

TOWN HALL

Frequently Asked Questions



Operations & Mobility

What is the status of Ride2 and some of Metro's other pilot programs?

Via to Transit, a new pilot on-demand service that connects riders to and from five transit hubs in southeast Seattle and Tukwila, launched April 16.

- ▶ How it works: Customers in Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Beach and Tukwila International Boulevard can use the Via app or call 206-258-7739 (a smart phone is not required) to request a ride to or from the nearby light rail stations.
- ▶ It costs the same as a Metro bus trip. Riders can pay with an ORCA card (including ORCA LIFT, Youth or Regional Reduced Fare Permit), which will automatically apply as a transfer toward a trip on a bus or train.
- ▶ Via to Transit is a Metro partnership with Sound Transit, City of Seattle and the Federal Transit Administration.
- ▶ The initial numbers are showing promise. Wait times are lower than anticipated and we are exceeding other KPIs.

Ride2 (Eastgate and West Seattle)

- ▶ How it works: Customers in Eastgate and West Seattle can use the Ride2 Transit app or call 855-233-1880 to request rides to or from nearby transit hubs (specifically, the Eastgate P&R, and Seacrest Dock and Alaska Junction, respectively). Wheelchair accessible vehicles are available upon request.
- ▶ It costs the same as a Metro bus trip. Riders can pay with cash (exact change), a paper transfer, a regional ORCA card (including ORCA LIFT, Youth or Regional Reduced Fare Permit), or a Transit Go mobile ticket.
- ▶ Rides are shared with other Metro customers while assuring riders get to their destination promptly.
- ▶ On average, wait times are under 10 minutes, and travel times are under 15 minutes.

Trailhead Direct entered its second full season, starting on April 20. On opening weekend, there were about 1,000 boardings and the second weekend had over 1,100 boardings.

- ▶ Trailhead Direct now offers more pick-up sites—including the Tukwila International Boulevard Station—to more trailheads.
- ▶ Trailhead Direct, co-led by Metro and King County Parks and operated by Hopelink, is possible thanks to funding and in-kind support from a number of partners, including the Seattle Department of Transportation, REI, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington Trails Association, and The Wilderness Society.
- ▶ Running weekends and Metro designated holidays, Trailhead Direct also costs the same as a standard Metro bus trip.

What information can be shared about the status of the electric fleet?

- ▶ Currently 12% of our total fleet is zero-emissions (185 out of 1,600) and we are testing new models; technology is changing.
- ▶ We have moved from three fast charge buses to 11 and have recently completed work to commission additional charging at Eastgate Park and Ride.
- ▶ We are leasing six standard 40 ft. and four articulated 60 ft. "long-distance" battery-electric buses for a test period of one year or longer. These travel more than five times farther (~140 miles or longer) between re-charging, than the fast charge buses Metro currently has in its fleet (~25 miles on a single charge).
- ▶ We will soon have two fully electrified routes. Routes 226 and 241 will soon be using only battery electric buses.

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How can we get more information and share our feedback about operations in general, and our division/section specifically?

- ▶ Updates about the department is shared on our employee site (www.kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/employees.aspx)
- ▶ Division directors have initiated office hours for their teams.
- ▶ You can also submit general department feedback by email askrob@kingcounty.gov

Partnerships and Sound Transit

What updates are there about our relationship/partnership with Sound Transit?

As many of you know, we are in the final stages of renewing our Intergovernmental Agreement between Sound Transit and King County, which enables Metro to operate and maintain Link light rail for the next four and a half years.

- ▶ Pending King County Council and Sound Transit Board approval, this agreement will also provide continued stability for our workforce. While the review process is expected to take a few months, we believe the new agreement will be approved by July 17, 2019, which is the expiration date of our current agreement.
- ▶ Our key priorities are to secure an agreement that reflects the growth of the system and provide for stable operations. We believe this agreement, which can extend up to 10 years, meets those objectives.

Employee Services

What are Metro's current apprenticeship programs?

Metro is actively building apprenticeship and training programs.

- ▶ Metro has a well-established Transit Mechanic Apprenticeship (which includes a four-year program and a two-year program). The program partners with South Seattle Community College and the Lake Washington Institute of Technology Heavy Duty Diesel Mechanic programs. This program currently has four apprentices and will have more positions over the next two years.

Metro launched two new apprenticeship programs this year.

- ▶ The Rail Electrical Worker Apprenticeship targets a work group (currently 19 people) that will be doubling in several years as Link light rail expands. We are currently in the process of hiring one apprentice this year. Next year, we hope to hire more apprentices. This is a four-year program and partners with Puget Sound Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee. The program was developed by Rail Division employees and management, and will be overseen by a joint labor management committee with IBEW 77 representatives and Rail Traction Power Management.
- ▶ The Building Operating Engineer Apprenticeship is specifically designed to maintain the heating/cooling (HVAC) systems at our bases. This is currently a work group of eight and we are hiring one apprentice. It's also a four-year program and partners with a trade school (currently the Construction Industry Training Council). The program was developed by Facilities Division employees and management, and will be overseen by a joint labor management committee with ATU 587 representatives and Facilities Division Management.

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Metro also has a trainee program in our Rail Division—the Light Rail Electro Mechanic Trainee program provides eligible Rail Service Workers the opportunity to become Light Rail Electro Mechanics. It began as a pilot program and has helped Metro develop two skilled electro mechanics. We currently have three trainees in the program.

Each of these programs gave preference to employees in the Vehicle Maintenance, Rail, and Facilities Divisions respectively.

How can employees have more visibility into recruiting/hiring in general (job postings, trade schools, etc.)?

Metro posts all Special Duty positions and sends emails for ALL positions, including Special Duty and Details, to Transit ALL with instructions to post at bases. The talent team attends job fairs and outreach events multiple times per month, focusing on trades and communities of color as well as military. For our large recruitments, the talent team, in collaboration with DHR's Career Support Services, holds information sessions that teach interviewing skills, resume skills, and gives countywide development opportunities.

Training & Development

How can employees get what they need to get their jobs well? Resources? Performance feedback/support?

Metro is moving forward with in-house initiatives designed to increase employee access to relevant learning and development opportunities. Technical training is currently provided at the section level. In the meantime, we encourage employees to access the Employee Resource Center, managed by King County's Career Support Services, which offers one-on-one coaching, group consultations and additional resources:

www.kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/learning-development/career-coaching/employee-resource-center.aspx.

We also encourage employees to appropriately use King County's Learning and Development resources to find classroom and online training: www.kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/learning-development.aspx.

How are we growing in-house talent? How is career advancement/progression being addressed?

In the first quarter of 2019, we hired 142 employees into non-operator positions. Over half of those positions were filled with internal movements and promotions! We also support the use of special duty, detail, and lead assignments as opportunities for career development. Our internal initiatives will continue to look for new and inventive ways to help employees have the career at Metro that they want. We encourage everyone to keep an eye on the careers page (www.kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/careers.aspx) and fill out a job notification card to get early notice of positions you may be interested in.

General

What are some services/benefits for employees (on-site or near-site)? Child care? Wellness? Work-life balance?

King County's Balanced You site is the one stop shop for information related to health, balance and self/family care www.kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/balanced-you.aspx. It includes:

- ▶ Locations and amenity information for all workplace fitness centers and wellness/lactation rooms. Each Metro base, as well as King Street Center and the Chinook Building, has on-site exercise resources. The Balanced You site also includes information on discounts available at area gyms, training studios, and other providers for employees and family members.
- ▶ Information on the Making Life Easier program, providing referrals for child and elder care resources, as well as personal, family and financial counseling. The MLE program can be reached 24/7 seven days a week at 1-888-874-7290.

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- ▶ A calendar of workshops offered at King County facilities, including meditation, retirement preparation, and other classes. Balanced You has funds available for employees to propose and start their own wellness programs on-site.

Where can we get more/specific information about wages, reporting structure and labor relations?

- ▶ Employees can find information on Metro's structure and strategy at www.kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/employees/becoming-a-mobility-agency.aspx.
- ▶ Labor contracts and Memorandums of Agreement for all bargaining units are posted at www.kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/labor-relations/contracts.aspx.
- ▶ Current wage schedules for all King County classifications are available at www.kingcounty.gov/~media/audience/employees/pay-benefits/compensation-classification/Current-Pay-Rates-Report.ashx?la=en. Wages are listed by union/not-represented for classifications crossing more than one contract. Information on wage progression, pay for special duty, etc. is outlined in each labor contract or Master Labor Agreement. Employees can contact Transit HR at 206-477-6000 with questions.

Communications

What is our official department name?

As legislated in ordinance, our official department name is the Metro Transit Department. That is how the department should be referred to in legal documents. For all other purposes and internal and external communications, use King County Metro as the name of our department.

How can we get more information and share our feedback about the Metro Transit Department in general?

- ▶ Information is shared on Metro's employee website: www.kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/employees.aspx
- ▶ Rob and Metro leaders are initiating another series of town halls starting in May through July. Come to a town hall and engage with Rob and division leaders!
- ▶ You can also email: Askrob@kingcounty.gov

Stay up to date:
visit our employee website at www.kingcounty.gov/metro/employees

