



KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

AUGUST 1, 2022





Follow-up on Paratransit Audit

King County Metro Transit is making progress in several areas, but more action is needed to fully implement the four remaining recommendations. The agency is connecting with community partners to reach prospective riders with culturally relevant service through a pilot, known as the Navigator project. Community partners asked to join in the pilot include Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Circle of Friends, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, CISC, Refugee Women's Alliance, and Asian Counseling and Referral Services. Meanwhile, King County Metro Transit is working to enhance language access. For example, Metro Transit made progress on the translation of key customer-facing documents and expects to have them out in five languages—Chinese (simplified and traditional), Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese—later this year.

Technical issues led to the delay of a new online payment application from 2021 to 2023. Metro Transit said incompatibility between existing software and the online payment application caused the delay. The revised launch date is contingent upon software upgrades planned for later this year.

We will continue to monitor the four remaining recommendations on equity and online payment until they are complete.

Of the 17 audit recommendations:

	12 DONE		4 PROGRESS		0 OPEN		1 CLOSED
Fully implemented Auditor will no longer monitor.		Partially implemented Auditor will continue to monitor.		Remain unresolved Auditor will continue to monitor.		No longer applicable Auditor will no longer monitor.	

Please see details below for implementation status of each recommendation.

Recommendation 1	On August 2, 2021	DONE	✓
Recommendation 2	On April 1, 2020	CLOSED	✗
Recommendation 3	On August 2, 2021	DONE	✓
Recommendation 4	On August 2, 2021	DONE	✓
Recommendation 5	On August 2, 2021	DONE	✓
Recommendation 6	On April 1, 2020	DONE	✓
Recommendation 7		PROGRESS	⋮

Transit should provide additional fare payment methods that take into account riders' needs and trip frequency.

STATUS UPDATE: Metro Transit delayed the launch date of its online payment tool for Access riders to the first quarter of 2023 from the fourth quarter of 2021. Metro Transit said incompatibility between existing software and the online payment application caused the delay. The revised launch date is contingent upon software upgrades planned for the fourth quarter of 2022. The software is currently undergoing testing. As we indicated in our audit report, many Access riders have challenges paying fares in cash, and they should be provided the same payment options as fixed route riders.

WHAT REMAINS: To complete this recommendation, Metro Transit needs to release a new payment option to paratransit customers.

Recommendation 8	PROGRESS	⋮
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Transit should work directly with King County communities to develop activities that will address barriers to the Access paratransit program for people with limited English proficiency.

STATUS UPDATE: Metro Transit plans to make Access eligibility documents available in five languages in the third quarter of 2022. Translation is underway to Chinese (both simplified and traditional), Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Translated documents will include applications, and promotional and instructional information.

WHAT REMAINS: To complete this recommendation, Metro Transit needs to publish and distribute its translated eligibility materials.

Recommendation 9

On April 1, 2020

DONE



Recommendation 10

On August 2, 2021

DONE



Recommendation 11

PROGRESS



Transit should use the results of the Equity Impact Review to find and engage with historically underserved populations.

STATUS UPDATE: Metro Transit is engaging community partners in a pilot to help people sign up for Access services. The pilot, known as the Navigator project, will assess the time and money community partners need to support prospective Access riders through the eligibility process, which includes a detailed application and functional assessment. Metro Transit expects information from the pilot to result in contracts with community partners who would charge King County a fee for supporting prospective riders. Community partners asked to participate in the pilot include Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Circle of Friends, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, CISC, Refugee Women's Alliance, and Asian Counseling and Referral Services.

WHAT REMAINS: To complete this recommendation, Metro Transit needs to conduct its pilot and engage community partners to offer services that support riders through the eligibility process. It expects to have cultural navigators in place in 2023.

Recommendation 12

PROGRESS



Based on the Equity Impact Review and best practices, Transit should a) develop community impact measures for the Access paratransit program, b) include the metrics in its Access paratransit performance monitoring plan, and c) annually report on equitable access to the program.

STATUS UPDATE: Tied to its Navigator project (see Recommendation 11), Metro Transit has developed community impact measures. These include counts of community outreach events that engage immigrant, refugee, and limited-English-speaking communities; documentation of riders' preferred languages; and the number of unique registered riders that come through the Navigator project.





WHAT REMAINS: To complete this recommendation, Metro Transit needs to monitor its community impact measures and report on them annually.

Recommendation 13

On April 1, 2020

DONE



Recommendation 14	On August 2, 2021	DONE	
Recommendation 15	On April 1, 2020	DONE	
Recommendation 16	On August 2, 2021	DONE	
Recommendation 17	On August 2, 2021	DONE	

Megan Ko conducted this review. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the King County Auditor's Office at KCAO@KingCounty.gov or 206-477-1033.