

Transit Riders Now Report

Fall 2024 Service Change

February 2024



King County

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II. Proviso Text

On November 15, 2022, the King County Council (“Council”) unanimously adopted ordinance **19546**¹, appropriating \$2.47 billion for the public transportation operating fund in the 2023-24 biennium, and including Section 114, Transit, Proviso P5. This proviso was subsequently amended via Ordinance **19633**².

REVISED TEXT OF PROVISOR P5:

Of this appropriation, \$2,000,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits four transit riders now reports in accordance with this proviso. Each transit riders now report shall describe the status of the transit system and all recommended additions, reductions, or restructures to transit service that meet the threshold for council approval under K.C.C. 28.94.020.B. proposed for the respective fall 2023, spring 2024, fall 2024, and spring 2025 transit service changes that in accordance with the Metro transit department's service plan indicates, at least the next two biennia, to occur twice a year in the spring and fall. Each report shall also describe all recommended additions, reductions, or restructures to transit service made in the service change immediately preceding the respective service change using the administrative powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.1 or the emergency powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.2.a. Each report that describes recommended additions, reductions, or restructures that meet the threshold for council approval under K.C.C. 28.94.020.B. shall be accompanied by a proposed ordinance that would approve the transit service change. Each ordinance should reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance number, ordinance section, and proviso number in both the title and body of the ordinance. Upon filing each transit riders now report, or adoption of each ordinance if a proposed ordinance accompanies the report, \$500,000 is released for encumbrance or expenditure.

A. Over the last several years, the Metro transit department has implemented a series of transit service reductions and restorations using the emergency powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.2.a. to respond to the changing operational needs, ridership patterns, and staffing levels that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023-2024 biennial budget appropriates funding for one hundred ninety-one thousand four hundred annual transit service hours in addition to the service offered in October 2022. The additional transit service hours are proposed to be added gradually as part of the fall 2023, spring 2024, and fall 2024 service changes. More service is expected to be added as part of the spring 2025 service change. It is imperative that the additional transit service reflect the needs of current transit riders, by responding to changing ridership patterns, Metro transit department staffing levels, available funding, changes made by the city of Seattle, Sound Transit or other agency partners, and the King County Metro Service Guidelines and Metro Connects long-range plan adopted by Ordinance 19367. The Metro Service Recovery Plan approved by Ordinance 19581 indicates that the Metro transit department is unlikely to implement major, as defined by the Metro transit department for the purposes of reporting to the Federal Transit Administration, service changes in 2023. The Metro transit

¹ [King County 2023-24 Biennial Budget, Section 114, Transit](#)

² [King County 2023-24 1st Omnibus Budget](#).

department may implement additional transit service reductions to match its current operational capacity using the emergency powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.2.a. or the administrative powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.1. It is imperative that any transit service changes made using the administrative or emergency powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B. reflect the needs of current transit riders, as well as to Metro transit department staffing levels and available funding.

B. If a transit riders now report is accompanied by a service change ordinance, the report shall include recommendations for transit service that would be implemented by the accompanying service change ordinance. The recommendations shall be based on, but not limited to, the following, and the report shall provide:

1. An analysis of ridership patterns, ridership levels, and route productivity using current route-level ridership information, as well as data from the most recent annual system evaluation report required by Ordinance 19367 and the performance measurement dashboard required by Ordinance 19367;

2. A description of Sound Transit Link light rail system extensions, transit service purchases by the city of Seattle, and other changes by agency partners that could affect transit service provided by the Metro transit department;

3. An analysis of how the report's recommendations comport with the King County Metro Service Guidelines adopted by Ordinance 19367, including the priorities and criteria to be considered for additions to transit service, the factors to be considered for reductions to transit service, and the process to be followed for restructures to transit service;

4. An analysis of how the report's recommendations will advance the Metro Connects long-range plan adopted by Ordinance 19367, specifically the plan to implement the Metro Connects interim network; and

5. An analysis of any constraints that limit additions to the transit service for the corresponding proposed transit service change ordinance, including, but not limited to, staffing shortages, funding limitations, or the Metro Connects funding gap described in the Metro Connects long-range plan adopted by Ordinance 19367 and the Metro Connects implementation report accepted by Motion 16155.

C. If a transit riders now reports is not accompanied by a service change ordinance, the report shall include:

1. An analysis of the constraints that have prevented the Metro transit department from proposing a major service change, including, but not limited to: staffing shortages, fleet or equipment shortages, funding limitations, or delays in partner agency transit expansions; a description of the Metro transit department's progress in implementing the Metro Service Recovery Plan approved by Ordinance 19581; and a description of the Metro transit department's plans and actions to address the identified constraints;

2. A description of the Metro transit department's level of service delivery during the six months preceding the due date of the transit riders now report, including the average weekly percentage of scheduled transit service trips that could not be delivered; and

3. If the Metro transit department has responded to its shortfalls in operational capacity by making additional service reductions, using either the administrative powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.1. or the emergency powers in K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.2.a., a description of the additional service reductions, including, but not limited to: a summary of service hours reduced

in each mobility project area identified in the Metro Service Recovery Plan approved by Ordinance 19581; an analysis of how the additional service reductions have affected the Metro transit department's need for daily or weekly service cancellations; and a description of the Metro transit department's plans to restore these additional service reductions.

The executive should electronically file the fall 2023 Transit Riders Now Report and the accompanying proposed transit service change ordinance if required by this proviso no later than March 2, 2023, the spring 2024 Transit Riders Now Report and the accompanying proposed transit service change ordinance if required by this proviso no later than August 3, 2023, the fall 2024 Transit Riders Now Report and the accompanying proposed transit service change ordinance if required by this proviso no later than March 7, 2024, and the spring 2025 Transit Riders Now Report and the accompanying proposed transit service change ordinance if required by this proviso no later than August 1, 2024, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and environment committee or its successor.

III. Executive Summary

This report responds to King County [Ordinance 19546](#), Section 114, Transit, Proviso P5, as amended. This is the third of four *Transit Riders Now* reports required by Proviso P5. This report pertains to the fall 2024 service change, planned for implementation on August 31, 2024. The information in this report references legislation that is not yet adopted by council and may be subject to change per the upcoming service change ordinances for the Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project and the Madison Street Area Bus Service Change Project.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted transit in King County, the region, and beyond. Metro implemented service suspensions in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 under the emergency authority granted by King County Code (KCC) 28.94.020.2a to respond to unprecedented changes in ridership and workforce availability. Metro prepared a Service Recovery Plan to authorize continued suspensions and provide an outline of Metro's plans for service recovery going forward. The proposed Service Recovery Plan was approved in March 2023.³

Ridership continues to recover and grow steadily across the system. Between spring 2022 and spring 2023, average weekday ridership on all Metro-operated bus services⁴ increased by 21 percent to more than 258,900, a net increase of 44,800 daily boardings. As of October 2023, average weekday ridership on all Metro-operated bus services was 273,000 daily boardings, which is 60 percent of ridership in October 2019. Weekends and weekday off-peak periods (outside of 5-9 a.m. and 3-7 p.m.) maintained higher shares of total ridership relative to weekday peak periods (5-9 a.m. and 3-7 p.m.) when compared to 2019 but afternoon peak continues to have the highest boardings per hour. For the Spring 2023 service change, rides per hour was 21.1, which is 72 percent of 2019 levels. For the Spring 2023 service change, productivity⁵ showed a stronger recovery than total ridership because Metro operated less service in Spring 2022 compared to Fall 2019.

Data collected through Metro's ongoing statistically valid Rider/Non-Rider surveys shows age, home location, household income, and gender identity are all linked to the likelihood of being a transit rider. Riders are using transit for a variety of reasons, and those reasons vary across frequency of use. Frequent riders (those taking six trips or more in the last 30 days) are more likely to report using transit for work, errands, and medical appointments, while those using transit less frequently (i.e., five trips or less in the last 30 days) are more likely to report using transit for fun or social purposes.. These surveys are consistent with ridership trends. Surveys show the increasing demand for transit is centered around non-work trips and riders want to be able to make these trips at a variety of hours, including weekends. Metro's ORCA business passport added 92 new accounts in 2023 and the Metro's ORCA Business Incentive program has played a significant factor in spurring account growth among small businesses. This program and account growth is extending transportation benefits to low and hourly wage workers who have often not had access to transportation benefits in the past, and tends to include high proportions of Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

³ King County Council, [An Ordinance approving the King County Metro Service Recovery Plan](#), File 2023-0035. [Link](#)

⁴ Includes several Sound Transit Express routes.

⁵ Productivity is a measure of service efficiency that shows passengers carried per hour that a transit vehicle is in service.

Metro continues to coordinate and plan with key partners on service and high-capacity transit development. Metro is engaging with the City of Seattle to explore fixed-route service changes to be funded by the Seattle Transit Measure (STM) and reallocating existing investments to better align with the city's goals. In the fall 2024 service change, the City of Seattle plans to reallocate 25,200 annual service hours that were invested in the Madison Street Area Bus Service Change (MSA) project area as of September 2022, and 17,500 annual service hours that were invested in the Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility (LLC) project area as of March 2022. All 17,500 annual service hours invested by the city's STM are planned to be retained in the LLC project area. For the MSA project area, 20,500 STM-funded service hours will be retained in the project area and 4,800 STM-funded service hours will be reinvested outside the MSA project area to better align with the city's goals.

Metro is coordinating with Sound Transit around changes to Metro-operated Sound Transit Express bus service, Link light rail expansion, and Stride Bus Rapid Transit. Sound Transit plans to open a portion of East Link with the 2 Line operating between South Bellevue Station and Redmond Technology Station in spring 2024, and open the Lynnwood Link Extension in fall 2024, which extends the 1 Line from Northgate into Snohomish County, serving four stations: Shoreline South/148th, Shoreline North/185th, Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood City Center. Metro is coordinating with Sound Transit and Community Transit to understand the frequencies of Link service between Downtown Seattle and Lynnwood before the full opening of Link 2 Line and its impacts to transit riders.

In the fall 2024 service change, Metro is preparing two service change ordinances: one for the MSA project, and the other for the LLC project. Changes recommended in both service change ordinances comply with the King County Metro Service Guidelines⁶ and advance the Metro Connects long-range plan.⁷ Both projects are service restructures responding to major transportation network changes. Service change ordinances in the project include:

- Restoration of suspended service hours identified on routes in each project area, consistent with the approach outlined in Metro's Service Recovery Plan
- Added service hours to implement Metro's federal commitment for the RapidRide G Line
- City of Seattle-directed reallocation of Seattle Transit Measure investment from the Madison Street Area Project to another route in the system

Both projects comply with the process to be followed for service restructures outlined in the King County Metro Service Guidelines. Proposed changes in both projects are informed by extensive public engagement, equity analyses including Title VI and Equity Priority Areas⁸ (EPAs), and service design best practices. To support the development of network concepts and proposal at each phase of the project, Metro considered existing conditions data such as Metro's Rider/Non-Rider survey results, most current available ridership and travel pattern data, locations of the EPAs, service levels in the EPAs compared to the rest of the project area, and passenger capacity of routes relative to ridership. In alignment with the Service Guidelines, Metro provided information on current conditions and potential future service at each phase of engagement to give jurisdictions, community members, riders, and other organizations a

⁶ King County Metro Transit, King County Metro Service Guidelines, November 17, 2021.

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/about/policies>

⁷ King County Metro Transit, King County Metro Long-Range Plan Metro Connects, November 17, 2021.

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/about/policies>

⁸ Equity Priority Areas are areas where historically underserved populations are concentrated, as identified in the Mobility Framework and Metro's 2021-2031 Strategic Plan.

clear indication of potential transit services proposed. In compliance with federal regulations, Metro conducted a Title VI Analysis on the final network proposal of both projects and attached the results of the Title VI Analysis to each projects’ respective service change ordinance.

For both projects, Metro used the Metro Connects interim network as a starting point for network planning. However, specific network changes are guided by community engagement and thus look different from the Metro Connects service network. Furthermore, Metro used the existing service hours to deliver an updated mobility network that moves towards the Metro Connects vision but does not include sufficient service funding to meet service levels envisioned in the plan. Nevertheless, the final network proposals from both projects advance the Metro Connects long-range plan in the following ways:

Features of the expanded service network envisioned by Metro Connects	How projects support these visions
Advance equity and address climate change by providing additional service in areas with unmet need ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathered feedback through multi-phase engagement with a focus on priority populations. • Used feedback, equity analysis, and service design best practices to inform the development of proposed network and consider trade-offs between service options. • Proposed service changes showed improved access to transit and very frequent transit for the population, community assets, and subsidized housing within the EPAs. • Proposed service change from the LLC project improved transit travel time between high priority community destinations.
Connect people to Sound Transit’s expanding regional transit system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed service changes from the LLC project provides 13 all-day routes that connect to Link stations. Eight of those are frequent routes to facilitate faster and more reliable transfers.
Provide a more robust all-day network by increasing service throughout the day and operating service from earlier in the morning to later at night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed service changes from both projects increase service during midday, night and weekend hours. • Where peak-only services are maintained in the LLC project’s proposed service change, it provides significant travel time savings by reducing the number of transfers for travelers to and from major employment centers.
Meet current transit needs identified in Metro’s annual System Evaluation Report and future transit needs identified in cities’ growth plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both project budgets assumed restoration of currently suspended hours. • Investment priorities of overcrowding, reliability and service growth identified in Service Guidelines were used when

⁹ Per the adopted Mobility Framework, unmet need is defined as areas with high-density, a high proportion of priority populations, and limited midday and evening service

Features of the expanded service network envisioned by Metro Connects	How projects support these visions
	<p>considering how to allocate restored service hours within the project areas. Many of the routes that have proposed service level increases are supported by the level of ridership and reliability needs, whereas service reductions are mostly on low-performing routes and/or time periods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro gathered feedback from jurisdictions at each phase of the project and aligned proposed service changes with the city’s growth plans whenever possible and as resources allowed.
Provide more flexible services that improve mobility by connecting people to key locations and to the fixed-route network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro has proposed a new Metro Flex zone as part of the LLC project. This zone would cover many areas not served by fixed-route transit, including schools, EPAs, and community assets, and offer a connection to Link light rail at Mountlake Terrace Station.
Expand RapidRide service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approval of Madison Street Area service change ordinance would create the RapidRide G Line, one of the RapidRide lines identified in Metro Connects.

Availability of bus operators, mechanics, and fleet are constraints on Metro’s ability to increase service levels. As of November 2023, the total number of operators (headcount) is about 24 percent lower than before the pandemic (2,427 operators in November 2023 versus 3,195 in February 2020), and the number of mechanics is about 20 percent lower than before the pandemic (235 mechanics in November 2023 versus 294 in February 2020).

While Metro’s adopted budget has funding to restore service in fall 2024, more work remains to stabilize operations before restoring suspended service. Additionally, Metro needs to hire and train staff not only to deliver and maintain bus service but also to support the planned expansions of Sound Transit Link light rail extensions. Due to current workforce and vehicle maintenance constraints, Metro may need to implement a reduced version of the MSA and LLC proposed networks and grow service over time contingent upon operational capacity. Similar to other transit operators in the region, Hopelink, who Metro contracts with to provide Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART) and other services, is also experiencing capacity challenges that are resulting in service suspensions. In early 2024, Metro will be restoring some DART Route 914 trips that Hopelink operates. Metro will continue to coordinate with Hopelink to restore suspended DART service when staffing allows.

IV. Background

Department Overview: King County Metro is the Puget Sound region’s largest public transportation agency. Metro provides bus, paratransit, on-demand, vanpool, and water taxi services, and operates Seattle Streetcar, Sound Transit Link light rail, and Sound Transit Express bus service. Metro is committed to providing safe, equitable, and sustainable mobility, and prioritizing service where needs are greatest.

Historical Context: The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted transit in King County, the region, and beyond. Metro implemented service suspensions in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 under the emergency authority granted by King County Code (KCC) 28.94.020.2a to respond to rapidly changing ridership and workforce availability. In addition, Metro implemented three restructures during the COVID-19 pandemic, including: North Eastside Mobility Project (March 2020); Renton, Kent, Auburn Mobility Project (September 2020) and North Link Connections Mobility Project (October 2021). Policies related to service provision were updated in 2021, including Metro Connects,¹⁰ the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation,¹¹ and Service Guidelines.¹² Service restorations and restructures were informed by Council-approved policies and community engagement processes and findings, including surveys that helped inform service restoration in Fall 2021. Restorations and changes also prioritized service using equity and sustainability considerations, focusing on restoring service where needs are greatest and where ridership remained high. In November 2022, the Council adopted a 2023-24 biennium budget via Ordinance 19546 that included Transit Proviso P5 requesting four Transit Riders Now reports. The first report was submitted to Council in March 2023 and the second report was submitted to Council in August 2023. This report is the third of the four required reports.

Given the magnitude of suspensions that were made during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency and limited operational capacity, it was not possible for Metro to restore service to pre-COVID levels before the emergency declaration expired. Metro prepared a Service Recovery Plan to authorize continued suspensions and provide an outline of Metro’s plans for service recovery going forward. The Service Recovery plan¹³ was approved by Council in March 2023 through Ordinance 19581, which included the following finding:

“The King County council finds that it is essential that the Metro transit department develop achievable and dependable service levels and schedules as it works to rebuild ridership and restore rider confidence in the transit system. Although the Metro transit department is working to recruit, train and retain the workforce required to implement the plan in Attachment A to this ordinance, the council encourages the Metro transit department to take all steps necessary to match service plans to achievable operational capacity, including, if needed, by making additional emergency service reductions, in accordance with K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.2.a, so

¹⁰ King County Metro Transit, King County Metro Long-Range Plan: Metro Connects, November 17, 2021, <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/about/policies>

¹¹ King County Metro Transit, King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, 2021-2031, November 17, 2021, <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/about/policies>

¹² King County Metro Transit, King County Metro Service Guidelines, November 17, 2021. <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/about/policies>

¹³ King County Metro Transit, King County Metro Service Recovery Plan, February 21, 2023, [King County - File #: 2023-0035](#)

that transit riders are able to depend on the Metro transit department to provide scheduled service on a daily basis without last-minute cancellations.”

As outlined in the Service Recovery Plan, service restructure projects will be the primary means for reshaping service and reinvesting suspended hours back into the system. Metro will work with community and use policies to add service in ways that meet current and emerging needs and build towards the Metro Connects vision of all-day service that is frequent and reliable.

In September 2023, Metro adjusted schedules to improve reliability and build resiliency¹⁴ by addressing operational capacity limitations. These changes were implemented under the authority of a new emergency declaration (K.C.C. 28.94.020.B.2.a) specifically related to capacity constraints. Consistent with Metro’s Service Guidelines and the Service Recovery Plan, reductions were identified based on equity and productivity factors. In addition, Metro considered the following factors:

- Maintaining overall service coverage across the county
- Minimizing impact on routes with high Equity Opportunity scores
- Minimizing impact on high-ridership routes
- Minimizing impacts to students
- Maintaining the frequent all-day network
- Maintaining length of operating hours (span of service)
- Minimizing/eliminating potential for crowding resulting from reductions
- Operational factors

Twenty peak-only routes were suspended: 15, 16, 18, 29, 55, 64, 114, 121, 167, 190, 214, 216, 217, 232, 237, 268, 301, 304, 320 and 342. Trips were reduced on an additional 12 routes: 7, 10, 20, 28, 36, 73, 79, 225, 230, 231, 255 and 345. These temporary service suspensions are tracked and included in service recovery planning, as outlined in Metro’s Service Recovery Plan.

Early indicators are showing that this action has been successful in improving service reliability for transit customers. In November 2023 Metro delivered 98.5 percent of scheduled trips, which is a five percent increase from August.

Current Context: As noted in the Transit Riders Now Report for the spring 2024 service change,¹⁵ Metro will not make changes in spring 2024 that exceed its authority per King County Code 28.94.020. Only minor schedule adjustments will be made to meet growing ridership outside of the traditional peak periods and reallocate the City of Seattle’s Seattle Transit Measure investment per the city’s request. These changes are intended to be budget- and operator-neutral.

Report Methodology: Metro’s Service Planning work group, within the Mobility Division, led the development of the proviso response. The following work groups within the Mobility Division supported development of ridership and productivity information: System Expansion and Integration, Market &

¹⁴ King County Metro Transit, *Metro will adjust schedules on Sept. 2 to improve trip reliability*, Metro Matters blog, May 11, 2023. <https://kingcountymetro.blog/2023/05/11/metro-will-adjust-schedules-on-sept-2-to-improve-trip-reliability/>

¹⁵ King County Metro Transit, Transit Riders Now Report, Spring 2024 Service Change – Ordinance 19546, Section 114, Proviso P5. [King County - File #: 2023-RPT0083](#)

Business Development, and Research & Innovation Programs. Information about Metro operational capacity constraints and next actions was provided by Metro’s Enterprise and Strategic Initiatives Lead. Sound Transit provided information about Stride Bus Rapid Transit and Link Light Rail expansion and associated timelines. The City of Seattle reviewed information about the Seattle Transit Measure investment.

V. Report Requirements

This section is organized to align with the proviso request.

A. Transit Proviso P5, Requirement 1: Ridership and Productivity Analysis

The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 had immediate, profound, and ongoing impacts on King County Metro. Just prior, in January and February 2020, Metro riders made more than 400,000 daily trips every weekday. The early period of the pandemic saw a dramatic decline in ridership across all modes provided by King County Metro. Yet even at the pandemic’s highest points Metro riders made more than 100,000 trips every weekday. More information about Metro response to COVID in 2020-21 is available in Metro’s COVID-19 Response and Recovery Report¹⁶ and associated progress update.¹⁷ Throughout the pandemic, people relied on Metro services to get them to work and meet their daily needs. Metro’s data shows that pandemic riders disproportionately came from south King County and south Seattle, where communities are lower-income and more racially diverse, as compared to King County as a whole. Many all-day Metro routes, including most routes in south Seattle and south King County, continued to provide full service to support these communities.

Ridership continues to recover and grow steadily across the system. Between spring 2022 and spring 2023 service changes, average weekday ridership on all Metro operated bus service, which includes several Sound Transit Express routes, increased by 21 percent, a net increase of 44,800 daily boardings. As of October 2023, weekday ridership on all Metro operated bus service was 60 percent of ridership in October 2019. October 2023 weekday ridership averaged 273,000 boardings per weekday, 33,000 higher than October 2022. Average boardings by service change are shown in Table 1. Metro continues to closely monitor ridership trends and encourage increased ridership. Monthly ridership information is also available online at: [Rider Dashboard - King County Metro - King County](#)

Table 1 : Average Boardings by Service Change

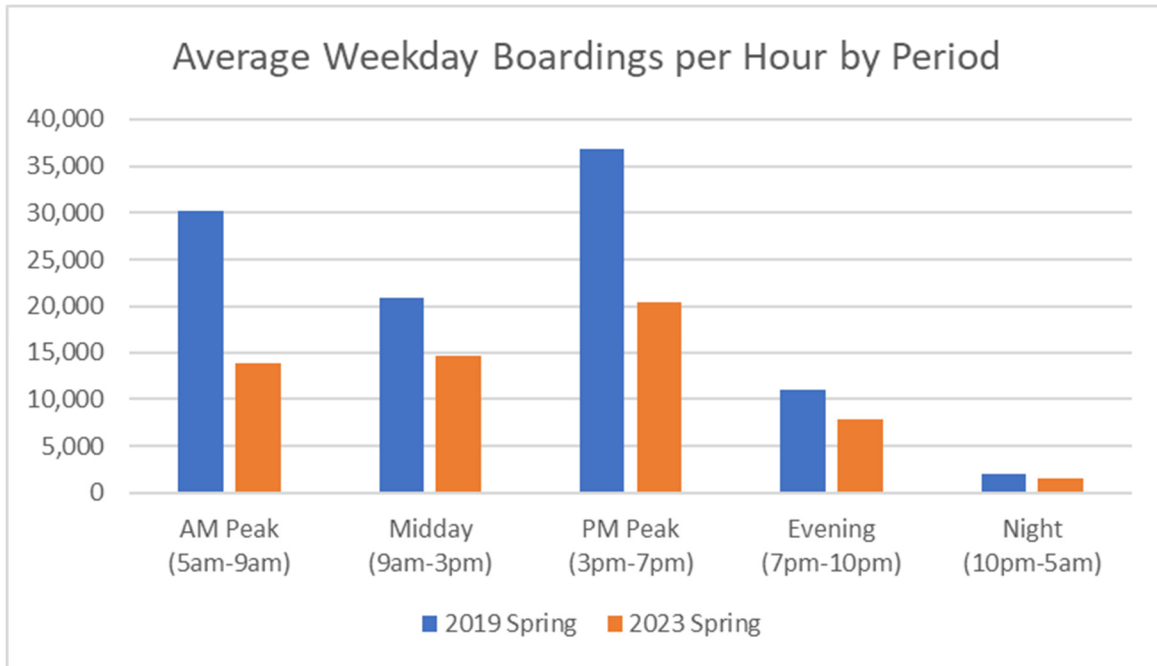
	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Weekday	441,593	419,411	123,098	135,614	149,918	195,078	214,102	238,146	258,917
Saturday	201,445	193,579	89,374	96,471	109,519	123,865	136,289	146,906	167,862
Sunday	159,100	154,592	73,615	77,549	87,468	102,771	111,705	118,500	132,911

As shown in Table 1, weekends retained a higher percentage of ridership relative to weekday when compared to 2019. In Spring 2023, weekday ridership was 59 percent of spring 2019 ridership levels; Saturday ridership was 83 percent of spring 2019 and Sunday ridership was 84 percent of spring 2019.

¹⁶ King County Metro Transit, COVID-19 Response and Recovery Report, <https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/metro/schedules/ready-when-you-are/metro-covid-recovery-report.pdf>

¹⁷ King County Metro Transit, COVID-19 Response and Recovery Report Progress Update – March 2021, <https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/metro/schedules/ready-when-you-are/metro-covid-recovery-report-update-march-2021.pdf>

Figure 1 : Average Daily Boardings by Service Change



As shown in Figure 1, weekday off-peak periods maintained a higher share of ridership when compared to 2019. As of October 2023, weekday AM peak period ridership on all Metro operated bus service was 46 percent of ridership in October 2019 and weekday PM peak period ridership was 57 percent of ridership in October 2019. October 2023 weekday midday, evening, and night ridership was 75 percent, 71 percent, and 81 percent of ridership in October 2019, respectively.

The number of rides per hour (productivity) shows a stronger recovery than total ridership because Metro is operating less service in spring 2023 compared to spring 2019. For the spring 2023 service change, rides per hour was 21.1, which is 72 percent of 2019 levels compared to 60 percent for weekday ridership in 2019. Productivity in off-peak and night periods has recovered to a greater extent than during peak periods, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 : Rides Per Hour Productivity

	Spring 2019	Spring 2023	Spring 2023 as percent of Spring 2019
Peak	32.2	22.3	69%
Off-Peak	29.4	22.3	76%
Night	21.3	16.2	76%

Many of the same routes that had high productivity before the pandemic continue to be the top performers. Most of the routes with the top 10 highest productivity in spring 2023 were also in the top 10 in spring 2019, as reflected in Table 3 below.

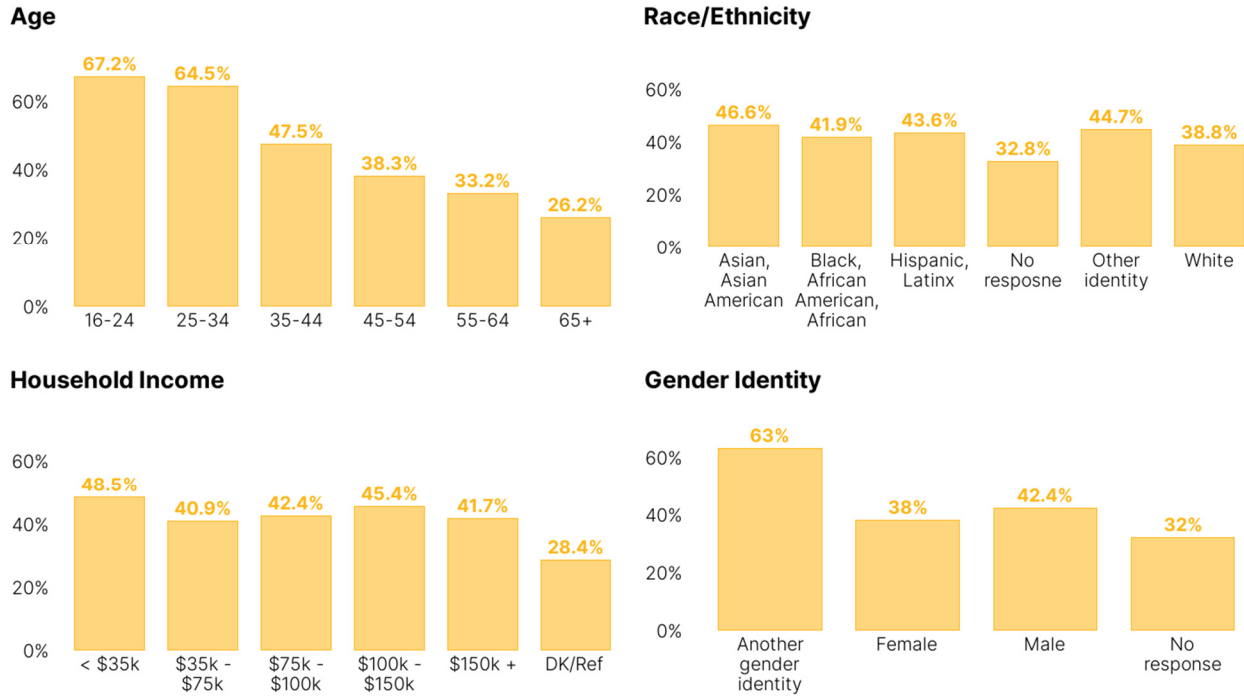
Table 2 : Routes in Top 10 for Weekday Productivity (rider per hour) in Spring 2019 and Spring 2023 (in alphanumeric order)

Routes	Spring 2019 Peak	Spring 2019 Off-Peak	Spring 2023 Peak	Spring 2023 Off-Peak
A Line	X	X	X	X
D Line	X	X	X	X
E Line	X	X	X	X
2	X	X	X	
3	X			
5		X		
7		X	X	X
8	X	X	X	X
11	X	X		
44	X	X	X	X
45		X	X	X
48				X
65	X		X	
67			X	X
70	X			
75				X

As shown in Figure 2 below, data collected through Metro’s Rider/Non-Rider surveys¹⁸ show that sociodemographic characteristics are contributing determinants of transit ridership. Based on survey findings, King County residents who have ridden transit in the past 30 days are more likely to be younger, have diverse racial and ethnic identities, live in lower-income households, and identify as male or another gender identity that is not female.

¹⁸ Information provided in this report is based on data collected quarterly between Q1 2023 and Q2 2023. Data are collected during a 4–5-week period at the end of each quarter.

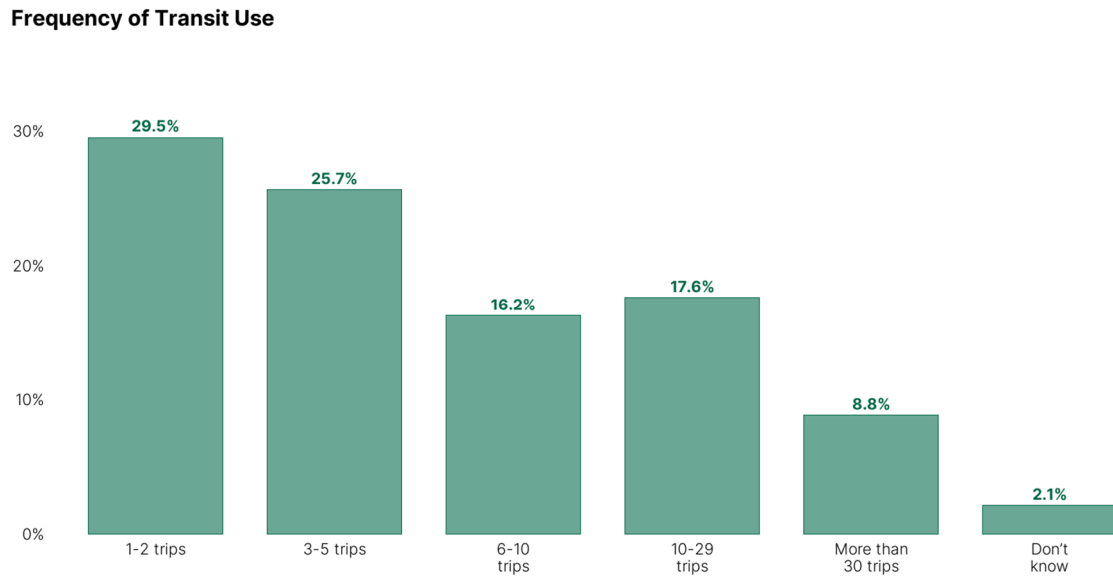
Figure 2 : Percentage of Respondents who Are Riders, across Demographic Subgroups (Rider/Non-Rider Survey Data)



Rider/Non-Rider, Q1 and Q2 2023

Most transit riders, however, are using transit infrequently. Among current riders (those taking any transit trip in the last 30 days), a majority (55 percent) reported making five or fewer trips in the last 30 days, as shown in Figure 3 below. Despite most riders being infrequent or occasional riders, there are still approximately one quarter (26.2 percent) of riders who are using transit very frequently (10 or more times in a 30-day period).

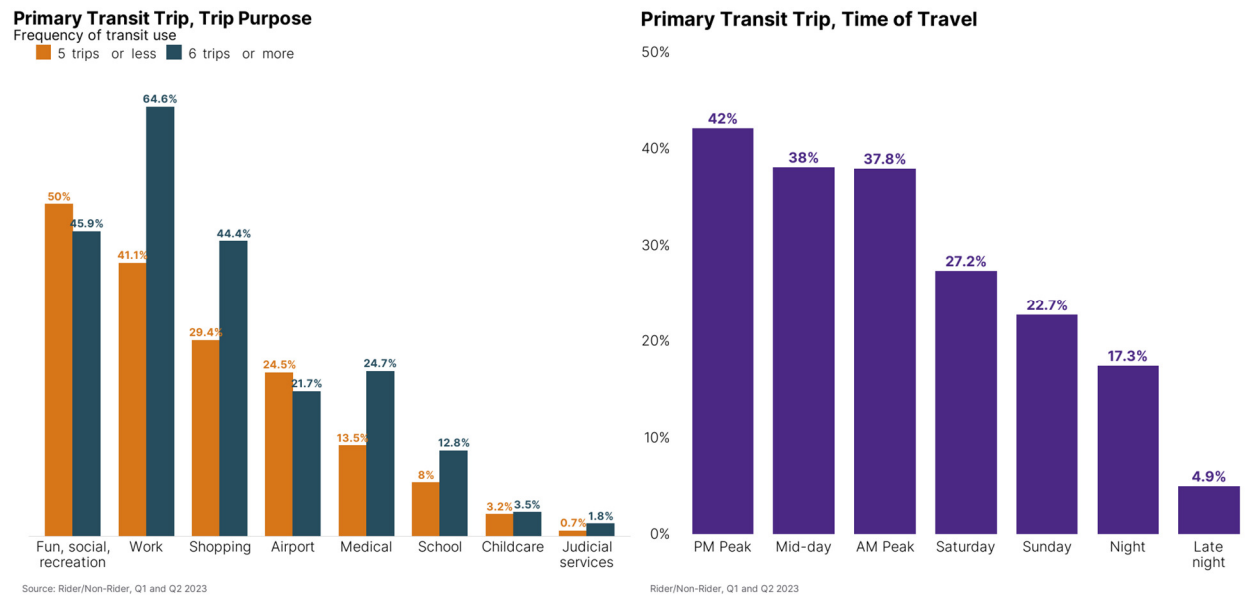
Figure 3 : Frequency of Public Transit Use in Last 30 Days, among Current Transit Riders (Rider/Non-Rider Survey Data)



Rider/Non-Rider, Q1 and Q2 2023

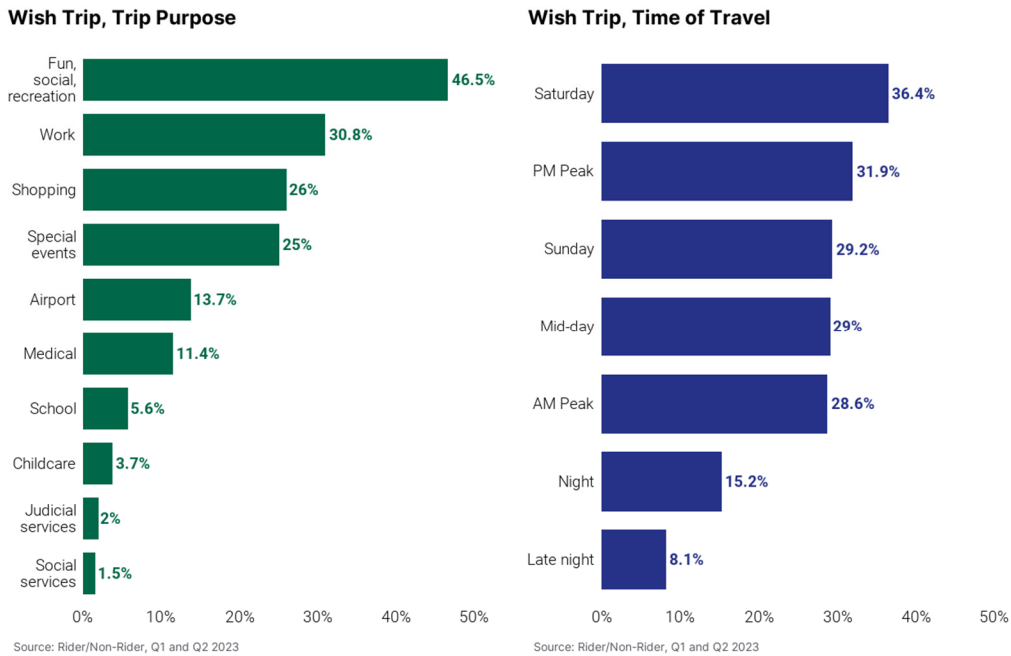
In general, frequent (six trips or more) and less frequent (one to five trips) transit riders are making the same types of trips. As shown in Figure 4 below, however, those who used transit six or more times in the last 30 days are much more likely to report using transit to get to/from work, shopping, and medical appointments relative to those who are using transit less often. Reflecting those varied trip purposes and transit use frequency, Metro also see a variety of travel times reported for riders’ primary transit trip. In particular, there continues to be significant amount of travel happening in the traditional PM and AM peak hours, but also significant travel happening in non-peak hours – including the weekday midday and weekends.

Figure 4 : Trip Purpose and Trip Time for Riders’ Most Common Public Transit Trip (Rider/Non-Rider Survey Data)



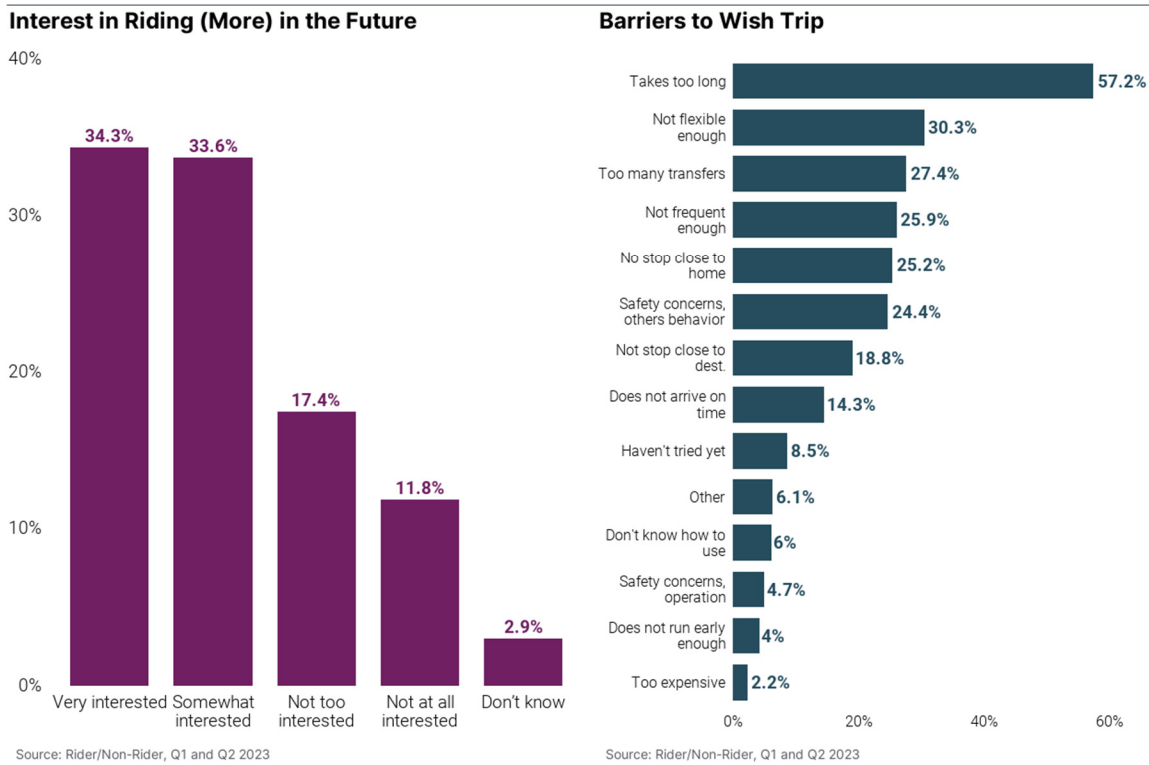
Consistent with post-COVID travel trends, the demand for transit is centered around non-work trips, as shown in Figure 5 below. When King County residents were asked about the transit trip that they would most like to take on transit but currently are not making or cannot make, nearly half (47 percent) of respondents reported they would like to take transit to get to/from a fun or social activity. Additionally, people want to be able to make these trips at a variety of hours, including weekends.

Figure 5 : Trips that Residents Would Like to Make Using Public Transit, among All Residents (Rider/Non-Rider Survey Data)



In 2022, Metro commissioned a study on location-based travel trends from Cambridge Systematics, which looks at all trips – not just transit trips. There have not been updates to these data since 2022, but 2022 data shows that more than a third of weekday trips (35 percent) were taken during the midday hours (9 a.m-3 p.m.). The majority of trips were less than 2.5 miles (65 percent). As shown in Figure 6 below, most King County residents are at least somewhat interested in riding public transit more in the future. They have also expressed particular interest in making more trips throughout the day and week, especially weekends and for fun, social, or recreational purposes as shown in Figure 5. Despite this interest, however, travel time is the most cited barrier to using transit. Thus, as changes to the service schedules and routing are considered, attention should also be given to what capital investments can be made to improve travel times on public transit.

Figure 6: King County Residents' Interest in Riding Transit and Barriers to Wish Trip (Rider/Non-Rider Survey Data)



Metro’s ORCA Business Program continues to grow. As of December 2023, Metro had passport accounts in place with 755 employers, covering approximately 446,000 people across King County. Of those accounts, 672 are Area Passport and 83 are Custom Per-Trip Passport accounts. So far in 2023, 92 new accounts have been added.

Business Passport staff continue reaching out to Metro Custom and Area Passport accounts in an ongoing effort to support and retain customers, as well as to exchange information related to transportation services and return to office work planning. About 95 percent of contract renewals involve direct conversation with customers. Since May 2023, Metro is hearing from new and renewing customers:

- Employers renewing contracts want to remain competitive in the job market by offering transit benefits.
- Some employers see value in promoting sustainability and reducing the overall impact of “nightmare” congestion.
- Customers are renewing based upon their employees’ return to office status:
 - Since Amazon’s return to office mandate, Metro has seen drastic program participation increases by its employees, including both transit and new vanpool formations.
 - Several companies are considering a cutback on benefits, with a desire to only offer transit benefits for those employees who will be working on site, reducing benefits for those who are on hybrid schedules or working from home. Consequently, Metro has shifted the marketing strategy to encourage employers to think of ORCA Business Passport as a lifestyle benefit, rather than a commute benefit, with the tagline, “Your commute is just the start.”

Metro's ORCA Business Incentive Program has played a significant factor in spurring account growth among small businesses, extending transportation benefits to low and hourly wage workers who have often not had access to transportation benefits in the past, and tend to include high proportions of Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). Seventy-nine percent of new accounts this year are small businesses receiving the incentive. In addition, Metro has extended this incentive to apply a discount on the renewal cost when small businesses renew their contracts in year two. This extension helps reduce the financial barrier to small business customers' participation and helps them transition to paying 100 percent of the renewal cost at year three and beyond. This has contributed toward a 2023 renewal rate that exceeds 86 percent.

B. Transit Proviso P5, Requirement 2: Changes by Agency Partners

This section provides information about changes associated with two key Metro partners which could affect transit service provided by the Metro transit department: the City of Seattle and Sound Transit.

City of Seattle

As of King County Metro's Fall 2023 service change, the City of Seattle's Department of Transportation (SDOT) has invested approximately 140,000 service hours in 35 routes through the Seattle Transit Measure (STM), approved by voters in 2020. STM funding promotes the key SDOT values and goals of Frequent Bus Service, Equity, Transit Access, and Stewardship. SDOT identifies potential STM investments to fill the gaps between Metro service levels and the city's Frequent Transit Network and prioritizes them using an equity-centered methodology. As of September 2023, about 19 percent of these service hours are invested in the peak period and 81 percent in the off-peak period. Prior to the 2020 Seattle Transit Measure, which was passed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of Seattle funded over 350,000 service hours through an earlier funding measure passed in 2014. The current STM provides less service funding than the expired 2014 measure. In response to this change, Metro reduced service in 2020 and 2021 to align service levels with reduced funding provided by the current measure.

For the fall 2023 service change, Metro provided SDOT with the opportunity to review Metro's proposed September 2023 reductions on routes and time periods where SDOT has invested in added service, including on Routes 7, 20, 36, and 73. SDOT requested that some service investments be reallocated to maintain more service on Route 36 to align with city equity goals and reduce a commensurate amount of STM-funded service on Route 10. Ultimately, Metro was able to fund trips on Route 10 and riders saw no change in the scheduled service. Additionally, Metro and the City of Seattle agreed to credit the September 2023 reductions on Routes 20 and 73, amounting to 8,500 annual service hours, as reductions in STM investment, since replacement STM investments were not possible due to Metro's current operational constraints.

In the spring 2024 service change, SDOT reallocated an estimated 1,600 STM-funded annual service hours from Routes 5, 10, and 56 to Routes 21, 28, and the RapidRide H Line. King County Metro's Scheduling and Service Planning teams collaborated with SDOT to ensure that these reallocations of STM investments would not require additional bus operators. These investment reallocations help bring the STM investments in better alignment with the SDOT's values and goals.

In Fall 2024, SDOT plans to reallocate 25,200 annual service hours that were invested in the Madison Street Area Bus Service Change project area as of September 2022, and 17,500 annual service hours that were invested in the Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project area as of March 2022. The reallocation of STM investments proposed by SDOT aims to respond to service network changes proposed by Metro in each project, and revise investment to better align with the SDOT's values and goals. All 17,500 annual service hours are planned to be retained in the Lynnwood Link Connections project area and be used for enhancing service levels on Routes 72, 75, 77, 345 and 365. For the Madison Street Area Bus Service Change project, 20,500 of the 25,200 STM-funded service hours in the project area will be used to enhance service levels on Routes 11, 49 and 60, while 4,800 STM-funded service hours will be reinvested outside the project area to improve service levels on Route 125.

In the near-term, Metro and the City of Seattle will continue to explore adding service in ways that Metro can successfully and reliably deliver. The City of Seattle remains committed to investing in Metro service, including alternatives to fixed-route services, to provide frequent, high quality transit service to the City of Seattle residents. As an example, Metro and SDOT are currently in the planning phase of a new STM-funded Metro Flex pilot. The City of Seattle was also a financial partner for the Trailhead Direct service in 2023. When sufficient operational capacity becomes available, Metro will further engage with the City of Seattle to explore additional service additions that could be made within available capacity.

Sound Transit

This section provides information about Sound Transit Express bus service, Link light rail service and Stride bus rapid transit service. As described in Metro's Service Recovery Plan, Metro is planning to restructure service in conjunction with these Sound Transit system expansion projects.

Express Bus Service

Metro currently operates nine ST Express routes, including: ST 522, 541 (currently suspended), 542, 544 (currently suspended), 545, 550, 554, 555 (currently suspended), 556, and 566. As new Link extensions open for service, Sound Transit plans to make changes to ST Express bus service. There are a range of potential changes which will be closely coordinated with Metro's bus network restructures, which include significant public engagement. King County Metro changes will require approval by King County Council, and changes to ST Express routes will require approval from the Sound Transit Board of Directors.

During 2021 and 2022, Sound Transit and Metro worked closely on the East Link Connections Mobility Project, a major planning and public engagement effort across the Eastside of King County. This coordinated project gathered feedback on proposals to restructure bus service to coordinate with the opening of the Link 2 Line and create an improved transit network, while increasing mobility for priority populations. Based on engagement a proposal was developed but was not advanced for consideration by King County Council and the Sound Transit Board due to delays in the opening of the full 2 Line. The proposal includes plans to adjust most ST Express routes operated by Metro, including 541, 542, 544, 545, 550, 554, 555 and 556. On balance, the current changes proposed to these routes, including replacement of duplicative ST Routes 550 and 545 with new Link 2 Line service, are expected to reduce the amount of ST Express service operated by King County and increase the number of bus operators available for Metro service. Prior to consideration by King County Council and the Sound Transit Board,

Metro is planning a review of and additional engagement on the 2022 proposal in early 2024.

During 2022 and 2023, Sound Transit and Metro worked closely on the Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project, another major planning and public engagement effort in North King County area. This project gathered feedback on proposals to restructure bus service to coordinate with the extension of the Link 1 Line and 2 Line to Lynnwood, and the opening of the Stride S3 service. Based on engagement a proposal was finalized and will be advanced for consideration by King County Council and the Sound Transit Board in 2024. The proposal includes plans to revise Route 522 to connect to the 1 and 2 Lines at Shoreline South/148th Station when the full 2 Line extends to Lynnwood or with the opening of Stride S3 service. This change is expected to reduce the amount of ST Express service operated by King County. The proposal to change Route 522 may be considered by the Sound Transit Board as early as fall 2024, with implementation to follow based on project opening dates.

Link Light Rail

Sound Transit plans to open a portion of East Link with the 2 Line operating between South Bellevue Station and Redmond Technology Station in spring 2024.

The [Lynnwood Link](#) project extends the 1 Line from Northgate into Snohomish County, serving four stations, Shoreline South/148th, Shoreline North/185th, Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood City Center. The project plans to open in fall 2024. Sound Transit has not yet finalized 1 Line service levels for the Lynnwood Link extension opening but is continuing to work to provide as much service as possible when the 1 Line opens to Lynnwood. Metro is coordinating with Sound Transit and Community Transit to understand the frequencies of Link service between Downtown Seattle and Lynnwood before the full opening of Link 2 Line and its impacts to transit riders.

The [East Link](#) and [Downtown Redmond](#) projects are projected to open at the same time, currently anticipated in 2025. When this project opens, the 1 and 2 Lines will combine to provide more frequency between downtown Seattle and Lynnwood. The East Link project adds 14 miles and 10 stations, Lynnwood and Seattle's International District to Judkins Park, across I-90 to Mercer Island and South Bellevue, and through downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red area to Redmond Technology Station. The Downtown Redmond Link Extension adds two new light rail stations in Redmond: Marymoor Village Station serving Marymoor Village near Marymoor Park and southeast Redmond, and Downtown Redmond Station serving downtown residential and retail core.

The [Federal Way Link Extension](#) extends light rail from Angle Lake Station in the City of SeaTac to the Federal Way Transit Center. The 7.8-mile extension includes three stations in Kent/Des Moines near Highline College, South 272nd Street and the Federal Way Transit Center. All three stations add parking for a total of 3,200 spaces along the route. The possible opening timeframe for the Federal Way Link Extension is 2026.

Stride Bus Rapid Transit

[Stride S1 and S2](#) Lines will connect communities along I-405 and SR 518 from Lynnwood to Burien. With buses running as often as every 10 minutes, this new service will connect to Link light rail at Lynnwood, Bellevue and Tukwila as well as to other transit services provided by Sound Transit, Community Transit and King County Metro. The project includes a new transit center in South Renton and 10 BRT stations, three of which will also add parking, for a total of 1,300 new spaces. I-405 Stride BRT builds upon the

Washington State Department of Transportation's I-405 Master Plan with roadway improvements for faster travel.

The [Stride S3 Line](#) will serve growing north Lake Washington communities. With buses running as often as every 10 minutes, this new service will connect to Link light rail at Shoreline South/148th Station as well as to other transit service provided by Sound Transit, Community Transit and King County Metro. The project will also include additional parking at Lake Forest Park, Kenmore and Bothell.

The Sound Transit Board adopted the final budget and schedule for the Stride Program in July 2023. The adopted baseline schedule for the Stride program included the following dates:

	Realignment (Q3 2021)	Adopted baseline schedule (Q3 2023)
S1 (I-405 South, Bellevue-Burien)	2026	Q3 2028
S2 (I-405 North, Bellevue-Lynnwood)	2027	Q2 2029
S3 (SR 522)	2026	Q2 2028

C. Transit Proviso P5, Requirement 3: Consistency with Service Guidelines

Ordinance 19546 Proviso P5 requires an analysis of how the report's recommendations, as reflected in an accompanying service change Ordinances for the fall 2024 service change, comport with the King County Metro Service Guidelines.

The fall 2024 service change will include two service change ordinances: one for changes proposed through the Madison Street Area Bus Service Change Project (MSA project), and the other for changes proposed through the Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project (LLC project). Both projects are service restructures responding to major transportation network changes and comply with the process to be followed for service restructures outlined in the King County Metro Service Guidelines. Service change ordinances in the project include:

- Restoration of suspended service hours identified on routes in each project area, consistent with the approach outlined in Metro's Service Recovery Plan
- Additional investment to implement the RapidRide G Line
- City of Seattle-directed reallocation of Seattle Transit Measure (STM) investment from the MSA project to another route in the system

As such, these service change ordinances propose employing existing and suspended service hours to deliver an updated mobility network that integrates with new high-capacity transit investment, centers on equity, and meets the project goals and community-identified mobility needs learned through the engagement process. For both projects, all existing and suspended hours are retained in each respective project area and used to develop the final proposed network.

Proposed changes in both projects are informed by extensive public engagement, equity analyses including Title VI and Equity Priority Areas (EPAs),¹⁹ and service design best practices in the Service

¹⁹ Equity Priority Areas are areas where historically underserved populations are concentrated, as identified in the Mobility Framework and Metro's 2021-2031 Strategic Plan.

Guidelines. Corresponding to each of these, community input, equity considerations, and service design best practices are the three decision-making factors that were identified and tracked for each proposed route change. In alignment with Service Guideline, Metro identified success criteria and performed in-depth equity analysis at each phase of the project to inform network decision-making and measure the final network proposal's success in meeting the established goals. Results of the equity analysis results are summarized in the Equity Impact Review and Network Development Report attached to each project's respective service change ordinances.

To support the development of network concepts and proposals at each phase of the project, Metro considered existing conditions data including the Metro's Ride/Non-Rider survey results, the most current available ridership and travel pattern data, locations of the EPAs, service levels in the EPAs compared to the rest of the project area, passenger capacity of routes relative to ridership, existing housing, jobs and other generators of ridership, and the location and density of permitted future development. Metro also considered the locations and capacity of the existing and planned capital infrastructure such as trolley infrastructure, layover, and bus stop, as the proposed changes would need to match the available capital resources. As Metro develops route change concepts after each phase of engagement, an estimated cost of added service and cost savings from reductions of other services are calculated to ensure that changes fit within the overall budget.

In alignment with the Service Guidelines, Metro provided a description of all transit services in the project areas at each phase of engagement. This included information on current conditions and potential future service, and was utilized throughout both projects to give jurisdictions, community members, riders, and other organizations a clear indication of potential transit services proposed during each phase. Information shared included route maps, levels of service (route frequency), span of service, identification of routing changes and route deletions, and how proposed routes would meet needs identified during community engagement. More information about the public engagement approach as well as examples of public-facing materials are included in the Public Engagement Report attached to each project's respective service change ordinances.

In compliance with federal regulations, Metro conducted a Title VI Analysis on the final network proposal of both projects. Results of the Title VI Analysis are summarized in the Title VI Service Analysis attached to each project's respective service change ordinance.

Madison Street Area Bus Service Change Project

To deliver the planned RapidRide G Line, the MSA project considered changes to Routes 3, 10, 11, 12, 47, 49, and 60 serving the Capitol Hill, Central District, First Hill, and Madison Valley neighborhoods of Seattle. The proposed changes would implement the G Line, optimize service coverage by extending and rerouting routes to connect with the new G Line stations, and enhance the overall connectivity and accessibility of the transit network. As part of these changes, the City of Seattle proposes to reallocate current STM service investments in project area routes.

The project goals for the MSA project were derived from common goals for restructures outlined in the Service Guidelines and are described in the Madison Street Area Bus Service Change Project: Equity Impact Review and Network Development Report. They include:

- Improve mobility for priority populations²⁰
- Equitably inform, engage, and empower communities and major employers traveling in the project area
- Integrate with the new RapidRide G Line
- Improve bus service to better meet the needs of riders and communities

In the final network proposal, Metro proposed:

- Modify the routing of Routes 3, 10, 11, and 12
- Eliminate Route 47
- Reduce service on Routes 10, 12, and 49
- Modify service on Routes 3 and 11
- Expand service on Routes 4 and 60

Table 3 below shows the project goals that each of the proposed changes support. All proposed changes support the second project goal to equitably inform, engage, and empower communities and major employers traveling through the project area, as they are developed through extensive community engagement that centers feedback from priority populations.

Table 3 : MSA project - project goals supported by proposed changes

Proposed Changes	Improving mobility for priority populations	Integrate with the new RapidRide G Line	Improving bus service to better meet the needs of riders and communities
Extend Route 3 trips originating in Madrona to serve the Summit area and replace Route 47 with this extension, convert route 3 trips that extend to Queen Anne to Route 4 trips	x		x
Revise pathways of routes 10 and 12 to serve E. Pine St. and reduce frequency during some Weekday, Saturday, and Sunday time periods ²¹	x	x	
Revise Route 11 to connect with Capitol Hill Link light rail station and revise frequency during some time periods ²²		x	

²⁰ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), low-and-no income people, immigrants, refugees, limited-English speaking populations, and people with disabilities.

²¹ Note: The City of Seattle removed Seattle Transit Measure (STM) funding on Routes 10 and 12 and reallocated those resources to Routes 49, 60 and 125 to better align with STM program goals

²² The City of Seattle removed Seattle Transit Measure (STM) funding from Route 11 and reallocated those resources to Routes 49, 60 and 125 to better align with STM program goals

Proposed Changes	Improving mobility for priority populations	Integrate with the new RapidRide G Line	Improving bus service to better meet the needs of riders and communities
Adjust frequencies on Route 49 throughout the day to match ridership trends respond to engagement feedback			x
Increase frequencies on Route 60 to match ridership trends and enhance service for priority populations	x	x	x

Overall, these changes help achieve project goals and meet mobility needs heard from the community by:

- Reducing duplications to RapidRide G Line and better integrating surrounding services with this new RapidRide service
- Increasing access to high-capacity transit services and the frequent transit network for the population in the project, and the population within EPAs
- Providing new transfer opportunities, mobility options outside of the weekday peak periods
- Improving connections to local businesses and community assets
- Restoring service to the Summit area, which has a high proportion of priority populations

The community input, equity analysis, and service design best practices factors that informed each proposed service change are included in the MSA EIR Report. Specific route-by-route service changes and their supporting King County Metro policies are described in the Ordinance Attachment A of the service change ordinance.

Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project

In fall 2024, Sound Transit will extend the Link 1 Line from Northgate to Lynnwood and open four new stations, with an additional new station at NE 130th St in Seattle expected to open in 2026. In addition to the new light rail stations, Sound Transit will change the ST Express Route 522 to match the planned S3 service between Bothell and Shoreline as early as 2025. In response to these changes, Metro launched the LLC project in 2022 with extensive three-phase public engagement to take proactive and meaningful steps towards improving mobility in an equitable and community-driven way and connect Metro services with new light rail stations. King County Metro routes that are evaluated for change include Routes 5, 16X, 20, 28, 45, 64, 65, 67, 73, 75, 301, 302, 303, 304, 320, 322, 330, 331, 345, 346, 347, 348, and 372. Sound Transit joined Metro in each phase of public outreach and provided information for their proposed changes to Sound Transit Express Route 522. As part of these changes, the City of Seattle also proposes to reallocate STM service investments among project area routes.

The project goals for the LLC project were derived from common goals for restructures outlined in the Service Guidelines and are described in the Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project: Equity Impact Review and Network Development Report (LLC EIR Report). They are:

- Improve mobility for priority populations
- Equitably inform, engage, and empower current and potential customers traveling in the project area

- Deliver integrated service that responds to Link expansion, changes in the transit network, and community needs
- Improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and environmental sustainability of the transit system

Through Phase 1 public engagement, Metro also synthesized a list of prioritized mobility needs with the project’s Mobility Board, who helped refine the list. These mobility needs are:

- Create new and improved east-west transit between major destinations and frequent high-capacity transit
- Provide transit to/from important community-identified destinations where priority populations live, and locations with dense housing development plans by 2026.
- Improve night-time transit service serving major and important destinations.
- Maintain and improve frequencies on routes that connect to/from major destinations and/or frequent high-capacity transit (RapidRide, Link, Stride S3 line).
- Improve weekend transit service serving major and important destinations.
- Ensure that transit transfers are convenient, accessible, reliable, and as seamless as possible for all riders, especially priority populations.

In the final network proposal, Metro proposed:

- Modifying the routing of Routes 28, 45²³, 303, 322, 345, 346, and 348
- Eliminating Routes 16, 20, 64, 73, 301, 302, 304, 320, 330, 347, and 372
- Creating new Routes 61, 72, 77, 333, and 365
- Expanding service on Routes 65, 303, 331, 345 and 348
- Reducing service on Route 75 to better match service levels to demand

Routes 16, 20, 64, 73, and 347 would be replaced by other frequent Metro services in the proposed network. Segments of Routes 301, 302, 304 would be mostly replaced by Sound Transit Link Light rail, and Routes 320 and 372 would be partially replaced by Sound Transit’s 522 BRT service. Despite duplicative segments, no route in the project met the Service Guidelines standard for duplicative service that may be redeployed for system-wide service investment priorities. As a result, all existing and suspended hours in the project are proposed to be reallocated within the service area to meet the project goals and mobility needs outlined above.

Table 4 below shows the project goals that each of the proposed changes support. All proposed changes support the second project goal of equitably inform, engage, and empower communities and major employers traveling through the project area, as they are developed through extensive community engagement that centers priority population’s feedback.

²³ Interlined with the project Route 75

Table 4 : LLC project - project goals supported by proposed changes

Proposed Changes	Improving mobility for priority populations	Integrate with Link expansion, change in transit network and community needs	Improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and environmental sustainability of the transit system
Implement the new east-west Route 61	x	x	x
Implement new Route 72	x	x	x
Implement new Route 77	x	x	x
Implement new Route 333	x	x	x
Implement new Route 365	x	x	x
Delete the Broadview, peak-only, northern portion of the Route 28		x	x
Reduce Route 45 peak-period frequency slightly. Break through-route pair with Route 75			x
Revise Route 65 to have weekday frequent service south of Lake City and NE 125 th , with alternating trips terminating at NE 135 th St and Lake City Way, and the other half terminating at the Shoreline South/148 th Station	x	x	x
Decrease Route 75 weekday peak frequency from 10-15 minutes to 15 minutes to better match demand. Interline with new Route 77		x	x
Revised Route 303 and 322 to provide 30-minute peak only service to South Lake Union and First Hill. Together, both routes will provide a 15-minute combined frequency will be provided between Northgate, South Lake Union and First Hill.		x	x
Revise Route 331 pathway to serve Mountlake Terrace Link light rail station and extend pathway to UW Bothell. Increase span of service later into the evening and night across the full week	x	x	
Revise Route 345 to serve the Shoreline South/148 th Station instead of Shoreline Community	x	x	

Proposed Changes	Improving mobility for priority populations	Integrate with Link expansion, change in transit network and community needs	Improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and environmental sustainability of the transit system
College via Westminster and NE 155th St.			
Revise Route 346 to serve Meridian Ave. between Aurora Village Transit Center and the South Shoreline/148th Station via N 155th St. and provide 30-minute local service throughout the week.	x	x	
Revise Route 348 to include two variants so that half of trips terminate at Richmond Beach, and the other half terminate at 8th Ave. NW, better matching service levels with demand. The overlapping portion of the route variants have improved frequent all-day service, with extended span of service at night. Additionally, revise route pathway to serve the Shoreline North/185th Station.	x	x	x
Delete Routes 301, 302, 304. Replacement service is provided by Link light rail		x	x
Delete Routes 16, 20, 64, 73, and 347. Replacement service is provided by other frequent Metro services in the proposed network		x	x
No changes to Route 5 and 67	x	x	x

In summary, these changes helped achieve project goals and meet mobility needs heard from the community by:

- Reducing duplications to Link light rail, Stride S3 bus rapid transit, and other Metro routes
- Creating new and improved east-west transit connections, particularly with the creation of Routes 61, 72, 77, and 333 and the improvement of service on Routes 331, 345, and 348
- Increasing access to high-capacity transit services and the frequent transit network for the population in the project, and the population within Equity Priority Areas
- Improving connections to/from major and important destinations, where priority populations live, and locations with planned dense housing developments
- Improving night-time, night owl, and weekend service serving major and important destinations

- Providing transfer opportunities and ensuring transfers are convenient, accessible, reliable and seamless.

The community input, equity analysis and service design best practices factors that informed each proposed service change are included in the LLC EIR Report. Specific route-by-route service changes and their supporting King County Metro policies are described in Attachment A of the service change ordinance.

D. Transit Proviso P5, Requirement 4: Consistency with Metro Connects

Ordinance 19546 Proviso P5 requires an analysis of how the report’s recommendations, as reflected in an accompanying service change ordinance, will advance the Metro Connects long-range plan (Metro Connects).²⁴

Metro Connects includes two service network visions: a near-term Interim Network, and a 2050 Network. Both networks assume significant service growth from existing service resources, inclusive of service hours currently suspended. Service change ordinances in the project include:

- Restoration of suspended service hours identified on routes in each project area, consistent with the approach outlined in Metro’s Service Recovery Plan
- Added service hours to implement the RapidRide G Line
- City of Seattle-directed reallocation of Seattle Transit Measure investment from the Madison Street Area Project to another route in the system

As such, Metro used the existing service hours to deliver an updated mobility network that moves towards the Metro Connects vision but does not include sufficient service funding to meet service levels envisioned in the plan’s Interim Network.

For both projects, the Metro Connects Interim Network was used as a starting point for network planning. However, specific network changes are guided by community engagement and thus look different from the Metro Connects service network. Nevertheless, the final network proposals from both projects advance the Metro Connects in many aspects. The following sections outline ways that the final network proposals advance Metro Connects.

Metro Connects envisions more frequent, reliable, and fast service all-day, all-week through a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network. Metro Connects envisioned that the expanded service network will:

- Advance equity and address climate change by providing additional service in areas with unmet need²⁵
- Connect people to Sound Transit’s expanding regional transit system
- Provide a more robust all-day network by increasing service throughout the day and operating service from earlier in the morning to later at night

²⁴ King County Metro Transit, King County Metro Long-Range Plan Metro Connects, November 17, 2021. <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/about/policies>

²⁵ Per the adopted Mobility Framework, unmet need is defined as areas with high-density, a high proportion of priority populations, and limited midday and evening service

- Meet current transit needs identified in Metro’s annual System Evaluation Report and future transit needs identified in cities’ growth plans.
- Provide more flexible services that improve mobility by connecting people to key locations and to the fixed-route network

Madison Street Area Bus Service Change Project

Advance equity and address climate change

In the MSA project, Metro gathered feedback through two phases of engagement with a focus on priority populations. That feedback was used along with equity analysis and service design best practices to inform the development of the proposed network and consider trade-offs between service options. When considering trade-offs, Metro centered on the mobility needs of the priority populations while supporting strong ridership in the system by maintaining frequent service levels where ridership is highest, integrating and reducing duplication with the new RapidRide G Line, and providing new coverage in a dense neighborhood. An example of this is the proposed extension of Route 3, which requires reducing frequencies on Routes 10, 11, 12 and 49 to fund this extension. Metro included this change in the final network proposal based on the engagement feedback that there are a high proportion of seniors and people living with disability in the Summit area and steep hills in the neighborhood. These proposed frequency reductions on Routes 10, 11, 12 and 49 are generally focused during times where ridership is lower, and Route 3 extension is anticipated to bring additional riders to the system.

Overall, the MSA project improves access to very frequent transit for the population, community assets, and subsidized housing within the EPAs. This improvement would come from the implementation of the RapidRide G Line, which is a key element of the Metro Connects vision for this area. Additionally, the network would result in a small increase in access to the transit network for populations and households living in an EPA. This is due to the increased coverage provided by the proposed network compared to the current service available to the project area. The proposed network would result in a less than one percent decrease in access to frequent transit for populations and households living in an EPA. However, access to transit network or the frequent service for community assets, subsidized housing units, or low/medium income jobs remained unchanged.

The MSA project also supports Metro Connects’ vision of fleet electrification by proposing long-term operation of Routes 3, 10 and 12 using trolley buses. This also includes building new Overhead Catenary Systems to support this shift of operations to Pine Street.

Move Metro toward an all-day service network

The MSA proposed network will introduce service level increases during midday on Route 60 and during the night period on Routes 11, 49, and 60. Additionally, RapidRide G line will provide very-frequent, 6-minute headway service throughout the day and into evening hours, providing nearly 24-hour service.

Meet current transit needs and future transit needs

The MSA service change includes substantial service hours investment to implement the RapidRide G Line, restoration of suspended service and existing service hours in the project area. The same investment priorities of overcrowding, reliability, and service growth identified in the Service Guidelines

were used when considering how to reallocate existing and restored service resources in the proposed network. Many of the routes that have proposed service level increases are supported by the level of ridership and reliability needs, whereas service reductions are mostly on low-performing routes and/or time periods.

Additionally, Metro aligned the proposed changes with the city's growth plans whenever possible. For example, RapidRide G Line is a project identified as the Madison Street Corridor Bus Rapid Transit in the City of Seattle's Transit Master Plan. This service, running every six minutes at times on weekdays and Saturdays, will support a corridor that has high ridership today and will likely see ridership growth due to increased growth identified in the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan.

Expanding RapidRide service

The approval of MSA service change ordinance would create the RapidRide G Line, one of the RapidRide lines identified in the Metro Connects. In alignment with the RapidRide features outlined in Metro Connects, infrastructure improvements delivered as part of the RapidRide G Line include a dedicated bus lane, new bus stops, modern sidewalks, and improved street lighting.

Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project

Advance equity and address climate change

In the LLC project, Metro gathered feedback through three phases of engagement with a focus on priority populations. During the first phase of engagement, Metro learned about the specific needs of communities within the project area. Themes from phase one engagement are synthesized into priority mobility needs with the help of the project's Mobility Board of community representatives. Feedback gathered throughout the project was used along with equity analysis and service design best practices to inform the development of the proposed network.

The LLC final network proposal is designed to address priority mobility needs identified at all phases of the project as well as the equity-focused project goals. Through each phase of engagement network changes were made in coordination with the project's Mobility Board to respond to community, stakeholder, and jurisdiction feedback, especially feedback from equity priority populations.

By prioritizing service where needs are the greatest, the LLC final network proposal increases transit access for priority populations to transit and other key destinations, especially via the frequent transit network. Transit travel time between high priority community destinations improves as well. The LLC EIR Report describes in detail how the proposed network addresses priority populations' mobility needs and improves transit service for areas with unmet needs.

Connect people to Sound Transit's expanding regional transit system

Together with Sound Transit's Stride S3 and Community Transit's Swift Blue Line service, the LLC final network proposal would provide 13 all-day routes that riders can take to connect to one of the Link stations from Northgate Station to Mountlake Terrace Station. Eight of these are frequent routes to facilitate faster and more reliable transfers. Additionally, eight all-day routes in the LLC final network proposal would allow riders to transfer to and from Sound Transit's Stride S3 service, four of which are frequent routes to facilitate faster and more reliable transfers.

More robust all-day network

Consistent with needs identified during community engagement and responding to evolving travel patterns following the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed transit service changes shift resources away from peak-only service and toward creating more frequent, all-day, all-week service that creates new connections with high-capacity transit and key destinations in north King County. Where peak-only services are maintained, it provided significant travel time savings by reducing the number of transfers for travelers between Kenmore, North King County, and the employment centers of South Lake Union and First Hill.

This proposal includes three routes operating later into the night than today, as well as five routes with new weekend service. In some cases, peak-hour frequency was slightly reduced on some frequent routes to better match service to demand and reinvest in places where needs are greatest within the project area. More specific description of trip changes between service periods are included in the LLC EIR Report.

Meet current transit needs and future transit needs

The LLC service change includes restoration of suspended service and existing service hours as of spring 2022. This service change involved using the same hours that existed but investing them differently than before. The same investment priorities of overcrowding, reliability, and service growth identified in the Service Guidelines were used when considering how to reallocate existing and restored resources to develop the proposed network. Many of the routes that have proposed service level increases are supported by the level of ridership and reliability needs, whereas service reductions are mostly on low-performing routes and/or time periods.

In each phase of the LLC project, Metro gathered feedback from jurisdictions and stakeholders in the project area through Partner Review Board meetings as well as jurisdiction briefings. During Phase 3, Metro also presented to project area City Councils. During this engagement, Metro received feedback related to future transit needs identified in various cities' growth plans and locations of future developments that could generate new ridership. These needs were considered and incorporated into the network proposal where feasible and as resources allowed. An example from the City of Shoreline includes the final network proposal providing frequent east-west connections on 145th Street, 175th Street, and 185th Street. These east-west corridors are identified in that the City of Shoreline's Transit Plan and are consistent with community engagement feedback that identified new east-west connections as a priority need. Additionally, the final network also proposed a new transit connection to Shoreline Place. Combined with the 148th Street and 185th Street station areas, these three locations are expected to receive approximately 4,600 new housing units based on information provided by the City of Shoreline.

More flexible services

As part of the LLC project, Metro has proposed a new Metro Flex zone for portions of Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, and Kenmore north of Ballinger Way and SR-522. This zone would cover many areas not served by fixed-route transit, including schools, equity priority areas, and community assets, and would offer a connection to Link light rail at Mountlake Terrace Station.

E. Transit Proviso P5, Requirement 5: Constraints

This section responds to the requirement to analyze constraints that limit additions to the transit service for the corresponding proposed transit service change, in this case the fall 2024 service change.

Metro currently possesses adequate funding to add and restore service in fall 2024, consistent with the adopted budget. However, significant work remains to stabilize operations before restoring suspended service. Key constraints on Metro’s ability to increase service levels include availability of bus operators and mechanics, and fleet availability. Metro needs to hire and train staff not only to deliver bus service but also to support the planned expansions of Sound Transit Link light rail extensions. As a result, and as noted in both service change ordinances, Metro may need to implement these projects in phases, contingent on Metro’s operational capacity.

Hiring and training bus operators and other positions critical to daily operations continue to be the biggest challenge for Metro – with multiple ongoing projects focused on increasing and improving hiring and training processes and capacity. As a result of increased attrition, retirement, and promotions, the number of current bus operators and mechanics has declined significantly since 2020. The total number of operators (headcount, not FTEs) is about 24 percent lower than before the pandemic (2,427 operators in November 2023 versus 3,195 in February 2020), and the number of mechanics is about 20 percent lower than before the pandemic (235 mechanics in November 2023 versus 294 in February 2020). One example includes implementation of single day hiring and interviewing events to screen and provide in-person offers to large numbers of bus operators and mechanics – significantly shortening recruitment timelines, increasing recruiting capacity, and improving the applicant experience.

In addition to service operated directly, Metro contracts with Hopelink to provide Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART) and other services. Similar to other transit operators in the region, Hopelink is experiencing capacity challenges that are resulting in less contracted service being delivered than Metro is requesting. As of Metro’s Fall 2023 service change, service suspensions were in place on nine of 15 DART routes²⁶ to address a shortage of operators. Trailhead Direct service operated by Hopelink was partially suspended during the 2023 season as well. The operator shortage is expected to persist into 2024, but a small increase in capacity will enable restoration of service on one route (Route 914) in Spring 2024. Metro will continue to coordinate with Hopelink to determine operator availability and feasibility of restoring service in 2024 and beyond. Service restoration plans will also be developed through service restructure projects, as identified in Metro’s Service Recovery Plan.

²⁶ Suspensions are in place on the following Hopelink-operated routes: 204, 630, 631, 901, 903, 906, 914, 915 and 931.

VI. Next Actions

Metro is working to deliver improvements that address current workforce challenges. The enterprise-wide Service and Workforce Initiative is helping to coordinate this work and achieve results that will support service growth. Key highlights of this work include:

- **September 2023 Service Stabilization** – Metro made a temporary service reduction of four percent to align service levels with operating capacity and deliver more reliable service for customers. This has significantly improved service reliability, increasing the number of scheduled trips delivered from 93 percent in August to 99 percent in October. Despite service suspensions Metro’s ridership continues to grow, including on some routes that are now carrying more passengers than they were before the pandemic.
- **Increasing Bus Operator Hiring and Training** – Increasing bus operator hiring and training capacity is the heart of Metro’s path to recovery. Metro has set a target of training 100 bus operators per month. Ongoing work includes:
 - Key hiring related changes
 - Implementing of new single-day hiring events to streamline and speed up the hiring and pre-employment steps of the applicant process.
 - Doubling of HR hiring capacity dedicated to processing bus operator applicants and dedicating additional staff resources to proactively address other downstream bottleneck in application processing.
 - Reducing barriers to applicants at key places in the application process – such as paying the \$40 WA Department of Licensing fee associated with obtaining a needed commercial learner permit.
 - Working actively to manage the performance of Concentra, the firm that does applicants’ health screening, and to reduce the chance of errors.
 - In partnership with the Washington State Department of Licensing, implementing a modernized Commercial Drivers License (CDL) test in early 2024 that better aligns with the skills a bus operator needs. Additional coordination is also occurring around the permitting and testing of applicants.
 - Key training related changes
 - Modernizing the bus operator curriculum based on the best practices and feedback from students.
 - Working with ATU 587 on how to quickly increase transit instructor capacity to support an increase in bus operator training.
- **Implementing Talent Acquisition Business Transformation.** This initiative has implemented opportunities to help Metro achieve better hiring outcomes. This includes:
 - Shortening time to hire through streamlined and consistent processes.
 - Restructuring the recruitment team to be divisionally focused, allowing staff to build strong working relationships and deep division specific knowledge.

- **Implementing Collective Bargaining Agreement and Increasing Retention.** Key changes that support Metro’s workforce recovery include:
 - Offering signing bonuses as well as market wage adjustments to keep Metro a highly competitive employer.
 - Increasing attractiveness of entry level bus operator work.
 - Enabling flexibility in hiring key positions and ability to contract out work for key Rail classifications if needed.
 - Making changes to support re-assignment of work between bus operators when needed.
 - Conducting exit interviews with operators to understand why they are leaving the organization and what Metro could have done to retain them.

- **Implementing Fleet Process Improvements.** Metro’s fleet availability continues to grow thanks to improved processes across all seven bases. Metro has developed and implemented a new digital workflow management tool – streamlining processes and supporting the most efficient use of workforce to improve service delivery.

- **Mechanic Hiring Surge and Single-Day Hiring.** Metro is seeing dramatic improvements in mechanic hiring compared to the last few years, thanks to more competitive pay and a new single-day hiring process that significantly improves the applicant process and shortens the overall process by roughly eight weeks. Metro expects to hire as many as 11 new mechanics from the November 2023 recruitment, the same number of mechanics hired collectively over the last six months.

Metro is closely monitoring metrics and setting goals related to service recovery, including changes in staffing and overtime in front-line roles, fleet availability, and trip delivery. As operational capacity grows, Metro will grow service and include associated recommendations and status updates in the next Transit Riders Now Report and potential accompanying service change ordinances.