

Testimony to King County Council

May 20, 2014

My name is Will Knedlik and I am appearing for Eastside Transit Riders United to request this Council to develop sustainable finances for Metro Transit, after voters' rejection of Proposition 1, notwithstanding cruel extortion of the transit dependent, cynical suppression of information about the gusher of sales tax revenue then flowing to Metro, and a sleight-of-hand intended to mislead drivers about funding for county roads to have received but eight percent of their huge shortfall.

Central necessities for genuinely sustainable funding are prompt reductions to Metro's excessive operating expenses and rapid correction of **tax injustice** and **transit inequity** from discrimination against the suburbs, for decades, all of which this Council appears intent on stonewalling, totally, in order to punish citizens for denying its \$1.5 billion tax grab to avoid core fiduciary obligations.

Metro can maintain all existing routes with existing revenues and without any service reductions, since it is so obese, if you will merely fulfill your duties as elected officials and bring its costs in line with those of Pierce Transit and Community Transit squarely documented by Sound Transit.

In addition, Metro's entire self-avowed deficit can be erased, **without fare increases**, by simply reversing its serial imprudence from accepting inflated county overhead charges (as identified a decade ago by Maggie Fimia as a council member then); handing over its highest-revenue bus routes to a junior taxing district (without any reimbursement); substantially increasing its operating expenses by removing its buses from its own Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (again without any compensation); transferring that tunnel with a fair market value of \$1 billion or more for what amounts to chump change (thus denying hugely appreciated value to benefit the Metro taxpayers who financed it); and refraining from pursuing federal Full Funding Grant Agreements (while a junior taxing district has received \$1.313 billion and today is seeking \$1.1 billion more).

Simply put, either returning Metro buses to its transit tunnel or else requiring receipt of all of its costs from increased operating expenses, in moving its buses to surface streets, is enough to avoid any cuts in bus service in 2014 and coming years, given the current gusher of sales tax revenues.

Even if Metro had a genuine \$50-to-\$75 million per year deficit – which it does NOT despite its phony claims to mislead citizens as taxpayers and as voters – that could be fully covered for two decades merely by requiring payment of **fair market value** for the DSTT, which we as Metro taxpayers financed, rather than giving it away for essentially nothing to a junior taxing district, as but one of several entirely straightforward means for avoiding any post-Prop 1 transit reductions.

Further, this Council could – and, perhaps, should – seek proposals from the private sector to maintain all current bus routes for three-to-five years with existing taxes and without fare hikes.

Yet further, a citizen oversight panel could help, greatly, if not packed to maintain the *status quo*.

Also paramount is undoing the gerrymandering of this body to afford one city with less than one third of county population with four of nine seats, instead of three or less that it deserves, which underpins **tax injustice** and **transit inequity** from discrimination against a majority of residents.

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Testimony to King County Council

May 15, 2014

My name is Will Knedlik and I am appearing tonight on behalf of Eastside Transit Riders United in order to request this Council to ensure development of fully sound funding for Metro Transit, as I did in appearing here on February 4, 2014 and repeatedly since in opposing Proposition 1.

At an absolute minimum, this means substantially reducing Metro's excessive operating expenses and rapidly ending **tax injustice** and **transit inequity** in discrimination against the suburbs today.

This is why **NO** service reduction whatsoever is necessary, since Metro is so grossly obese, as I have documented carefully as the county-designated spokesman for the committee appointed by you to draft an Opposition Statement for the Voters' Pamphlet against your \$1.5 billion tax grab.

The attached chart prepared by Sound Transit's management explains both why that regional transit agency has stopped purchasing over 50,000 hours of bus operations in this county from Metro and shifted those purchases to Pierce Transit, and also why *The Seattle Times* editorialized against Prop 1 time after time after time (namely, Metro's excessive charges of \$34.20 per hour).

Please note that this documentation of Metro's excessive costs was prepared by Sound Transit.

Simply put, County Executive Dow Constantine, Council Chair Larry Phillips and several other Council members serve on a regional agency that refuses to accept excessive Metro expenses, even though each of them urged county taxpayers to finance those wasteful costs through Prop 1.

The attached map indicates that suburban-and-rural taxpayers understand that when East King County pays 35 percent of Metro's expenses and receives 17 percent of its transit services, then the resulting subsidy to Seattle residents is the definition of **tax injustice** and of **transit inequity**.

Please note that the vote totals in suburban-and-rural districts suggest both that further transit-tax increases for buses in King County are unlikely to be approved until this discrimination is ended and also that those who represent those districts are likely to pay a price for any failure to do so.

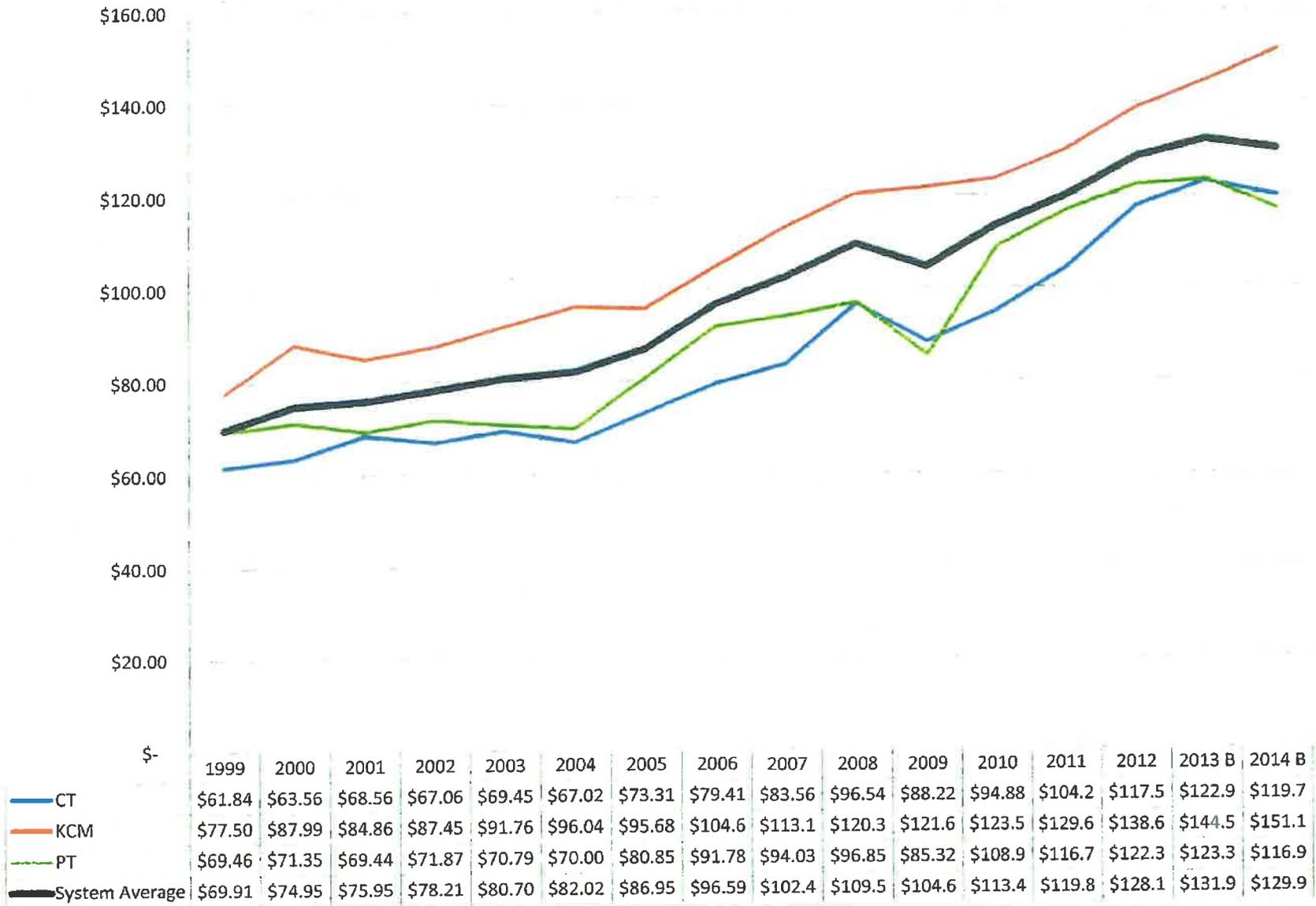
Executive Constantine and Mayor Ed Murray have each made crucial proposals following voters' eight-point beat down of Prop 1 – despite opponents being outspent by a margin of 100-to-1 according to Bob Gogerty's analysis – but hard choices that start with you could end some of you.

If you are genuinely unable to reduce Metro's excessive operating expenses, then you must give serious consideration to contracting with Pierce Transit (as Sound Transit has already done with approvals by several of you), or with the private sector (as Snohomish County now does), both with very substantial savings in each instance and both with Amalgamated Transit Union drivers.

What is unacceptable is an attempt to stonewall the two central lessons documented by Prop 1's rejection: that Metro's excessive operating expenses must be substantially reduced and that King County's intolerably discriminatory **tax injustice** and **transit inequity** must be completely ended.

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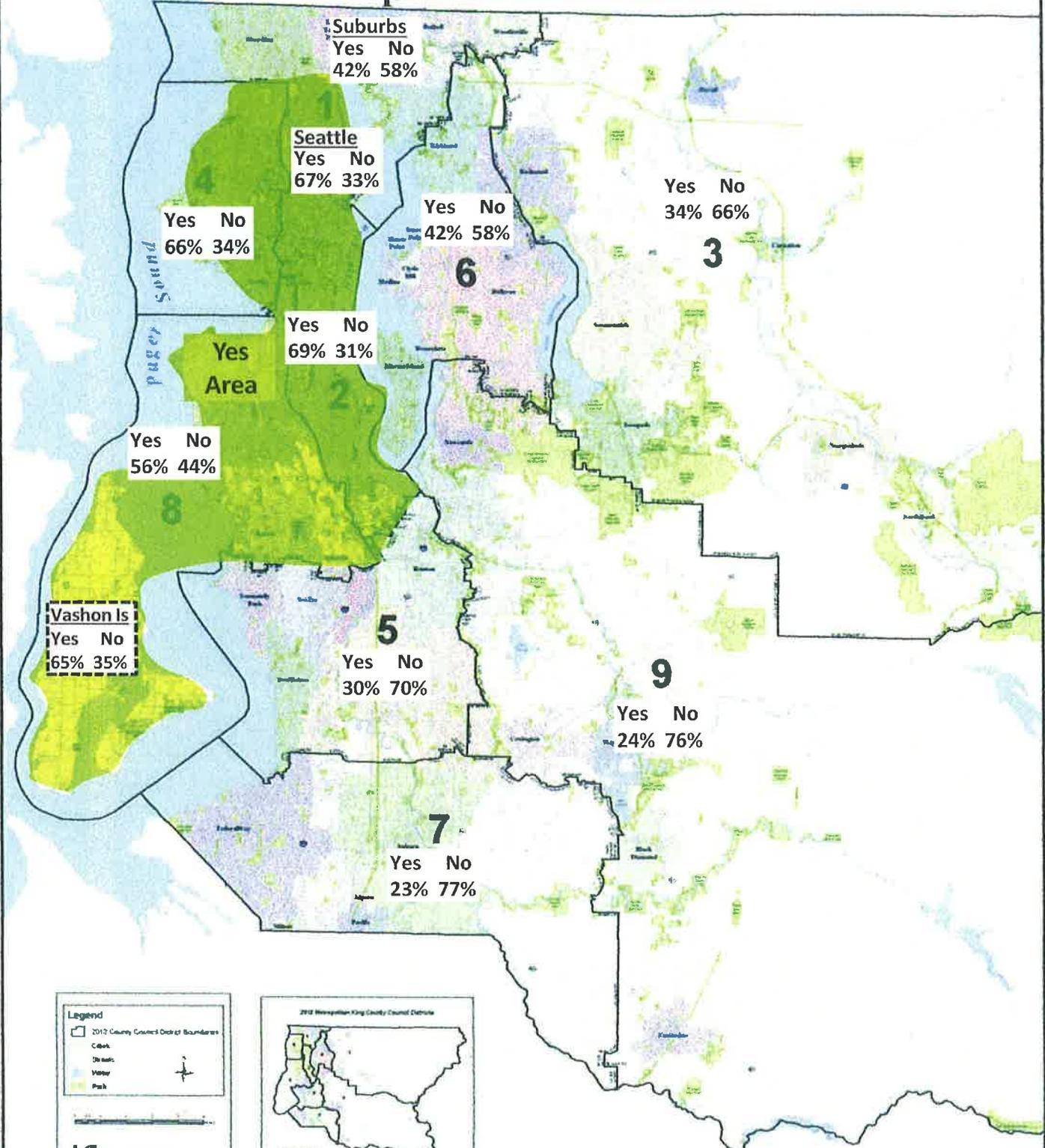
Comparative Cost per Platform Hour



SOURCE: Sound Transit's management presentation to its Citizen Oversight Panel on February 20, 2014

2012 Metropolitan King County Council Districts

Proposition 1 Final Results



Legend

- 2012 County Council District Boundaries
- City
- County
- Water
- Park

King County
 PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
 November 2011



	Yes	No
Approx Seattle/Vashon Is	62%	38%
Approximate Suburbs	30%	70%
Overall	46%	54%