



Legislation Text

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Clerk 08/25/2006

A MOTION calling for a detailed evaluation of funding options, debt capacity, security and operational impacts, and access to the courthouse by all branches of King County government and their employees, jurors and the general public of capital improvements to renovate and reopen the south entrance to the King County Courthouse and for the potential closure of the east and west entrances of the courthouse.

WHEREAS, historically, the primary entrance to the King County Courthouse was on the south side of the building in the area that currently functions as the loading dock to the courthouse, adjacent to City Hall park, and

WHEREAS, the city of Seattle is currently undertaking a project titled "City Hall Park Restoration Project" with the goal of transforming City Hall park into an attractive gateway to downtown Seattle, and

WHEREAS it is a common goal of all branches of King County government using the courthouse and the City of Seattle to improve the safety, cleanliness, and usefulness of City Hall park, and

WHEREAS, improvements to City Hall park would make little sense without a reopening of the courthouse south entrance, and

WHEREAS, reopening of the south entrance would physically integrate the downtown King County campus, encouraging way-finding between the courthouse, new county office building, King County administration building and the Yesler building, and

WHEREAS, the King County council has formally adopted Motion 11196 establishing a limit on the

use of current expense fund revenues for debt service by requiring that annual debt service payments shall not exceed five percent of the current expense fund's net revenue available for debt service, and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the county to pursue all funding options for the south entrance project in order to minimize the impact on the limited current expense fund debt service capacity, and

WHEREAS, the reopened south entrance would require both security staffing and equipment but the potential closure of the east and west entrances may mitigate or offset these security costs, and could potentially fund the debt service for reopening the south entrance, and

WHEREAS, the use by the public of the reopened south entrance will be affected by whether one or both of the east and west entrances are closed and the impacts to public access of both the reopened south entrance and the potential closure of the east and west entrances must be understood, and

WHEREAS, the reopening of the south entrance and the potential closure of the east and west entrances would impact all branches of King County government, including the elected officials and staff of the King County sheriff, the King County council, superior court, district court and the prosecuting attorney as well as jurors and the general public and therefore outreach and consultation with all of these groups and the public is needed prior to any final decision about reopening the south entrance and closing the east and west entrances, and

WHEREAS, while immediate funding of the south entrance design work is prudent and appropriate, King County should not proceed to construction of the south entrance until a detailed study of the identified issues of funding, debt capacity, security and operational impacts and access to the courthouse by all branches of King County government and their employees, jurors and the general public;

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

The county executive shall prepare a report that evaluates impacts to courthouse access and funding and operational options for the reopening and renovation of the courthouse south entrance and the potential closure of the east and west entrances, including, but not limited to, grant funding, one-time revenues associated with

surplus sale of real property, and operational costs and potential savings. The report shall also include an evaluation of access impacts to all branches of King County government and their employees, as well as jurors and the general public and the results of outreach to each of these groups. The county executive shall transmit and the council shall adopt a motion containing this report and these recommendations prior to the appropriation or expenditure of construction funds for capital improvements to renovate and reopen the south courthouse entrance and potentially close the east and west entrances.