



Legislation Text

File #: 2009-0535, **Version:** 2

AN ORDINANCE relating to public transportation; amending the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, 2007 - 2016 adopted by Ordinance 15963 and the transit division's financial policy adopted by Ordinance 15914; and amending Ordinance 15963, Section 2, and Ordinance 15914, Section 2.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Findings: The council makes the following findings:

A. Ordinance 15582 was passed by the King County council and approved by the voters in 2006. By approving this ordinance, the voters authorized King County to impose a one-tenth of one percent sales and use tax ("the Transit Now tax"). The ordinance limits the use of the proceeds of the Transit Now tax to a program of public transportation improvements, described in Attachment A to Ordinance 15582, to be implemented by King County Metro over a ten year period ("the Transit Now program"). In approving Ordinance 15582, the council assumed that the current transit system would remain intact, and that the Transit Now program would increase the overall 2006 transit system size.

B. Ordinance 15963, passed by the King County council in 2007, adopted the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, 2007-2016 ("the Strategic Plan") to provide guidance about improvements to the public transportation system. This guidance is consistent with Attachment A to Ordinance 15582, which describes the Transit Now program and with Ordinance 15756, which establishes processes and criteria to implement the partnership programs included in the Transit Now program. A phasing plan was included in the Strategic Plan to guide how the projected new service hours would be invested over the ten-year period.

C. New revenues from increased transit sales taxes, additional farebox revenue and other operating

funds were expected to be available to finance continuing improvements to the public transportation system identified in the Strategic Plan through the year 2016.

D. During 2007-2009, the Transit Now program was implemented by King County Metro according to the approved phasing plan in the adopted Strategic Plan.

E. The funding gap in Metro's budget has become increasingly severe as the economy has faltered over the past year and a half. A budget deficit that started off at approximately sixty million dollars a year has grown to over one hundred million dollars a year, and sales tax revenue continues to decline. King County Metro's budget crisis began to unfold in 2008, at the same time ridership was at record levels. The financial crisis spread on a local, regional and national scale and people began spending less, dramatically reducing the amount of sales tax revenue that Metro collects, its primary funding source. This situation worsened in 2009, making it increasingly difficult for Metro to balance its budget.

F. King County Metro is no longer able to implement the Transit Now program described in Attachment A to Ordinance 15582 and the Strategic Plan without reducing service levels in the existing system.

G. Due to this funding shortfall, the county council passed by supermajority Ordinance _____, as authorized by K.C.C. 4.29.020, allowing the use of the proceeds from the Transit Now tax to fund existing service consistent with the King County Code and King County Metro transit policies and goals, as may be amended.

H. In order to carry out the purpose of Ordinance _____, the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation must be amended to modify the Transit Now program service implementation phasing plan and to revise the description of the Transit Now program items that will occur within the timeframe in the current Strategic Plan for Public Transportation.

I. The amendments to the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation adopted by this ordinance are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation and the King County Comprehensive Plan.

J. As part of the strategy for addressing Metro's funding shortfall, the adopted Transit Program

Financial Policies that provide guidance to operating reserve levels and planning for future transit fares must also be amended.

SECTION 2. Ordinance 15963, Section 2, is hereby amended to read as follows:

The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation for 2007-2016, dated November 5, 2009, Attachment A to ~~((this ordinance))~~ this ordinance (Proposed Ordinance 2009-0535), is hereby adopted.

SECTION 3. Ordinance 15914, Section 2, is hereby amended to read as follows:

The 2008-2009 Transit Program Financial Policies, dated October 30, 2009, Attachment B to ~~((this ordinance))~~ this ordinance (Proposed Ordinance 2009-0535), are hereby adopted.