July 6, 2018

The Honorable Joe McDermott

Chair, King County Council

Room 1200

C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember McDermott:

This letter transmits an ordinance that will transform Metro Transit from a division within the Department of Transportation into a separate executive department within King County, with a focus on providing mobility services, delivering its capital program, building effective partnerships and investing in employees.

On December 11, 2017, the King County Council passed motion 15026 requesting the Executive to:

*SECTION C.*

*Develop and transmit an ordinance that would amend K.C.C. chapter 2.l6 to establish a Metro transit department with organizational emphasis on:*

*1. Delivery of mobility services to the people, businesses and communities of King County;*

 *2. Innovation in the development, planning and delivery of mobility and transit services;*

*3. Performance-driven financial, technology and capital programs;*

*4. A foundational commitment to equity and reducing disparity through the power of mobility;*

*5. Strengthening and expanding partnerships with communities, as well as*

*transportation providers and other entities;*

*6. Meaningful and inclusive community engagement; and*

*7. Investing in our most-valuable resources - our employees; and*

*SECTION D.*

*Develop and transmit legislation addressing funds, fund management policies, financial policies and other legislation as appropriate to this county organizational*

*change.*

In September 1999, the King County Auditor published a Transit Management Audit focused on policy and organizational issues. The principal recommendation of this audit was to make Metro Transit a separate department in an effort to elevate transit into the policy-making structure of the County and serve in the formation of executive policy. In making this recommendation, the audit recognized the historical reality that Metro Transit functions like a stand-alone department, that transit exerts primary control over the public transportation fund, and that Metro Transit would benefit from a greater role in setting County-wide policies.

On March 26, 2016, the King County Council passed Ordinance 18001. Section 3 of this ordinance called upon the Executive to:

*“…file a report detailing the costs, financial and county code changes, operational issues, and a timeline of council decisions necessary to transition the transit division from a subordinate division within the department of transportation to an executive department responsible for the operating and capital investments necessary to deliver King County's metropolitan public transportation function…”*

On September 18, 2017, the County Executive issued a letter to the director of the Department of Transportation and the director of the Metro Transit division to begin working with the King County Council on the process to transform Metro Transit into a separate department within King County. This letter outlined four priorities:

* Mobility - build options for current transit riders and to attract new riders through better connections to other transit modes
* Capital Program - align resources in order to quickly and efficiently deliver on the capital program that will allow for the service investments the region is seeking
* Employee Investment – invest in ways that help us become the employer of the future
* Partnerships - build on the strong relationships with our cities, stakeholders, businesses, and regional transit providers

Since that time Metro Transit has engaged in robust, inclusive and informed process to not only prepare for the division to department transition but to reorganize and organizationally focus around these priorities.

The attached ordinance represents the technical transition process and code changes necessary to form a Metro Transit department, effective January 1, 2019. It is based on a comprehensive look at each of the sections within the King County Code that make reference to or are associated with the Department of Transportation or the transit division, specifically. After reviewing these sections, Metro Transit, in coordination with other departments, have proposed a series of changes reflective of original and current adopted policy intent. These changes take the form of the following four types of proposed changes code changes:

1. additions to the code, where necessary to reflect Metro Transit’s new departmental status;
2. clarifications to functions currently assigned to the transit division and to be transferred to Metro Transit;
3. the addition of Metro Transit to County functions not currently assigned but required for it to fulfill Metro's department repsonsiblity; and
4. the transfer to other departments functions currently assigned to the transit division, but are no longer appropriate under the new structure.

The changes represented in this proposed ordinance reflect the direction of the Executive and adopted policy direction of the King County Council to transform Metro Transit from a division within the Department of Transportation into a separate executive department within King County.

The changes represented in this proposed ordinance uphold the goals and objectives of the King County Strategic Plan, specifically the ***Mobility*** goal to deliver a safe, reliable, and seamless network of transportation options to get people and goods where they need to go; to increase integration between transportation modes and all service providers, preserve and optimize the mobility system, ensure the safety and security for customers and employees using the mobility network and provide more equitable mobility access and reduce historic gaps.

Thank you for your consideration of this package of legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact John Resha, Assistant General Manager, Metro Transit at 206.477.0889.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

 ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff

 Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

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

 Rob Gannon, General Manager, King County Metro Transit

 Michelle Allison, Chief of Staff, King County Metro Transit

 John Resha, Assistant General Manager, King County Metro Transit