



KING COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

Transit Audit Program: 2020 Biennial Report

ADVANCING TRANSIT PERFORMANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND EQUITY

Six Years of Transit Audit Function in King County

The King County Council established the Transit Audit Function within the King County Auditor's Office in 2014. Since that time, we have consistently engaged in one or more in-depth reviews of King County Metro Transit Department (MTD). We focus on ensuring county residents have access to equitable, efficient, and effective transit services by making impactful recommendations to MTD.

High Impact Oversight 2018-2020

Our transit audit program resulted in:

- **four full audits** including transit reliability, cybersecurity, the Home Free Guarantee program, and fare enforcement on RapidRide lines. In addition, we are finalizing a report to inform bus electrification efforts.
- **significant positive impact for vulnerable county residents.** MTD implemented recommendations from our paratransit and fare enforcement audits improving service for those with disabilities and experiencing homelessness.
- **four reports to improve accountability and transparency of capital projects.**

Delivering Needed Capital Projects

Helping MTD improve its ability to complete capital projects was a significant area of focus. MTD embarked on an ambitious capital program to address regional growth and capacity to deliver service. However, it continues to have difficulty completing these projects on time and on budget. In 2019, MTD planned to spend about \$113 million on capital projects. It left vital projects incomplete by missing this target by more than 25 percent.

We issued four reports in 2019 and 2020 summarizing MTD progress in expanding capacity to deliver capital projects.

Given the current revenue forecast, it is more important than ever that MTD efficiently and effectively completes projects.

Key Results

MTD has implemented many significant recommendations since 2018. For example, during this period our recommendations encouraged positive outcomes at MTD:



Helped ensure that MTD is investing in the right projects at the right time by selecting IT projects based on strategic needs.



Decreased fines and decriminalized infractions by instituting a new system to enforce fares on RapidRide lines.



Ensured vulnerable residents have faster and safer access to transportation by implementing new contract for paratransit.



Reduced the risk of over-budgeting by completing critical maintenance work.

81%
TOOK ACTION

Action Toward Implementation

Following up on our recommendations increases transparency and accountability and creates momentum for positive change. Since 2018, we followed up on 57 audit recommendations. We track recommendations until they are complete.



100%
CONCURRENCE

Concurrence Increases Impact

Concurrence with our recommendations is the first step in positive change for the County and is one signal that our recommendations are effectively crafted. Metro Transit concurred with all 21 of the audit recommendations we made since 2018.

Award-Winning Oversight

Each year, local government audit organizations from around the U.S. and Canada submit their best performance audit reports to be judged by their peers. Our 2018 audit looking at fare enforcement on RapidRide lines won an exemplary award. The judges commented “the audit conclusions were impactful, and identified that not only could Transit not justify RapidRide’s fare enforcement model in terms of cost-effectiveness, but that the model also likely has unintended consequences for persons experiencing housing instability.”

Publications

Our office completed four audits focused on MTD and has one report in progress. We also followed up on recommendations from seven audits. All publications are available on the on the [King County Auditor’s website](#).

Performance Audit Reports

- *Cybersecurity Gaps Leave County at Risk*
- *King County’s Home Free Guarantee Program has sufficient internal controls to mitigate potential fraud, waste, and abuse*
- *RapidRide Fare Enforcement: Efforts Needed to Ensure Efficiency and Address Equity Issues*
- *Transit Manages Reliability Well, but Could Further Improve Customer Experience*

Work in Progress

- Bus Electrification

Follow-Up Reports

- Asset Management Program
- Bus Part Rebuilds
- Capital Planning
- Service Expansion
- Paratransit
- Transit IT

Team

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