October 20, 2014

The Honorable Larry Phillips

Chair, King County Council

Room 1200

C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Phillips:

As required by Ordinance 17597, I am pleased to submit the enclosed motion for the King County Council to accept the *King County Metro Transit 2014 Service Guidelines Report*. At a time when Metro ridership will exceed record highs, this report identifies the need for over 15 percent growth in the system to reduce crowding, improve reliability, and meet target service levels on corridors throughout King County. The need for transit service continues to grow, with about 40,000 more hours needed than when we reviewed the system in 2013.

King County Metro uses the service guidelines to plan and manage the transit system and to enable the public to see the basis of our proposals to expand, reduce, or revise service. The guidelines were developed in response to a recommendation of the 2010 Regional Transit Task Force. They strike a balance between productivity, social equity, and geographic value. The 2014 report includes analysis of the Metro system as of spring 2014 and identifies areas where Metro needs to make investments to reduce overcrowding, improve reliability, and meet target service levels. The information in this report provides Metro with information to continue to manage the transit system and provide quality service to our riders.

Ordinance 17597, which amended Ordinance 17143 that adopted Metro’s *Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021,* requires that the service guidelines report be transmitted by October 31 of each year to the Regional Transit Committee for consideration. It reads in part:

*“SECTION 1. Ordinance 17143, Section 5 is hereby amended to read as follows:*

*Beginning with a baseline report for 2012 and then annualy therafter through the duration of the plan, the executive is directed to transmit to the council, for acceptance by motion, an annual service guidelines report of Metro’s transit system…”*

*“A. For the period of the report, the service guidelines report shall include:*

*1. The corridor analysis to determine the Metro All-Day and Peak Network with a summary of resulting scores and assigned service levels as determined by the King County Metro Service Guidelines (Service Guidelines);*

*2. The results of the analysis including a list of corridors above and below their target service levels and the estimated number of service hours necessary to meet the needs of corridors under their target service level;*

*3. The performance of transit services by route and any changes in the Service Guidelines thresholds since the previous reporting period, using the performance measures identified in Chapter III of the Strategic Plan and in the Service Guidelines;*

*4. A list of transit service changes made to routes and corridors of the network since the last reporting period;*

*5. The network and rider connectivity associated with transit services delivered by other providers; and*

*6. A list of potential changes, if any, to the Strategic Plan and Service Guidelines to better meet their policy intent.”*

This report also responds to the requirement in Motion 13736 for Metro to provide an annual progress report on the King County Metro Transit Five-Year Implementation Plan for Alternatives to Traditional Transit Service Delivery. Incorporating the progress report on alternative services into Metro’s service guidelines report allows Metro to provide a comprehensive look at how our service is performing.

This year, the guidelines have helped Metro plan for service reductions and make the best use of its limited resources. But the guidelines look beyond service reductions to identify the service Metro should be providing, and it’s clear that more service is needed. The key finding of the 2014 guidelines report is that King County should be investing an additional 547,350 annual service hours to meet the current needs of Metro’s customers. Despite 10 percent ridership growth since the 2008 recession, Metro has been limited in its ability to add the service needed to meet growing demand, and instead had to reduce service in fall 2014. As seen in this report, the service quality needs are growing, with a 44 percent increase in hours needed to add trips on our most crowded routes and a 39 percent increase in hours needed to reschedule service to improve reliability since 2013. In the past few years we have not been able to meet these most basic needs of our system. Metro also needs to invest more hours in corridors where land use, social equity, and geographic value suggests that people need more service. Of Metro’s 112 corridors, 58 of these should see services increased to accommodate demand.

The additional investment need identified in the 2014 guidelines report does not include the added service that will be needed as King County population and employment continue to grow. Even larger investments than those outlined in this report will be needed to achieve the goals of our region’s *Transportation 2040* plan. As Metro’s growing ridership approaches record highs and our region continues to grow, we cannot ignore these needs.

The *King County Metro Transit 2014 Service Guidelines Report* shows progress toward the goals of Metro’s Strategic Plan, which mirror and support the eight goals in the King County Strategic Plan as well as the “fair and just” principle. The eight goals concern safety, health and human potential, economic growth, environmental sustainability, service excellence, financial stewardship, public engagement and transparency, and quality workforce. By identifying the resources needed to meet target service levels in all transit corridors, the service guidelines report helps Metro deliver efficient and effective services that are equitable and provide value throughout King County. The report’s discussion of progress on alternative services also illustrates Metro’s commitment to provide service that meets the needs of communities where traditional transit service is less cost-effective. The assignment of service levels based on low-income and minority demographics and ridership demonstrates a higher commitment to those corridors where more people depend on public transportation.

The service guidelines report also supports the objectives and strategies of the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan, particularly those related to the Transportation and Land Use goal. The report illustrates how Metro is encouraging transit use and reducing the need for driving by investing resources where the need is greatest and improving the reliability and efficiency of service.

It is estimated that this report required 625 staff hours to produce, costing $37,500. The estimated printing cost for this report is $700.

Thank you for your consideration of this motion. The service guidelines report will help King County residents see how Metro is making the best use of the County’s transit resources to deliver high-quality services that get people where they want to go—and what more we must do to meet current and future public transportation needs.

If you have any questions, please contact Christina O’Claire, Supervisor of Strategic Planning and Analysis for King County Metro Transit, at 206-477-5801 or via email at christina.oclaire@kingcounty.gov.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

 ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Interim Chief of Staff

 Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

 Carrie S. Cihak, Chief of Policy Development, King County Executive Office

 Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

 Harold S. Taniguchi, Director, Department of Transportation (DOT)

 Kevin Desmond, General Manager, Metro Transit Division, DOT

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