



# King County Metro Transit

Regional Traveler Information Builds Connections



*“To ensure success, you need a provider with the level of technical expertise and experience that the Trapeze team possesses.”*

**Trip Planning System Administrator  
King County Metro Transit**

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

When King County Metro Transit began planning for a traveler information system, they quickly realized they would need a regional solution to achieve the agency's objectives of increasing ridership and providing better customer service. Research into travel patterns had demonstrated that significant numbers regularly traveled across several service areas and across county lines.

Public transit services in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties include Sound Transit's regional express bus routes, Sounder commuter rail, the Seattle Center Monorail, and Washington State Ferries.

Dick Harrell, Trip Planning System Administrator at Metro Transit, described the difficulties faced by transit users trying to plan regional travel using public transit services: “Essentially, the transit rider would have to piece together a trip plan one agency at a time. It might take several days to put together a plan, depending on call center hours and other factors. It was inefficient, demanded a lot more of the transit user and probably discouraged transit use.”

## SOLUTION

Recognizing that poor information accessibility poses a serious barrier to public transport use, Metro Transit and its partners

looked to implement a traveler information solution from Trapeze Group.

By 1999, call center agents were using the desktop version of the traveler information system to plan itineraries involving multiple providers, multiple transfers and multiple modes of transport. Then in 2000 Metro Transit introduced a Web-based trip planner, bringing a whole new level of convenience to the public.

The Trapeze traveler information system supports everything from highly centralized to widely distributed configurations. The approach for any given project depends on geography, demographics, transportation infrastructure and the operational and technological characteristics of the participating agencies.

In the case of Seattle's regional solution, the autonomy of individual providers proved important; consequently, each agency maintains and operates its own call center and trip planning software, and shares its data with its regional partners through an automated process.

The implementation was complex, involving numerous scheduling and GIS systems, complex fare information and very different IT environments among other challenges.

## SNAPSHOT

<b>Participating organizations:</b>	Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro Transit, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Sounder Commuter Rail, Seattle Center Monorail, Washington State Ferries
<b>Trapeze components:</b>	Trapeze traveler information system for call centers, Web trip planner
<b>Calls to call center annually:</b>	600,000
<b>Itineraries served annually:</b>	2.77 million

According to Harrell, "Trapeze worked hard to integrate many different systems and data sources and achieve a solution that met the individual partners' requirements and was also seamless to the public. To ensure success, you need a provider with the level of technical expertise and experience that the Trapeze team possesses."

## RESULTS

The results of automating customer information services on Metro Transit's operations have been predictably good, according to Harrell. The average duration of a call has decreased as call center agents find answers and solutions more quickly. The agency is also serving more customers, thanks in part to the Web trip planner. Today the call center handles more than 600,000 calls annually while the online regional trip planner serves 2.77 million itineraries. People can plan trips when convenient for them and optimize search results according to the shortest trip, fewest transfers or shortest walking distance.

Aside from the obvious advantages of consistent, accurate and readily available information, there have been subtler benefits for the public. As Harrell explained, the automated information solution has fostered other kinds of regional collaboration. For example, the regional agencies are now providing consideration for previous fares when customers transfer to their routes.

Today the automated traveler information solution helps hundreds of thousands of commuters and others find their way to work, school, medical appointments, shopping centers and many other destinations.

## BOTTOM LINE

Thanks to their ability to see the 'big picture' and think regionally, King County and its partners are building stronger connections with their passengers and with each others' services.



### U.S.A.

(480) 627 8400

### Canada

(905) 629 8727

### United Kingdom

+44 161 435 6009

### Europe

+45 87 44 1600

### Australia

+61 8 8463 6672

[www.trapezegrup.com](http://www.trapezegrup.com)