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## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 10 | **Name:** | Terra RosePaul Carlson |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2020-B0002 | **Date:** | January 15, 2020 |

**SUBJECT**

A King County Metro Transit staff presentation providing an introduction to Metro Transit operations and policy documents.

**SUMMARY**

The Regional Transit Committee (RTC) has jurisdiction over Metro countywide policy, notably the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation (Transit Strategic Plan), King County Metro Service Guidelines, and METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan. This briefing by Metro staff explains how these policy documents shape Metro’s transit services and provides an overview of the Metro service, ridership, and budget data.

**BACKGROUND**

The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and the King County Metro Service Guidelines were approved in 2011,[[1]](#footnote-1) reflecting the Regional Transit Task Force (RTTF) recommendations for transparent, performance-based guidelines emphasizing productivity, social equity, and geographic value. The current versions of these policy documents are updates based on input from the Service Guidelines Task Force that met in 2015.

The Transit Strategic Plan:

* Defines King County Metro’s vision,
* Provides context on Metro’s function and challenges,
* Establishes eight broad Goals for Metro, each of which is associated with one or more Objectives that describe what Metro must do to achieve the Goals,
* For each Objective, defines Strategies for achieving the Objective, and
* Lists performance measures that are used to assess progress in accomplishing the Strategies.

More detail on potential updates to the Transit Strategic Plan is provided in the Metro staff briefing.

The King County Metro Service Guidelines:

* Define the all-day and peak network of Metro Transit corridors connecting regional growth centers[[2]](#footnote-2) and Metro-designated transit activity centers[[3]](#footnote-3);
* Establish a scoring process to identify target service levels on these transit corridors by awarding points for productivity, social equity, and geographic value;
* Establish measures of route productivity, passenger loads, and schedule reliability to assess Metro system performance;
* Set service design criteria for individual bus routes and the overall bus network; and
* Outline performance measures and design factors used to manage the system.

Starting in 2012, Metro has used the Service Guidelines to inform bus service changes, including restructures to accommodate new RapidRide bus lines and Link Light Rail extensions. For each service change, budget constraints, availability of buses and operators, and other factors have affected service hour investment decisions.

In 2013, the RTC and County Council added a Strategy to the Transit Strategic Plan calling for development of a long-range transit plan in coordination with King County cities and reflecting the transit needs identified in the cities’ comprehensive plans. This plan, the METRO CONNECTS Long Range Vision, was adopted in 2016.[[4]](#footnote-4) In its first chapter, “What We’re Proposing to Do,” METRO CONNECTS describes plans to expand and transform service through:

* 2025 and 2040 service networks of frequent, express, and local/flexible bus service integrated with Sound Transit rail and other services;
* Service Quality Investments in eight categories, including Speed and Reliability, Boarding and Fares, Innovation and Technology, Customer Communications, Passenger Facilities, Access to Transit, Managing Demand, and Transit-Oriented Development;
* Critical Service Supports – Fleet, Layover Areas, Operations and System Preservation, and Metro’s Workforce.

The second chapter of METRO CONNECTS, “How We Would Do It,” or “Attaining the Vision,” describes:

* The METRO CONNECTS Development Program, a rolling six-year development program to coordinate internally and with jurisdictions to deliver the near-term service changes, complementary capital investments, and other program and policy work needed to support the METRO CONNECTS vision;
* Financial Overview (clearly defining the revenue shortfall necessary to achieve the described future service levels);
* Working Together: What It Would Take to Form Partnerships;
* Service and Capital Investments; and
* First Steps.

In approving METRO CONNECTS, the RTC and County Council looked to the METRO CONNECTS Development Program to provide transparency on implementation. The need for significant additional revenue to achieve the METRO CONNECTS vision is also described in the METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan.

In addition to providing information about Metro Transit services, this briefing outlines some of the other factors that have led to proposed updates of the policy documents. These include the need to incorporate passenger ferry policy into Metro planning now that the Marine Division is part of the Metro Transit Department, the effects of the decision to define Metro as a mobility agency, and the recent Mobility Framework recommendations developed by Metro’s Equity Cabinet.

**INVITED**

1. Mary Bourguignon, Strategic Planning Manager, Metro Transit Department
2. Katie Chalmers, Service Planning Supervisor, Metro Transit Department

**LINKS**

Metro’s policy documents and related reports are on the Department website. Here are links to these documents.

Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021:

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/about/planning/strategic-plan.aspx>

King County Metro Service Guidelines:

<https://metro.kingcounty.gov/planning/pdf/2011-21/2015/metro-service-guidelines-042816.pdf>

METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan:

<https://metro.kingcounty.gov/planning/long-range-plan/>

2018 System Evaluation (Annual Report)

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/transportation/metro/accountability/pdf/2018/system-evaluation.pdf>

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Introduction to Metro Policy Updates, Metro Transit Department presentation
2. Metro’s Numbers at a Glance, Metro Transit Department handout
1. Ordinance 17143 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Service Guidelines use the regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers designated by the Puget Sound Regional Council within King County, which reflect areas with dense population, employment, and manufacturing and industrial activity. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Transit activity centers, as defined in the Service Guidelines, are areas with relatively high transit use identified by Metro. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ordinance 18449 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)