



King County

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

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February 7, 2024

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits the Transit Riders Now report for the fall 2024 service change, as required by Ordinance 19546, Section 114, Proviso P5. This is the third of four Transit Riders Now reports required by Proviso P5.

The report includes an analysis of ridership patterns, ridership levels, and route productivity; a description of changes by agency partners that could affect transit service provided by King County Metro (Metro); and an analysis of any constraints that limit additions to transit service. Concurrently with this report, I am submitting to the King County Council for consideration two proposed Metro service change Ordinances for fall 2024: one for the Madison Street Area Bus Service Change Project (MSA) and another for the Lynnwood Link Connections Mobility Project (LLC). Both projects are service restructures responding to major transportation network changes. This report is transmitted alongside these proposed service change Ordinances consistent with the requirements of Ordinance 19546.

The enclosed report identifies how these proposed projects comport with King County Metro Service Guidelines and advance the Metro Connects long-range plan. Consistent with the Metro's Service Recovery Plan approved by Ordinance 19581, these proposed service change projects include reinvestment of suspended hours back into project areas based on adopted policy; community, jurisdiction, and stakeholder engagement; and emerging ridership needs. In addition, both projects include City of Seattle-directed reallocation of existing Seattle Transit Measure (STM) investment in the project area. The MSA project also includes added service hours to be funded by King County to implement the RapidRide G Line. Both the MSA and LLE projects were designed with extensive engagement focused on priority populations.

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Ridership continues to recover from pandemic-related impacts and grow steadily across the system. Between the 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. Weekends and off-peak times maintained higher shares of ridership relative to weekday peak periods when compared to 2019 but afternoon peak continues to have the highest boardings per hour.

Metro continues to coordinate and plan with key partners, including the City of Seattle and Sound Transit.

In the fall 2024 service change, the City of Seattle plans to reallocate 25,200 annual STM-funded service hours invested in the MSA project area as of September 2022 and 17,500 annual service hours that were invested in the LLC project area as of March 2022. For the LLC project area, all 17,500 annual service hours invested are planned to be retained in the 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 also coordinating with Sound Transit around changes to Sound Transit Express bus service, Link light rail expansions and Stride Bus Rapid Transit service. 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. 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.

Metro is closely monitoring metrics related to service recovery, including staffing and overtime rates, fleet availability, and trip delivery. Within its adopted budget, Metro has adequate funding to add and restore service in fall 2024. However, significant work remains to grow the workforce to grow service. 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. The next Transit Riders Now report and potential accompanying service change ordinances will describe changes proposed for spring 2025.

Thank you for your consideration of this report. This report documents continued work to grow transit service in ways that respond to community needs, ridership changes, and Metro's ability to deliver service.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Christina O'Claire, Mobility Division Director, Metro Transit Department, at 206-477-5801.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dow Constantine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" at the end.

for

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

Michelle Allison, General Manager, Metro Transit Department (MTD)

Christina O'Claire, Director, Mobility Division, MTD