



King County Regional Transit Safety Task Force Briefing to King County Council Committee of The Whole



October 6, 2025



Briefing Overview

PRESENTERS

Opening & Task Force Recommendations

[Ashley Street & Sacha Taylor](#), Leone Solutions Group

Metro Safety Priorities

[Michelle Allison](#), King County Metro

Operator and Transit Employees Perspectives

[Greg Woodfill](#), Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 587

PANELISTS

Sound Transit Safety Priorities

[Ed Cobean](#), Sound Transit

Behavioral Health & Outreach Response

[Susan Mclaughlin](#), Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS)

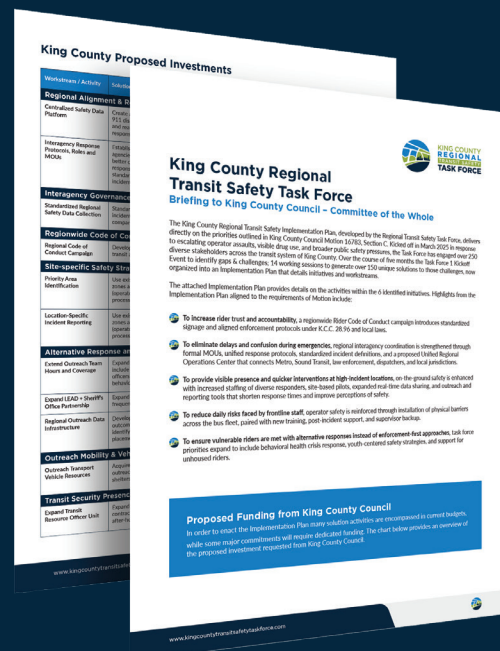
Incident Response & Enforcement

[Major Todd Morrell](#), [Major Marcus Williams](#), [Geoffrey Thomas](#), King County Sheriff

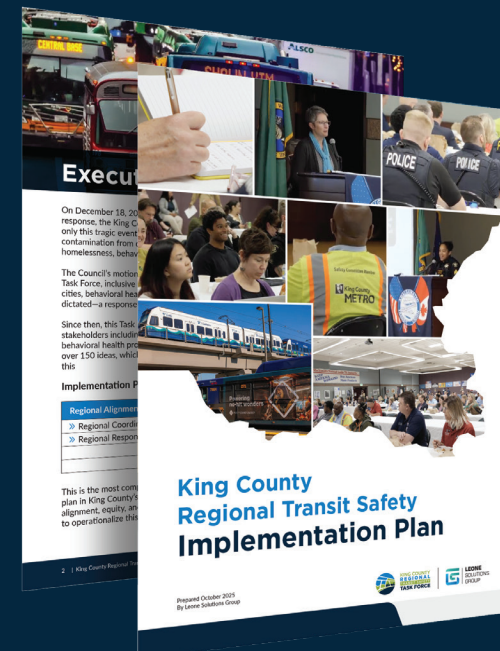
Local Jurisdictions Perspectives

[Robert Feldstein](#), Sound Cities Association

Committee Materials Packet



Briefing
Contains an overview of how the Transit Safety Task Force activities to-date address the requirements of Motion 16783 and and highlights opportunities for Council investments.

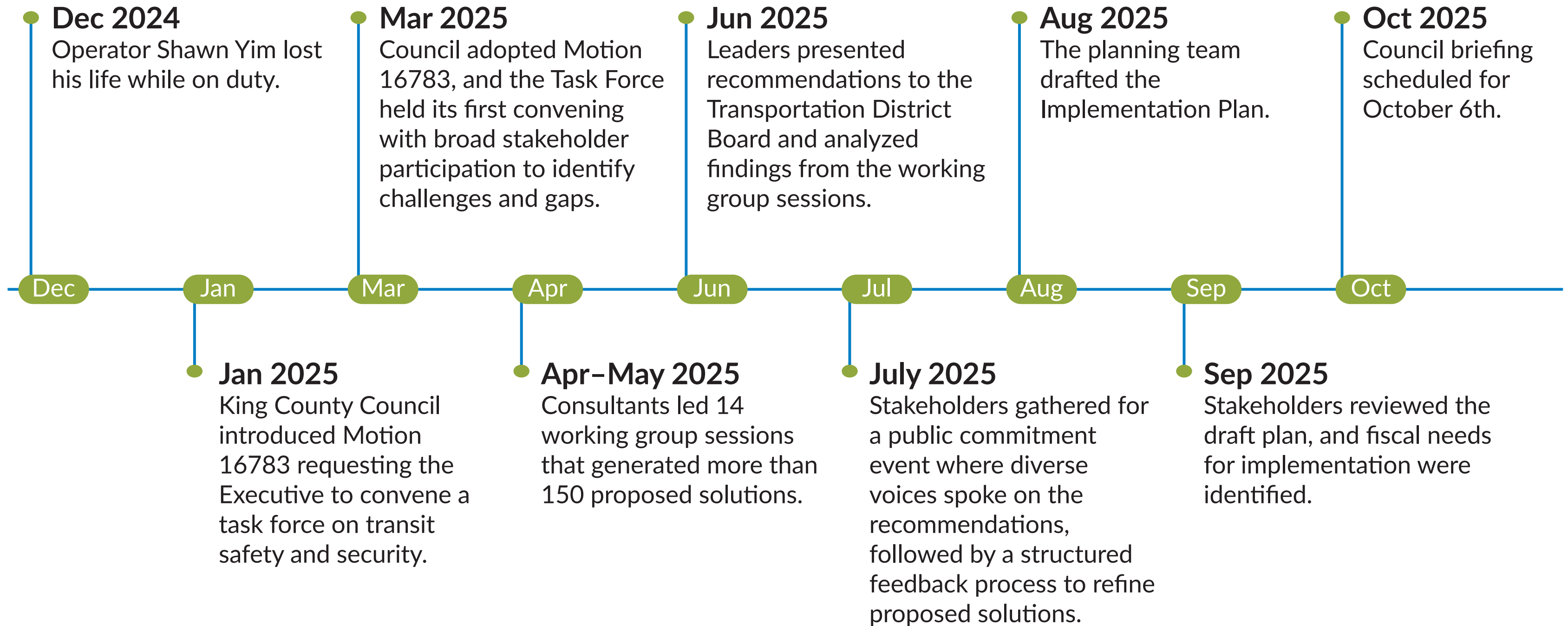


Implementation Plan
A living document that summarizes the recommended solutions and activities, action partners, and estimated funding needs.



Today's Presentation
The presentation includes an overview of Task Force activities, transit wide challenges, recommended activities from task force, and proposed next steps.

Task Force Progress



Task Force Overview

Motion 16783 required the Transit Safety Task Force to convene a broad membership, engage stakeholders, and develop a plan addressing operator safety, accountability, interagency coordination, and response times. Over the past nine months, this motion was fulfilled through regional collaboration and robust engagement. The recommendations presented today were driven by those closest to the issues, ensuring practical and actionable solutions.

2 stakeholder events with 250+ attendees



25 cities provided input



20+

meetings, base visits, and presentations



110+

organizations and agencies participated



14

working sessions



160+

proposed activities to address gaps

Critical Gaps

The Task Force identified critical challenges that must be addressed to restore safety, rebuild trust, and ensure consistent accountability across King County's transit system.

	<div>Fragmented Emergency Response Infrastructure</div> <div>"Emergency response depends on what city you're in."</div>	<div>Inconsistent Enforcement & Lack of Clear Rider Rules</div> <div>"It feels like there are no rules anymore on buses and trains."</div>	<div>Drug Use & Behavioral Health Crises on Transit</div> <div>"Transit is where all other broken systems land... we expect people who don't have training to fill in the gaps."</div>
<div>Staffing Shortages Across Safety Roles</div> <div>"We're stretched thin across the board. Everyone is stretched."</div>	<div>Unsafe and Neglected Transit Environments</div> <div>"If it looks abandoned, people treat it that way."</div>	<div>Broken Communication & Reporting Systems</div> <div>"You file a report and never hear about it again."</div>	<div>Fragmented and Inconsistent Safety Data</div> <div>"Where is the cross collaborative data between jurisdictions and agencies? Transit is everywhere and crosses county and city lines."</div>



Recommendations



Task Force Initiatives

In-depth stakeholder engagement has yielded 6 top priority areas to be addressed in the Regional Transit Safety Implementation Plan.

Regional Alignment Focus

- » Regional Coordination & Alignment
- » Regional Responder & Outreach Staffing

Transit Agency Focus

- » Field Staffing & Operator Support
- » Workforce Training & Support
- » Safe Transit Environments
- » Employee & Rider Reporting Systems

Implementation Plan

In line with Motion 16783, the Task Force developed a focused plan, organized into six initiative areas with supporting workstreams to guide regional safety solutions.

Regional Alignment Focused Initiatives

Regional Coordination & Alignment

Workstreams

- Regional Alignment of Incident Response ★
- Regionwide Code of Conduct Alignment ★
- Site-specific Safety Strategies ★
- Alternative Response and Regional Response Infrastructure ★
- Non-Enforcement Crisis Pathway ★
- Outreach Mobility & Vehicle Support ★
- Interagency Governance and Coordination
- Regional Exclusion Policy Alignment
- Cross-System Legal Accountability for Transit Incidents
- Legislative Alignment on Firearms and Worker Protections
- Youth-Focused Outreach at High-Incident Locations

Regional Responder & Outreach Staffing

Workstreams

- Transit Security Presence ★
- Non-Enforcement Crisis Staffing ★

Transit Safety Focused Initiatives

Transit Employee & Rider Reporting

Workstreams

- Operator Incident Reporting ★
- Operator Access at Bases ★
- Incident Follow-Up Protocols
- Reporting Outcome Visibility
- Rider Reporting Education
- Rider Reporting Access

Safe Transit Environments

Workstreams

- Bus Partitions Installation ★
- Station & Stop Lighting and Visibility
- Station and Stop Issue Reporting
- Community Activation and Stewardship
- Site-Specific Design Improvements for High-Incident Zones

Operator Training and Support

Workstreams

- Operator Briefings & Communication ★
- Ongoing Training & Specialized Education ★
- Training Space Expansion ★
- New Operator Training & Onboarding ★
- Critical Incident Protocol ★
- Peer, Mentorship & Night Shift Support ★
- Job Aids, Guides & Operator-Facing Materials ★
- Control Center Support ★
- Supervisor, Chief, & Superintendents Training & Support
- Wellness & Trauma Recovery Support
- Support for Legal Proceedings
- Security Specific Training
- Operations Policy Updates
- Post-Incident Operator Safeguards

Field Staffing & Support

Workstreams

- Field Operations and Backend Resource ★

Investment Needs to Address Current Gaps

Addressing the gaps identified by the Task Force will require investment not only from King County but also from transit agencies and local jurisdictions. The briefing document outlines specific activities where funding will be critical to achieving implementation goals and ensuring lasting, systemwide improvements to safety and coordination.

King County Proposed Investments

Workstream / Activity	Solutions
Regional Alignment & Response	
Centralized Safety Data Platform	Create 911 dispatch and response
	Establish agency better response standard incident
	Standardize incident comparison
	Develop transit safety strategy
	Use safety zones as a operational process
	Expand include officers behavior
	Expand frequent
	Develop outcome identify placement
	Acquire outreach quality
	Expand control after-hours

King County Regional Transit Safety Task Force
Briefing to King County Council – Committee of the Whole

The King County Regional Transit Safety Implementation Plan, developed by the Regional Transit Safety Task Force, delivers directly on the priorities outlined in King County Council Motion 16783, Section C. Kicked off in March 2025 in response to escalating operator assaults, visible drug use, and broader public safety pressures, the Task Force has engaged over 250 diverse stakeholders across the transit system of King County. Over the course of five months the Task Force 1 Kickoff Event to identify gaps & challenges; 14 working sessions to generate over 150 unique solutions to those challenges, now organized into an Implementation Plan that details initiatives and workstreams.

The attached Implementation Plan provides details on the activities within the 6 identified initiatives. Highlights from the Implementation Plan aligned to the requirements of Motion include:

- To increase rider trust and accountability, a regionwide Rider Code of Conduct campaign introduces standardized signage and aligned enforcement protocols under K.C.C. 28.96 and local laws.
- To eliminate delays and confusion during emergencies, regional interagency coordination is strengthened through formal MOUs, unified response protocols, standardized incident definitions, and a proposed Unified Regional Operations Center that connects Metro, Sound Transit, law enforcement, dispatchers, and local jurisdictions.
- To provide visible presence and quicker interventions at high-incident locations, on the ground safety is enhanced with increased staffing of diverse responders, site-based pilots, expanded real-time data sharing, and outreach and reporting tools that shorten response times and improve perceptions of safety.
- To reduce daily risks faced by frontline staff, operator safety is reinforced through installation of physical barriers across the bus fleet, paired with new training, post-incident support, and supervisor backup.
- To ensure vulnerable riders are met with alternative responses instead of enforcement-first approaches, task force priorities expand to include behavioral health crisis response, youth-centered safety strategies, and support for unhoused riders.

Proposed Funding from King County Council

In order to enact the Implementation Plan many solution activities are encompassed in current budgets, while some major commitments will require dedicated funding. The chart below provides an overview of the proposed investment requested from King County Council.

King County Regional Transit Safety Implementation Plan

Prepared October 2025
By Leone Solutions Group

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Implementation Plan Overview

The Implementation Plan organizes more than 150 solutions into six Core Initiatives, each addressing critical safety gaps identified through Task Force engagement. These initiatives provide the strategic structure for implementation, supported by workstreams that group related solutions into coordinated areas of focus.

Workstream 3

Regionwide Code of Conduct Alignment - Priority

Implementing a Regionwide Code of Conduct standard through visible placards on transit vehicles, a unified public campaign, and consistent staff training across agencies. This solution area focuses on setting clear behavioral expectations for riders, reinforcing them through multilingual messaging, and providing employees with aligned protocols for addressing violations.

Solution Title	Proposed Action	Solution Type	High Priority	Timeframe	Action Partners	Estimated Funding Needs*
Code of Conduct Placards in Vehicles	Post clear Code of Conduct placards on all transit vehicles with consistent language, translated versions, and visible consequences for violations.	Messaging, Design, Product, Policy, Program	High	Near-Term	Metro, Sound Transit	\$
Regional Code of Conduct Campaign	Develop and launch a unified Code of Conduct campaign across all regional transit agencies, including standardized signage and public education.	Partnerships, Messaging, Policy	High	Mid-Term	Metro, Sound Transit, Local Jurisdictions	\$\$

How to Read the Plan

- **Proposed Activity:** The activity stakeholders worked together to create to address identified gaps, drawing on their understanding of the issues and national/international best practices.
- **Priority:** High Priority tags are applied to the most urgent and impactful proposed solutions.
- **Implementation Timeframe:**
 - **Near-Term** – Can begin within 1 year using existing resources. (0–12 months)
 - **Mid-Term** – Requires some planning, funding, or coordination. (1–2 years)
 - **Long-Term** – Involves major policy, infrastructure, or systems change. (2+ years)
- **Type:** Identify what kind of solution this is (Infrastructure, Policy, Staffing, Communications, Outreach, Training, Technology, Program, Partnership, etc.).
- **Action Partners:** Agencies, organizations, or teams most responsible for leading or executing the activity.
- **Estimated Cost Tier:** Rough cost range using tier markers:
 - Tier 1 (\$0–49,999) = \$
 - Tier 2 (\$50K–249K) = \$\$
 - Tier 3 (\$250K–999K) = \$\$\$
 - Tier 4 (\$1M–4.9M) = \$\$\$\$
 - Tier 5 (\$5M+) = \$\$\$\$\$

Task Force Governance & Next Steps



Governance Body, Oversight, and Accountability

We recommend Council establish an Implementation Review Group (IRG) and consultant support that together provide the governance, accountability, and execution capacity needed to carry out the Implementation Plan.

Implementation Review Group (IRG) Activities

- Review and formally approve the Implementation Plan to advance into execution.
- Monitor delivery and outcomes, ensuring workstreams stay on track.
- Resolve cross-agency bottlenecks that slow or block implementation.
- Advise on resource allocation and budget priorities to align with Council direction.
- Provide sustained governance and accountability through regular convenings.

Consultant Activities

- Drive execution of the Implementation Plan across agencies and workstreams.
- Assist in development and execution of deliverables.
- Maintain rigorous tracking of milestones, risks, and dependencies.
- Deliver transparent reporting through quarterly updates.
- Engage stakeholders and the public to reinforce momentum and trust.

Hybrid Working Group Model

To balance focus and coordination, we recommend a hybrid approach: agency working groups for accountability within each agency, combined with cross-agency working groups for the largest regional initiatives.

Agency Working Groups

- Create agency working groups within Metro and Sound Transit, and a dedicated group to coordinate local jurisdiction actions.
- Ensure each agency delivers on all relevant workstreams.
- Serve as internal accountability hubs tied directly to the Implementation Plan.

Cross-Agency Initiative Working Groups

- Convened for the most complex, systemwide priorities that require alignment across all operators.
- Focus on initiatives that cannot succeed without shared standards and coordinated delivery.
- Examples of Cross-Agency Working Groups:
 - Regional Alignment on Incident Response
 - Regionwide Code of Conduct Alignment

Next Steps



With Motion 16783 fulfilled and the initial Implementation Plan complete, the next steps focus on launching the Implementation Review Group, coordinating agencies to begin implementation, sequencing activities by timeline, and reporting back to Council to ensure progress.



Develop Detailed Management Plan

Translate funding decisions and available resources into an executable plan with clear milestones, deliverables, and leads.



Report Progress

Provide regular updates to Council and Task Force stakeholders, demonstrating transparency, alignment, and measurable outcomes.



Establish Implementation Review Group with Consultant Partnership

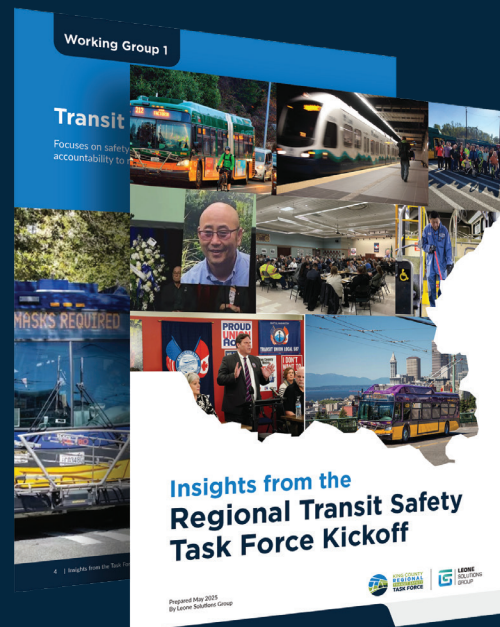
Launch the governance body alongside a consultant team responsible for project management, execution, and creation of key deliverables to ensure accountability and progress.



Coordinate Across Agencies and Jurisdictions

Align roles, responsibilities, and activities through agency-based and cross-agency working groups to drive systemwide implementation.

Task Force Publications



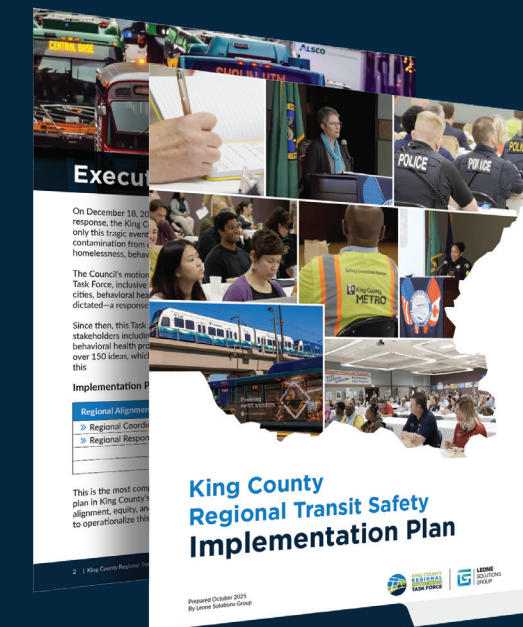
Insights from the Kickoff

Summarizes the gaps, challenges, and ideas raised by 120+ stakeholders at the Task Force launch.



Recommended Solutions in Review

Consolidates more than 150 proposed solutions into categories for evaluation and refinement.



Implementation Plan

Translates vetted solutions into initiatives, workstreams, and actions with timelines and responsibilities.



Stakeholder Input

Key Stakeholders & Commitments

Key region-wide stakeholders are committed to the successful implementation of the solutions.

- ATU Local 587
- Transit operators and dispatchers
- Metro and Sound Transit leadership
- County, city, and law enforcement representatives
- Behavioral health and care-based organizations
- Community and advocacy partners

