



Legislation Text

File #: 2014-0207, **Version:** 2

A MOTION related to Metro transit service and planning.

WHEREAS, the economic recession and recovery period of 2008 through 2013 resulted in \$1.4 billion in anticipated sales tax revenues not being generated for King County Metro transit purposes, and

WHEREAS, the regional transit task force unanimously recommended a comprehensive policy framework for an efficient and effective transit system balancing productivity with geographic value and social equity, and resulting in the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and King County Metro Service Guidelines, and

WHEREAS, the King County council and executive have worked collaboratively using the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and King County Metro Service Guidelines to save \$798 million of transit service through 2013 and \$148 million in ongoing transit savings and increased revenue, and

WHEREAS, the 2013/2014 approved budget reduced the Metro transit system to match available revenues assuming initial service reductions in September 2014, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 17225 adopted Fund Management Policies for the Public Transportation Fund, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 17476, Section 116, Expenditure Restriction ER1, requires a report that identifies and evaluates fare policy options to be submitted by August 1, 2014, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 17757 created a low-income fare program and requires transmittal of a low-income fare program implementation plan for incorporation into the 2015/2016 executive proposed budget, and

WHEREAS, farebox recovery for the Metro transit bus system has been at twenty-nine percent for the past two years and is expected to be twenty-seven and one-half percent following implementation of the low-

income fare program, and

WHEREAS, Motion 14081 calls for the transmittal of a plan that fully funds programs to reduce passenger crowding, improve schedule reliability and meet target service levels in the all-day and peak transit network consistent with the King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation and the King County Metro Service Guidelines, including an evaluation of existing and new revenue authorities and legislative strategies, by September 1, 2014, and

WHEREAS, King County is using Lean principles and other continuous improvement systems to continually find efficiencies and improve the business model and operational processes in the transit division, and

WHEREAS, an opportunity exists for the council and executive to work collaboratively with stakeholders and cities throughout the county during the development and adoption of the 2015-2016 budget to identify additional cost savings, efficiencies and updated estimates of revenue and expenditures that could change Metro's annual budget gap and thereby change the number of transit service hours required to be reduced;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. As part of developing the executive proposed 2015/2016 biennial budget, the executive in conjunction with the interbranch working group, established in section C. of this motion, is requested to review new revenue options such as increasing fares, evaluate program costs effectiveness by incorporating independent advice on transit industry best practices, identify alternatives to traditional transit service, and propose options to the council that could influence any reductions in the number of service hours. Such options should consider, but not be limited to, the following:

1. After implementing the low-income fare program, changing the farebox recovery target from the currently adopted twenty-five percent along with a review of options to reach a higher target, including, but not limited to, a farebox recovery rate of thirty percent. This review should include consideration of impacts to

ridership, financial and operational efficiencies, and policy implications of options;

2. Using the results of an industry peer review and the results of the audit specified in section A.5. of this motion, identify opportunities to improve program cost effectiveness in line with national transit industry best practices and consistent with the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and the Metro Transit Service Guidelines for system quality and effectiveness;

3. Implementing Lean and other process improvements that improve the efficiency of the division;

4. Identifying standard industry-wide measures that will enable comparison against peer agencies, analyzing the appropriate measures for the Metro transit system, and proposing the appropriate standard industry-wide measures for Metro transit; and

5. Considering the results of an independent audit commissioned and selected by the council of the existing transit fund management and other operational policies.

B. King County supports preserving a sustainable, growing and regional transit system, including through working with cities, businesses and not-for-profit partners to preserve a regionally funded regional transit system as described in the King County Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021.

C. An interbranch staff working group is established to review options and proposals as set forth above, during the course of the 2015-2016 budget development process. Given the relatively short timeframe during the budget process, the interbranch staff working group will provide additional opportunity for council and executive collaboration on the 2015-2016 proposed budget. The interbranch staff working group will meet as needed to accomplish their work. The interbranch working group shall consist of:

1. The director of the transit division;

2. A representative of the department of transportation, director's office;

3. A representative of the director of the office of performance, strategy and budget;

4. Two staff appointed by the executive;

5. Two staff appointed by the council; and

6. Other King County staff as needed by the working group in support of the charge to review and develop options.

D. The priority for use of new revenues, savings or other changes in the budget shall be to lessen the impacts of anticipated service reductions and restructures consistent with the King County Metro Service Guidelines and the establishment of a sustainable level of transit service.

E. King County supports investing in a reformed Metro transit system using region-wide resources including:

1. Continuing to work in partnership with the legislature, cities and stakeholders toward the shared goal of a statewide transportation package to address our critical transportation infrastructure needs; and

2. Exploring options afforded by existing authorities including those authorities for the King County Transportation Benefit District, and new revenues to increase transit service and access to transit to meet unmet transit service needs.