King County Metro: Flexible Services Program

Regional Transit Committee

May 17, 2023
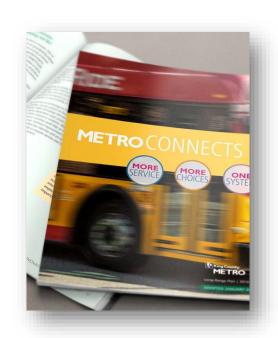

King County METRO — *Moving forward together*

Background

- Flexible Services are part of Metro's broad range of mobility services

- Programs developed from Alternative Services Demonstration Program established in 2015-2018

- Consistent with Strategic Plan for Public Transportation

- Focus on where needs are greatest, and fixed-route may not best meet needs
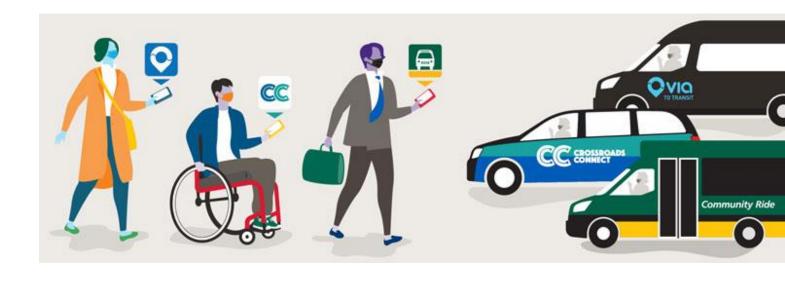
Policies

- **Strategic Plan for Public Transportation**
  - Adopt innovative services and products
- **Metro Connects**
  - Pilot new innovative flexible service models
  - Design, implement, evaluate new services
- **Service Guidelines**
  - Priority – equity, access, density
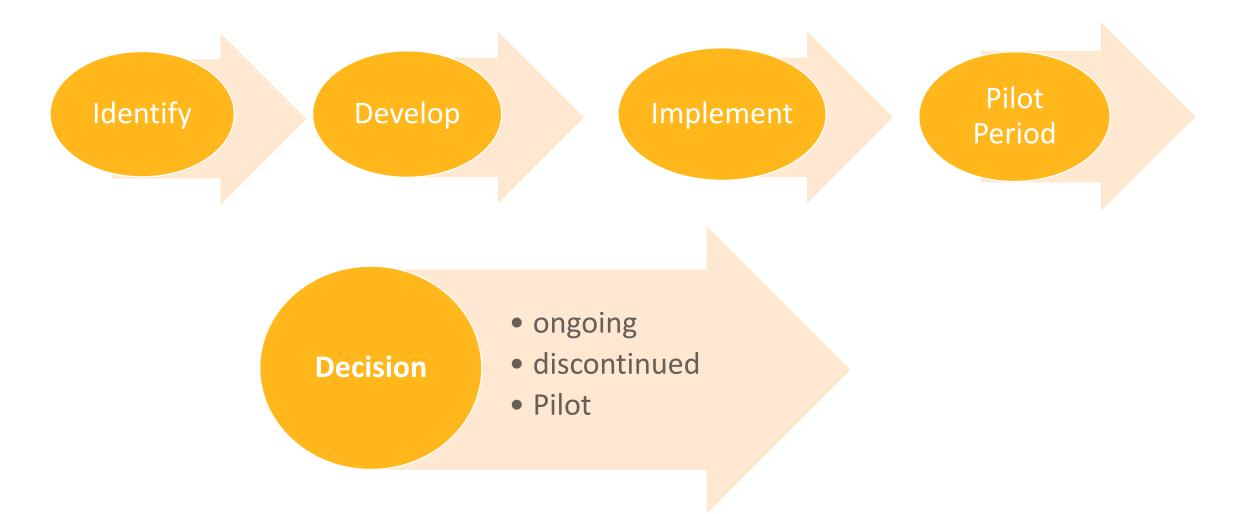 - Evaluation – equity, productivity, efficiency
- **Partnership Guidelines**

Prioritization

- **Equity:** serving those who need access the most
- **Partnership:** looking for opportunities to leverage resources

- **Access:** reaching jobs and community assets
- **Density:** serving areas with adequate ridership, and without high quality fixed-route service

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Pilot evaluation and decision-making

Identify → Develop → Implement → Pilot Period →

Decision
- ongoing
- discontinued
- Pilot

King County METRO
Moving forward together

Post-pilot Evaluation

- Equity, Productivity, Efficiency
- Community feedback
- Alignment with Metro's priorities/goals/plans
- Other mobility solutions in the area
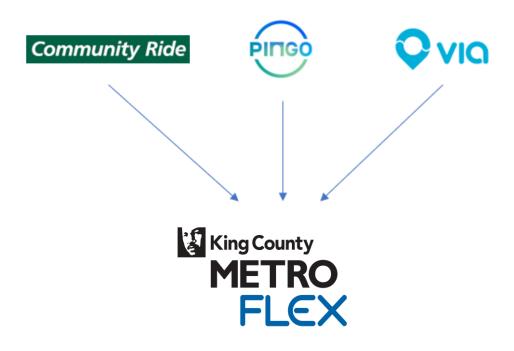- Available resources, including staff capacity

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Metro Flex Basics

- Open to general public

- Request ride on-demand using app, call center, or web booking

- Provide start/end anywhere within service area, get ETA

- Walk to nearby pick-up location

- Join a shared ride with 15 minute ETA on average

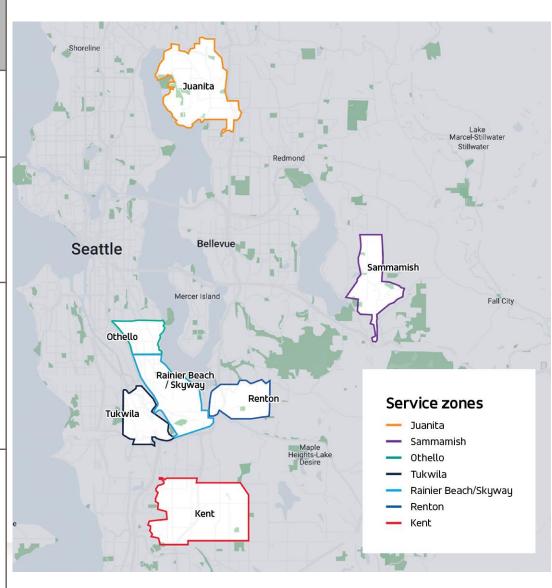- Same fare as bus, free transfers with ORCA

Metro Flex: Launched March 6, 2023

- Provides operational efficiencies
- Builds on innovations, preserves those achieved
- Streamlines branding, reduces customer confusion
- Reduces staff demands
- Achieves cost savings

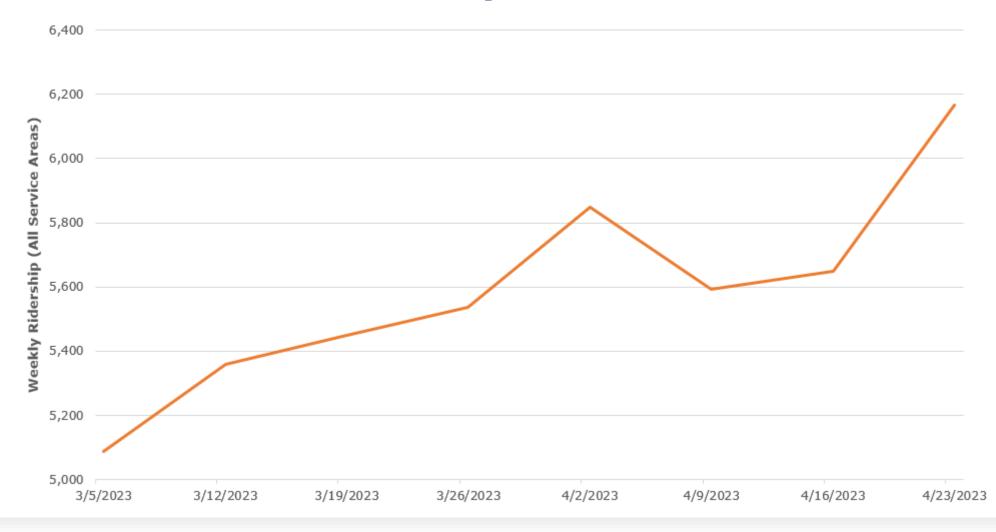| Service areas	Weekdays	Weekend
Juanita	7am-7pm	
Sammamish	7am-6pm	Sat: 9am-6pm
Kent	5am-7pm	Sat: 7am-7pm Sun: 7am-7pm
SE Seattle Renton Tukwila	5am-1am	Sat:5am-1am Sun:6am-12am

Service zones
- Juanita
- Sammamish
- Othello
- Tukwila
- Rainier Beach/Skyway
- Renton
- Kent

On-Demand Performance (1/2/2023 to 3/5/2023)

Location	Othello	Rainier Beach	Skyway	Tukwila	Renton	Kent	Juanita	Sammamish
Equity	93%	93%	54%	88%	82%	93%	39%	13%
Average daily rides	129	271	105	69	104	70	51	85
Productivity (rides/hour)	2.94	3.88	2.40	3.32	3.81	2.37	2.17	4.08
Efficiency (cost/ride*)	$18.34	$13.89	$22.43	$16.23	$14.14	$26.01	$32.48	$17.32

* Different vendors have different operating costs

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Recent Metro Flex Ridership Trend
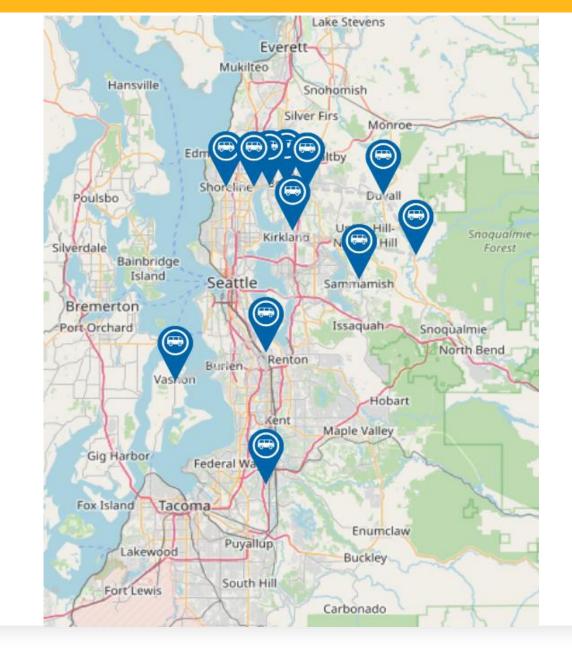
Moving forward together

Community Van

- Local, shared community-based trips
- Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC)
  - Recruits volunteer drivers
  - Manages trips and vehicles
  - Promotes, maintains info hub
- Metro provides vehicles, fuel, maintenance, insurance, staff funding, monitoring
- Available 24 / 7, flexible to meet community need

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Community Van

- Algona-Pacific
- Bothell-Woodinville
- Duvall-Carnation
- Kenmore-Kirkland
- Sammamish
- Shoreline-Lake Forest Park
- Skyway
- Vashon

*Launching soon-
Redmond (June) and Tukwila (July)

Moving forward together

Community Van Trips

- Partnership with KC Parks and ECOSS

- Local group trips to events and activities

- Medical appointments

- Food bank trips and meal deliveries

- Youth trips for sports, scout troops, after school programs

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Trailhead Direct

- Partnership with King County Parks and City of Seattle

- Seasonal transit-to-trails service

- Goals evolved from alleviating parking congestion to increasing equitable access to the outdoors

- Two routes sustained services, two are still pilots

- Operations on most routes suspended due to operator shortage

What's next

- End-of-pilot-period evaluation at year end
- Integrations with paratransit
- Electrification
- Integration w/trip planners
- Non-dedicated service providers for high demand times/overflow
- Supporting families w/children
- Planned expansion: Overlake, Auburn, Federal Way

King County METRO

Moving forward together

Thank you!