

June 24, 1985
6732A/JP/gj

INTRODUCED BY: PAUL BARDEN

PROPOSED NO.: 85-340
6300

MOTION NO. _____

A MOTION requesting the executive to submit to the Council a draft ordinance to appropriate \$2,500 to help fund a survey to determine the need for an international trade information center.

WHEREAS, the International Networking Subcommittee of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce was formed in the fall of 1984 to examine means through which international trade information and services in Washington state could be better coordinated, and

WHEREAS, an informal survey of 103 organizations dealing with international trade was conducted to gauge the response to the idea of a trade center, and

WHEREAS, a statewide comprehensive survey and feasibility study to analyze the need for a trade center and its specific functions is now proposed, and

WHEREAS, the cost of such a survey is estimated to be \$30,000, and

WHEREAS, the goal is to raise equal amounts from both the private and public sectors, and

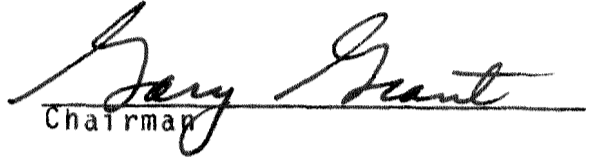
WHEREAS, King County is an important member of the international trading community;

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

2 The King County Executive is requested to submit to the
3 Council a draft ordinance to appropriate \$2,500 to help fund the
4 proposed survey to determine the need for an international trade
5 information center and its specific functions.

6 PASSED this 1st day of July, 1985.

7
8 KING COUNTY COUNCIL
9 KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

10 
11 Chairman

12 ATTEST:

13 
14 Clerk of the Council

Purpose Statement

The Committees purpose is to further the concept of an International Trade Center in Seattle in the following ways:

1. Undergo a Needs Analysis: identify whether Washington businesses engaged in international trade feel there is a need for an international center, and, if so, identify the specific functions these businesses would like the center to have and the extent to which they would use the center for these purposes.

2. If it is determined that there is a need for an international center, the Committee will serve as a catalyst in creating an organization which will be responsible for the planning, commencement, and operation of the international trade center in Seattle.

SUMMARY RESULTS
INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING SUBCOMMITTEE
Survey on International Trade and Information Center

The concept of an international trade and information center is based on the notion that international trade information and services could be better coordinated if one specific entity could be charged with the responsibility of either providing such information and services directly or acting as a clearinghouse i.e., referral center for other agencies and organizations. The committee has been studying the ways in which existing entities may work through such a center to maximize their independent potentials.

In reviewing the approach taken by other cities and the results the various approaches have brought about, the committee decided that functionality was the key criteria of successful centers. Planning for a central core of information and services had the effect of attracting international business.

A preliminary questionnaire was sent to 103 companies, chambers of commerce, international organizations, etc. to gauge their response to the committee's concept of potentially useful services and to the question of whether the international trade center is needed.

Approximately half of the surveys were returned. Respondents were overwhelmingly positive with respect to the key functions of an international trade and information center. For example, 84 percent felt such a center should coordinate inbound trade and investment missions; 81 percent thought multi-lingual communications is a vital aspect; and information referral topped the list with 89 percent. The function of providing a permanent display area for Washington products with export potential, though receiving the lowest support of eight functions, still elicited 57 percent favorable, 30 percent negative, and 11 percent neutral.

Based on these and other listed functions, respondents were asked whether such a center would be a benefit to their firm/organization and to Washington State. 73 percent thought their firm/organization would benefit, while 22 percent said no, and 5 percent were neutral. Surprisingly, they were unanimous on the question of benefit to the state with 95 percent yes, 0 percent no, and 5 percent neutral.

This initial survey leads the International Networking Subcommittee to the conclusion that a detailed demands analysis and feasibility study is warranted given the strong positive feedback. 92 percent of respondents also agreed that further study is necessary.

A complete compilation of the survey results including comments are available from the chamber's Trade and Transportation Department (447-7263).

ADOPTED
by the
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
of the
GREATER SEATTLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
March 12, 1985

Recommendation:

The International Networking Subcommittee of the International Trade Development Committee recommends the endorsement of the Board of Trustees to begin the process of soliciting funds to conduct a feasibility study on the need for and development of an international trade center in Washington State.

Background:

The International Networking Subcommittee was established on the notion that international trade information and services could be better coordinated if one specific entity could be charged with the responsibility of either providing such information and services directly or acting as a clearing-house i.e., referral center for other agencies and organizations. The committee has been studying the ways in which existing entities may work through such a center to maximize their independent potentials.

In reviewing the approach taken by other cities (see attachment) and the results the various approaches have brought about, the committee decided that functionality was the key criteria of successful centers. Planning for a central core of information and services had the effect of attracting international business.

A preliminary questionnaire was sent to 103 companies, chambers of commerce, international organizations, etc. to gauge their response to the committee's concept of potentially useful services and to the question of whether the international trade center is needed. The results are very positive and lead the committee to recommend that a detailed analysis be done.

Possible sources of financing for the study, which is estimated to run \$20-30 thousand, include the Port of Seattle, State Department of Commerce, City of Seattle, and private business. The Port has indicated that funds may be made available to study the information index concept which is a subset of the international trade center concept.

The committee's role will include the securing of funds, proctoring (through an independent research firm) the study and, positive results pending, the establishment or identification of an organization which will be responsible for the planning, commencement, and operation of the center.