



King County

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King County Executive

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January 21, 2021

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

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

This letter transmits a proposed ordinance relating to the approval of a new Transit Service Funding Agreement with the City of Seattle that, if enacted, would replace the existing agreement for transit service purchased through the Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD). The existing agreement, authorized by Ordinance 17978 and entered into November 24, 2015, expires on June 30, 2021. Seattle voters renewed funding for the STBD during the November 3, 2020 election.

The new agreement between King County and the City of Seattle ensures continued City funding of additional transit service for the City and establishes how King County Metro and the City of Seattle will coordinate, operate, and report on City-funded service. To ensure continuity of services as the current agreement expires and with the start of the new agreement, I respectfully request to have this item acted upon before March 20, 2021.

The City of Seattle supports additional hours of transit service within the city. The renewed STBD funding measure replaces the expiring measure and consists of a 0.15 percent sales tax, which will raise an estimated average of \$39 million per year over the six-year funding measure for transit service, capital improvements, and fare subsidies. The amount allocated to purchasing service hours from King County Metro specifically would be an estimated average of \$27 million per year over the six-year period. The transit service purchased by the City of Seattle under the new agreement will maintain and improve access and frequency of service for riders in Seattle and some riders outside of Seattle.

The existing agreement served as the basis for the new agreement. Staff from Metro and the Seattle Department of Transportation negotiated the changes contained in the new agreement, working from a mutually identified list of issues agreed upon at the beginning of the negotiation

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process. Most items are updates or revisions to sections or language in the existing agreement, such as updating the section on the use of the City's reserve fund (Section 3.3) to reflect its current program. A few new items included in the new agreement include the investment in flexible service pilot programs, such as Via to Transit, and a mechanism to address how service is reduced at the end of the agreement.

The new agreement furthers the mobility objectives of the King County Strategic Plan by preserving and optimizing the mobility system and providing for more equitable mobility access. The agreement also furthers key transportation and mobility elements of the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and its transportation and mobility pro-equity policy agenda by providing more frequent service that connects disadvantaged communities to major transit hubs and creating alternative transportation options that are responsive to community needs in areas. In addition, the agreement supports the Strategic Climate Action Plan goal of reducing passenger car trips through sustained and increased public transit frequency.

It is estimated that the negotiation process required 250 hours by Metro staff to produce this agreement, costing approximately \$12,500 in staff hours.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed ordinance. This important legislation will maintain and improve transit service in the city and continue an important partnership between King County and City of Seattle.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Christina O'Claire, Mobility Division Director, Metro Transit Department, 206-477-5801.

Sincerely,



for

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, Performance, Strategy and Budget, Office of the Executive
Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Karan Gill, Director, Council Relations, Office of the Executive
Terry White, General Manager, Metro Transit Department