



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

February 10, 2014

Ordinance 17746

Proposed No. 2013-0527.2

Sponsors Dembowski, Phillips and Lambert

1 AN ORDINANCE creating a countywide transportation

2 benefit district as authorized by chapter 36.73 RCW.

3 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

4 **SECTION 1. Findings:**

5 A. The 2008 recession had a deep and enduring impact to the economy in King
6 County, causing property and sales tax revenues that finance government transportation
7 services to drop unexpectedly.

8 B. As the largest labor market in the state, failure of the transportation system in
9 King County will have far reaching economic impacts across Washington.

10 C. The King County transit division ("Metro") is vital to the region's economic
11 health. Metro provided over one hundred fifteen million passenger trips in 2012 with
12 ridership expected to grow; more than one thousand five hundred companies provide
13 transit passes to their employees; over half of Metro's passengers are commuters; and
14 current service levels keep approximately one hundred seventy-five thousand cars off our
15 roads every weekday.

16 D. Sales tax currently provides for sixty percent of Metro's operating budget, and
17 reductions in property tax revenue and the lack of growth in gas tax revenue will limit
18 key funding sources for city and unincorporated King County transportation projects.

19 E. The twenty-dollar congestion reduction charge authorized in Ordinance 17169
20 in 2011 was a temporary measure while sustainable funding solutions were developed.
21 King County's authority for this implemented funding source expires May 31, 2014.

22 F. In 2011, the King County council adopted the landmark King County Metro
23 Transit Strategic Plan for Public Transportation and Service Guidelines that established a
24 new course that prioritizes productivity, social equity and geographic value in the
25 ongoing development of the Metro transit system.

26 G. To respond to decreased revenues during the recession, Metro undertook a
27 number of measures to preserve service. Metro implemented system-wide reforms,
28 including restructuring the transit system to improve productivity and effectiveness and
29 discontinuing the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. Metro has also increased revenue
30 for transit through property tax changes, through the implementation of the temporary
31 congestion reduction charge and through multiple fare increases raising fares by eighty
32 percent since 2008. As a result, Metro realized nearly eight hundred million dollars in
33 savings and new revenues combined to support the system.

34 H. Metro still faces an ongoing annual revenue shortfall up to seventy-five
35 million dollars to maintain existing service levels. Without new revenue, Metro will face
36 up to a seventeen percent cut in service, or approximately six hundred thousand annual
37 hours of service cuts beginning in fall 2014.

38 I. The King County road services division is responsible for an unincorporated
39 area road network that supports more than one million trips per day. The system consists
40 of about one thousand five hundred miles of county roads and one hundred eighty

41 bridges, plus numerous sidewalks and pathways, traffic signs and signals, drainage pipes
42 and culverts and other critical transportation infrastructure.

43 J. The road services division's funding for maintenance of roads and bridges has
44 declined by more than one-third since 2009 due to annexations, declining property
45 values, less state and federal grant support and lower gas tax revenue. At the same time,
46 the volume of county road miles has not dropped proportionally while transportation
47 safety, preservation and other needs are increasing due to aging infrastructure, population
48 growth, development and changing travel patterns.

49 K. Property tax is the road services division's primary funding source, and
50 property values in unincorporated King County have declined significantly since the start
51 of the recession. The ability of property tax revenue to recover from its depressed levels
52 is impeded by statutory constraints limiting tax collections.

53 L. Gas tax revenues, another major source of funding for the road services
54 division, will not increase with the rate of inflation as gasoline consumption stagnates due
55 to more fuel efficient cars and to fewer vehicle miles travelled, and because the tax rate
56 per gallon is fixed and does not adjust with inflation.

57 M. Future grant funding for capital projects is also uncertain as federal and state
58 decision-makers choose between competing interests for limited dollars.

59 N. The Strategic Plan for Road Services was approved by the council in 2010 to
60 provide key guidance to the agency about work priorities, including infrastructure service
61 and investment decisions. The plan gives top priority to basic goals: meet critical safety
62 needs; comply with legal requirements; and maintain and preserve the existing road
63 network.

64 O. The road services division is reducing costs through reductions in
65 management and administrative costs, space consolidation and reductions to fleet
66 equipment, and has already reduced division staff by forty percent and implemented
67 changes to service priorities.

68 P. It is the county's responsibility to maintain, preserve and operate the
69 unincorporated area road system, and without dedicated funding to stabilize the declining
70 road system, the roads services division expects to close thirty-five bridges before they
71 become unsafe, restrict access to seventy-two miles of failing roadways and reduce storm
72 service on snowy and icy roads by two-thirds during the winter season.

73 Q. Cities in King County maintain five thousand five hundred miles of streets
74 plus bridges, sidewalks, drainage systems, traffic signals, bicycle and pedestrian facilities
75 and trails. Existing facilities are aging.

76 R. King County cities have experienced a substantial downturn in revenues in the
77 past decade. Many cities in King County have been forced to supplement roads funds
78 with general fund dollars, which have themselves not been keeping pace with inflation.
79 Using general fund dollars to maintain roads and other transportation infrastructure
80 means that there are fewer dollars available to fund public safety, parks, human services
81 and other critical city services.

82 S. A lack of dedicated funding for transportation projects has made it
83 increasingly difficult for King County and King County cities to raise matching funds to
84 compete for state and federal transportation grant dollars, and state and federal
85 transportation grant opportunities have dwindled.

86 T. King County cities are also beset by failing roads and bridges, congested
87 corridors and bottlenecked interchanges, which undermine the ability to transport people
88 and goods.

89 U. Cities in King County have over \$1.3 billion in maintenance and preservation
90 needs alone over the next six years, and have identified a need of over \$3 billion for
91 mobility projects over the next six years. Cities in King County are responsible for the
92 repair and replacement of twenty-two bridges in King County with a sufficiency rating of
93 fifty or less, equating to more than \$775 million in bridge repair and replacement costs
94 over the next six years. The lack of adequate transportation funding for cities is a public
95 safety crisis in King County.

96 V. In 2013, action by the state Legislature related to the Public Works Trust Fund
97 resulted in a substantial reduction of funds available for King County cities, including a
98 greater relative impact on smaller cities in King County. Without an additional source of
99 revenue, many transportation infrastructure projects planned by cities will not be able to
100 move forward.

101 W. With new funding for transportation investments throughout King County,
102 there is an opportunity to catalyze construction jobs, enhance freight mobility for our
103 ports and create a pathway for retaining and growing new jobs for key industry sectors.

104 X. It is in the public interest and the best interests of the residents of the county to
105 establish a transportation benefit district with the authority to fund, acquire, construct,
106 operate, improve, provide, maintain and preserve transportation improvements permitted
107 by chapter 36.73 RCW, all as further set forth in section 5 of this ordinance.

108 SECTION 2. There is created a transportation benefit district, to be known as the
109 King County transportation district, with geographical boundaries comprised of the limits
110 of the county. The district shall have the authority to exercise the statutory powers in
111 chapter 36.73 RCW.

112 SECTION 3. A. The King County council shall be the governing board of the
113 transportation district, acting in an ex officio and independent capacity, which shall have
114 the authority to exercise the statutory powers in chapter 36.73 RCW.

115 B. The King County executive services finance director shall be the treasurer of
116 the transportation district.

117 C. The board shall develop and implement a material change policy for projects
118 that the district is financing. The material change policy shall address major plan
119 changes that affect project delivery or the ability to finance the plan, in accordance with
120 RCW 36.73.160(1).

121 D. The board shall cause to be issued an annual report, in accordance with
122 chapter 36.73 RCW.

123 SECTION 4. The district shall be dissolved in accordance with RCW 36.73.050.

124 SECTION 5. A. The transportation district is formed with the authority to fund,
125 acquire, construct, operate, improve, provide, maintain and preserve transportation
126 improvements permitted by chapter 36.73 RCW.

127 B. The transportation improvements of the transportation district must be projects
128 or programs contained in the transportation plan of the Puget Sound Regional Council,
129 King County or a city within King County that are:

130 1. The provision of Metro Transit public transportation services;

- 131 2. The service planning and public engagement for the provision of Metro
132 transit public transportation services;
- 133 3. The operation, maintenance and repair of Metro Transit vehicles, equipment
134 and facilities;
- 135 4. The acquisition and replacement of Metro Transit vehicles and equipment
136 and the planning, design and implementation of Metro Transit capital improvements;
- 137 5. The implementation of transportation demand management programs;
- 138 6. The planning, design and implementation of capital improvement,
139 preservation and restoration projects for road facilities such as streets, roads, bridges,
140 signals, guardrails, drainage systems, pedestrian and bicycle pathways and related
141 facilities and improvements;
- 142 7. The operation, maintenance and repair of road facilities such as streets, roads,
143 bridges, signals, guardrails, drainage systems, bicycle pathways and related facilities and
144 improvements;
- 145 8. The provision of emergency responses to protect road facilities and public
146 health and safety; or
- 147 9. The planning, design, installation and management of intelligent
148 transportation systems in including traffic cameras, control equipment and new
149 technologies to optimize the existing transportation system.
- 150 C. When authorized by statute or by the voters in accordance with chapter 36.73
151 RCW, the board may impose taxes, fees, charges or tolls, or any combination thereof, and
152 may implement a low-income rebate program for vehicle fees, for the purposes consistent
153 with chapter 36.73 RCW.

154 SECTION 6. For the purposes of chapter 36.73 RCW and section 5 of this
155 ordinance:

156 A. The transportation plan of King County includes as adopted and updated the
157 Transportation Element of the King County Comprehensive Plan, the King County Metro
158 Transit Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, the King County Metro Transit Service
159 Guidelines, the annual King County Metro Transit Service Guidelines Report, the King
160 County Department of Transportation Strategic Plan for Road Services, the
161 Transportation Needs Report and the King County Roads Services CIP.

162 B. The transportation plan of the Puget Sound Regional Council is its
163 transportation improvement program developed and updated as required by RCW
164 47.80.023.

165 C. The transportation plan of a city is its transportation program adopted and
166 annually revised and extended as required by RCW 35.77.010.

167 SECTION 7. For the purposes of this ordinance, "city" means city or town.

168 SECTION 8. As authorized under chapter 36.73 RCW, this ordinance shall be
169 liberally construed to permit the accomplishment of its purposes.

170 SECTION 9. If requested by the King County transportation district, publication
171 and distribution of a local voters' pamphlet in conformity with chapter 29A.32 RCW and
172 K.C.C. chapter 1.10 is hereby authorized for all special elections called by the King
173 County transportation district.

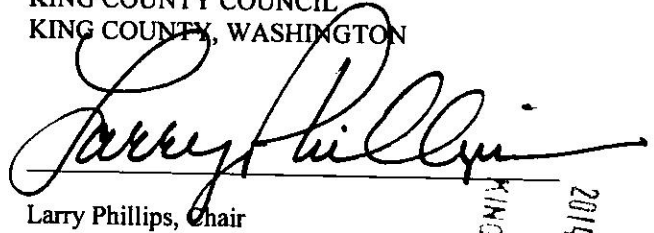
174 SECTION 10. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its

175 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance
176 or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.
177

Ordinance 17746 was introduced on 12/16/2013 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 2/10/2014, by the following vote:

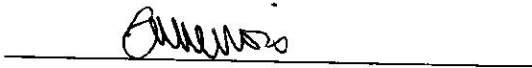
Yes: 9 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague,
Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski and Mr.
Upthegrove
No: 0
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

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KING COUNTY CLERK
KING COUNTY COUNCIL

APPROVED this 10 day of FEBRUARY, 2014.



Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None