



The Municipal League of King County

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September 23, 2008

Honorable Dow Constantine, Chair
Transportation Committee
King County Council
516 Third Ave., Rm. 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Performance Audit of King County Metro

Dear Chair Constantine:

As part of our 100-year history of monitoring the openness and effectiveness of local government, the Municipal League of King County has been studying Metro Transit this year. For some months we have been meeting with Metro staff and gathering data on the agency's operations. We will be developing the findings and conclusions of our study within the next few months. As citizen volunteers, we expect our report will focus on broad topics of interest to the general public and to you as policymakers.

We were pleased to learn that the Council has requested a performance audit of Metro with an ideal outcome of more/improved service at less cost. The Auditor is in the process of hiring a consultant to assist the County in developing a detailed scope of work and we look forward to hearing the proposers' ideas for areas that should be reviewed to best meet the stated outcome of the audit. We have also identified a number of areas for in-depth review and we wanted to provide our input on the audit scope. To the operational efficiency topics listed in the RFP, please consider adding the following:

- An examination of the agency budgeting and financial policies, including the expenditures allocated to the various functions, such as operation, maintenance, planning, capital, debt service, and reserves;
- An examination of the basis of King County overhead charges for the Division;
- An examination of optimal life cycle replacement practices for transit vehicles;
- An examination of the 40-40-20 service allocation policy and its effect on the agency's operation; and
- An examination of the performance metrics and service quality indicators used by the agency along with recommendations for other measures that could be used to focus in on improvements and efficiencies.

We know the agency is under great pressure currently due to the slowing economy, rising ridership and increasing fuel costs. We appreciate your leadership in requesting this audit and encourage you to ensure that it asks tough questions and does not shy away from the possibility that painful adjustments will be needed to realize real improvements and efficiencies in how transit is delivered in King County.

Sincerely,



Brad Meacham
Chair, Board of Trustees



Kathy Elias
Chair, Transportation Committee

cc: Kymber Waltmunson, Auditor's Office
Kevin Desmond, Metro General Manager
King County Council
King County Executive