



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Motion 16781

Proposed No. 2025-0058.2

Sponsors Balducci, Barón and Perry

1 A MOTION relating to public transportation, requesting
 2 that the Metro transit department report on unplanned trip
 3 cancellations, describe how information about unplanned
 4 trip cancellations for fixed-route bus service could more
 5 quickly and efficiently be provided to inform transit riders
 6 in real time, and describe how metrics about unplanned trip
 7 cancellations could be incorporated into the next update of
 8 the King County Metro Service Guidelines to inform
 9 operational and investment decisions.

10 WHEREAS, the King County Metro Service Guidelines ("the Service
 11 Guidelines"), which were updated in 2021 by Ordinance 19367, guide the development
 12 of the transit system through criteria to develop, modify, and evaluate transit service, and

13 WHEREAS, the Service Guidelines identify performance measures for fixed-
 14 route bus service, which the Metro transit department monitors and evaluates to
 15 determine if investments or operational changes should be made to meet community
 16 needs, and

17 WHEREAS, schedule reliability is identified in the Service Guidelines as one of
 18 the performance measures for fixed-route service, and

19 WHEREAS, schedule reliability is defined as buses adhering to published
 20 schedules within reasonable variance, specifically that a bus route should be no more than

Motion 16781

21 five minutes later or one minute earlier than its scheduled arrival time more than twenty
22 percent of the time, or, for routes that provide frequent service, more than three minutes
23 from the scheduled headway more than twenty percent of the time, and

24 WHEREAS, schedule reliability, which is measured in terms of the number of
25 annual transit service hours that would be required for routes not operating reliably to
26 meet the reliability standard, is reported for each route each year in the system evaluation
27 report required by Ordinance 19367, and

28 WHEREAS, in the years following the pandemic, a related issue has emerged,
29 that of unplanned transit trip cancellations, and

30 WHEREAS, unplanned trip cancellations, which are defined as scheduled trips
31 that do not take place, can happen for many reasons, including when there is either no
32 operator or no vehicle available at the transit base for a specific bus route, meaning that
33 the entire run of that bus route must be canceled, and

34 WHEREAS, unplanned trip cancellations have a similar impact on transit riders
35 as routes that are unreliable, in that, in both cases, buses do not arrive at their stops at the
36 scheduled time, but have different causes and different solutions, as issues with schedule
37 reliability are typically caused by traffic congestion along a bus route and can be
38 addressed either by investing in capital improvements to enhance transit speed and
39 reliability or by adding transit service hours to adjust the bus schedule, while issues with
40 unplanned trip cancellations can be caused by a shortage of staff or operable fleet
41 meaning that the bus never leaves the transit base and can be addressed by adding staff or
42 fleet, and

43 WHEREAS, Ordinance 19581, which approved the Metro Service Recovery Plan

Motion 16781

44 following the pandemic, acknowledged the challenge of unplanned trip cancellations and
45 encouraged the Metro transit department to take all steps necessary to match service
46 plans to achievable operational capacity, including, if needed, by making additional
47 emergency service reductions so that transit riders could depend on the Metro transit
48 department to provide scheduled service on a daily basis without last-minute
49 cancellations, and

50 WHEREAS, in response to Ordinance 19581, the Metro transit department
51 implemented emergency service reductions in September 2023 to match service levels to
52 operational capacity, and

53 WHEREAS, in addition, the Metro transit department developed new operational
54 protocols to respond to a nationwide steering column recall that affected a significant
55 portion of the bus fleet and has initiated a service and workforce initiative that has sought
56 to reduce unplanned trip cancellations, recruit more bus operators, vehicle mechanics,
57 and other operational staff to reduce the level of vacancies, and relieve other operating
58 capacity constraints to better maintain scheduled service levels and provide more reliable
59 service across the system, and

60 WHEREAS, because of those efforts, the Metro transit department reports
61 improved service dependability reliability in the provision of scheduled trips on average
62 each day;

63 WHEREAS, the Metro transit department monitors and evaluates unplanned trip
64 cancellations and schedule reliability to inform operational and investment decisions, and

65 WHEREAS, to maintain rider confidence in the transit system, it is imperative
66 that the Metro transit department quickly and efficiently make information available to

Motion 16781

67 inform transit riders of delays or trip cancellations in real time, and

68 WHEREAS, the Metro transit department maintains an alert system for which
69 riders can register to receive real-time updates on unplanned trip cancellations and other
70 trip disruptions for individual routes and services through text or email, and

71 WHEREAS, Ordinance 19367 requires the executive to transmit to the council an
72 ordinance to update the Service Guidelines within seven years of transmittal, meaning
73 that updates to the Service Guidelines are expected to be considered no later than 2028,
74 and

75 WHEREAS, as the Metro transit department develops a proposal for the next
76 update to the Service Guidelines, it is appropriate to include data and information about
77 unplanned trip cancellations and how unplanned trip cancellations will inform operational
78 and investment decisions;

79 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

80 A. The council requests that the Metro transit department report on unplanned
81 trip cancellations and the impact on transit riders for the period to be covered in the 2025
82 system evaluation report that is required by Ordinance 19367, with this information to be
83 provided as an appendix to the 2025 system evaluation report, which is due to be
84 transmitted to the council by October 31, 2025.

85 B. The council requests that the Metro transit department provide updates to the
86 transportation, economy, and environment committee at each of the next two general
87 manager updates during 2025 on how information about unplanned trip cancellations is,
88 or could be, quickly and efficiently provided to inform transit riders in real time of delays
89 or cancellations via communications from the Metro transit department and information

Motion 16781

90 provided to third party transit planning applications. The general manager updates
91 should also provide information about how Metro transit department unplanned trip
92 cancellations compares with peer transit agencies.

93 C. The council requests that the Metro transit department provide a briefing to
94 the regional transit committee and the transportation, economy, and environment
95 committee or its successor no later than February 28, 2026, to describe how metrics about

Motion 16781

- 96 unplanned trip cancellations could be incorporated into the next update of the Service
- 97 Guidelines to inform operational and investment decisions.

Motion 16781 was introduced on 2/11/2025 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 3/4/2025, by the following vote:


Yes: 8 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Quinn, von Reichbauer and Zahilay
Excused: 1 - Perry

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:

1AEA3C5077F8485...
Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

8DE1BB375AD3422...
Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None

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Intermediary Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp
Certified Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp
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Notary Events	Signature	Timestamp
Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps

Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps
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Certified Delivered	Security Checked	3/5/2025 4:30:35 PM
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