

**King County Metro**

# **Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031**

November 17, 2021





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## Letter from the General Manager

Dear Friends,

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

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.

## Strategic Plan

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.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 populations<sup>3</sup> tend to bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of climate change.<sup>4</sup>

**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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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/>

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>5</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup> [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
<b>Goal: Invest upstream and where needs are greatest (INVESTMENTS)</b> 		
<p><b>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.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Commute Times:</b> from Rider/Non-rider survey, broken down by priority populations* and all riders countywide</li> <li>▪ <b>Accessibility:</b> 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"> <li>– Highlight areas of priority populations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Create and promote products, services, programs, and partnerships that are accessible and easy to use and understand.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Reduced Fare Trips:</b> Number by youth, Regional Reduced Fare Permit (RRFP), ORCA LIFT, subsidized annual pass, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit</li> </ul>
<b>Goal: Address the climate crisis and environmental justice (SUSTAINABILITY)</b> 		
<p><b>Reduce demand for single-occupant and high-emissions transportation modes and increase transit ridership.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Transportation Emissions:</b> Countywide transportation GHG emissions and avoided countywide transportation emissions from Metro’s contribution to mode shift, congestion relief, and land use change</li> <li>▪ <b>Vehicle Miles Traveled:</b> by passenger and light-duty vehicles.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Help King County achieve its GHG emissions reduction and other climate goals through Metro’s operations.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Metro Operational Emissions:</b> GHG emissions and energy use, including:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fleet (bus and non-bus) and water taxi</li> <li>– Facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>


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"> <li>– Percentage of Metro and contracted fleets that are electric vehicles</li> <li>▪ <b>Green &amp; Equitable Infrastructure:</b> Percentage of capital projects achieving Green Building Ordinance required standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partner with communities to prepare for the impacts of climate change and support resilience in disproportionately affected communities.</b></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><b>Goal: Innovate to improve mobility, complement transit, and advance equity and sustainability (INNOVATION)</b> </p>		
<p><b>Metro and partners adopt innovative services and products that complement and support transit and make efficient, equitable use of public spaces.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Pilot Program Ridership:</b> by service name/product</li> <li>▪ <b>Pilot Program Locations:</b> Map (or other measure) of distribution of innovative services across King County, highlighting areas of unmet need (based on accessibility analysis)</li> <li>▪ <b>Equity in On-Demand Service:</b> Percentage of on-demand trips that starts or ends in an equity priority area</li> <li>▪ 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</li> </ul>
<p><b>Innovative services follow fair labor practices, share data or other accountability measures, and serve priority populations.</b></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><b>Goal: Keep passengers, employees, and communities safe (SAFETY)</b> </p>		
<p><b>Coordinate safety and enforcement programs in ways that are equitable, culturally appropriate, and focused on the customer experience.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Customer Safety Satisfaction:</b> Personal safety satisfaction score from Rider/Non-Rider survey (broken down by demographics, including priority populations)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide a safe and secure experience for passengers, communities, and Metro employees.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Assaults and Disturbances:</b> Employee assaults and passenger physical disturbances (per million boardings)</li> <li>▪ <b>Preventable Collisions:</b> Preventable collisions and customer injuries per million miles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Be prepared to respond to emergencies and support community resilience in coordination with partners and the public.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Metro’s Emergency Preparedness:</b> Rider/Non-Rider survey data re-rating of Metro’s response to COVID-19 (may evolve into a more general emergency question in future)</li> </ul>






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><b>Goal: Support thriving, equitable, transit-oriented communities that foster economic development (TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES)</b> </p>		
<p><b>Support healthy communities, a thriving economy, and a sustainable environment.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Housing Units:</b> At Metro-owned properties used for transit-oriented development broken down by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Completed</li> <li>– In development</li> <li>– In planning</li> <li>– Number of affordable housing units</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Commercial Space:</b> At Metro-owned properties used for transit-oriented development commercial space square feet by year.</li> <li>▪ <b>Growth:</b> 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.</li> <li>▪ <b>Planned Growth:</b> <i>To be developed. Coordinate with the Puget Sound Regional Council to map the alignment of transit service with planned growth.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Partner with local jurisdictions and other organizations to minimize displacement and increase affordable housing in urban areas near transit.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Affordable Housing Near Transit:</b> Percent of all and new rental units within ½ mile of frequent transit service that are affordable by median income brackets (regional measure)</li> </ul>



Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p><b>Goal: Improve access to mobility options (ACCESS)</b> </p>		
<p><b>Support access to mobility in public spaces and with private partners.</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Partner with local jurisdictions to develop plans for transit corridors that provide safe opportunities to walk, roll, or bike safely to transit connections.</p> <p>Use traditional, innovative, and emerging mobility modes to connect people to services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Transit Access Methods:</b> Mode share for how riders get to their bus stop (from Rider/Non-Rider survey)</li> <li>▪ <b>Proximity to Transit:</b> (frequent and infrequent service), for priority populations and other populations (likely including percentage of populations and map)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase awareness, use, and accessibility of mobility options, emphasizing priority populations.</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Ensure customer-facing information systems and services are easy to use, accurate, and integrated.</p> <p>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"> <li>▪ <b>Customer Communication Satisfaction:</b> Satisfaction with communication-/information-sharing from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority populations.</li> </ul>

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p><b>Provide equitable access to parking and other assets that connect people to transit.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Park and Rides:</b> Number of park and ride spaces by geographic location (form TBD, likely highlight areas of priority population on map)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal: Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services (SERVICE QUALITY)</b> </p>		
<p><b>Grow a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network of traditional and new mobility services that is safe, equitable, and sustainable.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Ridership:</b> Ridership/total number of boardings (rail, bus, water taxi, paratransit, and rideshare)</li> <li>▪ <b>Customer Satisfaction:</b> With Metro generally or specific service elements (TBD) – from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority population*</li> <li>▪ <b>ORCA Transfers:</b> by ORCA category, which includes low-income and disabled populations)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Make improvements to enhance transit speed and reliability, and support jurisdictions in doing so.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Quality of Service Index:</b> Service quality index (one score informed by on-time performance, pass ups, and missed trips)</li> </ul>

Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<b>Goal: Build a skilled, diverse, and well-supported workforce that has growth opportunities (WORKFORCE)</b> 		
<p><b>Partner with employees, unions, contractors, and communities to offer high-skill, high-wage careers that support a high quality of life.</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Help employees benefit from the opportunities offered by new mobility technologies.</p> <p>Implement organizational health framework and develop measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Job Satisfaction:</b> Employee job satisfaction (from King County employee survey, broken down by race, gender, age)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use innovation and new pathways to jobs to attract, recruit, and retain quality employees.</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Develop a consistent, equitable approach for supporting professional development.</p> <p>Support employees in maximizing their potential through equitable performance management.</p> <p>Support employees' health and well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Workforce Demographics:</b> Demographics of new hires, re-hires, and promotions by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Race</li> <li>– Gender</li> <li>– Age</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Recruit and hire from populations facing the greatest barriers to transit employment.</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Leverage and partner with other King County departments and programs to hire employees from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>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"> <li>▪ <b>Workforce Representativeness:</b> Demographics of King County population compared to Metro workforce and leadership by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Race</li> <li>– Gender</li> <li>– Age</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Goal: Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals (STEWARDSHIP)</b> 		
<p><b>Budget and invest in ways that deliver Metro Connects safely, equitably, and sustainably.</b></p> <p>Outcome:</p>	<p>Seek additional funding sources that are equitable and financially sustainable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Metro Connects Funding Gap:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Interim Metro Connects vs baseline scenario</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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"> <li>– 2050 Metro Connects vs baseline scenario</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exercise sound financial management and ensure Metro’s long-term financial sustainability.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Cost:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– per boarding</li> <li>– per passenger mile</li> <li>– per service hour</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Align investments with values and measure and communicate progress.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>State of Good Repair:</b> 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal: Conduct deliberate and transparent community engagement (ENGAGEMENT)</b> </p>		
<p><b>Be open to shared decision-making and co-creation with community.</b></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"> <li>▪ <b>Co-creation Engagement:</b> percentage of engagement projects incorporating co-creation (normalized for the size of the project)</li> </ul>

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"> <li>▪ <b>Equitable Contracting:</b> 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></li> <li>▪ <b>Engagement Satisfaction:</b> With the community engagement survey process</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use community-driven approaches to develop, program, and evaluate mobility services and infrastructure that serve priority populations.</b></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



## 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 2011<sup>6</sup> and was updated in 2015.<sup>7</sup> 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).<sup>8</sup> 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,<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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

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<sup>6</sup> King County Council, [Ordinance 17143](#)

<sup>7</sup> King County Council, [Ordinance 18301](#)

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

<sup>9</sup> [Link to METRO CONNECTS](#)

<sup>10</sup> [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 Framework<sup>11</sup> 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 Plan<sup>12</sup> and Ordinance 16948,<sup>13</sup> 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+<sup>14</sup> 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

<sup>11</sup> [Link to Mobility Framework](#)

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

<sup>13</sup> [Link to Ordinance 16948](#)

<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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.

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<sup>15</sup> [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,<sup>16</sup> King County Comprehensive Plan<sup>17</sup>, Strategic Climate Action Plan, Comprehensive Financial Management Policies,<sup>18</sup> Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, and the King County Strategic Plan's<sup>19</sup> 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.

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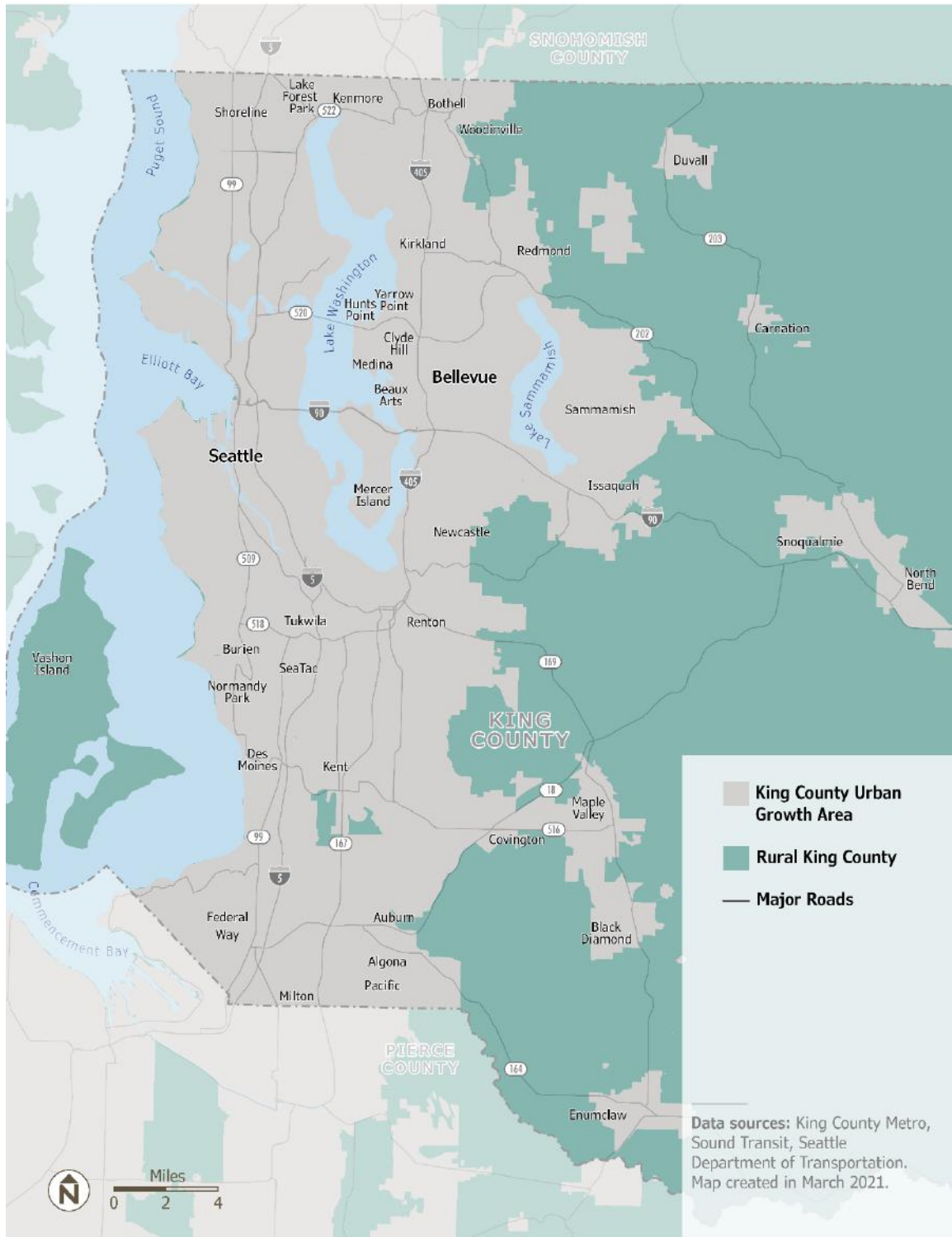
<sup>16</sup> [Link to King County Countywide Planning Policies](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Link to King County Comprehensive Plan](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Link to King County Comprehensive Financial Management Policies](#)

<sup>19</sup> [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,<sup>20</sup> 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,<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

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.

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<sup>20</sup> [Link to Ordinance 16948](#)

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

<sup>22</sup> “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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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).

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

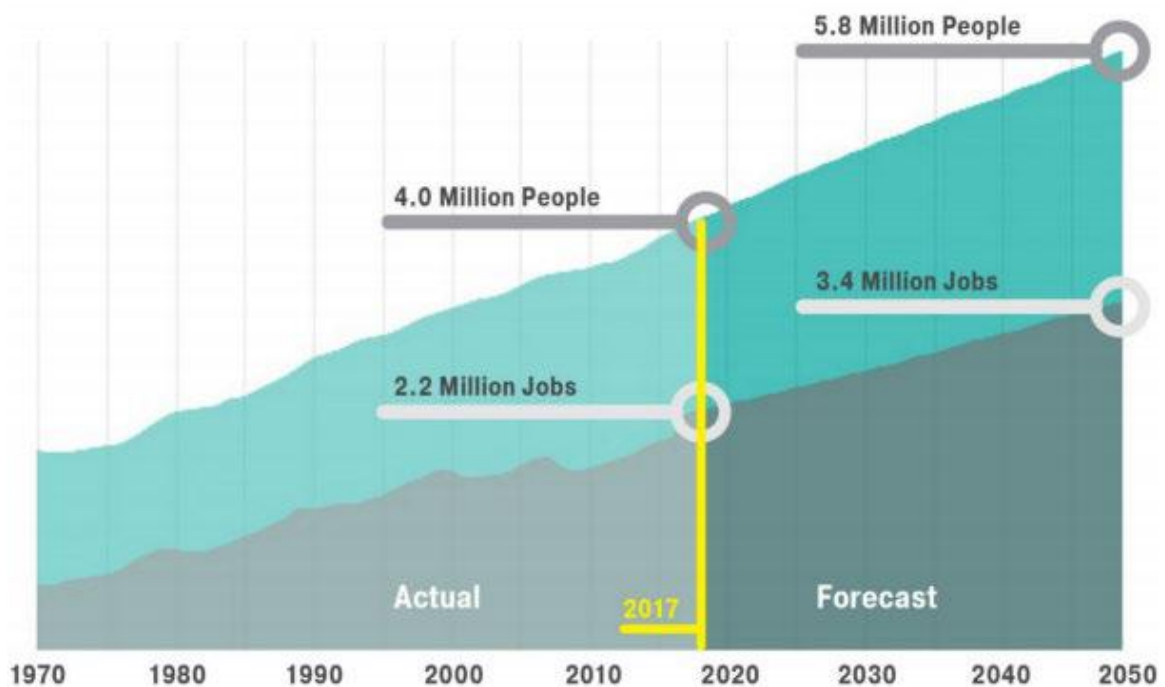


## A Growing, Diversifying Population

King County is growing and changing. Between 2010 and 2019, the county gained nearly 300,000 new residents.<sup>25</sup> 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 Region<sup>26</sup>



King County expects more than 870,000 more people and 680,000 new jobs by 2050.<sup>27</sup> 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

<sup>25</sup> 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>

<sup>26</sup> Figure is from Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2050

<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> The percent of the population that identifies as people of color increased from 34 percent in 2010 to 39 percent in 2017.<sup>30</sup> Compared to non-Hispanic white workers, these populations use transit more for work.<sup>31</sup>

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.<sup>32</sup> 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.

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<sup>28</sup> 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>

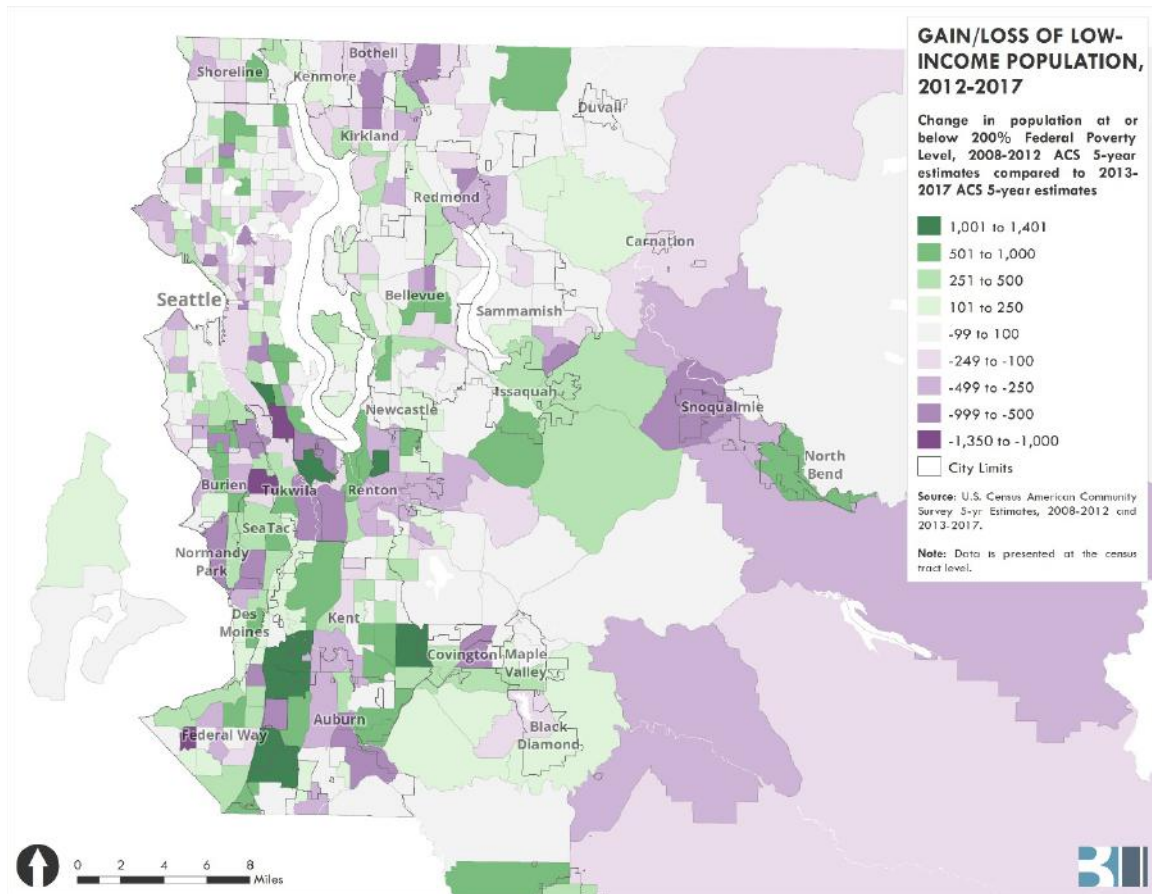
<sup>29</sup> King County Metro Mobility Framework Report, Appendix A, Travel Trends. 2019. Available at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/mobility-framework/metro-mobility-framework-report.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> 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>

<sup>31</sup> 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>

<sup>32</sup> [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.<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> The Puget Sound region is experiencing rising air temperatures and more heat-related health impacts, including more illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.

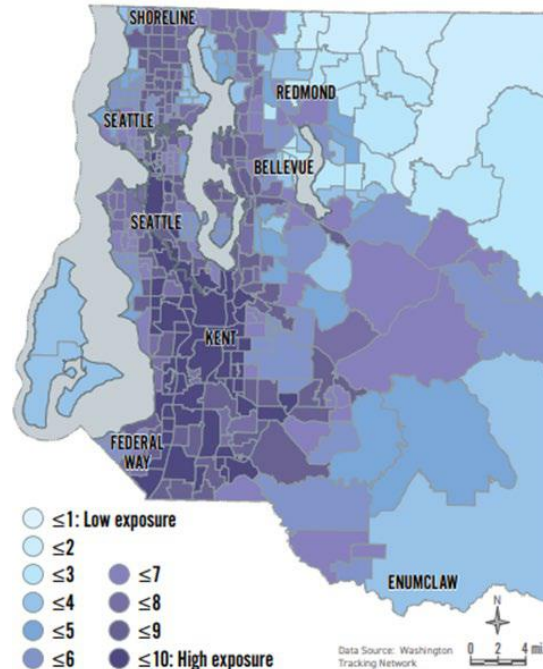
The transportation sector generates more than one-third of climate-altering GHG emissions in King County. Before COVID-19, total vehicle miles for work trips per person had increased, as did the GHG emissions from those vehicles. This may be because people are traveling farther for work, potentially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

Priority populations tend to bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of climate change.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

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.

<sup>34</sup> 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://ciq.uw.edu/resources/special-reports/no-time-to-waste/>

<sup>35</sup> 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/>

<sup>36</sup> 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](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.<sup>37</sup>

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.

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<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup> 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.

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<sup>38</sup> 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

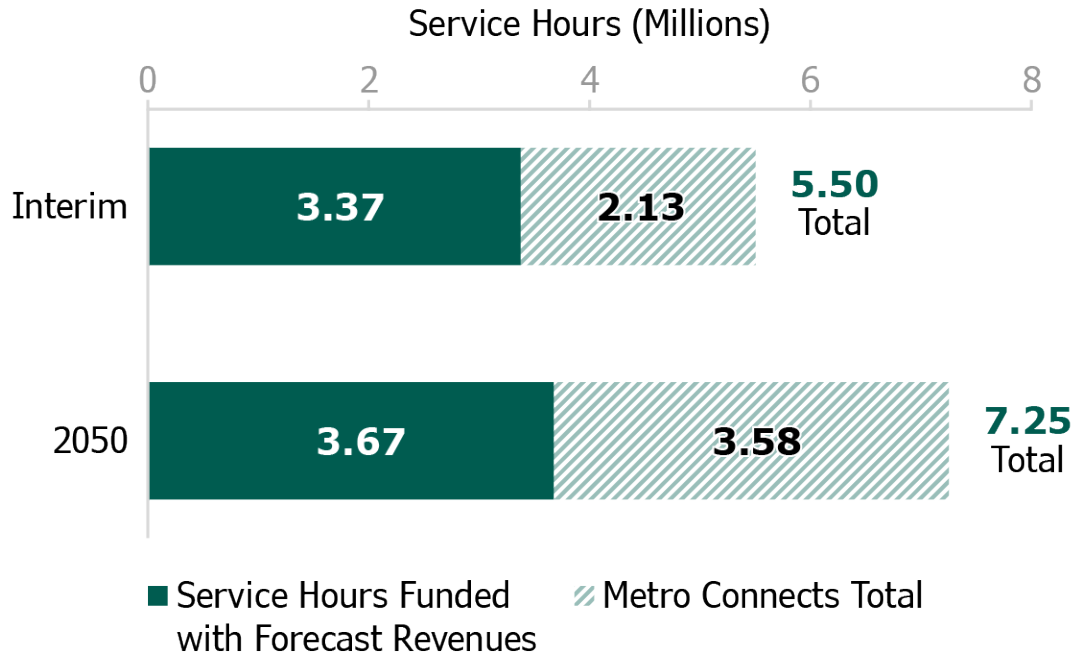
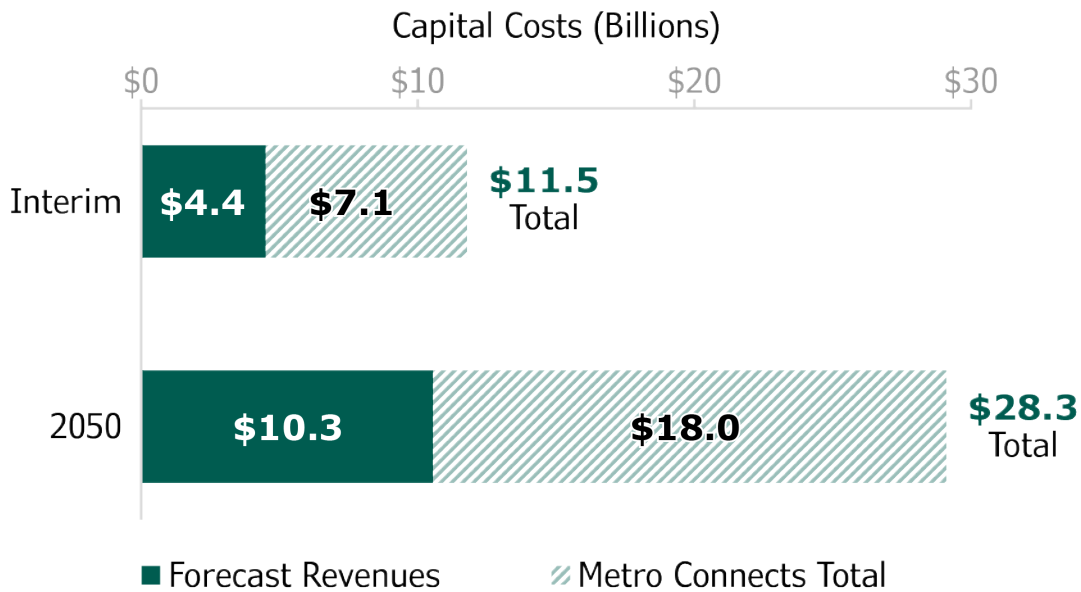


Figure 7 Metro Connects Incremental Capital Costs and What Could be Funded with Forecasted Revenues



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](http://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.<sup>39</sup> 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.***

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<sup>39</sup> 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.

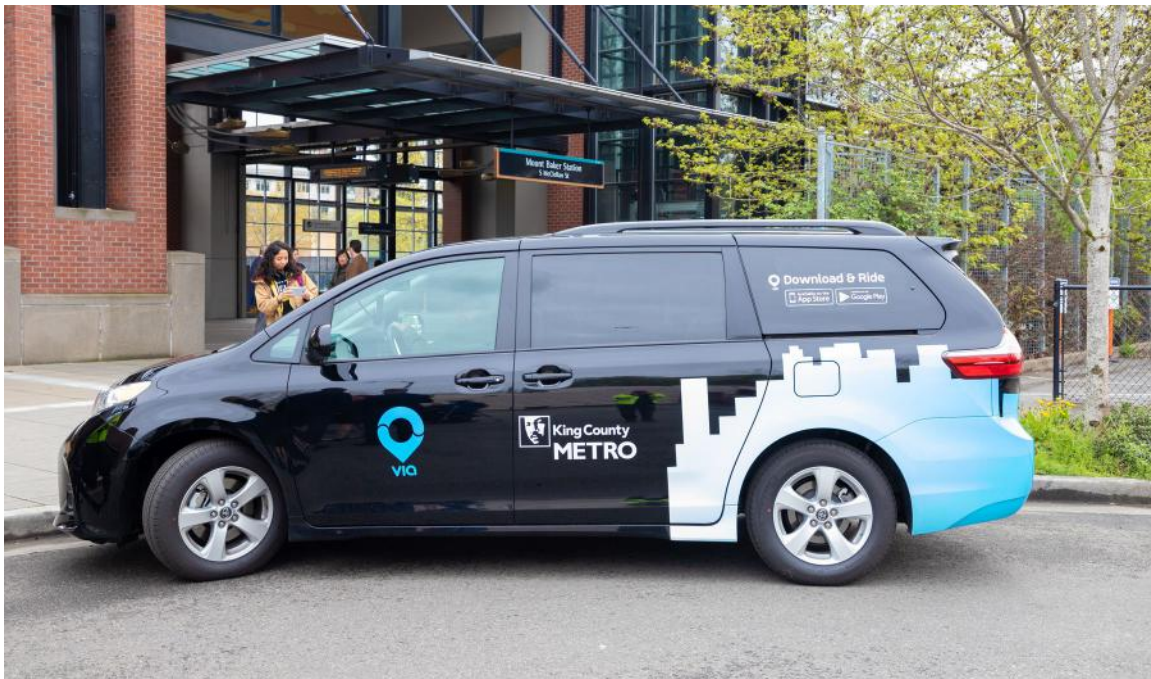


## Goal: Innovate to Improve Mobility, Complement Transit, and Advance Equity and Sustainability



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+<sup>40</sup> 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

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<sup>40</sup> 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 jobs<sup>41</sup>. 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,

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<sup>41</sup> 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 use<sup>42</sup>, 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

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<sup>42</sup> 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
<b>INVESTMENTS</b> 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"> <li>▪ <b>Commute Times:</b> from Rider/Non-rider survey, broken down by priority populations* and all riders countywide</li> <li>▪ <b>Accessibility:</b> 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"> <li>– Highlight areas of priority populations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Metro better serves customers by reducing barriers to mobility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Reduced Fare Trips:</b> Number by youth, RRFP, ORCA LIFT, subsidized annual pass, ADA paratransit</li> </ul>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b> 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"> <li>▪ <b>Transportation Emissions:</b> Countywide transportation GHG emissions and avoided countywide transportation emissions from Metro’s contribution to mode shift, congestion relief, and land use change</li> <li>▪ <b>Vehicle Miles Traveled:</b> by passenger and light-duty vehicles</li> </ul>
	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"> <li>▪ <b>Metro Operational Emissions:</b> GHG emissions and energy use, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fleet (bus and non-bus) and water taxi</li> <li>– Facilities</li> <li>– Percentage of Metro and contracted fleets that are electric vehicles</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Green &amp; Equitable Infrastructure:</b> Percentage of capital projects achieving Green Building Ordinance required standards</li> </ul>
<b>INNOVATION</b> 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"> <li>▪ <b>Pilot Program Ridership:</b> Innovation pilot ridership by service name/product</li> <li>▪ <b>Pilot Program Locations:</b> Map (or other measure) of distribution of innovative services across King County, highlighting areas of unmet need (based on equity tracts and accessibility analysis)</li> <li>▪ <b>Equity in On-Demand Service:</b> 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)</li> <li>▪ 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</li> </ul>

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

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"> <li>▪ <b>Park and Rides:</b> Number of park and ride spaces by geographic location (form TBD, likely highlight areas of priority population on map)</li> </ul>
<b>SERVICE QUALITY</b> <b>Provide fast, reliable, and integrated mobility services</b>	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ridership:</b> Ridership/total number of boardings (rail, bus, water taxi, paratransit, rideshare)</li> <li>▪ <b>Customer Satisfaction:</b> With Metro generally or specific service elements (TBD) – from Rider/Non-Rider survey, broken down by demographics/priority population*</li> <li>▪ <b>ORCA Transfers:</b> by ORCA category, which includes low-income and disabled populations)</li> </ul>
	Transit speed and reliability are improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Quality of Service Index:</b> Service quality index (one score informed by on-time performance, pass ups, and missed trips)</li> </ul>
<b>WORKFORCE</b> <b>Build a skilled, diverse, well-supported workforce that has growth opportunities</b>	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. Metro employees, especially priority populations, have equitable, consistent access to opportunities for professional development and career advancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Job Satisfaction:</b> Employee job satisfaction (from King County employee survey, broken down by race, gender, age)</li> <li>▪ <b>Workforce Demographics:</b> Demographics of new hires, re-hires, and promotions by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Race</li> <li>– Gender</li> <li>– Age</li> <li>–</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Metro employees represent the diversity of King County’s population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Workforce Representativeness:</b> Demographics of King County population compared to Metro workforce and leadership by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Race</li> <li>– Gender</li> <li>– Age</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>STEWARDSHIP</b> <b>Be responsible stewards of financial resources and invest in line with values and goals.</b>	Metro can implement Metro Connects, meeting regional transportation needs and advancing safety, equity, and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Metro Connects Funding Gap:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Interim Metro Connects vs baseline scenario</li> <li>– 2050 Metro Connects vs baseline scenario</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Metro is a responsible steward of public resources and protects its financial future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Cost:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– per boarding</li> <li>– per passenger mile</li> <li>– per service hour</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Metro makes data-informed decisions and demonstrates how its investments can advance safety, equity, and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>State of Good Repair:</b> 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.</li> </ul>

Goal	Outcomes	Measures
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b> 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"> <li>▪ <b>Co-creation Engagement:</b> percentage of engagement projects incorporating co-creation (normalized for the size of the project)</li> <li>▪ <b>Equitable Contracting:</b> 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>)</li> </ul>
	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Engagement Satisfaction:</b> With the community engagement survey process</li> </ul>

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



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

## 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.