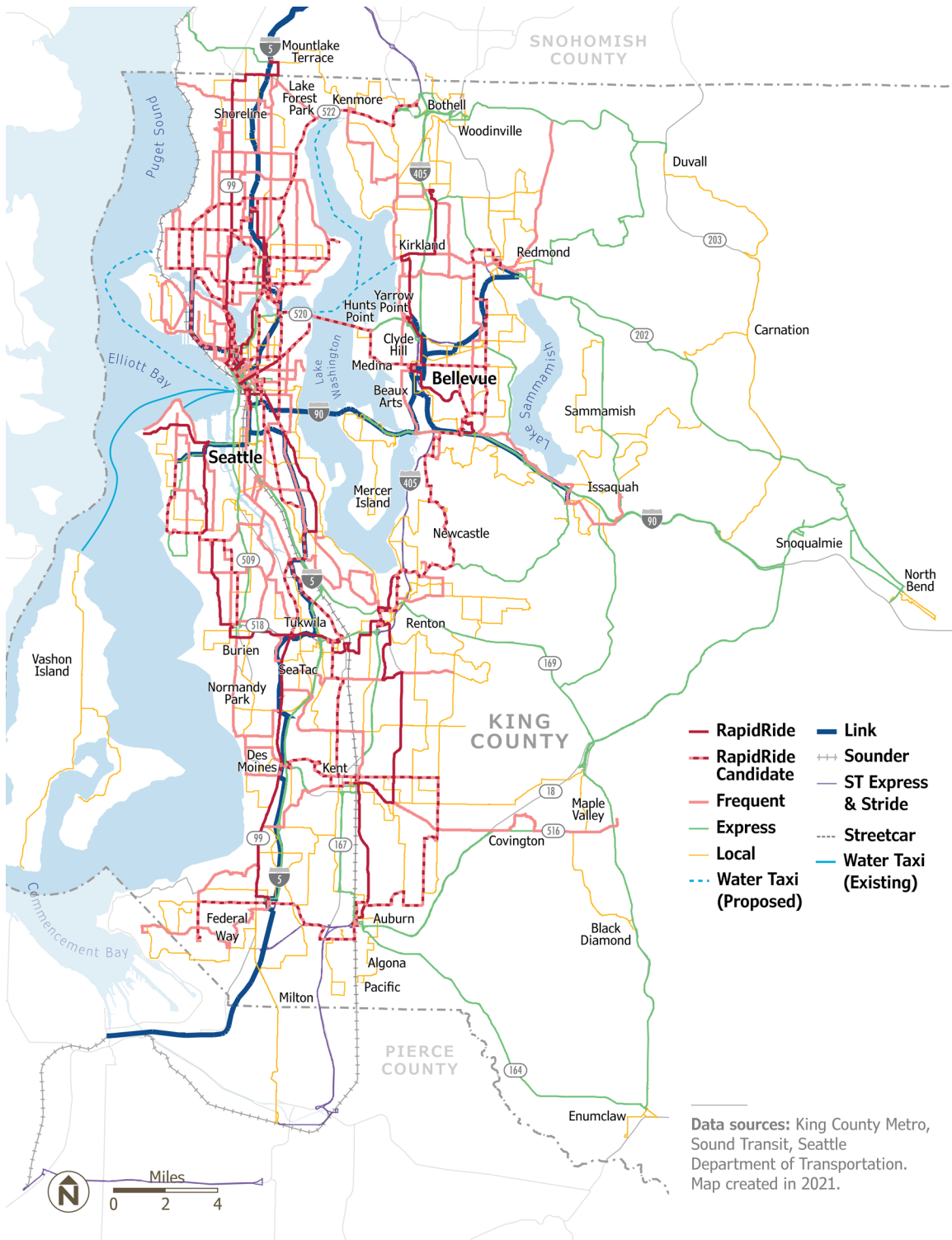
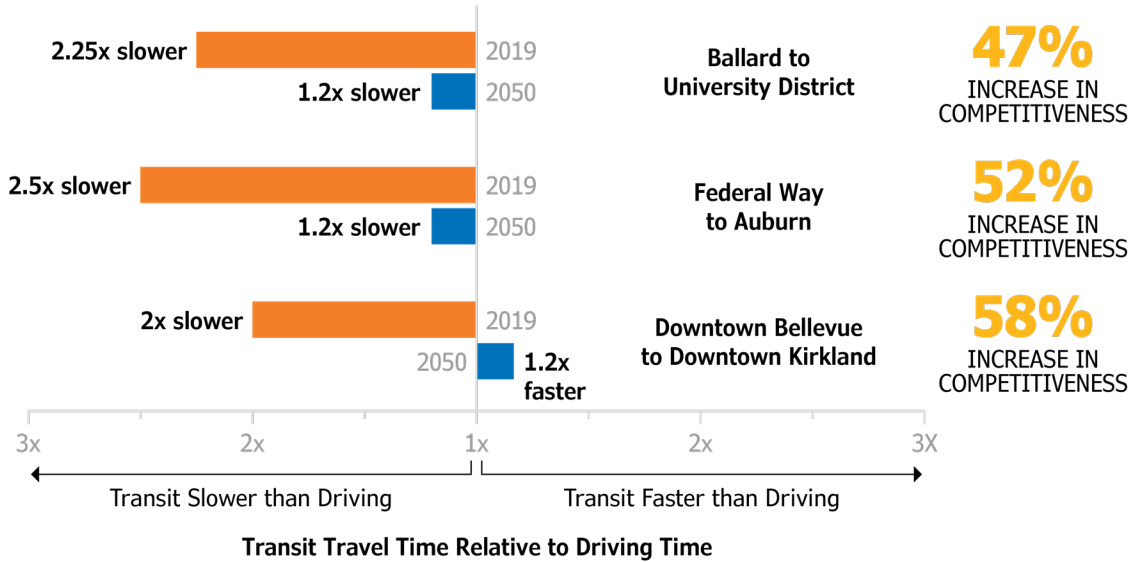


Figure 9 illustrates how the Metro Connects network can make transit a more competitive option to driving alone. For example, traveling from downtown Bellevue to downtown Kirkland via transit took twice as long as driving in 2019. In 2050,

transit would be the faster option for that trip. These improvements will help reduce vehicle miles traveled and emissions.

Figure 9 Ratio of Transit Travel Time to Driving and Associated Change From 2019 to 2050

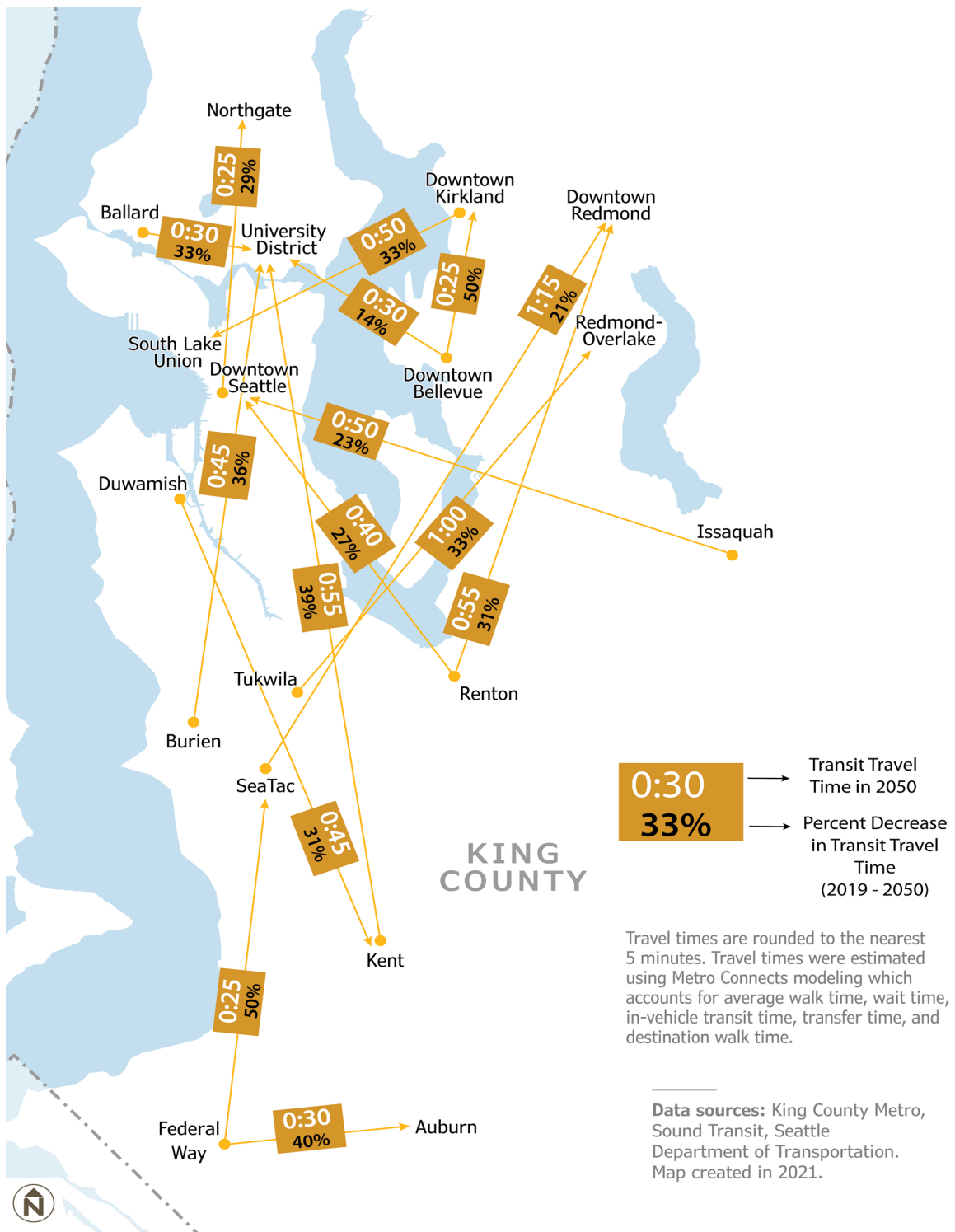
How competitive is transit relative to driving?



Travel times were estimated using Metro Connects modeling which accounts for average walk time, wait time, in-vehicle transit time, transfer time, and destination walk time.

The faster and more reliably transit gets someone to their destination, the more it becomes a competitive and attractive option to driving alone—especially for people with fixed work schedules. Figure 10 shows examples of travel-time savings between major centers in the 2050 network. The figure shows how a combination of speed and reliability improvements will make transit faster.

Figure 10 2050 Metro Connects Service Network Travel Time Savings Between Growth and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers



RAPIDRIDE SERVICE

RapidRide is Metro’s highest level of service, characterized by innovations, amenities, frequent trips, speed, and reliability. This arterial bus rapid transit service¹³ is integral to the region’s high-capacity transit network. RapidRide improves mobility along major corridors as well as between and into regional centers.

What will RapidRide service look like?

Metro intends to continue providing top-quality RapidRide service that produces strong results (see Figure 11).

Today, RapidRide buses arrive at least every five to 15 minutes from early morning until late evening. Stations at the busiest stops have broad shelters, real-time bus arrival signs, and ORCA readers that let cardholders pay on the sidewalk and get on at any of the buses’ three doors. Riders benefit from well-spaced stops, roadway improvements, onboard WiFi, and “intelligent transportation systems” that help the buses keep moving quickly.

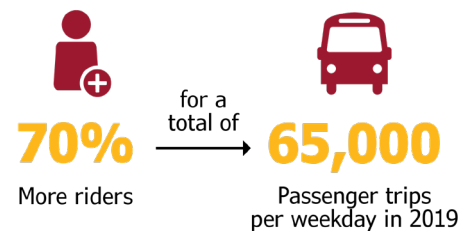
The next generation of RapidRide will expand and improve on these features. Metro Connects envisions more investment in speed and reliability improvements to achieve even more robust bus rapid transit.

Success will look different for each RapidRide corridor. However, all RapidRide lines will have an established set of standards and improvements. RapidRide’s features, including:

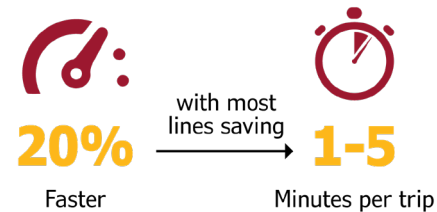
- Transit priority measures such as business access transit (BAT) lanes, queue jumps, and transit signal priority to ensure operations are faster and more reliable than standard bus service

Figure 11 Benefits of RapidRide¹⁴

Compared to the bus routes they replaced, RapidRide A to F lines combined carry about:



Travel is as much as



Customer satisfaction is high

Service is more reliable

¹³ Bus rapid transit (BRT) is bus service that operates as part of the region’s high-capacity transit system, with frequent service most of the day; articulated buses; stops at half-mile intervals; operation in improved roadways, bus lanes, or segregated right of way; shelters with real-time arrival signs; and offboard fare payment.

¹⁴ Infographic based on 2019 data

- Customer amenities such as off-board fare payment, all-door boarding, advanced customer information technology, onboard Wi-Fi, and high-quality stations
- Service on corridors and communities with strong transit demand
- Integration with the rest of the region’s high-capacity transit network, offering connections to Sound Transit’s Link and commuter rail services as well as other regional bus rapid transit services
- Operation on arterials, with wider stop spacing to strike a balance between greater access along a corridor and shorter end-to-end travel time
- Operation on freeways where travel markets can only be served by limited-access freeways
- Major capital investments such as access improvements and other community priorities

Metro will work closely with partner agencies to make the most of investments in RapidRide service.

Prioritization of RapidRide lines

Metro currently operates six RapidRide lines (A-F). Four additional lines (G-J) are being developed and are expected to be in operation by 2026.

An additional two lines, the K Line (Corridor 1027 between Totem Lake, Eastgate, and Kirkland) and the R Line (Corridor 1071 between Rainier Beach, Mount Baker, and the Seattle Central Business District), had been selected for investment, and community engagement and capital planning efforts were underway for those lines when those efforts were paused as part of King County’s 2021-2022 budget in response to the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Metro has prioritized the K and R lines as the next RapidRide lines to be implemented and has identified these lines in the Metro Connects future network maps (Figures 7, 8, 13, and 14) as being in operation by the time of the Interim Network. Because the K and R lines have already been prioritized for investment, they are not considered to be candidate lines and are not subject to the prioritization process described below.

The high level of service associated with RapidRide requires significant investment in service and capital improvements. To be successful and make the best use of financial resources, all RapidRide expansion corridors must have:

1. Strong service demand; and
2. Connections to and between regional and other major destinations as part of the high-capacity transit network.

Corridors that meet both criteria have been identified as candidates for RapidRide expansion in the interim and 2050 networks. Metro will prioritize equity and sustainability factors in selecting the specific candidate lines for development. This approach gives Metro flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and information gained from studies and community engagement before selecting and implementing new routes.

As Metro plans new RapidRide lines, it will work with cities and the public to study and evaluate routing, stop and station locations, integration with other services, multimodal connections, and other features. Public input will be a critical part of planning as projects move closer to final design. Metro’s Service Guidelines provide direction for planning and outreach around developing and changing service.

For more information

See Technical Report C. RapidRide Expansion Report, for information about how the candidate RapidRide lines were selected.

What will it take?

- **Develop and maintain a prioritization plan for selecting future RapidRide lines.**
A prioritization plan emphasizing equity and addressing climate change will provide opportunities to evaluate RapidRide candidates and engage with partners and the community to inform the planning and selection process. The process for developing this plan is explained in the “Implementation of Metro Connects – policies and planning” section of Metro Connects.
- **Expand and enhance the RapidRide network.**
Building on the current A to F lines and planned G to J lines, Metro will complete at least three new projects as part of the interim network and at least nine new projects by 2050. The H Line will launch in 2022, and planning for the G, I, and J lines is underway. The R and K Lines, which had started planning before being paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, are planned to be two of the projects in the interim network. Additional RapidRide lines for the interim network will be identified through the prioritization plan. All existing lines will be upgraded to meet the RapidRide Expansion Program standards.
- **With city partners, encourage equitable, transit-supportive land uses in existing and future RapidRide corridors.**
Equitable, transit-supportive land use policies concentrate dense, mixed-use, mixed-income development near frequent transit and enable more people of all backgrounds and income levels to drive less and access transit more easily. Metro will work with partners at the County and regional planning levels to advocate for transit-supportive and inclusive land use policies and programs.
- **With cities and other partners, invest in speed and reliability improvements in all existing and future RapidRide corridors.**
As discussed in the “Speed and Reliability” section, Metro, Sound Transit, and local partners have started to identify where major investments are needed to remove bottlenecks on corridors that are candidates for RapidRide service. Metro will assume primary responsibility for funding passenger facilities and roadway enhancements. Partners will assist with project planning and right-of-way acquisition and use.

Figure 12, Figure 13, and Figure 14 show the 2019 RapidRide network, the Metro Connects interim proposed RapidRide network, and the Metro Connects 2050 RapidRide network.

The City of Seattle and Burien are partnering with Metro on the development of the H Line corridor that will benefit transit riders and the community.

Seattle is investing in safer and easier access to stations, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, streetscape features and stormwater management upgrades to stimulate economic development, business access and transit (BAT) lanes to keep buses moving, as well as contributing funding to increase H Line frequency in off-peak direction (to match peak-direction frequency levels).

Burien has secured a state grant that will fund Metro's implementation of speed and reliability upgrades, access to transit improvements, communications and technology enhancements, as well as RapidRide station construction throughout the H Line corridor in that jurisdiction.

Figure 12 RapidRide – 2019 Network

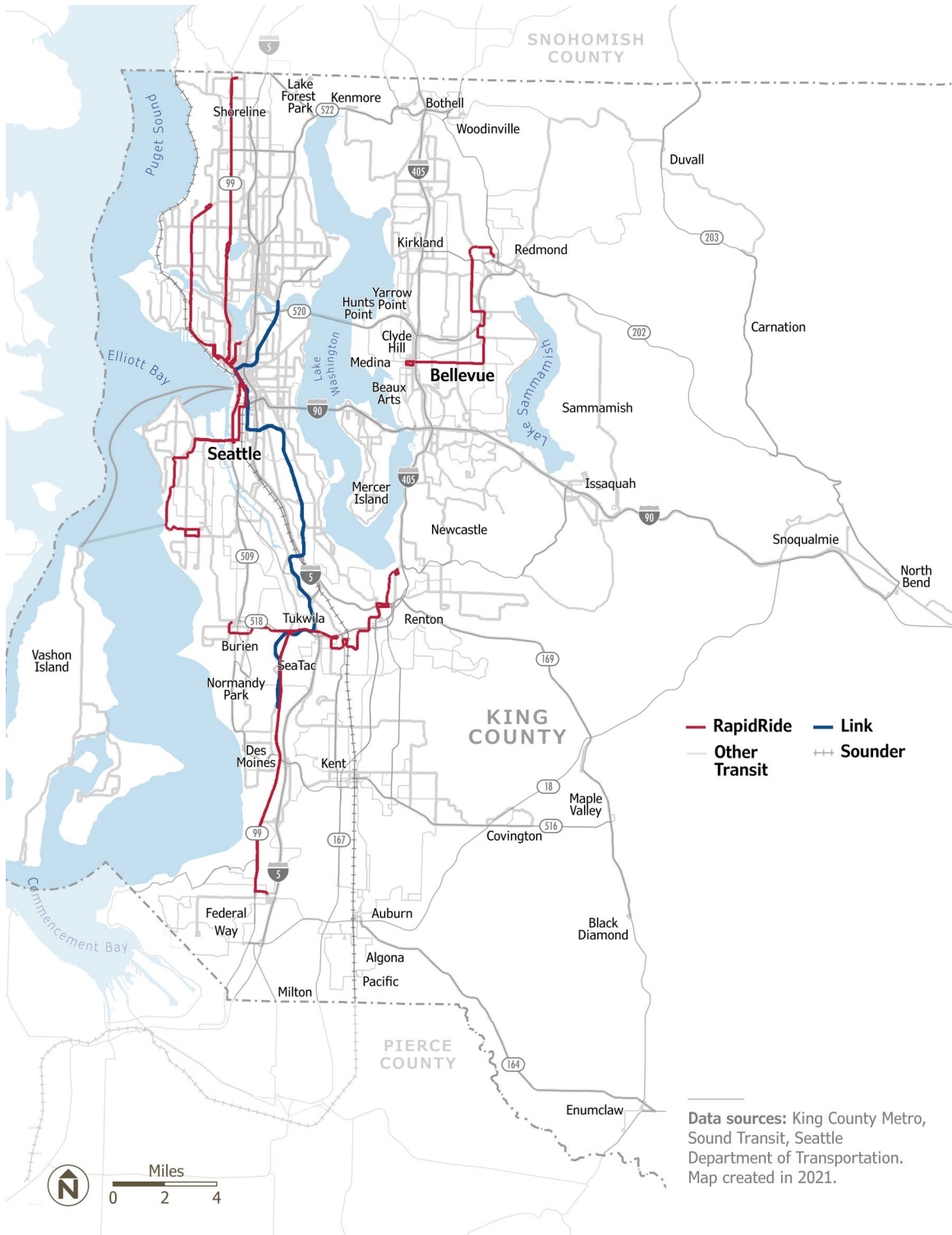


Figure 13 RapidRide – Proposed Interim Network

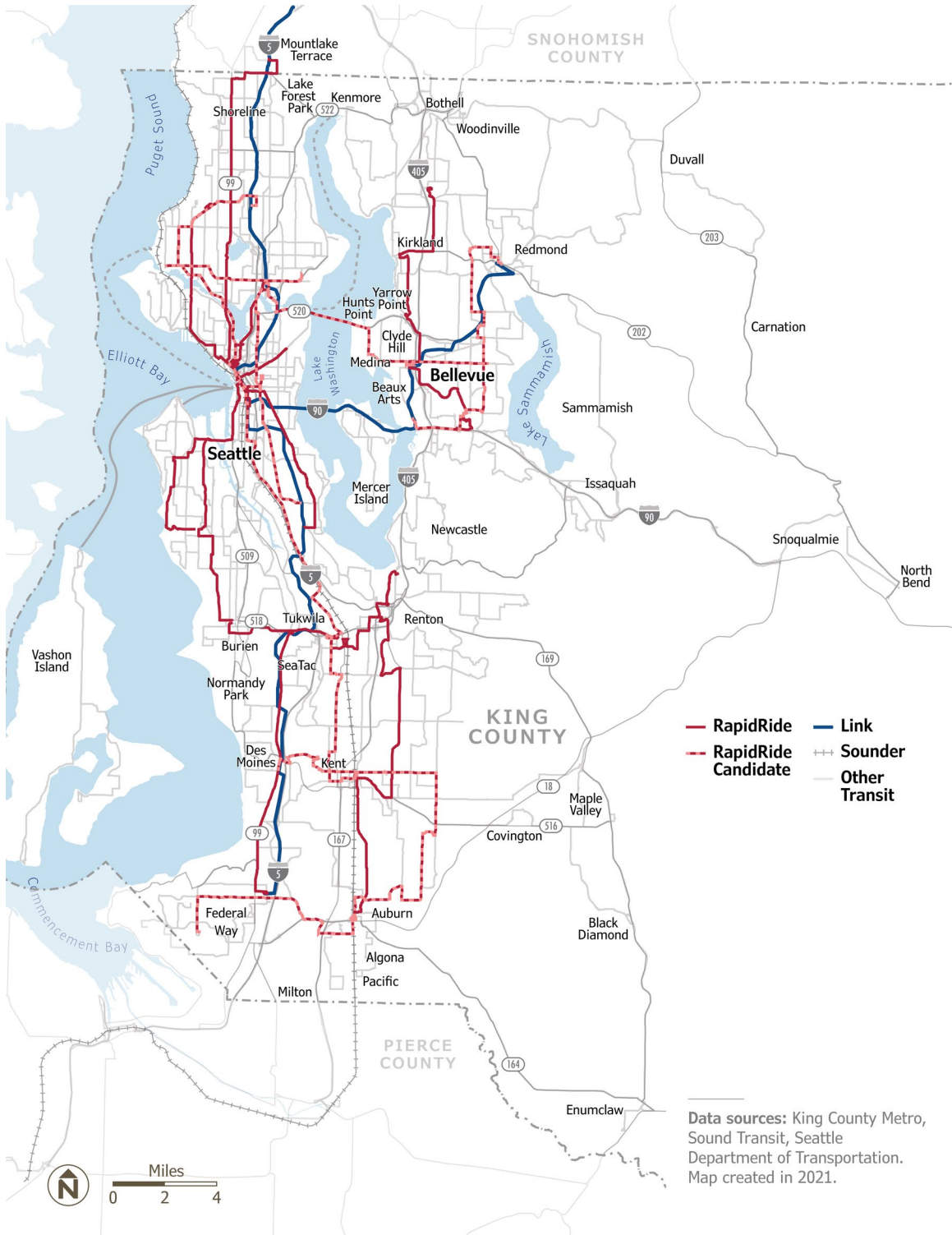
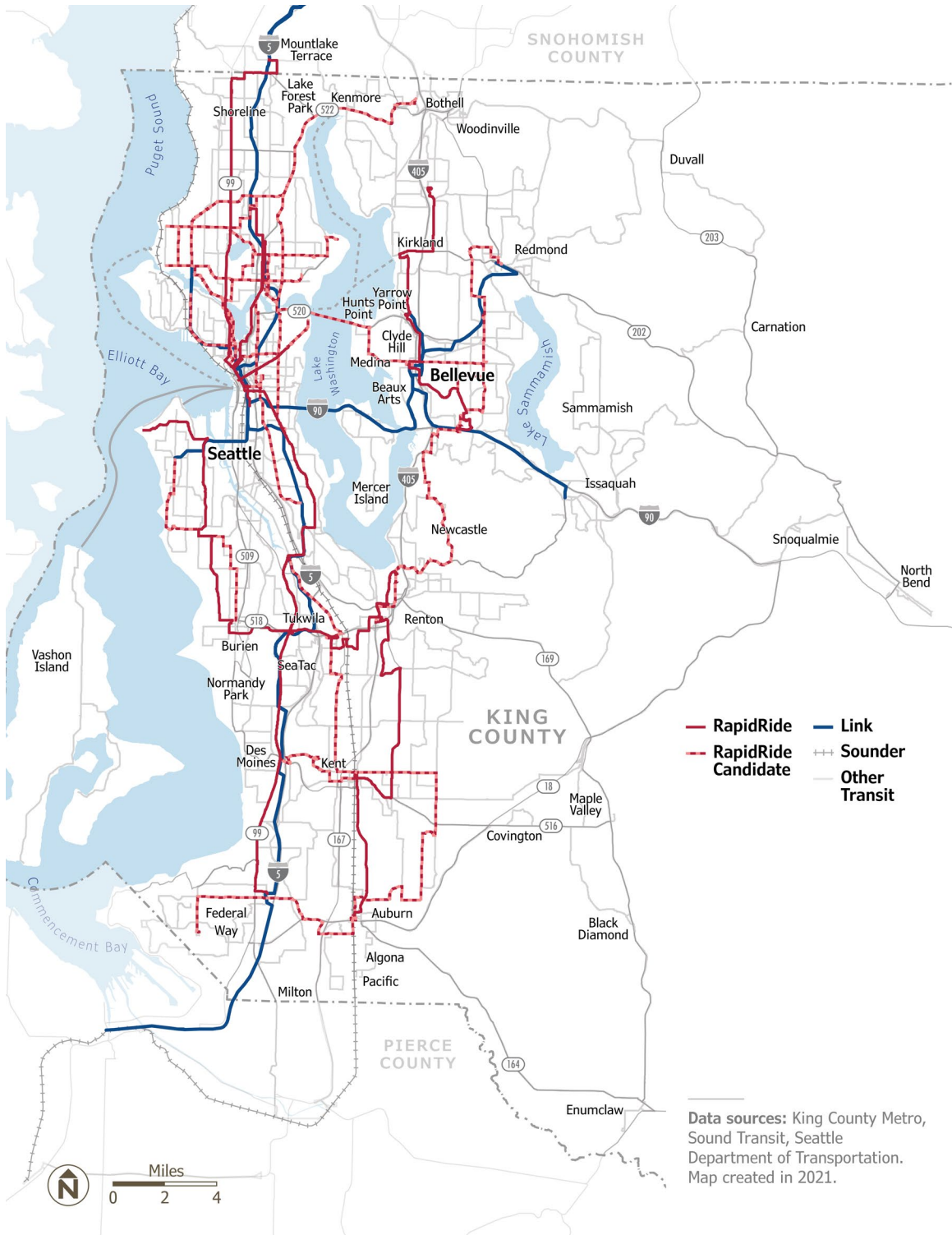


Figure 14 RapidRide – Proposed 2050 Network



FREQUENT SERVICE

“Show-up-and-go” service that starts early and runs late. Frequent service is fundamental to a transit system that improves mobility, confronts climate change, and advances equity. Metro Connects envisions an expanded frequent transit network that will improve access and connectivity regionally and support a growing population and economy. By 2050, 80 percent of King County residents will have access to frequent transit.

What will frequent service look like?

Frequent service will be provided by an interconnected network of routes with a high level of reliable, easy-to-use service all day, every day. Metro Connects defines frequent service as any route that comes at least every 15 minutes, 16 hours a day on weekdays and 12 hours a day on weekends. Stops will be every quarter mile.

Metro Connects proposes a major expansion of frequent service. The 2050 network will have nearly 630 miles of frequent service throughout the county. It will allow riders to travel faster and more conveniently for short, local trips and to major destinations and mobility hubs.

Frequent service will be reliable. Buses will move quickly along streets where buses have priority. Metro and city partners will invest in capital improvements to boost speed and reliability, such as bus lanes, signal priority, queue jumps, and other improvements. Metro may also use headway management, so buses come at consistent and reliable intervals, reducing customer wait times. Off-board fare payment at key stops and heavily used transfer points will get customers to their destinations sooner.

The frequent transit network will be easy to use. Customer information, including signage, maps, smartphone apps, and Metro’s website will clearly denote routes and stops with frequent service. Getting to and waiting for the bus or making transfers to other routes and modes will be easy, comfortable, and safe. Bus stops will have clear route and trip information, passenger amenities, and connections to walking and biking infrastructure. Metro will use technology to improve the customer experience. Real-time information about arrivals, transfers, and vehicle capacity will be provided at stops with many boardings, on the bus, and via smartphone apps.

The combination of frequent service with transit-supportive land use is one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to encourage transit ridership and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁵ Metro will emphasize frequent service on arterials and corridors that have supportive land uses (as described in Metro’s Service Guidelines) and that provide connections to major centers, transit hubs, and destinations in the county. These corridors have a density and mix of housing, jobs, and activity

¹⁵ For more information see Technical Report D and [King County Metro Mobility and Fleet Investment Strategies to Reduce GHG Emissions](#)

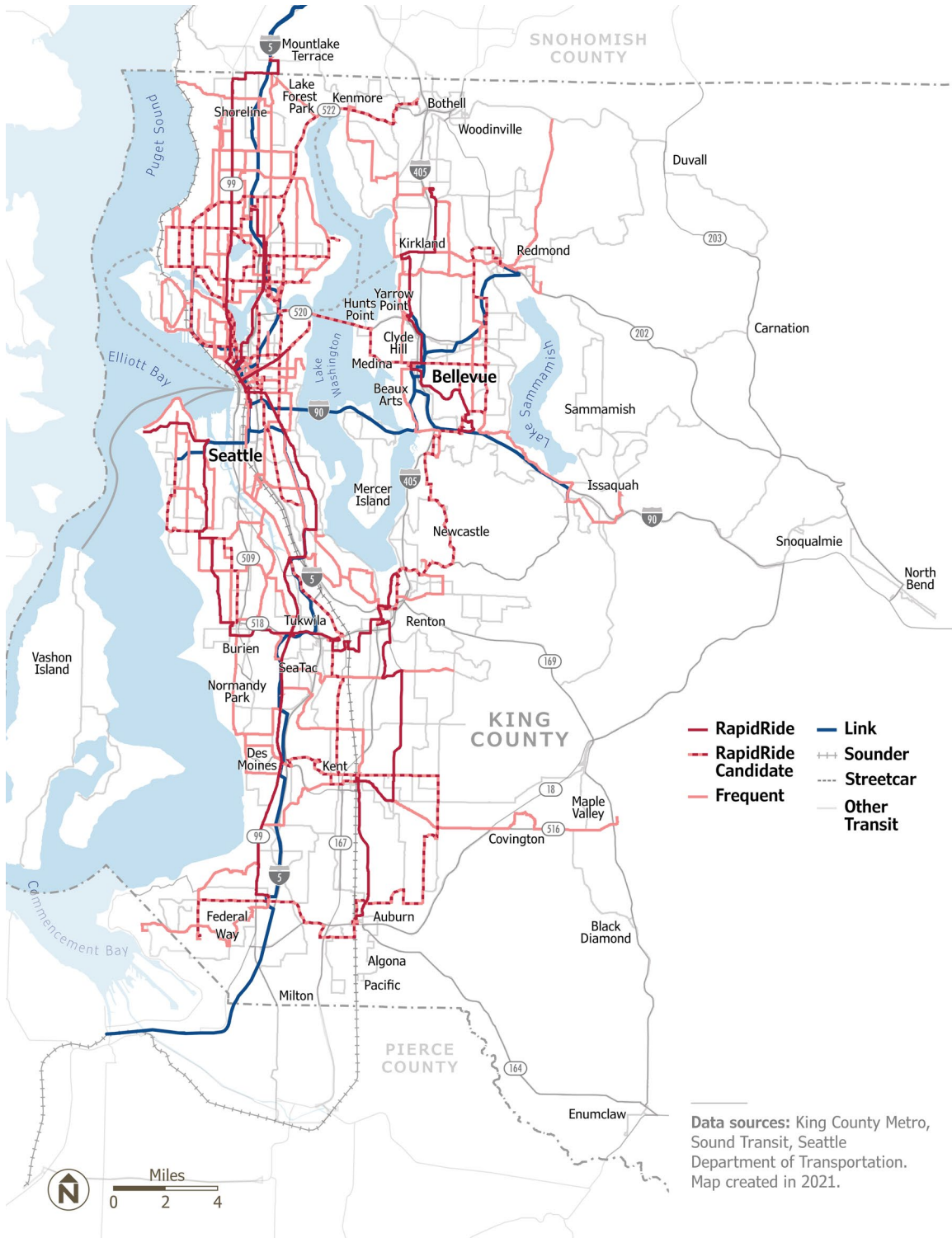
requiring high-quality service all times of day, every day. Frequent service will improve customers' access to jobs, schools, shopping, and social activities.

What will it take?

- **Increase investment in frequent service.**
Expand routes with at least 15-minute service 16 hours a day on weekdays and 12 hours a day on weekends.
- **Coordinate service, capital, and customer information investments.**
Develop an investment framework to align capital improvements with service growth and needs as frequent transit expands. Frequent routes and stops will be easy for customers to identify, and information will be consistent and accessible at the stop, online, and other avenues.
- **Work with city partners to invest in capital improvements and ensure transit-supportive policies.**
Prioritize transit over other modes, construct features that improve speed, reliability, and access to transit, and address existing needs and gaps. The level of investments will vary depending on the need and right-of-way conditions. Metro will work with cities to adopt transit-supportive land use policies, such as appropriate zoning, reduced parking requirements, and affordable housing incentives, along corridors with frequent service.

Figure 15 shows proposed Metro Connects frequent transit service in 2050.

Figure 15 Metro Connects 2050 Frequent Transit Service Network



EXPRESS SERVICE

Express service makes limited stops for faster and easier trips between growth centers across King County. Metro Connects includes new all-day express routes that support various schedules, destinations, and trip purposes, giving riders more flexibility.

What will express service look like?

Express service will run all day, unlike traditional express buses that primarily serve commuters during peak times.

As the number of people and jobs grow,¹⁶ King County will need fast, reliable, all-day service to support changing travel patterns. Express service will move more people to work or other destinations quickly, and Metro and Sound Transit have worked together to develop a complementary network of express services connecting important corridors countywide.

In the future, express buses will arrive more frequently during peak periods than during the off-peak. Some buses will arrive more frequently during the off-peak in high-demand corridors. Express stops will be spaced one to two miles apart, on average. Stops will be less frequent on highway segments and more frequent when serving local transportation hubs and stations.

Express service will connect transit centers, employment hubs, and educational institutions along major corridors. It will connect small suburban cities to regional growth centers and the larger transit system. The proposed express network will be integrated with regional rail and bus rapid transit services.

Express service will:

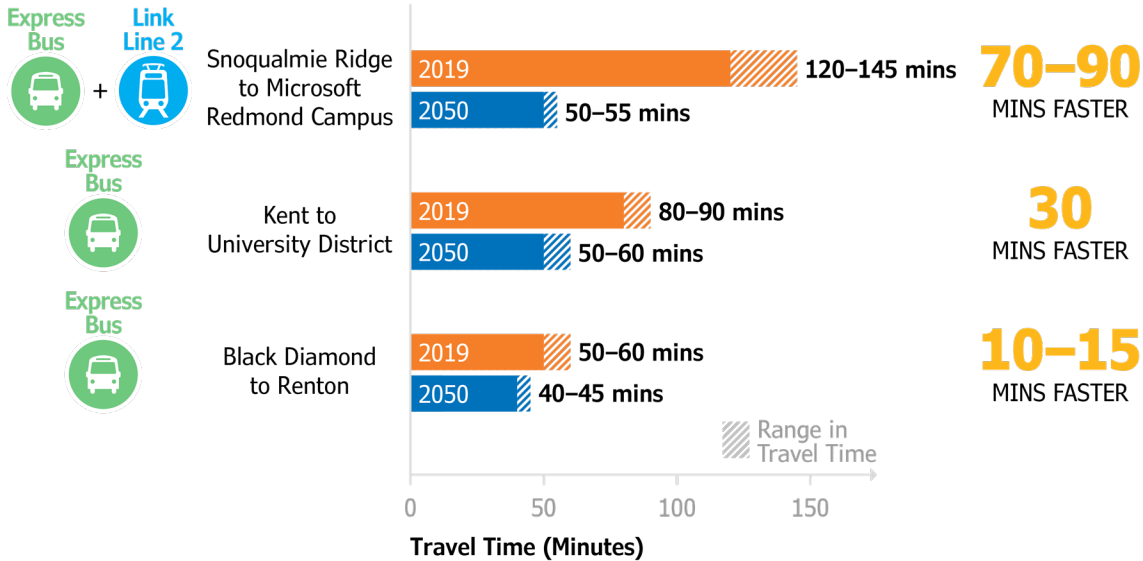
- Connect areas that have concentrated demand at both ends of the route
- Connect centers not well served by other regional high-capacity services such as light rail and bus rapid transit
- Operate primarily on highways or major arterials where express buses can maintain a travel speed of more than 20 mph, or 45 mph on freeway portions
- Provide significant and reliable travel-time savings compared to alternatives
- Provide faster trips by using improvements that help buses move more quickly and reliably
- Expand access to transit by connecting to parking facilities

Figure 16 shows how the Metro Connects 2050 network will benefit riders who travel during the morning peak period. The travel times savings will be significant. For example, a Microsoft employee who commutes from the Snoqualmie Ridge five days

¹⁶ More information and maps showing projected job and population growth in the Metro Connects Service Network Technical Report.

a week, 50 weeks a year could save 580 to 750 hours or 24 to 31 days per year in 2050 compared to 2019.

Figure 16 Benefits of Express Service During AM Peak Travel Time



Transit service types refer to 2050 service (Express Bus, Link Line 2).

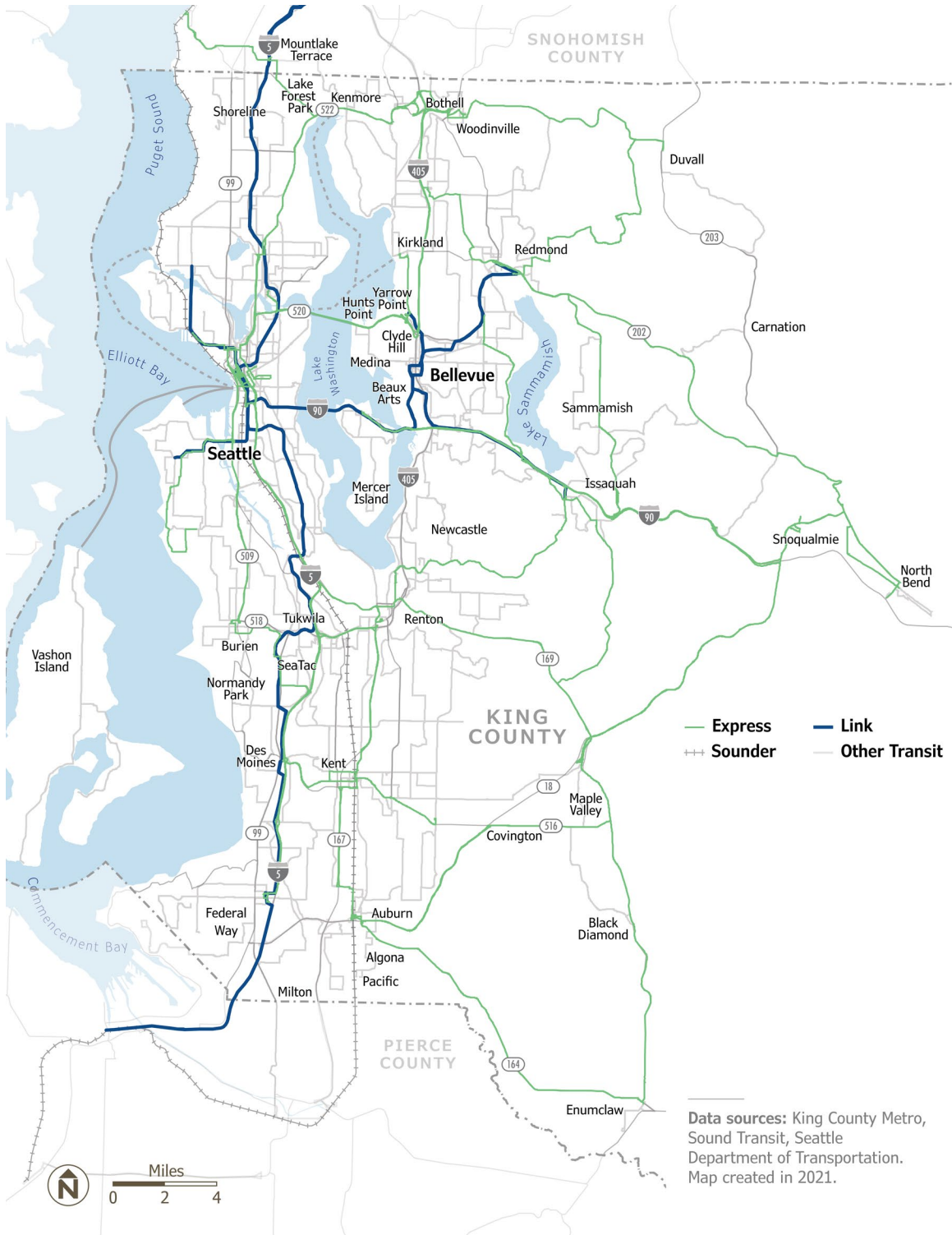
Travel times were estimated using Metro Connects modeling which accounts for average walk time, wait time, in-vehicle transit time, transfer time, and destination walk time.

What will it take?

- Expand express service.**
Expand to new areas, lengthen spans of service, and increase frequency. Dedicate about 11 percent of Metro’s total service hours to express service by 2050.
- Partner to improve express travel speeds and reliability.**
Improve non-highway roads where express service operates. Partnerships with local jurisdictions could enhance the right-of-way available for express service or augment planned in-street transit priority improvements. Continued and new partnerships with the Washington State Department of Transportation could help improve operations on highways.
- Coordinate express service with Sound Transit and other transit providers.**
As Sound Transit expands, some of its express bus corridors will be replaced by Link light rail and Bus Rapid Transit. Metro will use these milestones to implement new or modified express routes to expand regional express service and integrate it with the high-capacity transit network.

Figure 17 shows the 2050 Metro Connects express service network.

Figure 17 Metro Connects 2050 Express Service Network



LOCAL SERVICE

Local fixed-route and flexible services improve mobility and provide connections to the regional transit network. Metro will work with communities to determine the best options for them, ranging from expanded bus service to more flexible options such as ridesharing, on-demand service, and partnerships with other transportation providers.

What will local service look like?

Most of Metro's local service is provided by fixed-route buses that operate on regular routes with fixed schedules. Metro also operates services that use smaller vehicles and have a combination of fixed-and flexible-routing in some areas, such as Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART). Metro Connects defines local fixed-route service as a bus that comes every 15 to 60 minutes during weekdays, and possibly increased frequency during the peak periods. Stops along the route are spaced one-quarter mile apart. It often provides more point-to-point connections, which may result in less direct routing between destinations.

Metro will continue to expand flexible options that complement bus service and match local conditions and community needs. Options will focus on priority populations and build on and complement existing services such as community vans, vanpools, and on-demand ridesharing services. People might use these services to make connections to and from transit, or to get to other destinations in their community. Flexible service can provide more direct and dynamic connections than a fixed-route bus can in low-density areas, including rural King County.

Metro is thinking creatively about new options that match local needs in urban and rural parts of the county, understanding that local needs differ widely across the county. It is partnering with private providers of mobility technology and services to create on-demand services that work better for customers and integrate with the region's other transit and mobility services. The integration of flexible services with fixed-route services will be a priority as Metro works with communities to design services.

For more information

Via to Transit is a pilot, on-demand service connecting riders to and from transit hubs in southeast Seattle and Tukwila. People who live, work, or go to school within the specified service areas can download the app and request a ride from Via to Transit to catch Link light rail or a bus at certain stations.

For more information, visit: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/programs-projects/innovation-technology/innovative-mobility/on-demand/via-to-transit.aspx>

Metro intends to meet customer needs by taking a community-based planning approach that centers community needs in decision-making and will evaluate innovations to ensure they deliver value to the customer. Metro will follow the Service Guidelines and will develop project-specific performance measures and

evidence such as customer feedback and rigorous impact evaluations. The results will inform decisions about scaling up and making pilot services permanent.

Metro Connects will dedicate about 24 percent of Metro's total service hours to local services, including fixed-route and flexible service. Most of the growth in hours will be used to improve local fixed-route service, increasing frequency to achieve more arrivals every 30 minutes most of the day. However, for local service in particular, Metro will maintain flexibility and work with communities to define the services that meet their needs.

What will it take?

- **Pilot new innovative flexible service models and technology applications.**

These could include on-demand ridesharing options, innovative booking and routing technologies, automated vehicles, and other advances in technology yet to come. Partnerships with private service providers might create opportunities to give communities more and better mobility options. Such services should align with the Strategic Plan and include evidence-building plans for how impacts on mobility, equity, and sustainability will be evaluated according to Metro's Service Guidelines.

- **Partner with local jurisdictions, non-profits, and employers to secure additional funding for flexible services.**

Continue to work with local partners to identify opportunities to secure grants and apply other funding sources to launch flexible services throughout the county. Metro will also engage with communities to develop services, as outlined in Metro's Service Guidelines.

- **Use evidence from community-based planning, customer research and feedback to design, implement, and evaluate new services.**

Metro's flexible service projects have been successful in part because of collaborations with nonprofit organizations, jurisdictions, and community groups. Community partners help identify needs and support development of unique services to meet them. Continuation of these community partnerships will be important. Metro will also strengthen its capacity and partnerships to build evidence about what works and how innovative services impact mobility and quality of life for people and communities in the region.

Community collaborations

Metro has collaborated with communities in several areas. To improve connections to transit in southeast Seattle and Tukwila, Metro worked with Sound Transit, local jurisdictions, and community groups to implement and evaluate a feeder-to-fixed route (also known as first-last mile) service, improving access to buses and light rail for communities in need of improved service.

Metro also launched flexible, app-enabled, on-demand services in the Juanita area. These services coordinated with updates to the bus service network in northeast King County.

Another example is Community Van programs where in partnership with local jurisdictions and community groups, volunteer drivers are provided, and the vans bring together people who take trips in common to places like farmers markets or grocery stores.

Metro also is launching a new feeder-to-fixed-route pilot in Kent. It will address the specific needs of workers in the Kent industrial valley and will test new ways to integrate on-demand and fixed-route transit services.

For more information

For additional discussion of innovation and technology, see the Innovation, Modernization, and Technology section.

For a full description of Metro's current service types, see Technical Report B. Metro Connects – Service Network.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Metro Connects envisions mobility options for all people, regardless of ability. Metro will pursue innovative ways to improve the quality of Access paratransit services while reducing costs. And it will make all services more accessible by providing 100-percent low-floor Access buses and accessible stops, designing vehicle interiors to better accommodate customers and what they bring on board, and increasing auditory and tactile information.

What will accessible transportation look like?

Metro will provide comfortable and easy-to-use service for all passengers, regardless of physical abilities, languages spoken, and mobility or other devices they need to have with them. For people whose disabilities prevent them from getting to a fixed-route bus service, paratransit provides travel training and transportation options to the fixed-route bus service; for people whose disabilities prevent them from using fixed-route bus service, paratransit service is a comparable alternative. Access paratransit is not required or intended to meet all the transportation needs of people with disabilities. The Access paratransit program provides service, travel training, and other resources to give people with disabilities access to public transportation, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990?

Civil rights legislation that provides a national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities with specific requirements for public transit agencies. ADA requires the provision of demand-response transportation service for people with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route transportation systems.

Accessible services can be challenging to use or inconvenient for customers. Access service today requires that reservations be made one to seven days ahead and has a 30-minute pickup window. To meet the needs of a growing and diversifying community, Metro will work to improve service for customers with innovative approaches to deliver same-day scheduling and to reduce barriers that customers with disabilities face when trying to use transit.

About 30 percent of paratransit customers can use fixed-route transit for some trips. However, the other 70 percent cannot use existing services because of difficulties reaching the nearest stop or boarding and riding the bus. Making the transit system more accessible to more people also requires improvements to facilities, information, and customer experience.

Metro will also continue to support specialized services, such as Community Access Transportation (CAT), which help community agencies that serve older adults, people with disabilities and low-income populations set-up their own transportation services. Metro will continue working to expand services, such as CAT, that provide mobility in ways that meet people's needs in a cost-effective manner. Metro is also expanding

its trip planning services with a focus on making CAT more accessible to priority populations.

New technologies and transportation services will open opportunities to improve accessibility of all services, provide paratransit trips that are more convenient, have lower operating costs, and could complement or reduce demand for some existing paratransit services. Metro could pilot on-demand paratransit trips. Metro's use of wheelchair-accessible vehicles in its Via to Transit pilot program is an example of how Metro will improve accessibility of all of Metro's services and bring people of all abilities to the fixed-route system. The Via to Transit pilot also provided a call center for people without smartphones, interpreter services for riders with limited English proficiency, and pick up options where riders with disabilities made their request (rather than needing to meet their vehicle a few blocks away) to address other barriers to accessing mobility.

What will it take?

- **Use inclusive planning to make the entire transit network more accessible.**
Continue improving how Metro involves people with disabilities in planning, to ensure Metro understands their challenges in using transit. Partnering with local jurisdictions to ensure sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure are accessible. Implementing changes such as capital improvements to make buses more accessible and training for operators and riders can make all services more accessible.
- **Pilot and start new service models to reduce costs and improve service quality.**
Potential approaches include same-day Access Transportation service and public-private partnerships to expand accessible taxis or transportation network companies. Pilots should include evidence-building plans for how these services will be evaluated for impact.
- **Make customer information and support available to customers who have limited English proficiency or disabilities.**
Strategies might include enhanced availability of interpretation services and translated materials, audible announcements on vehicles and at facilities, tactile wayfinding options, and use of universal and intuitive symbols.
- **Partner to provide service.**
Continue to partner with community organizations to provide cost-effective transportation for people with disabilities. This could include expanding the CAT program, which is less expensive to operate than Access service or piloting partnerships with community-based organizations to provide 'cultural navigators' to help customers with limited English proficiency navigate the Access paratransit eligibility process.

MARINE SERVICE (WATER TAXI)

Expansion of new passenger ferry service routes on Puget Sound and Lake Washington, in appropriate locations, could provide more reliable options for getting around and connecting to the regional transit network. Passenger ferries can also allow people to avoid traffic congestion.

What will passenger ferry service look like?

Passenger ferry service represents one component of the region's transportation system, and can provide fast and reliable connections in appropriate locations. Ferries serve as a supplement to the countywide transportation system in locations where it serves the network as well as, or better than, traditional fixed-route transit service. Service hours could be extended during summer and special events to accommodate rider demand.

Ferry service can complement bus and rail service; it is not constrained by the road and rail network and traffic congestion. For example, when the West Seattle bridge closed in 2020, the water taxi became an essential connection for West Seattle residents. Planning for additions¹⁷ or changes to ferry service will consider Metro's core values: safety, equity, and sustainability.¹⁸ As a technical report to the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, King County should update the King County Ferry District 2014-2018 Strategic Plan to complete the policy-level analysis and decision-making to determine the level of service desired for water taxis and the property tax rate needed to provide that level of service. Until updated strategic planning answers these questions, planning for expanded new marine service routes must use the county's adopted Service Guidelines and consider the cost-benefit comparison of water taxi service to land-based transit services, including fixed-route and flexible service options.

As with all service envisioned in Metro Connects, Metro will need additional funding to expand passenger ferry service.¹⁹ Marine services are funded by a dedicated property tax levy, passenger fares, and federal and state grants. Future marine services will be funded by these sources or other sources specifically dedicated to marine travel. Each new route will require investments in capital infrastructure, including a terminal at each landing, mooring docks, transit connection improvements, and vessels.

¹⁷ Potential new routes studied by King County and the Puget Sound Regional Council are Kenmore and Kirkland to Seattle via Lake Washington, and Ballard to downtown Seattle via Puget Sound.

¹⁸ The Service Guidelines include guidance for evaluating and adjusting Marine service.

¹⁹ Passenger ferry service is currently funded through a dedicated Ferry District property tax, a separate source than the rest of Metro's bus service. That could change in the future.

What will it take?

- **As a technical report to the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, update the King County Ferry District 2014-2018 Strategic Plan** to account for current conditions, including changes in the Marine Division's organizational structure and management, of the regional transit system and to King County transit policies and procedures for planning and providing transit service, including an equity analysis.
- **As recommended in the King County Ferry District 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, determine the desired level of service for passenger ferries** and required property tax level to deliver that level of service.
- **Build on the update to the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan and update past studies to determine the role of passenger ferry service as part of the regional transit network.**
Evaluate connectivity and service to further the time and cost competitiveness of passenger ferries as well as parking and land use compatibility.
- **Engage with communities and partner with jurisdictions** to complete strategic planning for routes and terminals that enhance the regional transit system.

Figure 18 and Figure 19 illustrate the passenger ferry routes envisioned in the Metro Connects interim and 2050 networks.

Figure 19 Water Taxi Routes in the Metro Connects 2050 Network



Service Quality Investments

OVERVIEW

Improving the quality of Metro’s services is crucial to building a mobility system that gets people where they want to go, when they want to get there. The whole customer experience matters—from determining which service to take, to paying a fare, to boarding and riding the bus safely and efficiently.

Through Metro’s public engagement processes and surveys, Metro regularly hears about the importance of fast, reliable, service and making the transit system safe, understandable, and easy to use. This chapter describes programs and investments that will improve and modernize service, connect people to transit, and enhance the customer experience.

All of Metro’s services will benefit from the service quality improvements described in this chapter. Metro will use input from the public and customers—with an emphasis on outreach to priority populations—to determine what types of service improvements and attributes to prioritize and where.

Priority populations: people who are Black, Indigenous, and of color; have low or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.

Service quality investments described in this section include:

- Speed and reliability
- Boarding and fares
- Innovation, modernization, and technology
- Customer communications
- Passenger facilities
- Connecting to transit
- Managing demand
- Equitable transit-oriented communities

SPEED AND RELIABILITY

Metro aspires to deliver service customers can count on by making an unprecedented level of capital investments to improve transit speed and reliability. By keeping buses moving through congestion and arriving on schedule, Metro will deliver more service and customers will arrive at their destinations in less time.

What will speed and reliability look like?

Metro Connects proposes significant investments to improve transit speed and reliability.

Getting people to their destinations faster and on schedule benefits existing riders and attracts new ones. Speed and reliability are critically important for riders who have fixed schedules or depend on transit to get to work, medical appointments, or other engagements.

Speed and reliability investments can substantially improve the customer experience. They can lead to increased bus ridership and fewer car trips, a key goal of King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan.

Transit service can often become unreliable when it operates in mixed traffic on roadways that do not have transit-priority features. These conditions can result in buses spaced too close together or too far apart, slow travel times, high operating costs, buses running late, and difficult transfers.

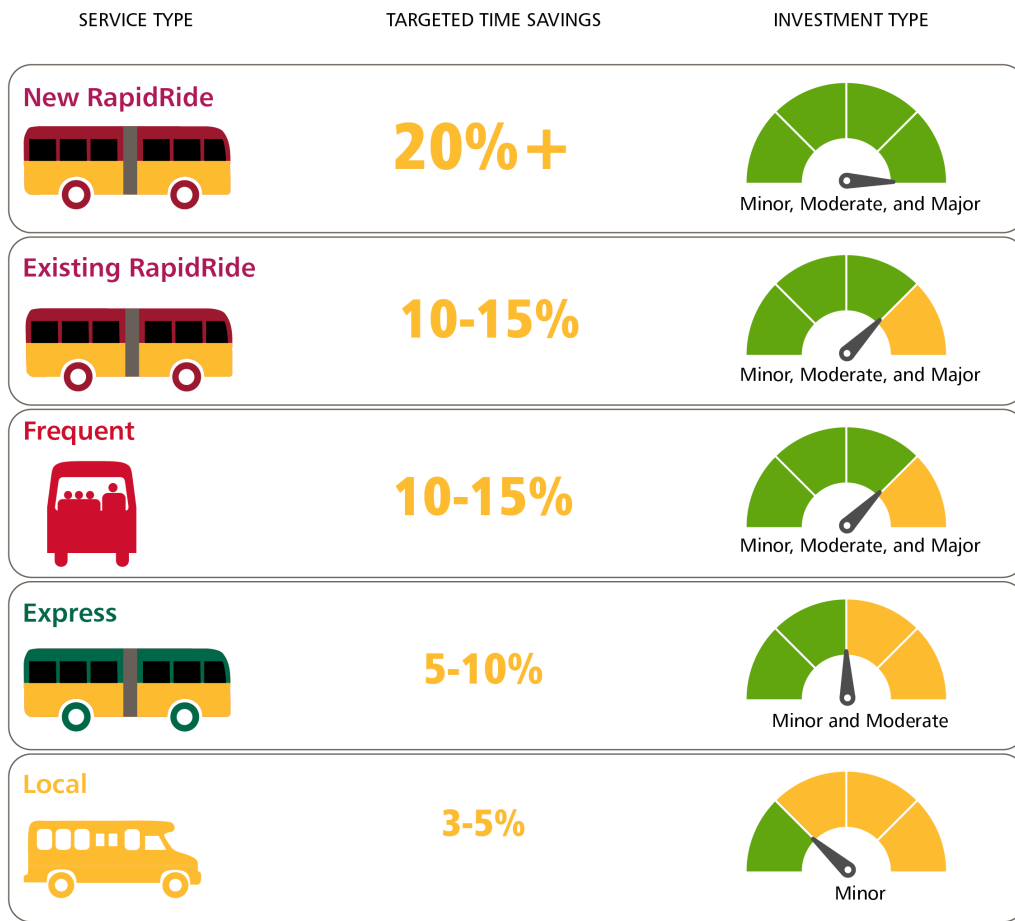
Metro will continue to work with city partners across King County to install transit-priority features that keep buses moving. These features let Metro spend more time moving people and less time getting delayed buses back on schedule, saving operating dollars to be used for more service. The most promising improvements are bus-only lanes, traffic signals that give buses priority, and measures that reduce delay at crowded bus stops. The "Fares and Boarding" section discusses ways Metro could increase reliability by making bus boarding easier and fare payment faster.

Metro Connects proposes different levels of capital investment—major, moderate, or minor—to keep buses moving fast and reliably. Each level has a different mix of tools, described in detail in the "Speed and Reliability Guidelines and Strategies" document. While all of Metro's service types will receive some investments, the priorities for major levels of investment will be areas where needs are greatest, service is most frequent, and roadways are most congested. Service that is less frequent or operates in less-congested areas, such as rural communities and fast-moving highways, will receive moderate or minor levels of investment.

Fast and reliable service is a top priority for Metro's customers.

Metro's 2019 Rider/Non-Rider Survey found that approximately one-third of Metro's customers are dissatisfied with frequency, travel time, and on-time performance. Metro regularly hears similar comments during community engagement activities.

Figure 20 Capital Investment Levels



INVESTMENT TYPES



MINOR INVESTMENT
 EXAMPLE FEATURES
 Spot Improvements at key locations and signal retiming throughout a corridor.



MODERATE INVESTMENT
 EXAMPLE FEATURES
 Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes and other speed and reliability treatments* within existing right-of-way.



MAJOR INVESTMENT
 EXAMPLE FEATURES
 New bus-only lanes and other speed and reliability treatments* that may require additional right-of-way

* Refer to the Speed and Reliability Guidelines for detailed descriptions of speed and reliability improvements.

What will it take?

- **Work with partners to make significant speed and reliability improvements.**

Rely on, consider incentives for, collaborate with, and communicate transparently with local jurisdictions to identify new projects. Combine Metro and city resources to seek federal and state funding. Seek local jurisdictions' assistance in planning and securing transit-only right-of-way and changing traffic management practices. Leverage investments with additional partner and grant funding to complete a network of infrastructure that keeps transit riders moving. Support improvements such as new bus-only lanes, transit priority features, upgraded signals, new transit signal priority, and rechannelized roadways. Speed and reliability projects can incorporate investments with partners to improve safety, reliability, the customer experience, and transit-oriented communities. Projects could include passenger amenities and safer access by walking, biking, and rolling.
- **Plan early for speed and reliability improvements.**

Align planning efforts with Metro's six-year capital improvement program, the Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects. Make transit speed and reliability improvements on corridors where congestion levels are high. Develop a countywide plan for bus lanes and corridor prioritization. Improve speed and reliability at congested "hot spots" countywide. Manage headways so service comes at consistent and reliable intervals, reducing customer wait times. Work with partners to improve incident response options that keep buses moving through delays, such as installation of temporary bus-only lanes. Pursue grant funding opportunities.
- **Pursue improvements to make boarding faster and easier.**

Read more in the next section, "Boarding and Fares."
- **In partnerships with others, invest in large regional projects that would benefit transit.**

Metro will maintain an inventory of candidate projects, including new transit pathways and service connections, major crossings, and transit bottlenecks.
- **Build on Metro's existing intelligent transportation systems architecture.**

These will support the management of vehicles on the road to make service faster and more reliable, and customer information tools that would make Metro system easier to use.
- **Support security and enforcement around transit priority features.**

Bus-only lanes, busways, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and roadway features that keep buses moving require enforcement to be effective.

BOARDING AND FARES

Taking the bus will be fast and easy as Metro improves the way customers pay fares, get on and off the bus, and use other mobility services. Metro will provide options for paying for multimodal trips and support incentives for using transit. Metro will work to make transit affordable to all, using an income-based approach to fare subsidies, and making it easier for employers to provide transit benefits to their employees. Investments in effective, community-based messaging will help riders understand how to efficiently get to their destinations.

What will boarding and fares look like?

The time a bus spends at stops to let passengers on and off can lengthen trip time and cause delays. Boarding can be slow and difficult for customers using wheelchairs, other mobility aids, strollers, or carts.

Fare payment also takes time, and boarding is slower when riders pay with cash rather than an ORCA card. Use of cash, paper tickets, and paper transfers increases the risk of fare disputes, as well as health and safety risks, and adds to Metro’s operating costs. Cash users also typically pay a more expensive fare.

Metro Connects envisions an equitable, easy-to-use fare program that improves the boarding experience and reduces trip times for everyone, from frequent customers to visitors. The program might provide new ways to pay, make it easier for cash users to use digital payment options, add more ORCA partners, and better ensure that each user pays the right fare—including income-based fare options.

The ORCA smart card fare payment system gives transit customers the advantages of faster fare payment and regional transfers between systems, as well as better and consistent access to income-based fares. Transit agencies realize benefits such as faster boardings, more accurate ridership data, and improved revenue data and regional revenue reconciliation. The next generation of ORCA will provide a range of improvements and opportunities for fare payment.

Equity benefits of ORCA’s intersystem transfer

ORCA allows a customer to travel on multiple systems within the 2-hour transfer window and to only pay the difference in fares if the second system used has a higher fare. This is not true with payment via cash or mobile ticketing, where riders pay a new fare each time they board. As Sound Transit builds out light rail, Metro will increasingly structure its service to feed the new rail lines. An intersystem transfer credit will be a key benefit for an increasing number of customers.

Next generation ORCA

Vendor support for the current ORCA system will expire in 2022, and the six ORCA agencies in the Puget Sound region are designing the next-generation fare collection system. Technology has changed significantly, and the ORCA partners will continue exploring opportunities to speed up fare collection.

Next generation ORCA will:

- Make fare payment more convenient by allowing customers to manage accounts in real time and use their phones to pay their fare via a new ORCA app or credit card.
- Improve equitable access to transit by increasing the number of retail locations where customers can load their account with cash.
- Support all-door boarding, significantly speeding boarding for customers.
- Be open architecture, meaning it can grow and adapt as new technology options become available. This will allow integration with other systems such as payment for parking at park-and-rides, shared mobility and micro-mobility providers, and transportation network companies.

Two important changes occurred after the 2017 adoption of Metro Connects. The King County Council adopted a flat fare for adults, making fare payment faster and easier. And Metro built on its ORCA LIFT program, which offers subsidized fare cards for riders who meet the income qualifications, by adding a fully subsidized transit pass for people in extreme poverty. ORCA LIFT saves money for participants and reduces cash fare payment on buses. Metro will continue pursuing other strategies to speed up boarding and make transit easier and safer to use.

For more information

Metro is committed to advancing equity through an income-based approach to fares and by ensuring that qualified riders can find the right reduced fare or program for them. For more information about Metro's reduced fare programs, visit www.kingcounty.gov/WhichORCAFare.

What will it take?

- **Move toward all-door boarding and off-board payment to make bus trips faster and enable Metro to provide more service with the same resources.**
Work with ORCA partners to implement next generation ORCA and increase the number of retail locations customers can access to add value to their account. Implement all-door boarding systemwide. Invest in onboard and offboard fare collection equipment. Expand alternative payment methods and provide new fare purchase sites.
- **Move toward a system without cash payment on-board buses, paper tickets, and paper transfers.**
Ensure that customers can purchase fare products with cash through an expanded retail network and other off-coach payment options. This will speed boarding and ensure cash customers can still use the system without paying more than the necessary fare.
- **Ensure affordability is not a barrier preventing people from riding public transit.**
Implement a targeted approach to fare discounts, ensuring that riders most in

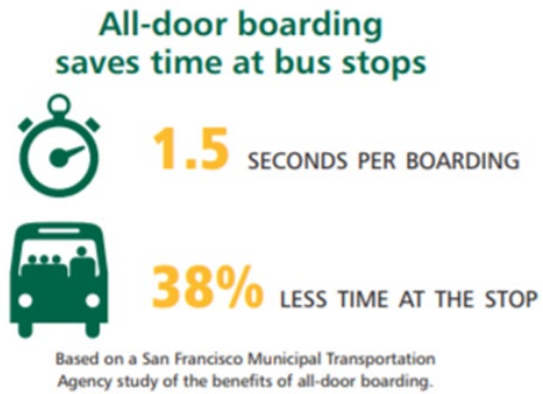
- need of a subsidy can access transit while continuing to collect the fare revenue necessary to support the expansion and improvement of Metro’s services countywide. Adjust pricing and partnership strategies so that Metro can better collaborate with human service agencies in making ORCA products available to their clients. Add new ORCA partners, expanding the retail network so that cash users do not have to pay more than the required fare.
- **Make boarding easier and faster for all.**
Procure vehicles with low floors for easy boarding and wider aisles and doors that make it easier to get on and off. Improve boarding for wheelchairs and other mobility aids through passive restraint systems, for bicycles through easier-to-use racks, and for strollers and baggage through vehicle design. Provide safe and convenient securement areas for customers who use mobility aids. Pursue other strategies to speed up boarding and make transit easier and safer to use.
 - **Facilitate integrated fare payment and trip planning.**
Help customers plan and pay for multimodal trips, in partnership with ORCA agencies and private providers, including micromobility providers. Advance income-based fares approach among private partner mobility providers. Explore opportunities for customers to pay fares for all services used in a trip—such as parking, bike-share and car-share providers, and transportation network companies—in real time with a single mechanism, such as Next Gen ORCA.
 - **Work with stakeholders to re-envision fare enforcement so it is safe, equitable, anti-racist, and culturally appropriate.**
Doing so will support more equitable access to the transit system, and may contribute to increased use of ORCA and other non-cash fare payment.
 - **Continually monitor, evaluate, and build evidence about what works and what needs improvement.**
Metro will measure changes in dwell times and associated run times for service as all door boarding is implemented, and tighten schedules where possible to speed service. Metro will evaluate efforts to help customers move to contactless forms of payment. Metro will use rigorous, evidence-based evaluation to determine what strategies are most successful in ensuring customers can pay and pay the fare that is right for them.

Some of these strategies are in use or possible today. Metro’s RapidRide system lets passengers at stations pay their fares offboard and get on the bus through any door. Metro is moving toward all-door boarding throughout its system in 2022. New technology could allow mobile payment at less-expensive onboard readers.

Several Metro programs contribute to steadily increasing use of ORCA. The ORCA Passport business account program has greatly expanded the number of ORCA riders. In 2019, ORCA business accounts represented 44 percent of Metro’s boardings (up from 30 percent in 2015, the last figure in this plan). In 2020, Metro, Sound Transit, and eight human service agencies launched a demonstration project to determine the feasibility of expanding the paper human service bus ticket program to include ORCA options. Results of the demonstration will inform program changes in Next Generation ORCA.

Technological developments could further expand options. Strategies like these will help Metro ensure its fare system is affordable, streamlined, and easy to use.

Figure 21 All-door Boarding Saves Time



INNOVATION, MODERNIZATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

Rapidly advancing technologies are changing how people travel. Metro will invest in, incorporate, and encourage technological innovation. Metro will question “business as usual” and evaluate new ways to better serve customers and advance safety, equity, and sustainability goals.

What will innovation, modernization, and technology look like?

Improved service management and modernization of is one of the best investments to improve service quality. Innovations in technology, such as integrated on-demand mobility platforms and automated vehicles, are changing the transportation landscape—and Metro is changing with it. Metro will continue to improve processes and technologies that enhance the customer experience, such as actively managing service to deliver more reliable and predictable service.

Building on its history of innovation, Metro is testing and adopting new features, services, and products to make services safer, more equitable, sustainable, and easier to use.

Metro is also working to modernize through business transformation efforts. These efforts focus on preparing Metro to deliver the vision outlined in Metro Connects, Metro is focusing on the customer in decision-making, becoming agile and nimble in the way that work is done, and developing employees to deliver on strategic objectives and meet the evolving mobility needs of the region.

Metro will use new on-demand mobility options, smartphone apps, trip planning resources, and real-time information to improve the customer experience and develop new service solutions. Innovative mobility services and partnerships will complement fixed-route transit, use public space equitably and efficiently, support fair labor practices, enable data sharing while protecting privacy, serving priority populations, and advancing climate goals. Innovation in internal business practices and processes will be aimed at delivering the best possible public transportation for Metro customers.

Metro is modernizing service delivery

Service modernization is a top priority for Metro as it strives to improve service delivery to better meet the needs of customers, employees, and the region. Metro is transforming business processes, using technology in new or more efficient ways, employing new ways of managing service such as headway management, and investing in core functions that allow Metro’s employees to deliver better and more-efficient service.

Metro is partnering with industry leaders on a variety of pilots and service enhancements to advance its goals while applying a learning mindset to ensure outcomes are met. One example is Metro’s on-demand Via to Transit pilot program

which provides on-demand ride-share service to support access to transit in areas of greatest need. Another example is advancing the use of software platforms and mobility services to share real-time data and develop integrated payment and planning tools so customers can access the mobility that works best for their specific trip needs through one easy system (See the next section, “Customer Communications,” for details). Use of integrated real-time information will also improve operations by increasing rapid response to incidents, manage demand throughout the system, and support the health and safety of customers and employees.

Innovation will help move Metro toward its policy goals, including safety, equity, and sustainability. Advancing technology is also helping Metro become more evidence-informed, data-driven, and proactive. Metro collects and shares new and more accurate data about operations and performance metrics, increasing Metro’s accountability to the public. Metro prioritizes equity to ensure new technologies do not create additional inequities and barriers. Metro will use technology to address climate change by building greener and healthier buildings and facilities, electrifying the Metro fleet, and advancing a suite of mobility services across the County that enable less reliance on car ownership.

What will it take?

- **Respond to community-identified needs and live up to Metro’s values.**
Embrace a value- and customer-focused approach that lets community engagement and customer feedback drive priorities and service and program design. Give the private providers Metro partners with incentives to share its focus on safety, equity, and sustainability.
- **Expand investment in research, development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative technologies.**
With a focus on ensuring equity, test, evaluate and launch new services, products, and practices enabled by emerging technologies that improve customer service, help Metro manage operations actively and operate more efficiently, and move toward the Strategic Plan goals.
- **Better use quantitative and qualitative data for decision-making, to ensure decisions are values-driven and data-informed.**
Create systems that better manage information and feedback from customers and employees and improve internal data collection, integration, use, and reporting. Create processes to ensure data is available to support decisions.
- **Nurture a learning culture that welcomes and adapts quickly to new ideas, technologies, changing conditions, and ways of working.**
Prepare for unexpected opportunities by developing flexible policies and processes that can adapt to change. Foster creative thinking and innovation through cross-disciplinary teams, regular performance assessments, strategic evidence building and use, and other avenues.
- **Increase communication about innovations and their evaluation.**
Focus on ensuring innovations are accessible, understandable, and easy to use for priority populations. Engage communities as Metro evaluates

innovations and acts on the results. Use the Service Guidelines as a framework for evaluating service innovations.

- **Convene and support public and private partners in equity- and evidence-informed mobility innovation.**

Engage public and private entities across the region's transportation system to support learning and innovation. Metro will also engage with transit agencies nationally to share work, build evidence, and learn from innovations.

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS

Metro Connects envisions a mobility system that is rich with easily understood information that will make the system accessible for all. People will know about their options and how to use services.

Figure 22 Metro Will Explore New Ways to Provide Customer Information



Left, middle: Paris has explored bus shelters designed as multi-purpose public spaces that include fare vending, neighborhood information, coffee or food for purchase, electrical outlets, integrated bikeshare stations, and more. (Photo source: Human Transit, humantransit.org)

Right: Onboard screens can provide information about connecting service, transit alerts, and other information. (Photo source: Redeye Chicago, redevChicago.com)

What will customer communications look like?

In 2021, Metro customers can get information and assistance from a range of sources—Metro’s website, trip planning app, Customer Information Office, email and text alerts, social media, marketing and promotion programs, and other sources that rely on data provided by Metro. Metro drivers play a major role in customer communications as they interact with passengers.

Metro will build on these resources by emphasizing:

- New types of information and ways to share it with customers
- More accessible methods of communication, such as making information available in multiple languages and for different abilities, developing strategies for communicating directly to priority populations, and partnering with community members and community-based organizations to spread information
- Continued emphasis on customer service training and support systems that enable Metro operators to provide the best service possible
- A suite of tools that make navigating the transit system easy, including wayfinding signs, announcements, promotional materials, and interactive options for questions and comments

Emerging technologies will enable the delivery of enhanced information or new communication platforms. Imagine if smartphones let customers know a traffic accident had blocked their bus, told them how full the next bus was, or showed the availability of a bikeshare service or park-and-ride. Or, Metro might install software-based passenger counters on its entire fleet, enabling real-time tracking of the number of people on a bus. Metro Connects proposes to make this information-rich future a reality as customer service solutions evolve.

Not everyone has a smartphone or computer and not everyone communicates in English, so Metro will pursue tools that help everyone. Dynamic, up-to-the minute information could be displayed at bus stops and transit centers and on buses. This could include nearby transportation options to make last-mile connections, such as real-time bike share, car share, or ride-hailing services.

New tools might offer other types of information, such as upcoming events at a venue the bus was passing. Metro customer service agents could provide personalized assistance through new channels. Marketing could target desired audiences to increase awareness of new and improved services and tools.

Metro will support open-source platforms and third-party developers by giving them clean and accurate transit data for their travel products and services. As new transit information products are developed, Metro will work with private sector partners to ensure they are integrated with Metro products and services.

Metro and other ORCA agencies will determine what role the next generation ORCA mobile app will play in the customer information environment. Will the agencies add functionality like trip planning to the ORCA app or will third party providers such as Google, Transit App, or OneBusAway be allowed to access and leverage the ORCA app platform? Metro will engage customers to inform this decision.

What will it take?

- **Evaluate current customer information systems and engage customers.**
Identify the gaps between what Metro provides and what customers want and expect to achieve more equitable access to mobility.
- **Improve communications, responding to community-identified needs.**
Target priority populations and ensure customers see their input incorporated into communication and marketing strategies.
- **Provide real-time information about current conditions and nearby transportation options.**
Equip transit hubs and vehicles with customer tools that provide static and real-time information. Include information about local transportation connections, and bus and train arrival times. Provide information about available park-and-ride spaces, bike parking, bikeshares, carshares, and transportation network companies.
- **Ensure advancements in customer information improve accessibility for all, regardless of their abilities or language spoken.**
Help all customers use the transit system safely and easily with accessible customer interfaces and improvements in audio, tactile, and electronic communications.
- **Gather and manage customer information to improve service.**
Collect and integrate data related to Metro's performance, customer information and feedback, and other areas, and integrate it into planning, performance management, and evidence-building processes. Develop mechanisms to make better use of qualitative data that Metro collects through surveys and community engagement.

- **Make data available to third-party developers.**
Sharing Metro data in common formats allows third-party app developers, such as One Bus Away and the Transit App, to use the best available transit data to help customers plan their trip. Metro will continue to improve the quality of the data it provides and recognize that consumer choice will continue to drive which app a person uses for travel planning.

PASSENGER FACILITIES

Metro Connects proposes well-designed stops, stations, and transit centers as well as improvements to existing facilities. Passenger facilities will help keep riders safe, give them better service information, make transfers convenient and close, and support equitable, transit-oriented communities.

What will passenger facilities look like?

Metro will improve more than 26 existing and new transit centers and more than 3,500 bus stops. The upgrades will emphasize enhanced safety, new customer features, and seamless integration between transit providers and other travel modes.

As of 2020, Metro owned and maintained more than 7,000 bus stops, including RapidRide stations and at transit centers. With Metro Connects' proposed expansion of transit service and integration with Sound Transit, the number of Metro-owned stops will increase. For many trips, the fastest option will include a transfer between bus and rail or between buses. Sound Transit's planned and proposed investments will add more light rail and bus rapid transit stations.

The number of people using these facilities will increase. The activity at many stops will change, with more riders transferring among buses and rail.

As Metro builds or rejuvenates facilities to accommodate more passengers, it will design them for easy connections across modes—bus, light rail, train, ferry, streetcar, biking, walking, etc. Access for single-occupancy vehicles will be low priority.

Passenger facility design principles

Metro Connects envisions top-notch passenger facilities that will give customers a high-quality transit experience.

Passenger facilities will be in the right locations. While following general guidelines for stop spacing, Metro will consider topography, safety, lighting, surrounding land use and development, and the presence of sidewalks when deciding where to place stops. Street crossings will be highly visible, well-lit, and located to minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.

Metro is coordinating with Sound Transit to ensure bus loading areas will be at or next to light rail stations so customers transferring will have short walks, short wait times, and minimal street crossings.

Wayfinding and transit information will be easy to see and understand for people of all abilities and languages. It will clearly direct passengers through transfer areas. Consistent signage across all major transfer points will help riders easily navigate Metro's and transit agency systems.

Stops, stations, and pathways will be safe for and accessible to all customers, regardless of age, ability, or gender. They will have ample space for passenger

loading and circulation. Access for people who walk, bike, or roll to the station will be prioritized.

Shelters and waiting areas will provide lighting, customer information, and protection from weather. Passenger facility designs that prioritize safety and security will help passengers feel safe and comfortable while waiting for a bus or train. Transit centers could be spaces for residential, commercial, and community activities, creating a friendly, equitable, and welcoming atmosphere for customers.

Combinations of many uses at transit centers will strengthen transit-oriented communities. The result will be efficient use of available land, reduced car trips, integration of transit with neighborhoods, and strengthened businesses.

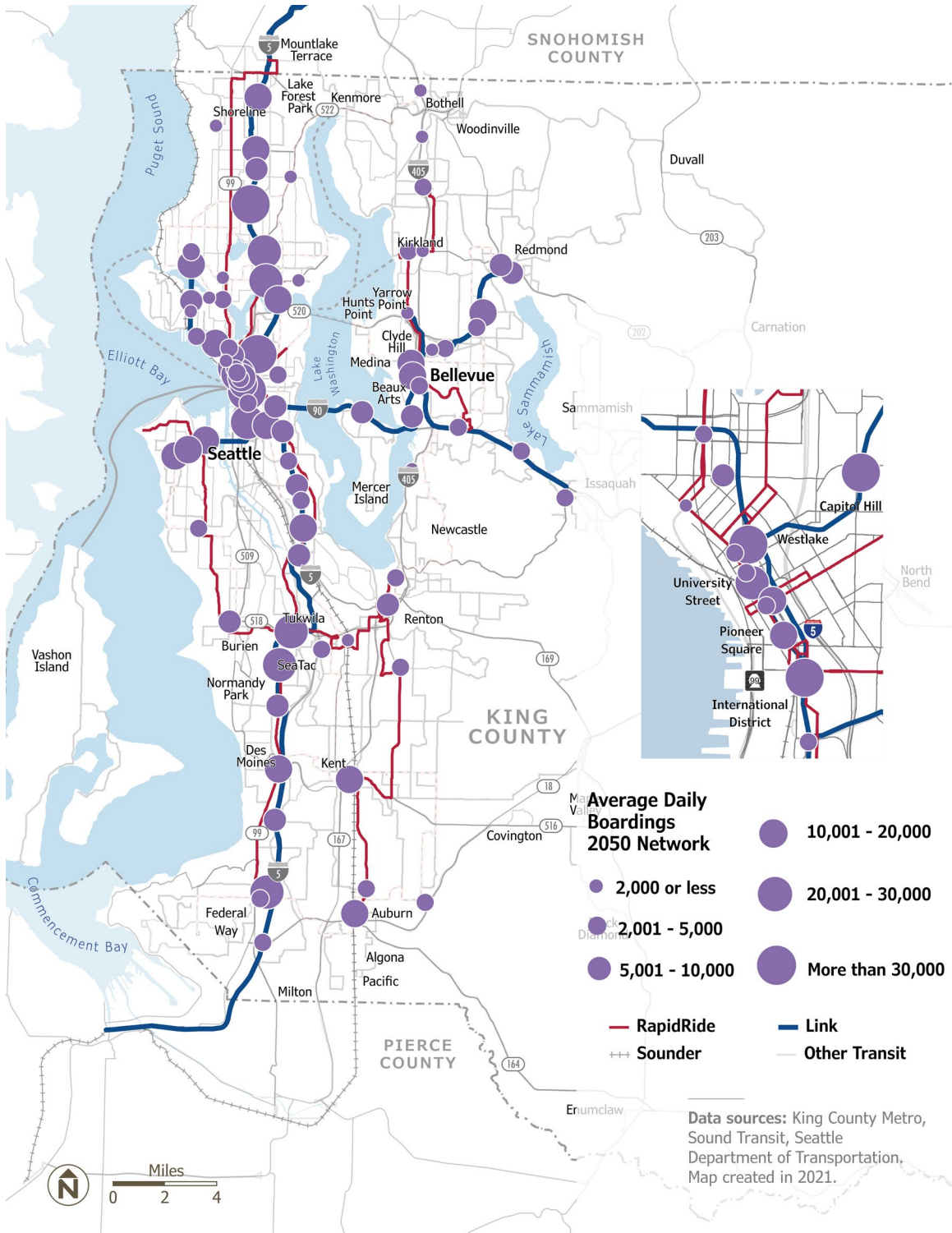
Metro will need improved facilities at transfer locations to support the proposed 2050 service network. Figure 23 shows anticipated major transit center boardings, including Link and some bus rapid transit stations. New or improved transfer locations will be needed at existing and future Sound Transit light rail stations, stops with significant ridership growth, and other key transfer points and transit centers in the system. Metro and Sound Transit will continue working together to provide passenger facilities that are appropriately sized for the anticipated passenger and bus volumes at light rail stations.

What will it take?

- **Build an extensive system of well-designed and safe passenger stops, stations, and transit centers.**
Make sure transit facilities are comfortable and easy to use by keeping design guidelines up to date and employing lessons learned from Metro’s passenger facility best practice study and community input.
- **Design facilities that make connections from other modes easy and comfortable, working with partners for shared facilities.**
Coordinate with Sound Transit and other partners extensively and early in the design process for light rail and bus rapid transit facilities. Ensure their design makes transferring quick and easy. Incorporate principles of universal design, accessibility, equity, sustainability, and engagement into the design process.
- **Coordinate with cities and private partners to ensure facility locations are consistent with land-use plans and designed to help integrate different transportation services.**
Consider partnering with private, governmental, or nonprofit property owners in transit facility development, helping reduce the costs of land acquisition, construction, and permitting while creating opportunities to meet community development desires.

In 2019, six major transit centers—four Link stations in downtown Seattle plus Capitol Hill and University of Washington—have 10,000 or more daily boardings. Westlake Station has the most boardings—28,000 per day. In 2050, as many as 30 transit hubs across the county could have more than 10,000 boardings. Smaller stops and stations around the county could also see more riders.

Figure 23 Anticipated Transit Center Boardings in the Metro Connects 2050 Network



CONNECTING TO TRANSIT

Metro wants customers to have safe, comfortable, equitable, and easy ways to get to transit. Metro Connects will invest in projects and strategies for improving the walk, roll, bike ride, drop-off, or drive to or from bus stops and stations.

What will connections to transit look like?

A person's decision to drive, ride, walk, roll, or bike to transit can be affected by many factors: how close they are to a stop, how often the service runs, the availability of parking, and the presence and quality of sidewalks, bike lanes, secure bike parking, lighting, and other safety and security features.

While the overall number of riders will increase by 2050, the share driving a personal car to transit is expected to decline with the expansion of transit service envisioned in Metro Connects²⁰. Metro Connects will support this shift by investing to improve bicycle and pedestrian access and to ensure access to auto parking is available, convenient, and equitable.

Several travel options will help riders reach transit service without driving alone. These include carsharing, micromobility services like bike and scooter sharing, taxis, on-demand ridehailing services, and public and private shuttles. Technology platforms offering real-time information, trip planning, and fare purchasing will provide a seamless experience for travelers connecting to and between the full range of mobility options.

The siting of new parking, bicycle and pedestrian investments will be based on access to the service network— particularly frequent and express service—and on local considerations and local urban character. Figure 24 outlines different types of areas with different densities and urban characteristics and the appropriate types of investments envisioned.

²⁰ King County Strategic Climate Action Plan.

Figure 24 Transit Access Zones and Types of Improvements

High Density	Medium Density	Lower Density	Lowest Density
<p>High-density areas served by a grid of frequent service, such as downtown areas.</p>	<p>Medium-density areas that are within walking distance of at least one frequent service.</p>	<p>Lower-density areas within walking distance of less frequent local or express service.</p>	<p>Lowest-density areas with limited or no walk access to transit.</p>
<p>Improvements</p> <p>Focus on bicycle and pedestrian facilities, little or no expansion of Metro parking.</p>	<p>Improvements</p> <p>Strong emphasis on more bicycle and pedestrian facilities, little or no expansion of parking.</p>	<p>Improvements</p> <p>Moderate emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian facilities and some parking investments.</p>	<p>Improvements</p> <p>Limited investment in bicycle and pedestrian facilities, emphasis on increasing transit parking.</p>
<p>Estimated Future bike/walk share</p> <p>96%</p>	<p>Estimated Future bike/walk share</p> <p>82%</p>	<p>Estimated Future bike/walk share</p> <p>50%</p>	<p>Estimated Future bike/walk share</p> <p>16%</p>

Analysis of walking, biking, and rolling to transit

To make walking, biking, or rolling to transit safer and more convenient, King County needs more high-quality sidewalks and crossings, ADA accommodations, bicycle and scooter lanes, and trails. Metro also needs secure places to park bikes and other mobility devices, like shared bikes and scooters.

Growing demand for trails and transit

King County has over 300 miles of multi-use trails used for some 10 million bicycle and pedestrian trips annually. The trails network presents opportunities to combine cycling or walking with the fast, frequent, transit service envisioned in Metro Connects.

Trail routes are being designed and constructed. These include the extension of the Mountains to Sound Trail east of Bellevue, the Eastrail from Renton to Woodinville, and the Lake to Sound Trail from Lake Washington in Renton to Puget Sound in Des Moines. These trails will help riders reach transit service without driving alone and will greatly enhance regional mobility.

Jurisdictions play an essential role in providing safe access to public transportation, as sidewalks, intersections and bike facilities are primarily on their rights-of-way. Metro will collaborate with them through programs such as Safe Routes to Transit, to

fund, design and build these improvements and encourage people-friendly street designs near transit.

Safe Routes to Transit

Metro’s Safe Routes to Transit (SR2T) program helps cities design and build safer, more convenient ways for people to walk, roll, and bicycle to transit services. The program contributes to improvements like safer pedestrian crossings, ADA ramps, new or improved sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, signal treatments, traffic calming, and improved bicycle facilities. Potential project sites are evaluated for equity, ridership, proximity to key destinations, community feedback, and other factors. Between 2017 and 2020, the program contributed to 33 projects in 11 jurisdictions.

Parking and mobility hubs analysis

Metro provides service to 130 park-and-rides across the county that have a combined total of more than 25,000 parking spaces. Metro and other transportation agencies own or lease these facilities. In lower density areas (such as Zones 3 and 4 in Figure 24), park-and-rides provide auto access to transit. They concentrate rider demand, allowing Metro to serve these areas more efficiently. Moderate and higher density areas (Zones 1 and 2 in Figure 24) have a growing need to accommodate additional access mode options, and present opportunities to re-imagine existing park-and-rides as multi-modal mobility hubs.

Metro Connects will introduce fully managed parking, deliver new parking access, enhance lots to accommodate multimodal access, and integrate technology. This will improve efficiency and the customer experience getting to the transit system. It will also ensure climate and equity goals are advanced through the design and prioritization of access and the management of auto parking.

As demand for mobility grows, Metro Connects envisions tailoring access investments to meet the needs of specific communities. To assess these needs, Metro will consider:

- Areas of the county with the greatest needs
- The level of transit service
- Population and jobs
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Availability of multimodal options such as micromobility or on-demand services
- Existing and future parking inventory, including the new parking facilities Sound Transit plans to build by 2050

Parking and mobility hub strategies will be prioritized as follows:

Manage parking to meet customer and community needs

- Increase efficiency by promoting carpools and real-time ridesharing, marketing underutilized lots, or employing other strategies
- Implement permits and payment for parking, making it easier for customers to find spaces

- Introduce technology to support real-time parking information, dynamic trip planning, parking monitoring and enforcement, and parking reservations and sales
- Facilitate community and third-party uses of park-and-ride lots at times when parking is underutilized by transit riders

Increase access to transit using creative and multi-modal solutions

- Expand capacity through leased parking, shared parking, and restriping existing lots to create more spaces
- Convert existing parking lots into multimodal mobility hubs, providing access to more modes and the potential for community and commercial uses

Deliver access to new parking

Compared to other access investments, construction of permanent parking is more expensive for the ridership it generates and can limit future development in key locations. This will be a lower priority strategy.

As Metro considers providing access to new parking, it will emphasize delivering permanent parking capacity through partnerships and transit-oriented developments (TODs), rather than through constructing standalone facilities. Metro will coordinate with affected jurisdictions and consider costs and needs, local partnerships, opportunities to deliver in conjunction with TODs, the service network, and other options for accessing transit. Metro will seek to leverage any parking investments to increase equitable development, bringing more riders close to great transit service.

For more information

See Technical Report B. Metro Connects – Service Network for more detail on connections to transit.

What is a mobility hub?

Mobility hubs are transportation nodes where many modes connect.

Metro Connects proposes to introduce multimodal mobility hubs at existing and future park-and-ride lots and in conjunction with transit-oriented developments. Mobility hubs would allow riders to seamlessly transfer to, from, and between transit, walking, biking, micromobility, shuttles, transportation network companies, and parking for private and shared vehicles.

To create mobility hubs, Metro would reconfigure existing lots and add hub elements such as:

- Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian circulation
- Improved passenger waiting areas
- New pick-up and drop-off zones
- Micro-mobility corrals
- Electric vehicle charging
- Real-time information

Mobility hubs would give riders more abundant and flexible options. They would support using nonmotorized and shared modes instead of driving alone.

Metro consistently hears from stakeholders and the public about the need for more ways to safely and easily connect to transit. Mobility hubs would help address that. Metro Connects proposes to expand access to all options, in alignment with local priorities.

What will it take?

- **Invest in mobility hubs to improve equitable access to transit through safe and sustainable design solutions that work for the community.**
Using a community-led process, Metro will collaborate with partner transportation providers and redesign existing park-and-ride locations to expand mobility choices for customers while advancing equity and climate goals. As a part of the transition to a mobility hub, Metro will invest in bicycle and pedestrian improvements to make it easier and safer to walk, bike and roll to key transit hubs. Along with the non-motorized investments, Metro will also manage vehicle parking to improve the customer experience and improve efficiency while ensuring those with greatest need can reliably find parking when they need it.
- **Provide reliable and real-time parking information to manage demand and improve the customer experience.**
Continue monitoring park-and-rides and pursue strategies to best use existing resources through active demand management practices. This includes using technology to provide real-time information to customers about parking availability and options for paying for or reserving a space. Data will be standardized and shared to allow for integration with tools that will help customers to easily plan, book, and pay for their mobility needs.
- **Develop partnerships to improve connections to transit.**
Work with city partners, King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and other partners to create high-quality trail connections, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities that connect to bus stops and transit centers and support transit-oriented communities. Partners could help identify, design, permit,

and build access improvements; assist in leased-lot negotiations; implement transit-supportive land uses; and contribute financially. Metro could provide funding to jurisdictions through grants or other mechanisms and help develop grant proposals.

MANAGING DEMAND

Metro Connects will help the transportation system work better by attracting new transit riders and reducing the use of single occupant vehicles. Metro's transportation demand management (TDM) program will be a key tool for maximizing the efficiency of existing roads and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

What will Metro's TDM program look like?

TDM programs breakdown barriers to using alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips for customers. These programs expand the customer base for transit and improve efficiency by maximizing use of the networks in place. TDM programs have a lasting impact on how people think about getting around, and lead to sustained changes in travel behavior over time.

TDM spreads transit demand across travel modes and times of day. One demand-management strategy is to provide access to efficient travel options such as carpooling, vanpooling, walking, biking, or riding transit. Another is to promote flexible work schedules that reduce demand during peak travel times. During the COVID-19 pandemic, metro observed dramatic changes in ridership patterns due to a shift towards telework for many employees. Changing work patterns to reduce stress on the transportation system could make more and more-frequent service available all day and support the use of mobility options closer to home, in addition to commuter travel.

How people travel can significantly affect the need for new transportation investments and can support system preservation and maintenance. TDM activities help get the most out of transportation infrastructure and services by making lower-cost, more-efficient transportation options easier to use and more readily available.

Metro's TDM program will continue to use outreach, education, incentives, and new products and partnerships with both community groups and employers. These strategies will help to reduce barriers to using transit, maximize the value of transit investments, create a healthy environment, and help the transportation system work better—especially where needs are greatest and with priority populations. Metro's TDM program covers a variety of transportation modes and tools, including but not limited to:

- Community-based social marketing
- Employer transit products
- Shared mobility options
- Parking management
- Flexible services
- Emergency ride home programs
- Pass programs
- Telework
- School and student-based programming

Metro will also develop new methods to connect with transit, using emerging technology and transportation pricing as well as improvements to alternative mobility. For example, Metro will explore ways to change pricing of its programs and services to influence demand.

What will it take?

- **Research, develop, and evaluate new tools.**
Build Metro’s capacity for evidence-based research, development, and evaluation of new TDM tools to reduce VMT while advancing equity. Co-create TDM programs with community partners to maximize their effectiveness. Assess employer products to expand participation among businesses that employ lower wage workers. Budget for TDM in Metro projects and continue to develop new TDM partnerships and transform existing partnerships. Design evaluation into each project and continue to build evidence on the most effective strategies.
- **Support local and regional land-use decisions that benefit transit and other alternatives to driving alone.**
Advocate for national, state, and local policies and funds that support alternatives to driving alone and help create walkable communities.
- **Partner to put TDM solutions to work.**
Seek opportunities to expand TDM activities through partnerships with cities, transit agencies, WSDOT, employers, the private sector, community-based organizations, and others.
- **Create sustainable pipelines to transit ridership.**
Support early and consistent intervention with transit and alternative modes, especially with youth and people new to the region.

EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES

By supporting housing, services, and jobs near transit, Metro Connects will strengthen communities. Metro will consider surrounding land uses when it plans transit service and will take an active role in building and promoting compact development and pedestrian-oriented improvements. Communities will benefit from more travel options, more affordable housing, and more transit users.

What will Metro's equitable transit-oriented communities program look like?

Equitable transit-oriented communities (TOC) enable people to drive less and access transit more easily. They embody a holistic approach to place-making through intentional and coordinated land use planning, development, and public investment.

In TOCs dense, mixed-use, mixed-income development is concentrated near frequent transit to enable more people of all backgrounds and income levels to benefit from improved mobility. Compact mixed-use development combined with frequent transit reduces trip making, trip length, and encourages alternatives to driving alone. More trips can be made through transit, walking, biking, or rolling, instead of driving. This helps communities grow to be healthy and sustainable.

Metro will strive to support and strengthen the communities it serves with transit. It recognizes the importance of integrating land use and transit service to advance equity and address climate change. Evidence shows that it is the combination of increased transit service, increase land use density, and equitable pricing of vehicle usage together that drives down car travel, no one strategy alone will get there.²¹

Metro will work with partners at the County and regional planning levels to advocate for transit-supportive and inclusive land use policies and programs. Metro will consider existing and future land uses when planning new services and siting new facilities. Metro will seek opportunities to leverage investments in transit infrastructure to meet community development and King County goals.

Metro will proactively manage its properties and identify opportunities to create equitable, transit-oriented development, including affordable housing. Metro will partner with others when possible and support projects that strengthen communities.

Similar to a TOC, a transit-oriented development (TOD) is a private or public/private real estate development. Typically, it is located within a 10-minute walkshed of frequent transit service. It often includes a mix of uses and its design is influenced by its proximity to frequent transit service. Typical TODs include:

²¹ Rodier, Caroline J. (2009) [A Review of the International Modeling Literature: Transit, Land Use and Auto Pricing Strategies to Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#). Institute of Transportation Studies, University of California, Davis, Research Report UCD-ITS-RR-09-39

- A mix of commercial and residential uses
- A variety of housing types, including affordable housing and active ground floor uses, often commercial, that frequently include schools and early learning facilities, retail and office space
- Multimodal access improvements such as street, sidewalk and intersection improvements that promote safe travel and improve access for people walking and biking
- Street grid, connectivity, and traffic calming features intended to encourage safe vehicle speeds
- Reduced parking supply and parking management strategies to minimize the land devoted to parking and increase efficiency of use
- High-quality urban design

Generally, the development density and co-location of uses justifies frequent transit service. Frequent transit enhances opportunities and market demand for additional similar development, stimulating an active streetscape and commercial activity with a quality pedestrian scale.

The South Kirkland Park-and-Ride

The South Kirkland Park-and-Ride, completed in 2014, is King County's eighth TOD project. It includes:

- A new transit center.
- A garage with 530 parking stalls and a surface lot with 323 stalls.
- Electric vehicle charging stations.
- 184 market-rate and 58 affordable housing units with easy access to transit in an opportunity-rich location; 12 units are for homeless families.

The project received Built Green 4 Star, Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard, and King County Sustainable Infrastructure Score Card certifications.

What will it take?

- **Implement Metro's equitable transit-oriented communities policy.**
Metro will conduct a comprehensive inventory of county-owned property to identify existing opportunities and potential new projects.
- **Work with partners to plan for and implement transit-oriented development.**
Ensure coordination between Metro, cities, and other regional partners to leverage available resources, advance community development goals, meet transit system needs, and ensure that projects are consistent with land-use plans. Partnerships with cities and with public and private stakeholders could help reduce the costs of land acquisition, construction, and permitting.
- **Resource a robust program that advocates for, plans for, and develops transit-oriented development projects.**
Use Metro's role as a regional transit provider and as a part of King County government to support communities and implement transit-oriented development. Have the staff and consultant resources needed to grow and

- support a robust program, as transit-oriented development projects take years to develop and deliver.
- **Advocate for transit-oriented communities.** Use Metro’s role as convener, advocate and as part of King County government to advance VISION 2050 goals, including via the King County Countywide Planning Policies and Centers Framework, for increase land use density and affordable housing near transit. Seek to drive results that include actions taken by local jurisdictions to reduce parking requirement, increase affordable housing, increase zoning capacity, prioritize right-of-way for transit, and minimize displacement near transit.

Fleet, Infrastructure, and Workforce

OVERVIEW

The Metro Connects network, a mobility system that supports healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment, is founded upon critical physical and people infrastructure that supports service expansion—as Metro’s fleet, facilities, and workforce do.

Enhancement and expansion of Metro’s fleet and facilities will be essential to delivering the increased service envisioned in Metro Connects. To deliver 7.2 million service hours, Metro will need a larger bus fleet, and additional bus bases with newer, greener technologies to support this growing fleet. And, Metro’s non-bus fleets such as Rideshare, Access, and other support vehicles will also need to grow as Metro’s suite of mobility services grows.

Metro’s commitment to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions will affect fleet and facilities. Metro will transition buses and other vehicles to zero-emissions vehicles powered by renewable energy and invest in charging infrastructure. Metro will build its facilities differently as it incorporates green building practices.

More well-maintained layover areas—where buses rest between trips—will help ensure buses arrive on time and drivers get the breaks they need.

Finally, supporting and growing Metro’s workforce is essential to ensuring Metro can reach the Metro Connects vision for significantly expanded service. This will be especially important as changing transportation technologies will require new and equitable training and development opportunities for employees, and as Metro builds a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves.

Sections in this chapter include:

- Fleet
- Electrification
- Facilities and other support systems
- Layover areas
- Metro’s workforce

Alignment with Strategic Plan goals



Invest upstream and where needs are greatest



Address the climate crisis and environmental justice



Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe



Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services



Build a skilled, diverse, and well-supported workforce that has opportunities to grow



Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals

FLEET

Vehicles designed for customer comfort, safety, and efficient and green operations are key to Metro Connects. Metro is building toward an entirely zero-emissions, low-floor bus fleet, and will expand its fleet of buses, vans, and support vehicles to provide the higher levels of service envisioned in the 2050 network.

What will the Metro fleet look like?

As of 2021, Metro's fleet, including Metro and Sound Transit coaches, has more than 1,500 fuel-efficient buses. These include hybrid diesel-electric and clean-diesel coaches, electric trolleys, and several battery buses. Metro's fleet also includes paratransit and DART vehicles, Rideshare vans and electric Metropool vehicles, and passenger ferries for the water taxi service. A large additional "non-revenue" fleet used to support service has tow trucks, supervisor vans, maintenance trucks, and more.

Metro Connects will require additions throughout the fleet, including approximately 430 new buses by 2050. Replacement vehicles will also be needed as current vehicles reach the end of their useful lives—usually after 12 to 15 years of service. As detailed below, all replacement buses after 2023 will be zero emission vehicles, and this will require development of associated charging infrastructure. In addition, Metro will also work to incorporate zero emission vehicles into its non-revenue, vanpool, and Access fleets as it replaces current vehicles and expands operations. Metro's goal is to power Metro fleets with 100 percent renewable electricity.

Compared to the current network, more of the new service proposed in Metro Connects will be in non-peak hours. Since fewer buses are used then, they will be used more efficiently, operating for more hours a day. As a result, Metro could purchase relatively fewer buses compared to the increase in service hours.

Metro Connects also envisions potential expansion and optimization of the electric trolley bus network, which carried about 15 percent of Metro riders in 2020. This will require investing strategically in the trolley network, focusing first on places where a relatively small expansion of wire could allow new service concepts to operate successfully. These include places that have frequent service, common overhead wires with existing trolley bus routes, steep hills, and dense urban service areas.

As of 2020, the passenger ferry fleet includes three biodiesel-powered high-speed vessels. Metro Connects proposes to add up to four vessels for three new routes over the next 30 years. Vessels purchased for expanding service must significantly reduce emissions. Ferry propulsion technology is quickly evolving for diesel-electric hybrid, hydrogen fueled, or full battery-electric systems. Metro is committed to moving toward zero-emissions vessels, as explained in the "Electrification" section. This includes replacement vessels for the existing fleet by 2050.

Smart design

As Metro purchases new fleet vehicles, it will continually improve their design with the ease, comfort, and safety of customers and operators in mind. Metro will ensure vehicles support equitable access for everyone, regardless of their ability. Metro will continue to emphasize features that make bus boarding fast and easy and keep maintenance costs down.

Metro will also proactively include systems that support developing technology. Bus real-time intelligence systems provide immediate access to useful information about operations and conditions, and could support features such as:

- Real-time information for customers about the availability of seats, bike storage space, and space for wheelchairs or other mobility aids
- Telematics—vehicle systems that use telecommunications to send, receive, and store computer-based engine data—for proactive identification of mechanical problems
- Video systems that use license plate readers and object recognition to identify vehicles parked in bus-only lanes
- Onboard environmental monitors for weather conditions and air pollution
- Traffic control that goes beyond transit signal priority, such as remote activation of pedestrian crossing buttons at intersections to encourage patrons not to jaywalk to catch the bus
- Secondary uses of a vehicle, such as an emergency communications hub or power generator
- Safety features including audible signals to pedestrians

For more information

See Technical Report E. Capital Costing Methodology for more detail on the topics in the Supporting Infrastructure section.

What will it take?

- **Procure state-of-the-art zero-emissions vehicles and supporting infrastructure** to support expanded service, replace vehicles as needed, and meet customer needs.
- **Use fleet design criteria that focus on customer and driver needs.**
- **Optimize and moderately expand the trolley network by:**
 - Filling gaps in the network to allow flexibility
 - Working with partners to potentially extend wire to new streets so routes could be converted to trolley bus service
 - Keep the trolley system infrastructure in a state of good repair through regular maintenance and planned replacement cycles.
 - Increasing use of trolleys on weekends.

ELECTRIFICATION

Metro Connects will confront climate change by transitioning to zero-emissions vehicles, powered by renewable energy, over the next 20 years. A zero-emissions fleet will deliver world-class transportation benefiting drivers, mechanics, passengers, and people living along the bus routes—improving the quality of life for everyone in King County.

What will fleet electrification look like?

Metro is committed to having the greenest fleet possible. Starting in 2004, Metro was a national leader in adopting diesel-electric hybrid bus technology. In 2015 Metro reinvested in the second largest zero-emission trolley fleet in the nation. As of 2020, Metro operates a bus fleet of all hybrid or electric coaches (including electric trolley buses).

As of 2021, Metro is preparing for rapidly evolving electric vehicle technology and continuing the transition to a zero-emission fleet. Zero-emission electric buses produce no exhaust, are quieter, and can lower operating costs. Metro is also exploring options to transition its non-bus fleets to zero emission vehicles.

Metro has committed to powering its electric vehicles with 100 percent renewable energy sources. Electricity from Seattle City Light is carbon neutral and from Puget Sound Energy is purchased from a long-term contract from a new wind and solar installations in Washington State purchased through the Green Direct agreement.²² Furthermore, over time all electricity supplied in Washington State will be free from GHG emissions. In 2019, Washington State signed into law the Clean Energy Transformation Act which required all electricity supplied to be carbon neutral by 2030 and fossil fuel free by 2045.

Metro's substantial investment in a zero-emissions fleet will help achieve King County's equity, sustainability, and safety goals²³. It will help King County respond to the climate crisis by improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, contributing to the health and mobility of county residents.

²² More information about Puget Sound Energy's Green Direct Program available [here](#).

²³ Articulated in the County's Equity and Social Justice Ordinance and Strategic Implementation Plan and the Strategic Climate Action Plan.

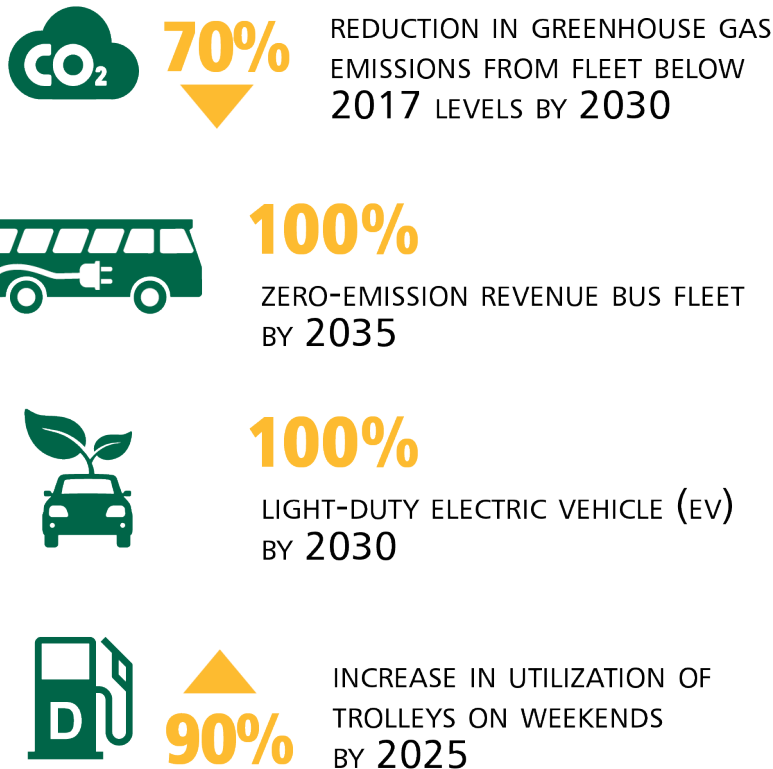
King County’s vehicle fleet operations targets

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from County fleets by 45 percent by 2025 and 70 percent by 2030 (below 2017 levels).

Increase the percentage of County-owned vehicles that are electric, including a 100 percent zero-emission bus fleet by 2035; and 50 percent of light-duty vehicles electric by 2025 and 100 percent by 2030.

Metro will use a phased approach to acquire battery-electric buses, convert operations, prepare the workforce, and build the necessary infrastructure to support a 100 percent zero-emissions bus fleet. Metro is continuing to plan and evaluate alternatives for accelerating the transition of the bus fleet to achieve the 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan goals of zero emissions by 2035. Metro is evaluating requirements, potential impacts to service, and operational needs to achieve this target. Metro will operate the next wave of new battery-electric buses from Metro’s South Base, predominantly serving south King County, improving air quality in communities where people are disproportionately affected by pollution. Battery-electric buses will benefit communities near the bases and along routes by reducing noise and eliminating tailpipe air pollution. Metro will retrofit existing bases and build new bases that house, charge, and maintain battery-electric buses.

Figure 25 Strategic Climate Action Plan Targets for Metro



Trolley fleet

The trolley fleet comprises approximately 12 percent of Metro’s current (2021) bus fleet (174 trolleys). Trolleys will continue to be key to Metro’s zero-emissions strategy. The trolleys include battery energy storage to enable operation over short distances without overhead wire. Metro will continue to explore innovations in the batteries that support trolleys and other strategies to optimize and expand use of the trolley fleet. Continued innovation and technical advancements will help Metro increase use of trolleys on the weekends as well. Construction projects often require that portions of the trolley overhead system be turned off to safely allow work to occur. Construction that impacts Metro’s trolley system is currently limited to weekends. Technical advancements such as increased off-wire capabilities and continued work with partners in scheduling construction projects will help Metro keep trolleys running.

Battery-electric buses

Metro has committed to purchasing only zero-emission buses after 2023. Trolley buses will continue to be an important component of the zero emission fleet and the bulk of these will be battery-electric buses (BEBs) that will replace existing diesel-hybrid buses. Metro currently operates 11 fast-charge BEBs. It is planning an initial purchase of 40 long-range BEBs in 2021. Metro will continue to expand its BEB fleet as buses need replacement.

Zero-emission non-bus fleets

Metro is also exploring options to transition its non-bus fleets—such as Rideshare, Access and the non-revenue vehicle fleet—to zero emission. Metro’s efforts include continuing to transition light duty-sedans to electric, piloting new vehicle technologies to meet operational needs, and developing cost analysis tools to inform purchase decisions. Metro is also upgrading and expanding electric charging infrastructure.

In addition, Metro is working to electrify its ferry fleet. Ferry propulsion technology continues to evolve with cleaner diesel engines, hybrid propulsion systems using batteries for low-speed docking operations, and full battery-electric systems able to achieve operating speeds that meet commuter needs. Battery-electric vessels will reduce fuel consumption and costs, maintenance, and air emissions. Electric power reduces noise and vibration and enhances vessel responsiveness and safety.

Metro will use the best available propulsion technologies as existing fleet vessels reach the end of their useful life and as new ferry routes are started. Shoreside charging infrastructure will be deployed to support the overnight and underway needs of battery-electric vessels.

Infrastructure

Metro has begun building large-scale electrical charging infrastructure and will continue developing information technology solutions to manage vehicle charging. Metro is planning to use on-base and on-route charging. It is building new bus bases and retrofitting existing bases with bus charging infrastructure. Charging stations at

layover locations will enable buses with long assignments to charge in the field during breaks. Metro is also investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support its non-revenue fleet vehicles and considering charging infrastructure needs for program such as Access and Rideshare.

What will it take?

- **Commit the resources needed to add and replace existing buses.**
Purchase battery-electric buses and electric trolley buses and build supporting vehicle charging infrastructure.
- **Build new and convert existing bases to support battery-electric bus technology.**
Build new facilities like Interim Base and South Annex Base at South Campus with electrification infrastructure. Retrofit Metro's existing facilities to support a fully zero-emissions system. Provide sufficient base capacity to continue operations while portions of bases are closed during the retrofit process.
- **Pursue renewable energy sources.** Continue to work with utilities and explore opportunities for solar energy production at Metro facilities to ensure that electricity used is from 100 percent renewable. Metro's ability to meet this target is dependent on availability of renewable energy production and purchasing options from utilities as the demand from Metro's fleets increases.
- **Invest in vehicles and charging infrastructure for non-bus fleets.**
- **Continue to operate and optimize use of electric trolley buses.**
Explore opportunities to increase trolley utilization on weekends.
- **Coordinate and form partnerships with local utilities.**
Work together to deploy charging infrastructure for battery-electric buses and ensure that electricity is from renewable sources.
- **Engage with transit industry and manufacturer partners.**
Ensure that zero-emission vehicles and charging technology are available and meet operational and service needs.
- **Train and develop Metro's workforce to operate and maintain battery-electric buses.**
- **Work with jurisdictions and other agencies throughout King County to develop electrical infrastructure for layover charging.**
Coordinate and collaborate with others to develop and install a network of charging infrastructure to support fully zero-emission fleets. Partner with Sound Transit and other transit agencies that own key terminal locations in King County. Budget for infrastructure requirements.
- **Make necessary code and policy changes.**
- **Measure and report on progress toward achieving an all-zero-emission fleet.**

FACILITIES AND OTHER SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Building and maintaining infrastructure, such as bus bases, other support facilities, bus shelters, transit centers, and park-and-rides, provides the foundation of the Metro Connects vision. Metro has made significant investments in infrastructure to support high-quality service, but continued growth is essential. Maintaining a state of good repair will help ensure that Metro customers enjoy a world-class transit system.

What will bases and support facilities look like?

Bases and support facilities are essential to expanding, improving, and operating service. Mechanics do maintenance or repairs. Employees clean and fuel the bus and may post “rider alerts” about upcoming service changes. Drivers learn about events that might affect transit service that day. Activities like these are performed at Metro’s seven bus bases and other facilities, and Metro Connects proposes infrastructure to support the service proposed for the future.

What is “state of good repair”?

State of good repair means keeping capital assets in a condition at which they could operate at a full level of performance. Maintaining the transit fleet and facilities in a state of good repair helps to avoid the high costs of deferred maintenance, to qualify for federal funding, and to deliver safe, reliable, and comfortable customer service.

Bus bases

Metro’s seven bus bases support an average of 200 buses each and have both operations and maintenance facilities. Metro is currently near capacity at existing bases, limiting the ability to add more vehicles to the fleet. Metro expects additional capacity to become available with the construction of Metro’s Interim Base in 2021. Metro will need one or two additional bases to house the expanded fleet and non-revenue vehicles needed to deliver the service in Metro Connects. Metro is planning to build a new base on its South Annex property at the South Campus.

The exact facilities required depend on factors such as the sizes of buses needed, their propulsion technologies, and partnerships with other transit providers. New bases will be sited and designed according to these criteria:

- **Service demand.** Timing and size for new facilities is driven by the demands of service growth. Occasionally, service demand exceeds available capacity, driving the need for unique and rapidly deployable solutions to provide additional capacity quickly.
- **Sustainability.** King County’s Green Building Ordinance and Strategic Climate Action Plan set requirements and targets for achieving the highest green and equitable infrastructure standards in facilities. Bases will also be designed and retrofitted to support zero-emissions fleets.

- **Location.** Locating bases near the start and end points of service provides operational benefits by limiting the distance vehicles travel without passengers. Metro considers land availability and use, along with potential impact to adjacent properties and area traffic, when siting a new base.
- **Partnerships.** Metro has agreements with Sound Transit to share bus base capacity, helping both agencies operate efficiently.
- **Operational success.** Bases should be located and designed for efficient and effective operations and maintenance to occur. They should provide working space for employees.
- **Employee access.** Bases must provide adequate space for employees to park on site, or include mobility solutions in their siting, to ensure all employees can reliably and conveniently access their work site.
- **Resilience.** Facilities should be sited in locations not expected to be impacted by sea-level rise, with further attention to the effect of sea-level rise on the routes those bases support. With deployment of electric buses, proximity to key utility infrastructure adds to the resilience of the site in a catastrophic event as those services are restored first.

Metro continuously explores ways to maximize the use of facilities and reduce costs, such as parking some North Base buses near downtown Seattle during the day rather than driving empty buses back to the base.

Marine vessel maintenance facilities

The existing infrastructure to support marine operations is a moorage and maintenance barge on the north side of Pier 48 in Seattle. The proximity to the Pier 50 passenger ferry terminal supports efficient servicing of vessels for preventative maintenance and emergency repairs. The facility provides moorage for all three existing vessels.

As new routes are added, daily maintenance and moorage of new vessels will have to be sited at a terminal or a nearby location. Building a small satellite maintenance facility to provide reliable vessel operations will be a priority—especially for lake routes that will be far from the current maintenance barge.

Support facilities

Metro will also have to expand and accommodate facilities and functions to support non-bus fleets and deliver the Metro Connects service networks. For example, Metro's paratransit fleet resides at one Metro owned base and a variety of contractor leased bases strategically located across the service area to provide efficient and timely service. To support efficient paratransit operations, Metro Connects calls for strategic planning for long term KCM facilities to include state of good repair ongoing improvement maintenance practices, technological upgrades, and the latest fleet maintenance techniques. Metro Connects support for expanding to new facilities and upgrading current facilities to meet SCAP standards would align with the county's safety, equity, and sustainability goals.

Van distribution base. Metro currently manages the largest publicly owned vanpool program in the country. To support the continued growth of the vanpool program, Metro Connects calls for another vanpool distribution base.

Operations support. Metro will need more people to manage and support the operation of a growing transit system. The Transit Control Center (TCC) is the nerve center for Metro's bus operations. TCC staff monitor and manage the movement of buses in service. They coordinate radio contact with all bus drivers on the road, supervisors in the field, emergency responders, and other groups that support bus operations, helping manage problems and occasional emergencies.

As RapidRide and the frequent transit network expands and new technology emerges to help manage the transit system, the TCC will evolve. It will provide real-time headway management of frequent service and the TCC must grow to support the specialized equipment and dedicated space needed for an expanded network.

Metro will also need to ensure other staff have the space, capacity, and training needed to accommodate service growth. For example, service quality staff and field supervisors need to be accommodated when they are not in the field. Metro must expand classrooms and test areas for driving buses to train operators. Bus operators need adequate restroom facilities and places to rest between trips.

Maintenance and power distribution. The number of bus stops, shelters, and park-and-rides will grow with Metro Connects. Expanded RapidRide service will need enhanced shelters and signs at stops. Expanded use of technology will lead to more sign maintenance, radio maintenance, battery charging, and more. The employees who build, repair, clean and maintain these structures must have adequate space and equipment to do their work, located as close as possible to major service areas.

Administrative support. Though the COVID-19 pandemic may change work patterns, Metro will always need office space for customer service, planning, engineering, marketing, information technology, and other functions. As service expands, some of these functions will grow, particularly as new capital projects are planned and built. Revenue-processing requires secure physical space for processing cash and fare media that riders pay with every day.

Safety and security

All customers and employees should feel safe and welcome on Metro services and at Metro facilities, and keeping customers and employees safe is a top priority. Metro will continue to improve the safety and security of its system, through actions such as:

- **Build systems that support the safety of customers and employees in an equitable way.** As the transit system grows and urban centers expand, ensuring safety and security will continue to be essential for Metro to provide excellent services. In particular it is important to address gentrification and suburbanization of poverty, and the needs for people experiencing the lack of shelter or housing. Security needs and approaches will continue to evolve and emphasize the region's most vulnerable and impacted populations' needs. Safety onboard buses and at stops, stations, transit centers, and park-and-

rides will remain a priority in facility design and staffing. As of 2021, Metro is working with stakeholders to reimagine and restructure its security, safety, and fare enforcement approaches and practices.

- **Engage community partners to build connections for those with the greatest need.** Metro will pursue partnerships with human service providers, jurisdictions, and other transit providers to build connections for people riding transit that are in need of subsidized fares, housing, shelter, or other support programs.
- **Partner to ensure security at shared facilities, including expanded Link stations.** Metro will continue working with partners to ensure that shared facilities are safe, secure and welcoming for riders and employees.
- **Promote passenger safety** through operator training, continued use of safety shields at the front of coaches, onboard safety and security features in new vehicles, and use of emerging technologies.

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS)

Emerging technologies that connect travelers, vehicles, management centers and the roadway—called intelligent transportation systems (ITS)—will transform travel.

Metro has been a leader in using ITS. A wireless communications network on RapidRide corridors enables buses to request priority treatment at traffic signals, lets passengers pay fares before boarding, and delivers “next bus” information to electronic signs at stations.

Metro will build on this architecture to deliver improvements systemwide, connecting the management of transit and other transportation modes. This will make Metro’s service faster, more reliable, and easier to use. Many of Metro’s concepts for using ITS are mentioned throughout this document, including:

- **Intelligent buses** that report the availability of seats, bike racks, and space for mobility aids; have engine diagnostics; have weather and pollution information; and communicate with the road network and other vehicles
- **Integration of public and private travel options** such as bus, rail, carshare, bikeshare, and transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft into a single trip-planning and payment system
- **Integration of transportation management centers** operated by Metro, WSDOT, the City of Seattle, and others
- **Improvement and exchange of raw transit data** among regional partners to better understand customers’ needs, building on past initiatives
- **Other future technologies** such as automated buses and active safety systems.

With the ongoing extension of Link, Metro is restructuring its network around the rail system as well as multimodal connections and new travel options. As this service network evolves, service integration will become even more critical. Metro will need better tools to analyze ridership, productivity, on-time performance, traffic congestion, roadway volumes, corridor performance, and other aspects of operations

in a more regional and collaborative manner. The region's transit agencies could become better aligned by sharing more data and analysis.

Metro will not fully understand riders' needs and travel patterns without knowing where and how they transfer. Metro will need agreements with the ORCA partners to obtain regional data and conduct integrated service planning.

What will it take?

- **Invest in operations and system preservation.**
Build base capacity for up to 450 new vehicles, along with a new vanpool distribution base, Access fleet base, and other support facilities. Prepare existing bases and building new facilities to support electric vehicles. Expand safety and security infrastructure to keep customers and employees safe in an equitable way. Continue to lead in the testing, development, and procurement of information technology assets that are vitally important to providing excellent customer service over the long term.

LAYOVER AREAS

Layover sites are critical for reliable service. They help get buses to the right place at the right time and give Metro drivers safe places for breaks. Metro Connects envisions expanding layover space as service grows. As competition for curb space increases, Metro will invest in new, off-street facilities that will provide long-term stability and benefits for riders and bus operators.

What will future layover areas look like?

Layover is time built into bus schedules between a bus's arrival at the end of a route and its departure for the next trip. This provides break time for operators, helps buses get back on schedule if the preceding trip was late, and allows buses to depart at regular, predictable intervals. Layover areas include facilities for the bus to park, restroom and in some cases break facilities for operators, and are located throughout the county, either on-street or off-street, such as at a transit center.

Layover sites have a huge financial impact on Metro operations. Layover areas must have clean, safe, and well-lit facilities for bus operators. Service costs more when operators must drive empty buses long distances to reach layover spaces. Well-located layover areas—close to the start and end of routes—increase scheduling flexibility, reduce travel time to the beginning or end of routes, and enhance reliability. To achieve the Metro Connects vision, new layover spaces will need to be needed to support the growth of the mobility system, and new facilities will be needed at layover locations to support battery electric bus charging and active service management and service modernization.

On-street layover spaces are where buses park along curbs in street right-of-way. Metro partners closely with jurisdictions to secure layover space. Metro sites on-street layovers where they will not interfere with traffic and strives to minimize impacts on adjacent properties. However, property development or changes often result in pressure to reduce or move layover sites. This pressure can be particularly acute in dense urban areas, where development pressure is intense but where layover space is most needed because of the large amount of transit service starting and ending at major destinations. Many areas are seeing increasing competition for limited curb space.

In 2015, Metro's layover sites accommodated approximately 530 buses. The service changes envisioned in Metro Connects will affect both the number of layover spaces needed and their locations.

Metro estimates adding 270 layover spaces to accommodate the 2050 network—approximately 50 percent more than in 2015. This increase reflects the expectation that some current on-street layover spaces will no longer be available because of development. Many of these spaces will be needed in dense urban areas, including downtown Seattle. Metro must update and renegotiate many current layover agreements, develop new ones, and invest in off-street layover facilities.

Layover charging for battery electric buses will be necessary to support a future zero-emission fleet. Layover charging will be needed for more frequent services, like RapidRide, and will require significant electrical infrastructure in jurisdictions throughout the county. Metro will likely need to partner with other transit agencies that own key terminal locations in King County.

What will it take?

- **Provide adequate layover areas and explore innovative options and practices to meet layover needs.**
Meet the growing layover need by delivering new dedicated layover spaces, through innovative approaches such as incorporating layover space into other types of projects, additional park-and-rides and transit-oriented developments. Explore operational, service modernization, and scheduling practices to more efficiently utilize layover spaces.
- **Support new operational needs at layover locations.**
Provide facilities at new layover locations to support changing operational needs, including facilities to support battery electric bus charging where needed as system evolves to zero-emission over time. Provide facilities to support service modernization and management, such as break stations for operators.
- **Work with jurisdictions to site on-street layover areas or build off-street layovers where Metro expects a long-term need, such as in downtown Seattle.**
Work with property owners and builders to include layover areas that have rider facilities as part of new development. Transit-oriented development projects are great opportunities for these types of partnerships.
- **Continue partnerships with other agencies to secure layover space.**
Build on Metro's successful joint agreements with Sound Transit, and consider King County Housing Authority as another potential partner.

METRO'S WORKFORCE

In preparation to deliver the service envisioned in Metro Connects, Metro is growing the workforce, hiring people with highly specialized skills, and attracting diverse employees who reflect the communities Metro serves. It is working to become an anti-racist organization, strengthening leadership and accountability, and focusing on safety for employees and customers.

What will Metro's workforce look like?

As of 2020, Metro had more than 5,000 full and part-time employees, including about 3,000 bus operators. Other Metro employees plan service; purchase and maintain buses; build and keep up customer facilities; respond to events affecting service, safety, and security; and otherwise support daily operations. Metro's marine division employees operate and maintain the water taxis.

Metro also operates Sound Transit's light rail system, which will grow three-fold, and two streetcar lines for the City of Seattle, which is evaluating expansion. Metro's growing workforce will be essential to building an integrated system that lets people travel farther, faster, and more easily.

Metro will build a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves and engages employees in decisions that impact their workplace. Creating a culture of belonging at Metro means respect, safety, and accountability are priority. Metro will look beyond traditional recruitment strategies to build space for racial, gender, and other diverse communities at Metro. Efforts to attract and retain a quality workforce will include succession planning, employee training and development programs, and the creation of pathways to Metro employment—especially important as Metro faces a high retirement rate among supervisors, managers, and trades positions.

Metro's culture will shift to focus on the value of people. Metro's ability to embrace anti-racist principles will support retention and leadership development and will make Metro a place where people want to work. Above all, Metro will ensure employees have what they need to provide the highest levels of customer service and safety.

As the Metro Connects vision unfolds, effective internal communications will be critical for building a common understanding and commitment to transforming the Metro system.

Metro will also focus on productive labor-management relationships with the unions that represent most of the workforce. Strategically partnering with the labor community and others can help Metro recruit new employees in addition to developing and supporting its current workforce.

What will it take?

- **Keep employees engaged and respond to employee needs.**
Ensure that teams are staffed commensurate with the work assigned. Ensure that training, recognition, and engagement needs are considered and planned for when making changes to the system. Increase employee pulse surveys and Employee Resource Groups, which offer opportunities for greater employee engagement. These types of engagement will provide data points on how Metro is moving toward a culture shift.
- **Continuously improve safety.**
For example, improve layover facilities and reduce onboard cash fare payment to minimize conflicts between operators and passengers.
- **Build a workforce that experiences belonging at Metro and reflects the diversity of King County’s population.**
Use equitable recruitment, hiring, development, and performance management practices—all critical to a high-performing organization and a culture shift that allows racial, gender, and other aspects of diversity to thrive. Create the conditions that prioritize health and well-being, and invest where needs are greatest.
- **Implement an organizational health framework.**
Promote an organizational health strategy that creates the conditions for employees from the most oppressed communities to thrive. Ensure that Metro leaders slow down and take stock of what is needed for Metro to truly recover from the pandemic and create conditions that support collective health.
- **Respond to a high retirement rate by training new employees and leaders.**
Invest in robust training and development programs and stay competitive with the private sector for hiring and retaining the next generation of Metro employees. Work with technical institutes and colleges to recruit and train employees and develop leaders for jobs in maintenance, operations, and administration. Consider pathways for communities where needs are greatest and people might not have access to technical resources and colleges.
- **Keep employee skills up to date with changing technology and innovation in the transit industry.**
Foster a sustainable learning culture at Metro. For example, as the fleet modernizes, ensure that operators and maintenance workers get updated training and new skills. Invest in employees where needs are greatest.

What operators had to say

Metro drivers experience first-hand the factors that affect their ability to transport passengers safely and on time. They also hear from customers about the quality of service. Metro hears regularly from its drivers about their ideas for the future of Metro’s service. Some key themes incorporated into this vision include the importance of strengthening safety and security for riders and drivers, reducing overcrowding, improving fare payment, and improving speed and reliability through capital improvements and well-timed transfers.

Attaining the Vision

OVERVIEW

Metro cannot achieve Metro Connects all at once or do it alone. Collaboration, partnerships, continuous improvement, and demonstration of value will be key.

Consistent with how Metro Connects was developed, Metro will continue to collaborate with jurisdictions, transportation agencies, and the public to move toward this shared vision.

Metro Connects is a living document that Metro expects to update every six to ten years, in alignment with updates to the Strategic Plan and Service Guidelines. As a long-range vision, Metro Connects and its networks will not change drastically with every update. However, this iterative process will contribute to an enduring consensus about the future of transit and will help cities and the region realize their visions for the future.

Metro will use existing planning processes to strive to make progress toward Metro Connects. Metro will continue to collaborate with jurisdictions, community organizations, riders, and community members on service changes and capital projects. The Service Guidelines will ensure that near-term investments align with the Metro Connects networks. Service restructures will remain an important tool for achieving Metro Connects. Metro will follow guidance in Metro Connects for prioritization of capital projects and will document that planning through its 6-year Capital Improvement Program, which informs biennial budgets.

Metro will plan for its mid-range future through its planning and budgeting processes. Metro understands that jurisdictions, employers, and community stakeholders need targets to plan toward, and the Metro Connects interim network provides those targets for service expansion. Metro will continue communicating its plans to elected

Alignment with Strategic Plan goals

-  Invest upstream and where needs are greatest
-  Address the climate crisis and environmental justice
-  Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development
-  Improve access to mobility options
-  Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services
-  Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals
-  Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement

officials, jurisdictions, and other stakeholders through its Regional Project Schedule,²⁴ updated annually.

The Metro Connects networks are important guides for future service, but engagement with affected communities and priority populations must drive the final service changes to ensure they advance equity and respond to community needs. Metro will continue engaging the public in shaping major service changes before they are adopted by the King County Council. The capital program will be subject to budget review and approval by the King County Council.

Priority populations: people who are black, indigenous, and of color; have low or no-income; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse.



Metro defined which populations to focus on in partnership with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice and the Equity Cabinet as part of the development of the adopted Mobility Framework.

The interplay between King County and Metro’s policies, local land use and comprehensive plans, and the processes for implementing services changes, capital projects, programs, and initiatives is shown in Figure 29.

Key elements described in this section include:

- Financial overview
- Implementation of Metro Connects: policies and planning
- Implementation of Metro Connects: engagement with communities and partners
- Accountability and continuous improvement
- Next steps

²⁴ The Regional Project Schedule identifies the implementation timing of major mobility projects and capital projects throughout King County on a six-year time horizon.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

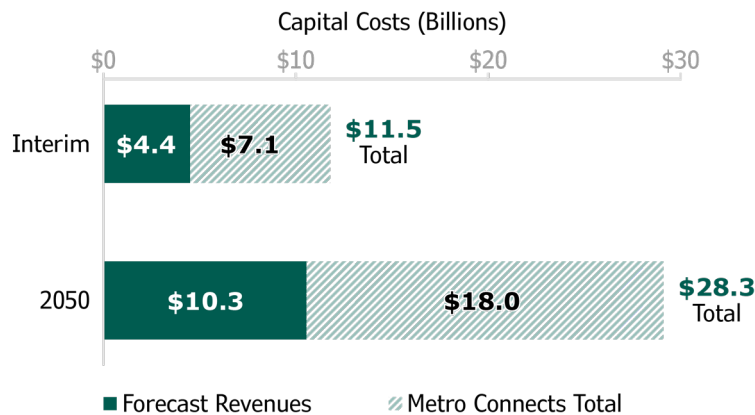
Metro Connects is an ambitious service and capital vision, consistent with forecasts of future transit needs and the Puget Sound Regional Council’s transportation plan. Additional funding is needed to grow service, make capital investments, and achieve the full vision.

In response to King County Council motion 15252²⁵ and as part of the 2021 update to Metro Connects, Metro updated the expected costs for the interim and 2050 networks, as well as Metro’s assumptions about forecast revenues.

The costs are high-level planning estimates of investments needed to support Metro’s network, expressed in year-of-expenditure dollars, which include inflation. These costs are subject to change as investments are further defined and sequenced. Because of inflation and the ongoing cost of service once implemented, the timing of investments can have a significant impact on the total costs.

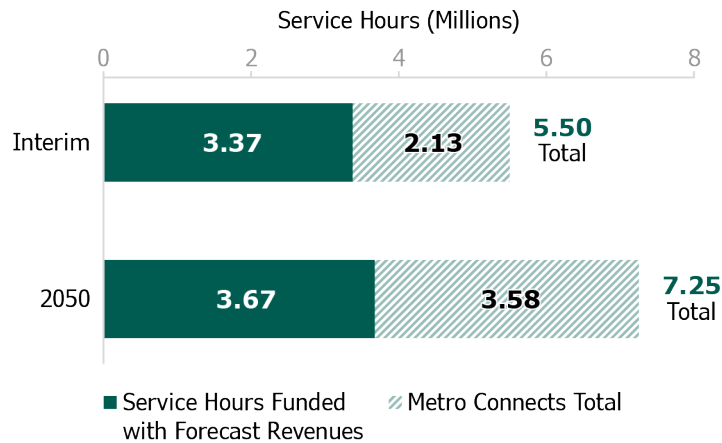
Figure 26 and Figure 27 illustrate the capital costs and service additions identified in Metro Connects between now and the interim network (for costing purposes, 2035), and through 2050. These figures also show the current estimate of what could be funded with currently forecasted existing revenue sources—sales tax, farebox revenue, federal and state grants, and others.

Figure 26 Metro Connects Capital Costs and What Could be Funded With Forecasted Revenues



²⁵ A motion expressing support for regional planning, coordination and funding efforts to address the implementation of Metro Connects. Passed by the King County Council on Nov. 13, 2018.

Figure 27 Metro Connects Service Adds and What Could be Funded With Forecasted Revenues



In summary, as of June 2021, Metro expects the interim network to cost approximately \$11.5 billion in capital costs and require 5.5 million annual service hours. The 2050 network will require an even larger investment—\$28.3 billion in capital costs and 7.25 million annual total service hours.

Existing revenues will enable Metro to maintain service levels, however the cost of attaining Metro Connects will significantly exceed existing revenue sources. Metro looks forward to working with elected leaders and partners on a regional funding solution.

Metro’s revenue sources include sales taxes, fares, property taxes, federal and state grant funding, with sales tax representing metro’s primary revenue source. Using a sales tax as Metro’s primary revenue source amplifies the challenge of sustainable and equitable funding. Sales taxes are volatile and regressive. Property taxes—another available funding source—are also regressive. The region could pursue many funding approaches, including sources that may be more equitable and less regressive. A 2019 report²⁶ to the King County Council included potential funding options, although these may evolve based on changes at the state or local levels. Metro will also work to control costs and ensure maximum impact of investments when implementing Metro Connects.

These figures are meant to give Metro, elected officials, and other stakeholders a sense of the large scale of investments required to implement Metro Connects. However, given the likelihood the figures will change, Metro is transmitting more detailed information about the projected costs and costing methodology separately, in Technical Report E. Capital Costing Methodology. Metro proposes more regular updates on what Metro could afford toward the projected costs through the Strategic Plan web-based dashboard (for more information, see the “Accountability and Continuous Improvement” section).

²⁶ Status report on Metro Transit’s Regional Planning Effort (in response to Motion 15252), transmitted to the King County Council on May 31, 2019

Service investments

In 2019 Metro spent \$755 million on service operations. An additional \$337 million annually for the interim network, and an additional \$711 million annually for the 2050 network (in 2019 dollars) would enable Metro to implement the Metro Connects service improvements, bringing frequent service to within a half mile of 80 percent of the county's population and expanding flexible transit options. This would require approximately twice Metro's current funding capacity.

As mentioned above, Metro's primary source of revenue is sales tax, along with fares, property tax, and federal and state grants. King County must engage in a regional conversation about how to fund this service investment (which could include, but not be limited to, additional federal, state, and local funding options and partnerships).

Capital investments

Metro Connects will require a substantial expansion of capital investments in infrastructure, facilities, and fleet to support the vision. Investment will be needed to create optimal transit travel conditions that keep buses moving and on time. Significant investments in passenger facilities will also be needed to support the new service network. Metro will invest in technology and supporting infrastructure to create an enhanced customer experience. These capital investments will support the productivity gains associated with the Metro Connects network. Without these investments, service will be slower, operating costs will be higher for the same level of service, transit will be less productive, and it will be more difficult to meet the region's goals for climate, equity, mode share, and ridership.

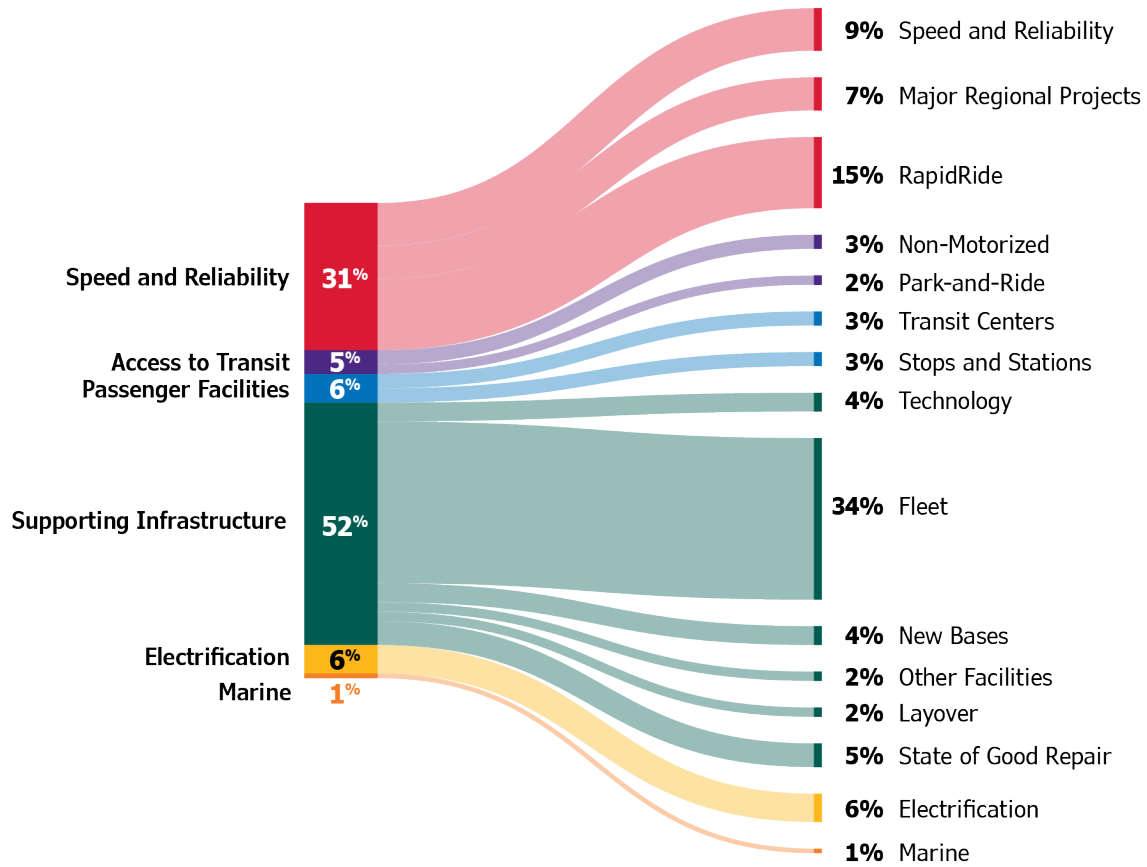
Metro Connects will also require substantial investment to acquire battery-electric buses, convert operations, prepare the workforce, and build the necessary infrastructure to support a 100 percent zero-emissions bus fleet.

As mentioned above, Metro estimates the 2050 network will require an investment of approximately \$28.3 billion in year-of-expenditure dollars on capital projects.

Figure 28 illustrates the current estimates of how the capital investments would be distributed among the major capital elements.

As with the service investments, and as shown in Figure 27, existing revenue streams would cover some of the proposed capital investments. To fund the remaining investment, King County would look to additional federal, state, and local funding options and support jurisdictions and elected officials in a regional conversation about funding. In addition, Metro will seek delivery partnerships to increase the capacity and ability to implement the new investments needed to support the Metro Connects vision.

Figure 28 Capital Investments 2018-2050



State of good repair

Metro’s first commitment is to support the existing system by keeping current assets (bus bases, maintenance facilities, revenue and non-revenue vehicles, trolley wire, substations, etc.) in good working condition. Metro will continue to plan for required maintenance on the existing system as part of the biennial budgeting process. As Metro has done in the past, it will look for federal, state, regional, and grant funds to ensure Metro can meet its obligation to maintain and repair existing assets. The estimated cost for maintaining current assets and for new facilities and infrastructure are shown as “State of Good Repair” in Figure 28.

IMPLEMENTATION OF METRO CONNECTS: POLICIES AND PLANNING

Metro will follow its policies and planning processes to work toward making Metro Connects a reality.

Policies and planning processes

Metro will follow its adopted policies and planning processes to work toward the Metro Connects vision. This will streamline planning and support clear communication to stakeholders about decision-making.

Metro will continue working with cities and engaging the public and stakeholders on service changes, service network restructures, capital projects, and broader priorities. This essential engagement is explained in the “Implementing Metro Connects: Engagement with Communities and Partners” section.

Adopted policies

These adopted policies will support the implementation of Metro Connects:

- **Metro’s Strategic Plan for Public Transportation**
 The updated 2021-2031 plan directs Metro to grow service and deliver capital projects in alignment with seven key goals, and consistent with Metro Connects.
 The Strategic Plan public-facing dashboard will track progress toward key metrics associated with Metro Connects, as well as the funding gap between what Metro can afford and the unconstrained costs of the interim and 2050 Metro Connects networks. The “Measuring performance” section of this plan includes more information.
- **Metro’s Service Guidelines**
 The guidelines establish service growth as Metro’s third priority for service investments, after crowding and reliability. The 2021 Service Guidelines update

Alignment with Strategic Plan goals

-  Invest upstream and where needs are greatest
-  Address the climate crisis and environmental justice
-  Innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability
-  Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe
-  Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development
-  Improve access to mobility options
-  Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services
-  Build a skilled, diverse, and well-supported workforce that has opportunities to grow
-  Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals
-  Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement

changed the network that this priority aligns with from Metro’s current network to the Metro Connects interim network.

As a result, the annual System Evaluation report will highlight service hours needed to achieve the targets set for the Metro Connects interim network. When funds are available for service growth, after addressing crowding and reliability, the Service Guidelines directs Metro to invest to fill those gaps toward Metro Connects.

- **Metro’s fund management policies**
These policies²⁷, adopted by the King County Council, set priorities for how Metro spends money and serve as the foundation for the priority order of capital investments toward Metro Connects.
- **King County Strategic Climate Action Plan**
Metro is responsible for delivering on priority actions in the Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) that are related to emissions reductions, climate equity, and preparing for climate impacts countywide as well as for Metro-owned fleet and facility operations. The 2020 SCAP update commits Metro to seek specific funding sources to implement Metro Connects and to identify the cost to support service growth and achieve King County climate goals for transit ridership and car-trip reduction targets.
The SCAP biennial report will track progress towards targets and priority actions.
- **King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan**
The King County Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan articulates a shared vision for a King County where all people have equitable opportunities to thrive. Metro is responsible for delivering on the Transportation & Mobility element of the plan, aligning work with identified goal areas, and employing four strategies to advance ESJ: investing upstream where needs are greatest, investing in community partnerships, investing in employees, and doing this with accountable and transparent leadership.

Planning processes

Metro will use these existing planning processes to implement Metro Connects:

Funded actions

- **Metro’s biennial budget** will support near-term progress toward Metro Connects, including funding of service changes and capital projects. Such system or program changes will be informed by Metro’s policies, business plan, and community and stakeholder engagement. For example, as mentioned above, the Service Guidelines will guide service changes in a way that aligns with Metro Connects.

²⁷ The fund management priorities are: debt repayment, operation and maintenance of the current system, reserves, and new spending on service and capital to achieve Service Guidelines or Metro Connects goals.

- **Metro will plan for future capital projects through its 6-year Capital Improvement Plan**, transmitted to the King County Council with the biennial budget. Immediate projects are funded in each budget. Metro will follow the “Capital Prioritization” guidance, described later in this section, when making decisions about which capital investments should be prioritized, consistent with available resources.

Mid-range strategy

- **Metro will articulate its mid-range priorities and plans through its 10-year business plan**,²⁸ updated regularly. Though the business plan is internally focused, Metro will explore opportunities to communicate its priorities to external stakeholders. Engagement with stakeholders, like the Equity Cabinet, will help inform the development of the business plan.

Coordination and partnership

- **Local and regional plans** informed the development of the Metro Connects network and will continue informing its implementation. Such plans include the Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2050, the King County Comprehensive Plan, the King County Countywide Planning Policies, and jurisdictions’ local plans. Metro hopes clearer communication and continued engagement will help cities plan for and implement improvements to support Metro Connects. More information is included in the “How Metro will work with partners and communities” section.

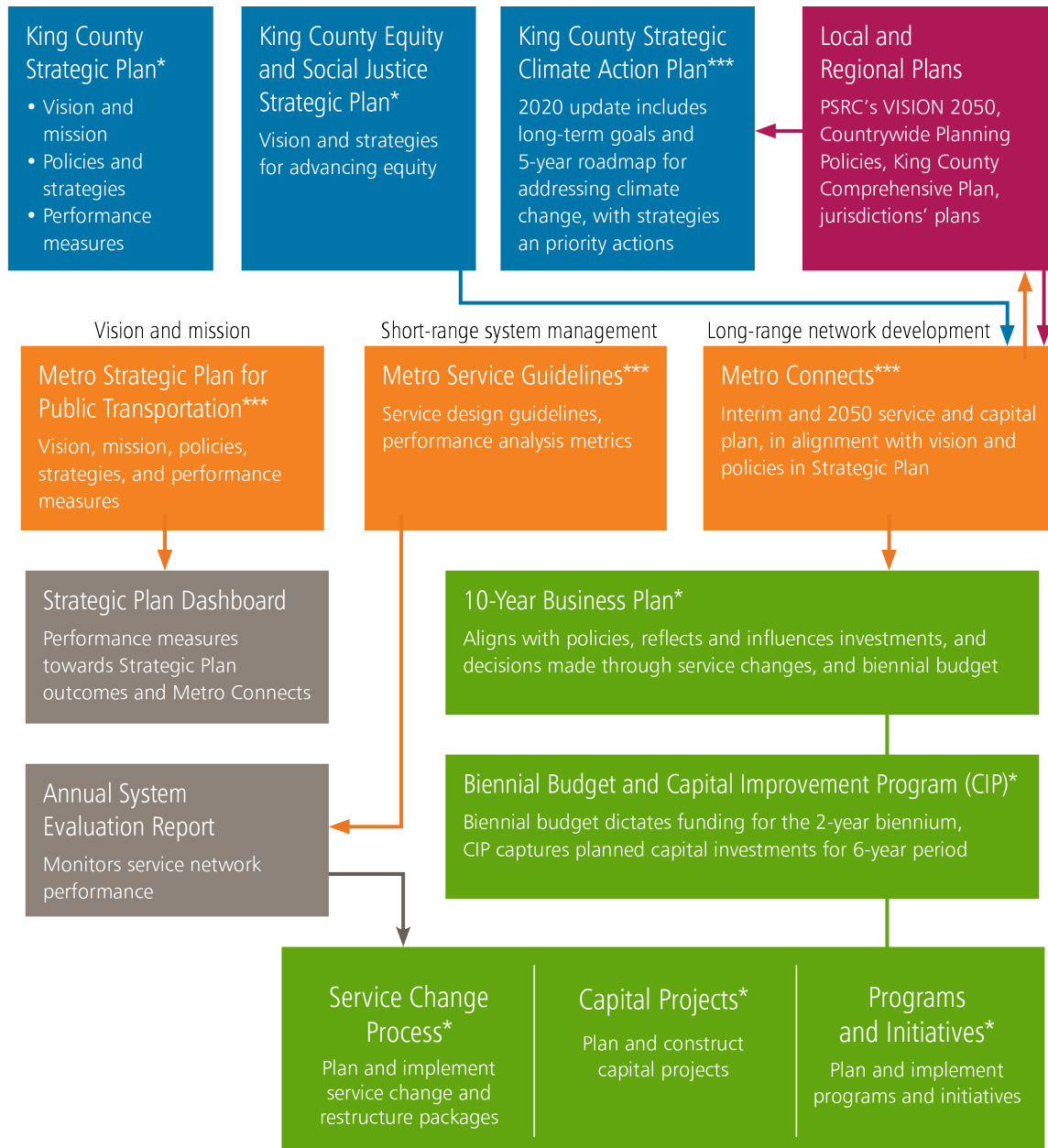
Accountability

Metro will measure performance and track progress toward Metro Connects through the Strategic Plan dashboard, explained in the “Measuring Progress” section of the “Attaining the Vision” chapter.

Figure 29 illustrates how plans and policies will drive implementation of Metro Connects.

²⁸ Metro’s 10-year business plan identifies the operational and service outcomes, business needs, and key strategies that capital investments should support.

Figure 29 Plans that Guide the Metro Connects Development Program



* Informed by community engagement

** 2020-2021 updates incorporate Mobility Framework

*** Informed by community engagement and 2020-2021 updates incorporate Mobility Framework

King County policies that guide Metro's work

Metro policies (RTC and KCC adopted)

Metro-owned implementation products and processes

Local and regional plans

RTC and KCC adopted performance measurement systems

New guidance for prioritizing investments

Since the adoption of Metro Connects in 2017, Metro has heard a desire from stakeholders to better understand how Metro will prioritize implementation of the investments outlined in Metro Connects. In response, Metro updated its Service Guidelines to direct service investments into the Metro Connects interim network. Metro also worked with stakeholders to develop additional guidance for how it would prioritize other key investments, including capital projects and RapidRide. That guidance is included below.

Prioritizing capital investments

3. Significant capital investments are crucial to delivering the Metro Connects service networks.

When identifying and prioritizing capital projects, Metro will lead with its core values of safety, equity, and sustainability, using the following principles:

- Support safety for Metro’s employees, customers and the community by prioritizing investments that address safety concerns and by ensuring all investments and facilities are safe
- Advance equity by identifying and addressing existing gaps and by prioritizing investments where needs are greatest
- Help build a resilient and sustainable King County and address the climate crisis by prioritizing investments that advance King County’s Strategic Climate Action Plan

Given the strong relationships among these values, Metro must balance efforts to support them all.

Metro will prioritize capital investments in the following order to advance Metro’s Strategic Plan and Metro Connects and to align with Metro’s Fund Management Policies²⁹:

1. Maintain assets
2. Support existing service levels
3. Grow and improve service and operations by balancing core values

Metro’s capital investments will align with Metro’s financial capacity and strategy direction, as identified in its 10-year business plan. In addition to balancing its core values, Metro will consider community input and how a project addresses community-identified needs when making decisions. Such input may come through engagement efforts for specific capital projects and higher-level policy or business plan development. By seeking input upstream and in its business planning and other processes, Metro seeks to go beyond simply seeking feedback on specific projects or proposals.

Metro will use this guidance to develop capital projects, programs, and the Capital

²⁹ The first priority in the Fund Management Policies, “Fund payment of debt service,” is not as relevant and therefore not included in this priority list.

Improvement Program (CIP). Metro will continue to monitor and adjust projects, programs, and overall set of capital investments to respond to changing conditions, agency direction and business needs, and community feedback. This will then inform how the CIP is updated during each biennial budget process. Figure 30 illustrates this process.

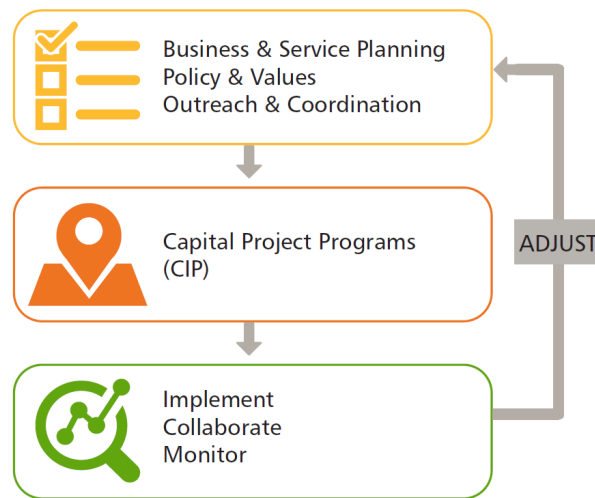
Prioritizing RapidRide implementation

As described in the “RapidRide service” section, the 2021 update to Metro Connects moved to a programmatic approach for identifying future RapidRide lines. Metro identified a pool of candidate lines for the interim and 2050 RapidRide networks rather than a specific set of routes. Metro will develop a prioritization plan to select the specific RapidRide lines for the interim network, which will be informed by updated corridor evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and corridor studies. The corridor evaluation will use the same five factors used in the updated Metro Connects, which are equity, sustainability, service demand, capital, and implementation. Stakeholder engagement will include community stakeholders, affected jurisdictions, and partner agencies.

Metro will develop a RapidRide prioritization plan based on corridor studies that will include a pre-planning level study of candidate corridors that consider route alignment, capital investment needs, and cost estimates. The prioritization plan will organize RapidRide candidate lines into tiers by their priority and potential timeframe for implementation. The top tier RapidRide candidates will include those planned to be implemented for the interim network and the second tier will be the lines next to be developed if funded. Work on the first RapidRide prioritization plan will begin in 2022 and the plan will be presented to the Regional Transit Committee and Council for acceptance by motion upon its completion.

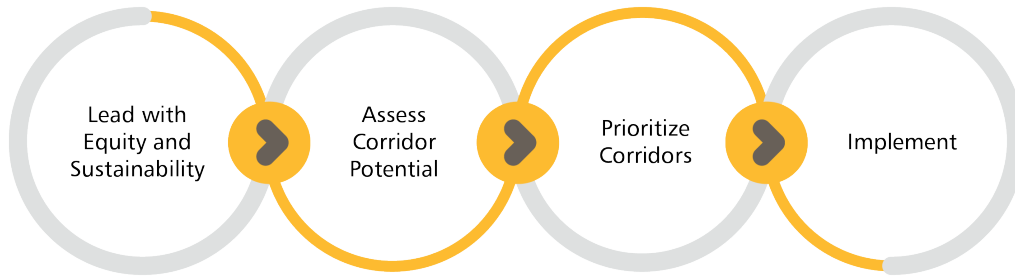
Decisions about RapidRide implementation will be made through Metro's biennial budget process, in alignment with the RapidRide prioritization plan, and adopted by the King County Council. Metro will provide an oral report to the Regional Transit Committee on its proposed capital program at least once each biennium, following the transmittal of the Executive’s proposed biennial budget. Metro will also provide relevant data and status updates on RapidRide in the annual System Evaluation report. In addition, Metro will maintain ongoing consultation with community stakeholders, affected jurisdictions, and partner agencies to discuss quantitative and qualitative data informing the future of all candidate routes. Such consultation will enable Metro to work with affected jurisdictions to facilitate transit supportive land uses and right-of-way improvements that are critical to RapidRide implementation. Decisions about investment in existing RapidRide lines will be prioritized based on

Figure 30 Capital Investment Planning Process



the factors used for evaluating candidates, such as equity and sustainability, and other factors such as safety, age and facility condition. This approach will allow Metro to make decisions about RapidRide that are more informed by timely data and community input.

Figure 31 RapidRide Prioritization Process



Metro will identify and implement future RapidRide lines by:

1. Leading with equity and sustainability in identifying the top candidates
2. Assessing the potential of candidate corridors based on community engagement, consultation with jurisdictions and partner agencies, updated information from corridor studies and analysis, and other implementation factors
3. Prioritizing and grouping the selected candidates into tiers and including this information in the RapidRide prioritization plan
4. Implementing corridors via the biennial budget process and Capital Improvement Plan

Figure 31 illustrates this process, which is explained in detail in Technical Report C. RapidRide Expansion Report. The K Line (Corridor 1027 between Totem Lake, Eastgate, and Kirkland) and the R Line (Corridor 1071 between Rainier Beach, Mount Baker, and the Seattle Central Business District) have been identified by Metro as the next RapidRide lines to be implemented. These lines are identified in the Metro Connects future network maps (Figures 7, 8, 13, and 14) as being in operation by the time of the Interim Network. Because the K and R lines have already been prioritized for investment, they are not considered to be candidate lines and are not subject to the prioritization process described above.

IMPLEMENTATION OF METRO CONNECTS: ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS

As resources become available, input from riders, community members, cities, and transportation stakeholders will continue to drive the delivery of Metro Connects.

As mentioned, Metro’s adopted policies and planning processes will serve as important starting points for implementing Metro Connects. However, the Metro Connects networks are visionary and not meant to be created without community and partner input. The subsections below explain how Metro expects to center equitable community engagement, work with cities, and align with regional partners.

Centering equitable community engagement

Metro wants to build a mobility system that meets the needs of riders safely, equitably, and sustainably. To do that, Metro will start by listening to and valuing the needs and expertise of communities—especially priority populations. Engaging upstream and early, sharing power and co-creating with communities, and building lasting relationships are central to Metro’s vision for future engagement. Metro will continue to center the voices of communities in decision-making and improve engagement practices based on performance measures and community feedback.

Ongoing partnership with the Equity Cabinet

Metro’s engagement with the Equity Cabinet, a group of 23 community leaders representing riders and priority populations countywide, exemplifies the importance of co-creation and centering community voices. The Equity Cabinet was the driving force behind Metro’s Mobility Framework, adopted by the King County Council in 2020. The Equity Cabinet also continued working with Metro on the updates to Metro Connects and other policies, meeting monthly in 2020 and 2021.

Metro’s vision for how to include communities in decision-making, described below, is guided by the Strategic Plan.³⁰ Metro’s Service Guidelines describe Metro’s approach for service-related community engagement. Other County policies like the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan inform how Metro will engage with communities equitably.

Engaging with communities on Metro’s priorities.

Metro will engage early on with community stakeholders to inform and make decisions about Metro’s broader priorities, not just project-level decisions. Metro will explore opportunities to do this - for example, through the development of Metro’s business plan. This will help ensure Metro’s investments reflect community needs and priorities, make Metro’s decision-making more transparent, and support Metro

³⁰ Recommendations from Metro’s Mobility Framework shaped direction in the Strategic Plan.

and partners in identifying opportunities to better coordinate to meet needs. Metro may engage standing groups or commissions like the Equity Cabinet, the King County Transit Advisory Commission, and the Access Paratransit Advisory Committee in addition to community-based organizations, jurisdictions, and others.

Sharing power through community-led engagement.

Metro's engagement processes will strive to include all potentially impacted stakeholders, prioritizing priority populations and those in communities where needs are greatest. Metro will share power by co-creating engagement processes and ideas and designs for service and capital investment, programs, and policies. Metro will partner with and compensate community-based organizations for their work. Metro will make information, materials, and events accessible for people of all abilities and who speak languages other than English. Metro will demonstrate how community input shapes outcomes. Such early, co-creative engagement will help ensure service concepts, capital plans, programs, and policies are built from the ground up with the communities they are intended to serve.

Building lasting relationships.

Metro will take a long-term approach to community engagement rather than a project-by-project approach. This will create more opportunities to understand community priorities, learn about community-led efforts, and explore opportunities for partnership and co-creation. Having a regular presence in communities will enable staff and leaders to respond to their needs and build lasting relationships and trust. It also provides better opportunities to break down silos when involving communities in work across Metro divisions, County departments, and agencies.

Working with cities

Metro Connects was developed in partnership with many stakeholders, with jurisdictions playing a significant role. The original vision was based on local and regional growth plans. Metro will continue working closely with cities to implement Metro Connects. Since the 2017 adoption of Metro Connects, Metro has heard from cities about the need to improve communication and make partnership opportunities clearer. The 2021 update to Metro Connects aims to do that.

Metro recognizes that cities need to plan and make investments that support the Metro Connects network in advance of its implementation. Though Metro's funding uncertainty makes this a challenge, Metro is committed to working closely with cities on needed planning and investment.

Metro has several tools cities can use to plan:

- The **Metro Connects interim network** identifies near- or mid-term investments. The **Service Guidelines** will direct investment toward the target service levels for the interim network.

- The **Regional Project Schedule** facilitates regular communication and ensures cities understand and inform Metro’s plans, and vice-versa.

The **Regional Project Schedule** is a communication tool that identifies the timing for implementing major mobility projects and capital projects throughout King County on a six-year time horizon.

- The **Service Guidelines** will also include guidance regarding the types of land uses that support certain types of transit, so cities can make zoning choices that support the services envisioned for their communities in Metro Connects.

The **Service Guidelines** articulate the types of land uses that best support different service families. Cities could use this guidance to inform land-use decisions that prepare for future transit expansion and improvements.

Metro will also build on ways it communicates and collaborates to ensure cities can inform Metro’s plans, and Metro can inform theirs. Such methods will go beyond project-specific coordination, so Metro and cities continue to collectively inform and work toward the shared Metro Connects vision.

Partnership opportunities.

As discussed in the financial overview section, Metro Connects remains an ambitious, expensive, and largely unfunded vision. Current revenue sources will not get the region to the Metro Connects interim or 2050 networks. **Metro, its elected leaders, and city partners must work together to develop a funding solution.** Metro looks forward to supporting those conversations.

As part of its commitment to supporting healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment across the region, providing mobility to all, Metro’s priority is a regional solution to funding Metro Connects. However, cities can consider partnerships to fund service. Cities can also make in-kind investments and improvements. Such nonfinancial contributions might include:

- Adopt transit-supportive land uses, in alignment with the types of services planned for certain corridors in the interim and 2050 networks
- Engage with Metro in capital planning
- Support efforts to secure additional funding, such as coordinating on grants or engaging in conversations about a regional funding approach
- Expedite permits for transit-related construction
- Make speed and reliability investments
- Prioritizing transit in public right-of-way
- Collaborate on infrastructure expansion and improvements for RapidRide, other frequent routes, and all-day express service
- Support innovations in customer service and operations by adopting programs and tools to improve data quality, quantity, and analysis
- Build safe and comfortable passenger facilities that accommodate many more people, make transfers among services easy, and meet jurisdictions’ needs

- Improve access to transit by increasing park-and-ride capacity, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and secure bicycle parking facilities at major transit hubs around King County

Metro also recognizes that some cities have more staff and financial resources than others. To the extent possible with Metro’s own resources, Metro will provide additional support to jurisdictions with fewer staff or financial resources or jurisdictions with higher percentages of priority populations. Support might include:

- Technical support in project planning
- Support with grants (partial funding, local match, or add with planning to apply for a grant)
- Opportunities for in-kind partnerships (see list above)

Metro’s Service Guidelines includes more information on service and infrastructure partnerships.

Aligning with regional partners

Aligning the envisioned Metro Connects networks with regional partners is crucial to building a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. For example, integration with Sound Transit’s expansion is essential.

Metro developed the original Metro Connects networks based on regional growth plans with input from jurisdictions. The 2021 update to Metro Connects includes targeted changes to the service networks rather than a wholesale re-envisioning. The original Metro Connects was consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies, as is the 2021 updated version. As described above, Metro intends to continue working with local jurisdictions to align plans and implementation of projects.

The 2021 update to the Metro Connects networks brought forward input received in the original vision, while updating the 2040 network to be a 2050 network to align with the Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2050. PSRC expects the region to grow by 1.8 million people by 2050, for a total of 5.8 million people, and 1.2 million jobs, for a total of 3.4 million jobs.³¹ Metro’s updated 2050 network map accounted for this projected growth by increasing service proportional to the assumed growth. Metro Connects’ emphasis on the connection between dense, affordable, mixed-use zoning and transit is consistent with VISION 2050’s focus on increasing housing density around transit (especially high-capacity transit).

Aligning with regional partners is crucial to Metro’s ability to deliver an integrated network that contributes to broad outcomes like advancing equity and addressing climate change. Such integration will also advance equity by making it easier for all people—especially priority populations—to connect to opportunities.

Increasing transit use by delivering the Metro Connects network remains essential to addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and delivering on other commitments in King County’s Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP).

³¹ Puget Sound Regional Council, VISION 2050. <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/vision-2050-plan.pdf>

Ultimately, achieving the SCAP's goals to reduce car trips will require transit service investments, dense land use, and equitable vehicle-usage pricing above and beyond what is currently proposed in Metro Connects, Sound Transit 3, and VISION 2050. However, delivering Metro Connects is an important place to start.

For more information

See Technical Report D. Transportation GHG Emissions Reduction Opportunities Evaluation for a summary analysis of requirements to achieve reductions in vehicle miles traveled and evaluation of Metro investment strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Metro will track progress towards Metro Connects through a web-based dashboard and use evidence-building to understand its impact and improve delivery of Metro Connects.

Measuring progress

Metro will report on progress toward Metro Connects through its Strategic Plan dashboard. Measures will align with the vision of a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable.

To streamline reporting to support data- and evidence-informed decisions, measures align with those already in the Strategic Plan. There will be fewer measures than there were in the original Metro Connects. Many of the measures align with those Metro originally developed with stakeholders, across the three areas of transit access, connections, and use and efficiency. Metro will update these measures regularly, as outlined in the Strategic Plan. The measures used may evolve in the future, as new information becomes available.

Though the costs do not align with a key theme, Metro will also report what Metro can afford against the projected service and capital costs through the “Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals” goal on the Strategic Plan web-based dashboard.

Table 2 illustrates the measures that Metro will report on through the Strategic Plan.

Table 2 Metro Connects Performance Measures

Vision Theme	Performance Measure
Integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ridership: Ridership/total number of boardings (rail, bus, water taxi, paratransit, rideshare) ▪ ORCA Transfers: by ORCA category, which includes low-income and disabled populations)
Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pilot Program Ridership: by service name/product ▪ Customer Communication Satisfaction: Satisfaction with communication/information-sharing from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority populations
Equitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proximity to Transit: (frequent and infrequent service), for priority populations and other populations (likely including percentage of populations and map)
Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation Emissions: Countywide transportation GHG emissions and avoided countywide transportation emissions from Metro’s contribution to mode shift, congestion relief, and land use change ▪ Vehicle Miles Traveled: by passenger and light-duty vehicles
Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Safety Satisfaction: Personal safety satisfaction score from Rider/Non-Rider survey (broken down by demographics, including priority populations*) ▪ Assaults and Disturbances: Employee assaults and passenger physical disturbances (per million boardings)
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metro Connects Funding Gap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interim Metro Connects vs baseline scenario – 2050 Metro Connects vs baseline scenario

For more information

To track Metro's progress towards Metro Connects, visit: kingcounty.gov/metro

Strengthening Metro's learning and impact

Metro will strengthen its approach to learning and to building and using evidence to achieve Metro Connects. Co-creating and innovating with community includes using data and evidence to understand what works and delivers impact. Innovation requires taking risks and being willing to fail in pursuit of Metro's values. A learning and impact mindset equips Metro with the tools to evaluate potential risk and value, be open to experimentation and failure, and be transparent about what works and where it is necessary to improve or try again.

Evidence – data plus analysis - can be built using qualitative or quantitative data and can include customer feedback and surveys, operational performance metrics and measurement, and evaluation that assesses the impact of Metro's investments on mobility, equity, sustainability, and other quality of life outcomes. Metro has a long history of strong performance management and use of quantitative data in decision making. As Metro strengthens its learning and impact, it will build on these assets to use data of all kinds in rigorously demonstrating how Metro's services impact community outcomes.

For example, when Metro implemented income-based fare discounts, early measures focused on operational metrics, such as how many people enrolled and whether enrollment reached all communities equitably. Metro is now building evidence about how fare discounts lead to better outcomes for people with low incomes, such as increased mobility, employment, and health and well-being. With the many service priorities competing for constrained resources, building evidence of this type will be critical to attaining the vision of Metro Connects.

Sample study: Using evidence to understand that fare cost and service are necessary to creating equitable access to mobility

In 2019, Metro partnered with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services and researchers from the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities at Notre Dame and University of California – Irvine on a study to build evidence about the impact of transit fare discounts for people with low incomes.

The researchers randomly assigned 1,800 study participants into two groups. The first received a transit pass with up to 24 weeks of fare-free transit. The second group received an ORCA LIFT discounted fare card with six free trips. The group that received fare-free transit had twice the number of transit boardings compared to the group with the discounted fare card, with similar effects on ridership across all demographic groups. However, little to no effect on ridership was detected for people who lived in neighborhoods without a bus stop. **This impact research indicates that both cost and the service network are important in delivering mobility to priority populations.**

As Metro creates a stronger learning culture and evidence-informed decision-making practices, several approaches will help achieve Metro Connects:

- **Develop longer-term strategic approaches that center equity and community in evidence building and use.**
Equity-based and evidence-based practice work together to support pro-equity outcomes when data and evidence practices are driven by, inclusive of, and responsive to communities. To make best use of research and data assets, Metro will use its data and research capacity to answer the questions that are most critical for informing decision making related to the goals of Metro Connects. Metro will implement a strategic approach to research through, for example, developing learning agendas, which are now required of USDOT and other federal executive agencies by the 2018 Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act. Metro will center equity considerations regardless of the primary learning objective and will work with communities and be clear about how it will use evidence and act on the results.
- **Form evidence-building partnerships that leverage Metro’s expertise with that of community, researchers, and other partners.** Such diverse teams will include community expertise to identify priority outcomes and interpret data and results, researchers who bring technical expertise and knowledge of other interventions, and the deep expertise of Metro staff and other partners regarding service delivery. Metro will compensate community partners for their expertise, honor the independence of external researchers, build the knowledge and skills of Metro staff, and engage with other sectors on common outcomes.
- **Increase the rigor and range of research methods.**
Metro is increasing the rigor and range of methods used in research to better understand and demonstrate the impact of Metro’s investments. Metro will use the most rigorous methods best suited to the learning objectives. It will value diverse forms of knowledge and reflect the multiplicity of culture contexts in which Metro’s services are delivered.
- **Share results and learnings transparently and broadly.**
Metro will support scientific practices and the publication of results, regardless of research findings. Metro will engage in regional and national forums to share, learn from, and build evidence regarding the impact of mobility on equity, sustainability, and other quality of life outcomes.
- **Use data to support learning.**
Metro will develop long-term data strategies that better integrate and use quantitative and qualitative data across Metro, King County, and other data sources. This will allow for a better focus on community outcomes and impact, while vigorously protecting data privacy and security.

NEXT STEPS

Metro will continue to provide mobility services that get people where they need to go, when they need to – safely, equitably, and sustainably. Meeting Metro’s vision will require expansion of service and capital facilities, modernization of systems that support operations and customers, and innovation in the way Metro does business. Metro will need to engage in ongoing, authentic partnership with community members, customers, employees, and stakeholders to create the future system.

To start work toward the interim network, Metro will do the following:

- **Put public transit at the heart of a successful recovery from the health, economic, and racial inequity crises precipitated or worsened by COVID-19.**
Build a better, more equitable network that builds trust in public transit and encourages people to choose Metro for their mobility needs. This will include focusing on the customer experience, working with partners, expanding service to build towards Metro Connects, and keeping safety, equity, and sustainability centered in recovery efforts.
- **Secure additional funding.**
Work with elected officials and regional leaders to secure the additional funding needed to deliver Metro Connects. Metro aims to develop the Metro Connects interim service network before the Ballard Link light rail expansion, but will need more funding to deliver this system. Expansion of Metro services described below rely on obtaining significant additional revenue.
- **Make the service investments identified in the annual Service Guidelines Report.**
Annual investments that will help support Metro Connects in a way that prioritizes equity, productivity (future land use), and geographic value.
- **Restructure service around Link light rail and other Sound Transit expansions.**
Continue restructuring around expansions of Link light rail as it is built out. These extensions will be an opportunity to review the entire transit network and build towards the Metro Connects service network.
- **Prioritize and build new RapidRide lines in coordination with partners.**
Expanded and enhanced RapidRide is the centerpiece of the Metro Connects frequent network, which will integrate with the region’s high-capacity transit network to connect urban centers. Metro will also restructure around RapidRide expansion.
- **Expand Metro’s system capacity.**
Meet the region’s growing demand for transit by buying additional fleet vehicles, expanding bus base capacity, installing charging infrastructure, and hiring bus operators and other personnel. The timing of such investments will depend on Metro’s financial situation.

- **Support Metro’s workforce.**
Continue building an anti-racist culture that supports recruitment, retention, and development of a diverse workforce that can embrace changes in the transportation landscape.
- **Help customers get more and better access to the transit system.**
In conjunction with other transit agencies and cities, continue to improve options for transit riders to get to bus stops and high-capacity transit stations.

Internal planning and engagement with communities, cities, and other stakeholders will help Metro’s budget, adopted by the King County Council, and business plans incorporate investments toward the interim network.

King County Metro Transit Department

King Street Center, KSC-TR-0415 201 S. Jackson St
Seattle, WA 98104
206-553-3000 TTY Relay: 711
www.kingcounty.gov/metro

To request alternative formats please call 206-553-3000

Available 206-477-3832 TTY Relay: 711

Para solicitar esta información en español, sírvase llamar al 206-263-9988 o envíe un mensaje de correo electrónico a community.relations@kingcounty.gov

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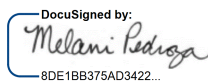
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Melani Pedroza
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Browsers:	Final release versions of Internet Explorer® 6.0 or above (Windows only); Mozilla Firefox 2.0 or above (Windows and Mac); Safari™ 3.0 or above (Mac only)
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