## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 8 | **Name:** | Paul Carlson |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2016-0404 | **Date:** | January 17, 2017 |

**SUBJECT**

Proposed Ordinance 2016-0404 would adopt METRO CONNECTS,the King County Metro Transit long range plan. This legislation was subject to a mandatory referral to the Regional Transit Committee (RTC) with subsequent referral to the Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee. The RTC passed the Proposed Ordinance on December 14, 2016, after amending the proposed plan and adding requirements to the ordinance for follow-up work and reporting.

**SUMMARY**

METRO CONNECTS is the proposed 25-year long range plan for King County Metro Transit. It was developed around three goals for transit service:

1. **More service.** The proposed plan outlines options to provide more RapidRide lines, more all-day bus service, additional local choices, and faster transit options, such as bus-only lanes.
2. **More choices.** The proposed plan identifies options to provide more types of service, including projects to provide additional on-demand service options, as well as investments for enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and auto access to transit.
3. **One system.** The proposed plan orients itself within the regional transit system, highlighting coordination with Sound Transit and other agencies and partners, identifies opportunities to make transit more accessible for people with differing needs, and outlines customer assistance and service improvement goals.

The RTC reviewed the proposed plan over the course of a number of meetings and workshops during 2016, and passed Proposed Ordinance 2016-0404 on December 14, 2016, after amending the proposed plan to reflect regional concerns and issues of interest, and adding requirements to the ordinance for follow-up work and reporting.

**BACKGROUND**

The 2013 update of the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021[[1]](#footnote-1) included a new strategy (Strategy 6.1.2) calling for development of a King County Metro long range plan in collaboration with King County cities and other transit agencies.

METRO CONNECTS is the response to this requirement. It was developed by King County Metro following lengthy public consultation with jurisdictions and stakeholders and was transmitted by the Executive in 2016. It addresses operating and capital requirements for a King County Metro transit program that would:

* Incorporate transit service needs identified in city comprehensive plans;
* Revise the King County Metro transit network to include “Frequent Service,” “Express Service,” and “Local and Flexible Service” categories;
* Integrate Metro transit service with Sound Transit and other transit agency services; and
* Provide the level of transit service needed to address population and job growth to 2040, as projected by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

The proposed 2040 METRO CONNECTS network assumes a 70 percent increase in bus service hours accompanied by significant capital investments in fleet, operating base capacity, passenger access and facilities, transit pathways, and other needs. Funding gaps would need to be addressed to achieve both the 2025 network (which is identified as an interim step), as well as the proposed 2040 network.

**Summary of METRO CONNECTS (as transmitted)**

The METRO CONNECTSintroductory section highlights three objectives (more service, more choices, and one system) and describes benefits of the proposed, fully implemented vision.

**Chapter 1 – What We’re Proposing to Do,** takes up most of METRO CONNECTS, with sections describing elements of the service network, service quality investments, and critical service supports.

Each concept is described in a summary statement, followed by a *“What would it look like”* explanation and a *“What would it take”* discussion of planning, funding, and other requirements to achieve the concept.

The service network section describes the three bus service types (frequent service, express service, and local and flexible service), as well as accessible transportation options.

The service quality investments section describes topics that affect the customer experience in using transit, all of which would have impacts on King County Metro’s success in achieving the METRO CONNECTS vision. These include:

* Speed and reliability
* Boarding and fares
* Innovation and technology
* Customer communications
* Passenger facilities
* Access to transit
* Managing demand
* Transit-oriented development

The critical service supports section addresses infrastructure, support facilities, and workforce needs for achieving the vision, focusing on fleet, layover areas, operations and system preservation, and Metro’s workforce.

**Chapter 2 – How We Would Do It,** addresses the process for moving toward the vision, with information on finances, the role of partnerships, service and capital investments, and initial steps.

METRO CONNECTS includes seven Appendices with more detailed information on key plan elements. Notably, Appendix A, Service Network, reflects the close collaboration with cities on transit needs and appropriate service types for different areas of the county.

* Appendix A. Service Network
* Appendix B. Capital Costing Methodology
* Appendix C. Speed and Reliability
* Appendix D. Access to Transit
* Appendix E. Passenger Facilities
* Appendix F. Critical Service Supports
* Appendix G. RapidRide Expansion Report

**RTC Amendment**

Proposed Ordinance 2016-0404 was reviewed and discussed in RTC meetings on August 17, August 30, September 21, October 19, and November 16. Based on RTC input, a first draft of revisions to METRO CONNECTS was circulated in October; a second draft was released in November; and the committee voted to adopt the proposed plan in December, as amended.

Table 1 lists changes to the transmitted METRO CONNECTS document in page order, as effectuated by the amendments made by the RTC. If the only change to a page is the renumbering of a figure or the change of a single word, it is not included in this table. Note: All the service maps were updated from the transmittal to correct mistakes and distinguish more clearly between ‘peak-only’ and ‘express’ service.

**Table 1. RTC Amendment Changes to METRO CONNECTS**

| **Pages** | **Section** | **Issue** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4-7 | Executive Summary | New 4-page Executive Summary added |
| 16 | METRO CONNECTS benefits | Adds reference to high capacity transit and bus rapid transit (BRT) |
| 19 | Peak-only service | Definition of “peak-only express service” added to glossary, page numbers in table of contents change |
| 20 | Service Profile Table | Adds vehicle numbers to Table 3, adds reference to System Evaluation Report (instead of Service Guidelines Report) |
| 21 | Peak Service | Rewords explanation of “peak service only” role |
| 22 | Integrating Transit | New paragraph on transit network evolution through 2040 and on integration with Sound Transit |
| 26 | 2040 Service Network | Adds Figure 8 map and includes explanatory paragraph on 2040 network |
| 27 | Performance Metrics | Adds 2015 baseline data and explanatory narrative to Figure 9, 2040 Performance Metrics |
| 28 | Frequent Service  | Rewords “Frequent Service” description |
| 30 | RapidRide Network | Adds explanatory material to map legend |
| 33 | Express Buses | Adds reference to bus rapid transit |
| 37 | Alternative Services | Revises Alternative Services description |
| 40-41 | Speed and Reliability | Rewords descriptions of “Speed and Reliability” and investment categories |
| 46-47 | Innovation & Technology | Rewords description of technology role |
| 52 | Passenger Facilities | Adds reference to BRT (in addition to light rail) |
| 54 | Access to Transit | Rewords “Transit Access Zones” description and parking stall information |
| 56 | Park-and-Ride Map | Adds explanatory detail to map legend and revises colors for clarity |
| 58 | Access to Transit | Revises discussion and table relating to park-and-ride needs |
| 73 | What Would It Take? | Rewords summary description of operations and system preservation needs |
| 77, 79 | Development Program | Corrects name of Metro Connects Development Program, System Evaluation Report |
| 80 | Development Program | New narrative describing Development Program |
| 81 | Plan Relationships | Revises chart of transit plan relationships |
| 82 | Financial Overview | Corrects names of King County Forecast Council and Metro Connects Development Program |
| 83 | Partnerships | Revision of partnership language |
| 84 | State of Good Repair (SGR) | Adds description of State of Good Repair requirements, clarifies what is shown in Figure 27 |
| 85 | First Steps | Adds reference to high capacity transit |

The RTC amendment made changes to the plan’s appendices, including adding references to the METRO CONNECTS Development Program, reordering some sections, and updating and correcting data

The amendment also made a change to the underlying ordinance (Proposed Ordinance 2016-0404) that would require the transmittal to the Council and RTC, by March 30, 2017, of a work plan for a METRO CONNECTS Development Program.

**ANALYSIS**

The long range plan, METRO CONNECTS, as transmitted, meets the requirements of Ordinance 17641. It was extensively reviewed by the RTC and was amended to correct technical and formatting errors, to address regional concerns and issues of interest, and to add follow-up work and reporting requirements.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Ordinance 2016-0404 and attachments, as amended
2. Transmittal Letter
3. Fiscal Note

**INVITED**

* Christina O’Claire, Manager Strategy and Performance, King County Transit Division
* Jana Demas, Strategic Planning Lead, King County Transit Division
1. Ordinance 17641 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)