

300,000 Metro riders fuel region's recovery

By Michelle Allison, King County Metro General Manager

Our region reached a major milestone when more than 300,000 people rode King County Metro. Achieving the highest one-day total in four years is proof that transit is the engine of our economic recovery. We're going to more places and we're traveling together.

The 303,000 people who took Metro on May 15, 2024, represents an increase of 22% from just a year ago and 156% from 2020. And this fall, your transit options will grow, too. Metro is adding more bus service, including in the evenings and on weekends. We're providing connections to four new Sound Transit light rail stations. We'll also unveil the RapidRide G Line, linking Madison Valley with downtown Seattle.

More riders and an expanding network bring us closer to what each of us wants our region to offer: easy, congestion-free and environmentally friendly ways to get around.

Vast numbers of private vehicles are taken off the road because Metro carries more passengers than any transit agency in the northwestern U.S. Yet, we still have congestion on bridges, freeways and streets. As our population increases by tens of thousands each year and in-person work rebounds, the answer is more transit, not less.

We also know that safety is vital to our riders' experience. Metro is decidedly safer than what the public may see portrayed. When we survey riders and non-riders, it's riders who always give us the highest scores — including for safety.

Communities have made it clear to us that there is a need for both security and compassion. Based on what we heard from you, we developed an approach to keep



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riders safe that focuses on “Care and Presence.” We have more than doubled the number of Transit Security Officers and added Metro Safety Ambassadors to engage with riders. We also deployed Behavioral Health Specialists, who provide de-escalation, resources and support.

The good news is that Metro's growing ridership and improving safety data show these efforts are working. Security incidents in 2023 were down 12% from 2019 (before the pandemic) and down 22% from the peak in 2020. Drug-related incidents in April 2024 were down 55% from April 2023. We're glad for the progress and remain committed to improving and doing even more.

You can help by letting us know your concerns so we can direct resources and staff. If it's an emergency, please call or text 9-1-1. But, even if it's not, let us know at

kingcounty.gov/metro/contact or by calling 206-553-3000. We also realize that your journey doesn't begin when you board or end when you exit. We greatly appreciate cities and towns exploring ways to improve places where you don't feel safe.

As your transit agency, our sole mission is to move all of us forward together. Every rider on transit and pedestrian in our cities' downtowns helps build the future we want.

King County Metro is the largest transit agency in the Northwestern United States. Metro provides bus, on-demand, paratransit, vanpool and water taxi services, and operates the Seattle Streetcar, Sound Transit Link light rail and Sound Transit Express bus service. Every week, Metro connects well over 1 million riders to countless destinations across the Puget Sound region.

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