



Transit Audit Program: 2024 Biennial Report

ADVANCING TRANSIT PERFORMANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND EQUITY

The Transit audit function within the King County Auditor's Office provides independent oversight of the King County Metro Transit Department (Metro Transit). We perform in-depth reviews of Metro Transit operations to help ensure county residents have access to equitable, efficient, and effective transit services. In 2022 and 2023, we focused on identifying ways Metro Transit could reduce bus collisions, improve its Vanpool program, and enhance its ability to achieve a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035.

Audit results in 2022 and 2023

Our transit audit program resulted in:

- **Eliminated data gaps.** We identified gaps in data that limit Metro Transit's ability to track progress delivering a capital program budgeted at \$1.6 billion for 2023-2028.
- **Increased accountability for continuous improvement.** We found that Metro Transit could strengthen internal improvement efforts by increasing management accountability for progress.
- **Reduced the risk of collisions and injuries.** We recommended Metro Transit align its incident response process with federal guidance and ensure operators receive regular safety training.

Delivering a zero-emission bus fleet

We continued to focus our audit efforts on helping Metro Transit meet its goal of achieving a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035. Since implementation of a zero-emission fleet will require Metro Transit to improve its ability to deliver capital projects, we conducted an audit of Metro Transit's capital project management and delivery processes. We made recommendations to improve an area in which Metro Transit has historically not met targets. We also initiated a second audit of Metro Transit's Zero Emissions effort to answer key questions about the timeline and risks faced by Metro Transit's zero-emission capital projects, national trends and challenges in achieving a zero-emission bus fleet. We identified ways Metro Transit can improve its delivery of zero emissions capital projects.

Key results

Metro Transit has implemented many significant recommendations since 2022. Examples of positive outcomes from our recommendations include:



Bus riders have more accurate information to plan their trips



Residents can view community impact measures for the Access paratransit program



People who speak English as a second language can access paratransit application and instruction documents



Metro Transit can better track IT project costs

Positive relationships maximize change

County staff and auditors both seek positive outcomes for the transit riding public, so cooperation focused on achieving shared goals magnifies results. During this period, we found several indicators of positive relationships. For example, 100% of our post-audit survey respondents from Metro Transit noted that auditors made good use of their staff’s time and that the audit process was collaborative. Metro Transit also concurred with all 46 of the audit recommendations we made since 2022.

95%
TOOK ACTION

Action toward implementation

Following up on our recommendations increases transparency and accountability and creates momentum for positive change. Since 2022, we followed up on 24 audit recommendations. We track recommendations until they are complete.



Publications

Our office completed four audits of Metro Transit during this two-year period. We also followed up on recommendations from six audits. All are available on the on the [King County Auditor’s website](#).

Audit reports

- *Zero Emissions: Metro Transit Working to Mitigate Risks to County’s Ambitious 2035 Goal*
- *Vanpool: Improved Monitoring Could Help Achieve Strategic Goals and Reduce Program Risk*
- *Metro Transit: Strengthening Data, Communication, and Continuous Improvement Processes Could Help Reduce Project Delays*
- *Metro Transit: Proactive Analysis and Training Could Further Improve Safety*

Follow-up reports

- Bus Collision and Injury Prevention
- Transit Reliability
- Access Paratransit
- Metro Transit Capital Delivery
- RapidRide Fare Enforcement
- Metro Transit Information Technology

2022-2024 audit team

KyMBER Waltmunson • King County Auditor

Peter Heineccius • Senior Principal Auditor

Ben Thompson • Transit Audit Manager

Megan Ko • Senior Auditor

Elise Garvey • Principal Auditor, Program Lead

Mia Neidhardt • Senior Principal Auditor

Cindy Drake • Supervising Auditor

Zainab Nejati • Capital Projects Principal Auditor

Basil Hariri • Auditor