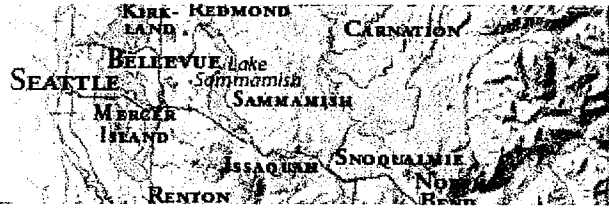




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# News Center



## King County and Metro unveil new tools for staying in tune with transit disruptions

With snow again in the forecast, King County Metro Transit is gearing up to keep buses moving and to keep riders better informed. While Metro staff will be chaining up many of its buses overnight to prep for the forecasted weekend snow, new media tools and additional staff are ready to send out transit information on the county's blog and Twitter sites as well.

In the event of a snowstorm this weekend, King County will use the Twitter social-networking system and a county blog posted prominently on [www.kingcounty.gov](http://www.kingcounty.gov) to provide all known Metro service disruptions related to bad weather. Not only will Metro send out available information about bus service, but bus riders will also be able to use the blog to share their own experiences and observations related to bus travel.

"We have found tech-savvy bus riders are already sharing information about our bus routes and snow-related disruptions, so it is important we engage with them and share their information with other riders," said **King County Executive Ron Sims**. "Use of Twitter and the county's blog will help fill the gap while Metro works on adding a new real-time bus tracking system.

"The observations from our passengers will supplement the information Metro staff is receiving from the field," said Sims.

Overnight tonight, crews will be chaining 30 extra buses at each of the seven Metro bases in case there is snow Saturday morning. That will give staff a head start on any difficult driving conditions early in the morning, and more buses will be chained up if needed. Electric trolley buses, which have traction problems in the snow, will be replaced with diesel buses this weekend. Also, additional staff has been called in to work in the field, at radio center, customer communication offices, and at the bases.

To get the latest Metro Transit messages on Twitter, go to: [www.twitter.com/kcnews](http://www.twitter.com/kcnews). The King County Alert blog is online at: [www.kingcounty.gov/kcnews](http://www.kingcounty.gov/kcnews).

These two new features will be the latest tools in a growing list that Metro uses to provide service information. Also, depending on the magnitude of bus service disruption due to weather or other conditions, public information staff from other departments will join the Metro communication effort. Rapidly changing conditions may delay posting of route-specific service disruptions on Metro's Web pages, but the new communication tools will help Metro and bus riders share information.

Media and the public can find the latest news releases on **Metro and King County's** home pages, as well as on the **Regional Public Information Network (RPIN)** for breaking news on transit disruptions. Metro's telephone call center offers 24/7 service at (206) 553-3000. The Metro Web site is undergoing incremental changes that will make it more user-friendly in the short term while a complete redesign is underway.

By next winter, transit users should find even more communication improvements. Metro is already upgrading the Metro Online website, developing a new transit alert messaging system, beefing up information staffing for emergency events, and planning for the integration of new technology that tracks bus reroute and service disruptions as a new source of real-time information.

## See more at:

