



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

February 3, 2015

Ordinance 17971

Proposed No. 2014-0479.2

Sponsors Dembowski and Phillips

1 AN ORDINANCE creating the King County Metro transit
2 carbon offset program; requiring the wastewater treatment
3 division and the solid waste division to be carbon neutral
4 by 2025, by investing in energy efficiency, renewable
5 energy, the production of renewable energy, carbon offsets
6 and other practices to reduce the emissions of greenhouse
7 gases from operations; and adding a new chapter to K.C.C.
8 Title 28.

9 STATEMENT OF FACTS:

- 10 1. King County places a high priority on reducing the environmental
11 footprint of King County operations.
- 12 2. King County has been a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in its
13 operations.
- 14 3. Transportation accounts for nearly half of all greenhouse gas emissions
15 produced in King County.
- 16 4. In 2012, King County adopted the Strategic Climate Action Plan
17 required by Ordinance 17270, which states the county has an overarching
18 climate goal is to partner with its residents, businesses, local governments

19 and other partners to reduce countywide greenhouse gas emissions by at
20 least eighty percent below 2007 levels by 2050.

21 5. In 2014, the Growth Management Planning Council, which includes
22 elected leaders from King County and its cities, unanimously adopted a
23 new countywide planning policy to reduce countywide sources of
24 greenhouse gas emissions by twenty-five percent by 2020, fifty percent by
25 2030 and eighty percent by 2050, compared to a 2007 baseline.

26 6. King County also has an overarching climate change goal to reduce
27 total greenhouse gas emissions from government operations, compared to
28 a 2007 baseline, by at least fifteen percent by 2015, twenty-five percent by
29 2020 and fifty percent by 2030.

30 7. The transit division has a significant and beneficial impact on the
31 region's greenhouse gas emissions and displaces roughly four times more
32 greenhouse gas emission than it generates, which is a net displacement of
33 approximately six hundred thousand metric tons of carbon dioxide
34 equivalent each year.

35 8. The operations of the wastewater treatment division and solid waste
36 division protect our environment by disposing of solid waste and
37 wastewater in an environmentally sound way. However, certain
38 components of these operations are significant sources of greenhouse gas
39 emissions, including: emissions associated with energy used in buildings
40 and facilities and to collect and treat wastewater and solid waste;
41 emissions from the diesel and gasoline used in vehicles; emissions from

42 the methane and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with
43 wastewater treatment and county-owned landfills; and indirect emissions
44 related to services, supplies and equipment, especially from construction
45 contracts.

46 9. In 2013, the department of natural resources parks and its divisions,
47 including the wastewater treatment division and solid waste division,
48 committed to achieving carbon neutral operations and are actively
49 pursuing activities to reduce their operational greenhouse gas footprint.

50 The department has made significant progress to date by engaging
51 employees, accelerating energy efficiency, renewable energy and tree-
52 planting projects, as well as improving methods for calculating greenhouse
53 gas emissions and offsets.

54 10. Ordinance 15556, enacted in 2006, approved King County's
55 membership in the Chicago Climate Exchange to reduce King County's
56 carbon emissions and, among other purposes, to develop an accounting
57 methodology for emission trading that recognizes the transit division's role
58 in reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions and credits regional entities
59 for providing public transit service and to establish such a regional transit
60 credit.

61 11. Both the wastewater treatment division and solid waste division are
62 utilities under Title 36 RCW.

63 12. RCW 36.01.250 gives any county authorized to acquire and operate
64 utilities or conduct other proprietary or user or ratepayer funded activities

65 explicit statutory authority to reduce or mitigate the greenhouse emissions
66 of such utilities, including investing in carbon offsets or other credits.

67 13. In enacting RCW 36.01.250, the state made the following findings in
68 Chapter 349, Laws of Washington 2007: "The legislature also finds and
69 declares that greenhouse gases offset contracts, credits, and other
70 greenhouse gases mitigation efforts are a recognized purpose of other
71 county proprietary activities that are funded by users and ratepayers, and
72 that such mitigation efforts confer a direct benefit on such payers."

73 14. The purchase of carbon offsets from the transit division by the
74 wastewater treatment division and the solid waste division is an important
75 tool in a portfolio of actions to meet the goals of the King County
76 Strategic Climate Action Plan to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of
77 King County operations and in the county.

78 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

79 SECTION 1. Sections 2 through 4 of this ordinance should constitute a new
80 chapter in K.C.C. Title 28.

81 NEW SECTION. SECTION 2. The definitions in this section apply throughout
82 this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

83 A. "Additionality" means the principle of achieving net greenhouse gas emissions
84 savings over and above those that would have arisen anyway in the absence of a given
85 activity or project.

86 B. "Carbon neutral" means no net greenhouse gas emissions from operations,
87 including when carbon offsets are applied to the emissions calculation

88 C. "Carbon offset" means a reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide or
89 greenhouse gases made in order to mitigate for or to offset an emission made elsewhere.

90 D. "Transit carbon offset" means an investment by the transit division that results
91 in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions beyond standard operations, thereby
92 achieving additionality.

93 NEW SECTION. SECTION 3. The wastewater treatment division and the solid
94 waste division shall aggressively reduce both direct and indirect greenhouse gas
95 emissions from operations.

96 The department of natural resources and parks shall achieve overall carbon-
97 neutral operations by 2017. The wastewater treatment division and the solid waste
98 division shall each achieve carbon-neutral operations by 2025. For purposes of
99 calculating carbon neutrality, purchased offsets may only be included in the calculation
100 only if those carbon offsets meet the principle of additionality. The reduction in
101 greenhouse gas emissions shall be accomplished through energy efficiency, investments
102 in the use of renewable energy, the production of renewable energy, carbon offsets
103 consistent with RCW 36.01.250 and other division projects that reduce or sequester
104 greenhouse gas emissions to reduce the emissions of greenhouse emissions from
105 operations.

106 The wastewater treatment and solid waste divisions shall annually calculate their
107 greenhouse gas emissions and create an annual greenhouse gas inventory using
108 recognized methodologies and protocols, to the extent available. The first annual
109 greenhouse gas inventory shall be reviewed by an independent third party with proven
110 experience in emission inventory calculations. Subsequent annual greenhouse gas

111 inventories shall be reviewed, by an independent third party with proven experience in
112 emission inventory calculations, periodically and when there is a material change in the
113 wastewater treatment division's or solid waste division's operations or energy use or
114 source.

115 NEW SECTION. SECTION 4. A. The King County Metro transit carbon offset
116 program is hereby created and shall be administered by the transit division.

117 B. Transit carbon offsets shall be reviewed by an an independent third-party
118 organization with proven experience in emission mitigation activities to ensure that
119 transitcarbon offsets meet the requirements of RCW 36.01.250.

120 C. The transit division shall also make carbon offsets available for purchase by
121 individuals or public or private entities.

122 D. The transit division shall make carbon offsets available for purchase to the
123 wastewater treatment division and the solid waste division as a means for those divisions
124 to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The wastewater treatment division and the
125 solid waste division shall evaluate the purchase of transit division carbon offsets, as
126 necessary, to achieve the requirements of this chapter.

127 E. When purchasing carbon offsets, the wastewater treatment division and the
128 solid waste division shall ensure the offsets meet the requirements of RCW 36.01.250. In
129 purchasing offsets, the wastewater treatment division and the solid waste divisions shall
130 purchase offsets from to the transit division before purchasing carbon offsets from
131 outside of the county if transit division offsets are comparably priced.

132 F. Revenue from the sale of carbon offsets shall be used by the transit division
133 solely for the purposes of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through providing

134 additional transit service hours or investments that reduce the greenhouse gas emissions
135 from transit operations beyond standard operations, thereby achieving additionality.

136 G. The executive shall ensure that transit carbon offsets are not double counted in
137 calculating the greenhouse gas emissions for King County. ..

138 SECTION 5. Before implementing the King County Metro Transit carbon offset
139 program, the executive shall report to council by June 1, 2015, on potential options for
140 structuring the program, potential buyers of the offsets, and the costs and revenues of
141 implementing the program. The executive must file the report in the form of a paper
142 original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original
143 and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the

144 policy staff director and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and environment
145 committee, or its successor.
146

Ordinance 17971 was introduced on 12/1/2014 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 2/2/2015, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Lambert,
Mr. Dunn, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski and Mr. Upthegrove
No: 0
Excused: 1 - Ms. Hague

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

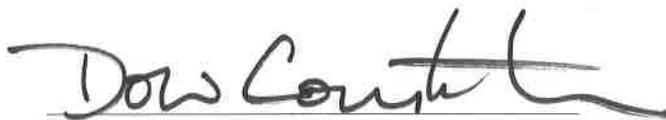

Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this 4 day of FEBRUARY, 2015.



Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None