



King County

Shannon Braddock

King County Executive

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

206-296-9600 Fax 206-296-0194

TTY Relay: 711

www.kingcounty.gov

July 15, 2025

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Zahilay:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that, if enacted, would grant King County Metro (Metro) the authority to use eminent domain to acquire the remaining property rights necessary for the implementation of the RapidRide I Line project, should negotiations for those properties reach impasse. The proposed Ordinance would allow, but not require, Metro to use eminent domain if necessary to acquire the remaining property rights needed for the I Line project through negotiated settlement.

The King County Council adopted the Locally Preferred Alternative for the I Line project via Ordinance 19098 which set forth the locations of critical project improvements including passenger facilities and pedestrian safety improvements. The I Line project is a vital project for King County, connecting economically and racially diverse communities in South King County to employment opportunities, commercial and retail centers, and recreational activities. The Federal Transit Administration is a major funding partner for I Line through its Capital Investment Grant Program, providing \$80M for the project. By accepting federal funds, Metro has committed to a schedule to begin construction in 2025 and complete the project in 2027.

Metro has been working for several years to secure each of the 110 property rights necessary for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the RapidRide I Line. To keep its commitment to begin operations in 2027 and maintain federal funding, Metro plans to begin project construction in September 2025. Metro has secured most of the property rights needed for the project, however, it is still negotiating with 25 property owners. The property rights include a mix of temporary and permanent rights, primarily strips of land behind sidewalks, needed for road improvements, sidewalk widening, and RapidRide station construction. Notably, none of the outstanding acquisitions require acquisition of a home or building, and

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property owners remain entitled to fair market compensation, construction mitigation, and restoration of property.

While Metro expects to reach negotiated settlements for most, if not all, of these property rights by the end of 2025, five properties have already received impasse letters. Providing Metro with the authority to utilize eminent domain, if necessary, allows Metro to meet its planned I Line service start in 2027, particularly given the I Line construction schedule and lengthy legal processes around eminent domain.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. If your staff have questions, please contact Mark Ellerbrook, Director of Metro Capital Division, at 206-477-6109.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Braddock", written over a horizontal line.

for

Shannon Braddock

King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Stephanie Pure, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

Michelle Allison, General Manager, Metro Transit Department