

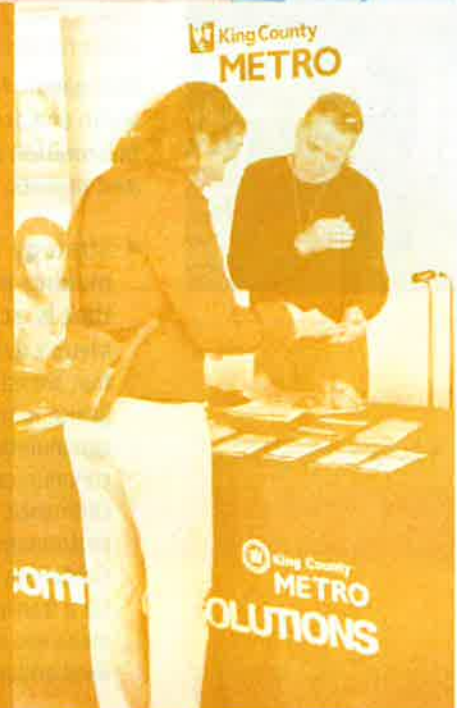
## GOAL 7

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.



*Metro is committed to informing and engaging the public as it develops products and services.*





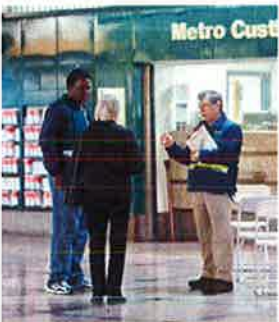
**Objective 7.1: Empower people to play an active role in shaping Metro's products and services.**

Metro is committed to being responsive and accountable to the public. One way Metro will meet this commitment is by continuing to conduct a community planning process and public outreach as part of any major service change or new service initiative. **Intended outcome: The public plays a role and is engaged in the development of public transportation.**

▪ **Strategy 7.1.1: Engage the public in the planning process and improve customer outreach.**

Metro's community engagement work is consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice ordinance. Metro seeks to build its capacity to engage all communities in a manner that promotes and fosters trust among people across geographic, race, class and gender lines, resulting in more effective policies, processes, and services as well as supporting community-based solutions to problems.

Metro's planning process provides opportunities for the public to help design public transportation services. It involves riders, non-riders, elected officials, community leaders, city and County staff members, and social service agencies. Outreach targets historically under-represented populations, using translated materials or interpretation services as needed. Metro uses public meetings, open houses and a sounding board process to engage customers. Metro also does extensive public communication using direct mail, newspaper and radio ads, surveys and online information, and continually explores new media to reach a larger audience. Metro will strive to involve the public early in any planning process and offer opportunities for ongoing involvement.



**Objective 7.2: Increase customer and public access to understandable, accurate and transparent information.**

Transparent decision-making processes and information will help build public trust in Metro and acceptance of the decisions made. **Intended outcome: Metro provides information that people use to access and comment on the planning process and reports.**

▪ **Strategy 7.2.1: Communicate service change concepts, the decision-making process, and public transportation information in language that is accessible and easy to understand.**

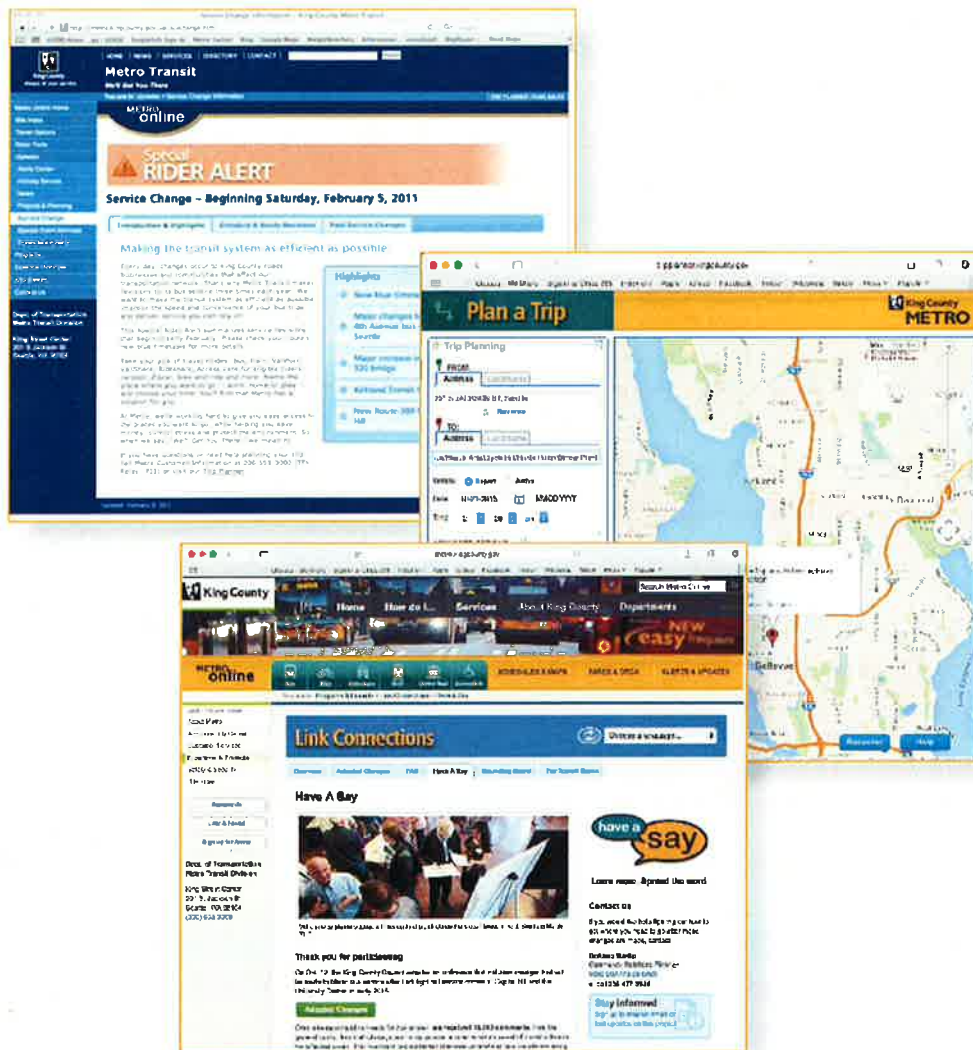
Metro's decision-making process should be clear, transparent and based on criteria that are easy for customers to understand. Metro considers equity and social justice in its decision-making process, particularly for people of color, low-income communities, people with limited English proficiency, and people with other communications barriers consistent with King County's Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, Executive Order on Translation, and federal law. Service guidelines and performance measures provide an outline of Metro's approach to decision-making. Guidelines are based on data that are understandable to the public and provide for a transparent process for making service allocation decisions. Performance measures will give the public a snapshot of Metro's performance on a systemwide level and allow for comparisons between service types and between peer

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agencies. Using a variety of forums, media channels and accessible formats, Metro will reach out to customers and the public to share information on the decision-making process and on the performance measures that are the basis of Metro service changes and new service initiatives.

- **Strategy 7.2.2: Explore innovative ways to report to and inform the public.**

New forums for public outreach can help Metro reach more new and existing riders and make it easier for them to find the information they need. Metro will continue providing information to the public through various channels including printed materials, Metro Online, social media and other channels.







## RESTRUCTURING SERVICE

Service restructures are changes to multiple routes along a corridor or within a large area consistent with the service design criteria in this document. Restructures may be prompted by a variety of circumstances, and in general are made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of transit service as a whole, to better integrate with the regional transit network, or to reduce Metro's operating costs because of budget constraints. When planning for service restructures, factors other than route performance are taken into account, such as large-scale service and capital infrastructure enhancements. Restructures may result in the modification, addition, and deletion of corridors that align with future corridors in the long-range plan. These changes must be approved by council as part of a service change package.

- Under all circumstances, whether adding, reducing or maintaining service hours, service restructures will have the goals of focusing frequent service on the service segments with the highest ridership and route productivity, creating convenient opportunities for transfer connections between services, and matching capacity to ridership demand to improve the productivity and cost-effectiveness of service.
- Service restructures to manage the transit system will have a goal of increasing ridership.
- Under service reduction conditions, service restructures will have an added goal of an overall net reduction of service hours invested.
- Under service addition conditions, service restructures will have the added goals of increasing service levels and ridership.

When one or more circumstances trigger consideration of restructures, Metro specifically analyzes:

- Impacts on current and future travel patterns served by similarly aligned transit services.
- Passenger capacity of the candidate primary route(s) relative to projected consolidated ridership.
- The cost of added service in the primary corridor to meet projected ridership demand relative to cost savings from reductions of other services.

Restructures will be designed to reflect the following:

- Service levels should accommodate a projected minimum of 80 percent of the expected passenger loads per the established loading guidelines.
- When transfers are required as a result of restructures, the resulting service will be designed for convenient transfers. Travel time penalties for transfers should be minimized.
- A maximum walk distance goal of 1/4 mile in corridors where service is not primarily oriented to freeway or limited-access roadways. Consideration may be given to exceeding this maximum distance where the walking environment supports pedestrians or at transfer locations between very frequent services.

Based on these guidelines, Metro will recommend specific restructures that have compatibility of trips, have capacity on the consolidated services to meet anticipated demand, and can achieve measurable savings relative to the magnitude of necessary or desired change.

After a service restructure, Metro will regularly evaluate the resulting transit services and respond to chronically late performance and passenger loads that exceed the performance management guidelines as part of the ongoing management of Metro's transit system.

Key reasons that will trigger consideration of restructures include:

**Sound Transit or Metro service investments**

- Extension or service enhancements to Link light rail, Sounder commuter rail, and Regional Express bus services.
- Expansion of Metro's RapidRide network, investment of partner or grant resources, or other significant introductions of new Metro service.

**Corridors above or below the All-Day and Peak-Only Network target service level**

- Locations where the transit network does not reflect current travel patterns and transit demand due to changes in travel patterns, demographics, or other factors.

**Services compete for the same riders**

- Locations where multiple transit services overlap, in whole or in part, or provide similar connections.

**Mismatch between service and ridership**

- Situations where a route serves multiple areas with varying demand characteristics or situations where ridership has increased or decreased significantly even though the underlying service has not changed.
- Opportunities to consolidate or otherwise reorganize service so that higher ridership demand can be served with improved service frequency and fewer route patterns.

**Major transportation network changes**

- Major projects such as SR-520 construction and tolling and the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement; the opening of new transit centers, park-and-rides, or transit priority pathways.

**Major development or land use changes**

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



## PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For each major service change, Metro will undertake a significant planning process that includes outreach to involve the public in shaping the change. Through the outreach, Metro planners will better understand community mobility needs, where people are traveling and when, and how to provide the best service possible. During the planning process, Metro typically will engage with the community through several phases of outreach, and will complete a comprehensive community engagement report at the end that summarizes the results of this work and how public input was used to shape a final recommendation for change.

Each outreach effort will be guided by several goals:

- Transit planners are informed by members of the public who are reflective of those who may be affected by the change.
- Metro's outreach process is transparent, accessible, welcoming and understandable. Participants understand what is being considered, the timeline and how decisions are made, and that their input is valuable and welcome.
- The outreach process is meaningful. Regardless of how participants feel about the final result, they can see how public input shaped what is being considered and the final result.

Outreach should be scaled relative to the magnitude of the change being considered as well as the potential impacts of the change on riders.

For each outreach effort, Metro should identify the demographics of those who may be affected by the change being considered. Then, outreach strategies should be designed to inform and solicit input from these populations, creatively seeking to engage those who would not otherwise learn about our process via mainstream communication channels.

These outreach strategies should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- posting of information at bus stops or onboard buses and at community gathering places such as libraries, schools, and community centers
- conversations with people on the bus and at stops, community events, and information tables
- public meetings
- questionnaires
- conversations with community or stakeholder groups
- online and/or mailed information, social media, news releases, and advertisements
- community advisory groups or sounding boards
- outreach to community groups in the Community Service Areas of unincorporated King County
- translation and distribution of materials in accessible formats and/or provision of interpretation for populations with limited or no English proficiency and people with disabilities

- work with community partners that serve transit riders, such as those with limited English proficiency, low-income and homeless populations, youth, minorities, people with disabilities, elderly people, and those who are currently unserved or underserved by transit, to engage these populations in formats, locations and at times that work best for them.

For service changes that affect multiple routes or large areas, Metro may convene a community-based sounding board composed of people who may be affected by the change. Sounding board members attend public meetings, offer advice about public outreach, and provide feedback about what changes to bus service would be best for the local communities. Metro should consider both sounding board recommendations and public feedback in developing recommendations.

Proposed changes may require County Council approval. The Council holds a public hearing before making a final decision on changes.

Through the planning and outreach process, Metro should strive to:

- Understand and address potential issues regarding major travel origins and destinations
- Engage with key stakeholders including community-based organizations and the general public to understand the needs of transit riders and potential riders, such as those with limited English proficiency, low-income and homeless populations, youth, minorities, people with disabilities and Access users, elderly people, and those who are currently unserved or underserved by transit
- Match community needs with service provided. Metro may identify potential alternative services projects through the planning and outreach process.