



Legislation Text

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Clerk 06/05/2014

AN ORDINANCE adopting public transportation service reductions in
September 2014.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. Transit division ("Metro") service is funded mainly by sales tax, and due to the inherently unstable and variable nature of that funding source, the amount of operating funds available from that source varies with the health of the economy. The economic downturn that started in 2008 and resultant decline in sales tax revenues caused a projected shortfall in Metro's operating funds of about \$1.2 billion for the years 2009 through 2015.
2. Since 2009, Metro has undertaken a series of actions to address the revenue shortfall, including increasing system-wide operating efficiencies, use of one-time reserve funds, and generation of new revenue, resulting in approximately \$800 million in cost savings and additional resources and closing the financial gap by approximately \$148 million annually. Although the worst of the recession has passed and sales tax revenue is currently on an uptick, the economy has not recovered enough to generate the sustained sales tax revenues needed to close this financial gap.
3. A temporary funding source, the congestion reduction charge, was authorized by the state Legislature and approved by the county council in 2011, through Ordinance 17169. The intent of this legislation was to help address transit revenue shortfalls during the economic downturn and allow King County Metro to continue reducing congestion on some of the state's most

crowded highways.

4. To close the annual budget gap in the 2013/2014 Biennial Budget Ordinance, transit service must be reduced consistent with the King County Metro Service Guidelines.

5. The proposed reductions to Metro's fixed route transit network include bus service changes that affect all jurisdictions within King County, as well as portions of unincorporated King County.

6. The proposed service reductions are consistent with the policy direction and priorities adopted on August 30, 2013, in the Updates to the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and associated King County Metro Service Guidelines under Ordinance 17641.

7. Metro conducted required public outreach and Title VI service equity analysis in accordance with applicable federal regulations and King County Code and other policy.

8. The proposed service reductions are within the adopted 2013-2014 service hour budget.

9. An opportunity exists for the council and executive to work collaboratively with each other, stakeholders and cities throughout the county to identify alternative cost savings, efficiencies and updated estimates of revenue and expenditures that could reduce Metro's annual budget gap, thereby decreasing the number of transit service hours required to be reduced in 2015.

10. Actual service levels for 2015 and later will be determined in a manner consistent with adopted policies and the King County budget for those years.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. The September 2014 public transportation service changes for King County, substantially as described in Attachment A to this ordinance, are hereby approved and shall be implemented beginning September 27, 2014.

SECTION 2. Service changes to routes 903, 909, 919, 927, 931 and 935 as proposed in section 1 of this ordinance shall take effect only upon the council's approval by motion of a report that: identifies and quantifies

the ridership to the system and the anticipated cost and operational impacts of wheelchair ridership currently using these services transferring to either Access or regular bus service; describes how contracted transit service, as an alternative service product, is proposed to be used to reduce or avoid other potential transit service reductions and make the transit system more efficient, including through extension or changes to the existing Dial-a-Ride Transit routes, and other new and existing alternative services, consistent with strategies 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 of the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021; and describes how the county has worked with its contract transit service provider to manage and potentially mitigate fiscal impacts of service changes. The report shall be filed by the executive in the form of a paper original and electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council's chief of staff and the lead staff to the transportation, economy and environment committee, or its successor.