1200 King County Courthouse 516 Third Avenue Seattle, WA 98104

# King County

### **KING COUNTY**

## **Signature Report**

#### Ordinance 19745

	Proposed No. 2023-0423.2 Sponsors Upthegrove	
1	AN ORDINANCE authorizing the vacation of a portion of	
2	S. 368th Street/10th Street, file no. V-2730; Petitioners:	
3	Brett Sherrod, Christian Denzler, and Jerald Laitila.	
4	STATEMENT OF FACTS:	
5	1. A petition has been filed requesting vacation of a portion of S. 368th	
6	Street/10th Street, hereinafter described.	
7	2. The department of local services notified utility companies serving the	
8	area and King County departments of the proposed vacation and has been	
9	advised that Puget Sound Energy and Comcast require easements over the	
10	vacation area. The vacation shall not extinguish the rights of any utility	
11	company to any existing easements for facilities or equipment within the	
12	vacation area.	
13	3. The department of local services' records indicate that this segment of	
14	right of way is unopened and unmaintained.	
15	4. The department of local services considers the subject portion of right	
16	of way useless as part of the county road and transportation system and	
17	believes the public would benefit by the return of this segment of right of	
18	way to the public tax rolls and recommends approval of the vacation.	
19	5. Pursuant to K.C.C. 14.40.020 and RCW 36.87.120, the value of the	
20	vacation area is offset by the costs to King County to manage and	

maintain this segment of unopened right of way and the present value of
future property tax. This results in a determination of: \$2,758 as
compensation for the vacation of 6,964 square feet of S. 368th Street/10th
Street right of way to the property of Petitioner Christian Denzler, King
County Assessor's Parcel Number 375060-8010; no compensation for the
vacation of 4,511 square feet of S. 368th Street/10th Street right of way to
the property of Petitioner Jerald Laitila, King County Assessor's Parcel
Number 375060-8049; and no compensation for the vacation of 3,194
square feet of S. 368th Street/10th Street right of way to the property of
Petitioner Jerald Laitila, King County Assessor's Parcel Number 375060-
8052.
6. Due notice was given in the manner provided by law. The office of the
hearing examiner held the public hearing on February 7, 2024.
7. As detailed in the February 7, 2024, recommendation, the hearing
examiner found that the road segment subject to this petition is not useful
as part of the King County road system, concluded that the vacation of this
segment of road will benefit the public through the transfer of
responsibility for management and return of the property to the public tax
roll, and recommended requiring \$2,758 in compensation from Petitioner
Christian Denzler as a condition of vacation, and no compensation from
Petitioners Jerald Laitila or Brett Sherrod.

12	8. For the reasons stated in the examiner's report and recommendation,
13	the council determines that it is in the best interest of the citizens of King
14	County to grant said petition and vacate the right of way.
45	BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:
<del>1</del> 6	SECTION 1. The council, on the effective date of this ordinance, hereby vacates
<del>1</del> 7	and abandons a portion of S. 368th Street/10th Street, right of way as dedicated to King
48	County by the recording of the plat of Jovita, recorded in Volume 19 of Plats, Page 14,
19	records of King County Washington as described below:
50	THAT PORTION OF SOUTH 368TH STREET (10TH STREET) IN
51	SECTION 34, TOWNSHIP 21 NORTH, RANGE 4 EAST, W.M., KING
52	COUNTY, WASHINGTON, LYING EASTERLY OF THE WEST 30.00
53	FEET OF SAID SECTION 34 AND WESTERLY OF THE
54	NORTHWESTERLY PROJECTION OF THE WESTERLY RIGHT OF
55	WAY MARGIN OF 34TH AVE S (VIRGINIA AVENUE) TO THE
56	NORTHERLY RIGHT OF WAY MARGIN OF SOUTH 368TH STREET
57	(10TH STREET), ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF JOVITA,
58	RECORDED IN VOLUME 19 OF PLATS, AT PAGE 14, RECORDS OF
59	KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON.
50	Containing 14,669 square feet, more or less.
51	SECTION 2. There are no contingencies or compensation requirements
52	for vacating the subject road right-of-way abutting the Laitilia parcels (375060-
53	8049 and 375060-8052).

#### Ordinance 19745

SECTION 3. Vacation of the subject road right-of-way abutting the Denzler
parcel (375060-8010), is contingent on petitioner paying \$2758 to King County within
ninety days of the date council takes final action on this ordinance. If King County does
not receive \$2758 by that date, there is no vacation and the associated right-of-way
remains King County's. If payment is timely received, the clerk shall record an ordinance
against parcel 375060-8010. Recording an ordinance will signify that payment has been

Ord	inance	19745

- received, the contingency is satisfied, and the right-of-way associated with parcel
- 71 375060-8010 is vacated.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DocuSigned by:

Daud Up

E76CF01F07R14FF

Dave Upthegrove, Chair

ATTEST:

Docusigned by:

Melani Hay

8DE1BB375AD3422...

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

Docusigned by.

--- 4FBCAB8196AE4C6...

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: A. Hearing Examiner Report dated February 7, 2024

February 7, 2024

## OFFICE OF THE HEARING EXAMINER KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Telephone (206) 477-0860

hearingexaminer@kingcounty.gov

www.kingcounty.gov/independent/hearing-examiner

#### REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

SUBJECT: Department of Transportation file no. V-2730

Proposed ordinance no. 2023-0423

Adjacent parcel no(s). **375060-8010**, **375060-8049**, and **375060-8052** 

#### BRETT SHERROD, CHRISTIAN DENZLER, JERALD LAITILA

Road Vacation Petition

Location: a portion of S. 368th Street/10th Street

Petitioner: Christian Denzler

36728 32nd Ave S Auburn, WA 98001

Telephone: (425) 319-0100 Email: denzler@vexicon.com

Petitioner: Jerald Laitila

36803 34th Ave S Auburn, WA 98001

Email: jerryj17@yahoo.com

Petitioner: Brett Sherrod

36721 34th Ave S Auburn, WA 98001

Telephone: (253) 266-6211

Email: bsmustangman@gmail.com

King County: Department of Local Services

represented by Leslie Drake

201 S Jackson Street Seattle, WA 98104

Telephone: (206) 477-7764

Email: leslie.drake@kingcounty.gov

#### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

#### Overview

1. Brett Sherrod, Christian Denzler, and Jerald Laitila petition the County to vacate a stretch of public right-of-way at a portion of S. 368th Street/10th Street. The Department of Local Services, Road Services Division (Roads), urges vacation. On February 7, 2024, we conducted a remote public hearing on behalf of the Council. After hearing witness testimony and observing their demeanor, studying the exhibits entered into evidence, and considering the parties' arguments and the relevant law, we recommend that the Council approve the vacation. As explained below, there is only one property from which compensation should be required as a condition of vacation.

#### **Background**

- 2. Except as provided below, we incorporate the facts set forth in Roads' report and in proposed ordinance no. 2023-0423. That report, and a map showing the area to be vacated and the vicinity of the proposed vacation, are in the hearing record and will be attached to the copies of our recommendation submitted to Council. Ex. 1 at 001-04; Ex. 14.
- 3. Chapter RCW 36.87 sets the general framework for county road vacations, augmented by KCC chapter 14.40. There are at least four somewhat interrelated inquiries. The first two relate to whether vacation is warranted: is the [1] road useless to the road system and [2] would vacation benefit the public? If the answers to these are both yes, the third and fourth relate to compensation: [3] what is the appraised (or perhaps assessed) value of the right-of-way, and [4] how should this number be adjusted to capture avoided County costs? We analyze each of those below.

#### Is Vacation Warranted?

- 4. A petitioner has the burden to show that the "road is [1] useless as part of the county road system and [2] that the public will be benefitted by its vacation and abandonment." RCW 36.87.020. "A county right of way may be considered useless if it is not necessary to serve an essential role in the public road network or if it would better serve the public interest in private ownership." KCC 14.40.0102.B. While denial is mandatory ("shall not" vacate) where a petitioner fails to make that showing, approval is discretionary where a petitioner shows uselessness and public benefit ("may vacate"). RCW 36.87.060(1) (emphasis added).
- 5. The subject right-of-way segment is not currently opened, constructed, or maintained for public use, and it is not known to be used informally for access to any property. Vacation would have no adverse effect on the provision of access and fire and emergency services to the abutting properties and surrounding area. The right-of-way is not necessary for the present or future public road system. Utilities will retain their easements.
- 6. We find that the road is useless to the county road system. We also find that the public will benefit from its vacation, with the savings in expected, avoided management and

- maintenance costs and increased property taxes discussed below. We conclude that vacation here is warranted.
- 7. Normally, when a stretch of right-of-way is vacated the property abutting one side of the right-of-way takes half of the square footage, and the property abutting other side takes the other half. This case is interesting. Given how the abutting parcels were initially created, the entire right-of-way was carved out from land to the south; thus the vacated right-of-way will return only to the lots to the south. *See* Ex. 4 at 005. The two properties to the north of the right-of-way (the Sherrod lot and one of the Denzler lots) will not add any square footage when vacation is complete. It is only the abutting properties to the south (the other Denzler lot and the two Laitila lots) that add square footage. Ex. 14.

#### What Compensation is Due?

- 8. Where vacation is appropriate, we calculate compensation by [3] starting with the increase in property values the receiving parcel will garner from the extra square footage the (formerly) public right-of-way area adds to the parcel; this figure is generated by the Assessor. However, that is only the starting point, because [4] State and County law allow local legislative branches to adjust the appraised value to reflect the expected value to the public from avoided liability risk, eliminated management costs, and jettisoned maintenance costs, along with increased property taxes. RCW 36.87.070; KCC 14.40.020.A.1. Performance, Strategy, and Budget created a model for calculating these adjustments, updated annually. Roads then applies those figures to a given parcel. This means that the appropriate level of compensation to require is a somewhat individualized inquiry, producing different results for different parcels.
- 9. Here, the Assessor opines that the smaller of the Laitila lots (375060-8049) will not appreciate at all in value from the additional square footage. Ex. 18. That seems counterintuitive; how can adding 4500 ft.<sup>2</sup> —which almost doubles the size of the existing 4940 ft.<sup>2</sup> lot *not* add any value? *Compare* Ex. 18 *with* Ex. 12. However, in past petitions where we required someone from the Assessor's office to appear at our public hearing to explain a similar incongruity, staff satisfactorily described how, due to the mass appraisal model they employ, certain smaller value gains are not captured. Here, the figure would likely be very low anyway, given that the larger Laitila lot (375060-8052, which is thus acquiring more square footage) is only estimated to appreciate by \$3000. Ex. 17. The southerly Denzler lot (375060-8010, which will acquire the most square footage) is expected to appreciate by \$7000.
- 10. From those gains we then subtract the value the County sees from jettisoning a stretch of right-of-way; the model this year calculates that \$4096 per segment. That completely offsets the gain to the larger Laitila lot. It only partially offsets the gain to the Denzler lot, resulting in compensation due of \$2758. Mr. Denzler is under no compulsion to acquire the right-of-way. If he chooses not to acquire it, the public area will simply continue to bisect his two adjoining properties and he will be no worse off than he was when the petition started.

#### 4

#### RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. We recommend that Council APPROVE proposed ordinance no. 2023-0423 to vacate the subject road right-of-way abutting the Laitilia parcels (375060-8049 and 375060-8052), with no compensation requirement or contingencies.
- 2. We recommend that Council APPROVE proposed ordinance no. 2023-0423 to vacate the subject road right-of-way abutting the Denzler parcel (375060-8010), CONTINGENT on petitioner paying \$2758 to King County within 90 days of the date Council takes final action on this ordinance. If King County does not receive \$2758 by that date, there is no vacation and the associated right-of-way remains King County's. If payment is timely received, the Clerk shall record an ordinance against parcel 375060-8010. Recording an ordinance will signify that payment has been received, the contingency is satisfied, and the right-of-way associated with parcel 375060-8010 is vacated.

DATED February 7, 2024.

David Spohr Hearing Examiner 

#### NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

A party may appeal an Examiner report and recommendation by following the steps described in KCC 20.22.230. By **4:30 p.m.** on *March 4, 2024,* an electronic appeal statement must be sent to <u>Clerk.Council@kingcounty.gov</u>, to <u>hearingexaminer@kingcounty.gov</u>, and to the party email addresses on the front page of this report and recommendation. Please consult KCC 20.22.230 for the exact filing requirements.

If a party fails to timely file an appeal, the Council does not have jurisdiction to consider that appeal. Conversely, if the appeal requirements of KCC 20.22.230 are met, the Examiner will notify parties and interested persons and will provide information about next steps in the appeal process.

V-2730-Brett Sherrod, Christian Denzler, Jerald Laitila

## MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 7, 2024, HEARING ON THE ROAD VACATION PETITION OF BRETT SHERROD, CHRISTIAN DENZLER, JERALD LAITILA, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FILE NO. V-2730

David Spohr was the Hearing Examiner in this matter. Participating in the hearing were Leslie Drake and Chris Denzler. The following exhibits were offered and entered into the record: Exhibit no. 1 Roads Report to the Hearing Examiner, submitted January 22, 2024 Petition transmittal letter, to the County Road Engineer from the Clerk of Exhibit no. 2 Council, dated January 28, 2020 Exhibit no. 3 Petition for Vacation of a County Road, received January 27, 2020 Exhibit no. 4 Letter to petitioners, acknowledging receipt of petition, dated February 10, 2020 Exhibit no. 5 Letter to Petitioners, regarding revised petition, dated May 28, 2020 Exhibit no. 6 Petition signature page with all signatures Exhibit no. 7 Letter to Petitioners acknowledging receipt of revised petition Exhibit no. 8 Plat Jovita Exhibit no. 9 King County Assessor's information for Petitioners' property, APN 2721049047 Exhibit no. 10 King County Assessor's information for Petitioners' property, APN 2721049059 Exhibit no. 11 King County Assessor's information for Petitioners' property, APN 3750608010 King County Assessor's information for Petitioners' property, APN Exhibit no. 12 3750608049 Exhibit no. 13 King County Assessor's information for Petitioners' property, APN 3750608052 Exhibit no. 14 Exhibit map depicting vacation area Exhibit no. 15 Final notice sent of review to agencies on October 23, 2020 Email exchange with Assessor's Office regarding valuation of vacation area Exhibit no. 16 Exhibit no. 17 Compensation calculation model spreadsheet for Petitioners' property, APN 375060-8052 Exhibit no. 18 Compensation calculation model spreadsheet for Petitioners' property, APN 375060-8049 Exhibit no. 19 Compensation calculation model spreadsheet for Petitioners' property, APN 375060-8010 Exhibit no. 20 Cover letter to Petitioners, with a copy of the County Road Engineer's Report, dated December 29, 2020 County Road Engineer's Report Exhibit no. 21 Easement between PSE and Jerald Laitila Exhibit no. 22 Exhibit no. 23 Easement between PSE and Christian Denzler Exhibit no. 24 Emails to Lakehaven Water and Sewer District regarding easements Exhibit no. 25 Ordinance transmittal letter, from King County Executive to Councilmember Dave Upthegrove dated November 8, 2023 Exhibit no. 26 Proposed Ordinance Exhibit no. 27 Declaration of Posting Exhibit no. 28 Affidavit of Publication for date of hearing – to be supplied by Clerk of

the Council

**Certificate Of Completion** 

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Cherie Camp

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SEATTLE, WA 98104

Cherie.Camp@kingcounty.gov IP Address: 198.49.222.20

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Cherie.Camp@kingcounty.gov

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**Signer Events** 

Dave Upthegrove

dave.upthegrove@kingcounty.gov

Security Level: Email, Account Authentication

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Melani Hay

melani.hay@kingcounty.gov

Clerk of the Council King County Council

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Melani Hay 8DE1BB375AD3422

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**Dow Constantine** 

Dow.Constantine@kingcounty.gov

King County Executive

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King County

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Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps	
Envelope Sent	Hashed/Encrypted	3/12/2024 5:57:36 PM	
Certified Delivered	Security Checked	3/14/2024 9:09:42 AM	
Signing Complete	Security Checked	3/14/2024 9:09:59 AM	
Completed	Security Checked	3/14/2024 9:09:59 AM	
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#### Consequences of changing your mind

If you elect to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format, it will slow the speed at which we can complete certain steps in transactions with you and delivering services to you because we will need first to send the required notices or disclosures to you in paper format, and then wait until we receive back from you your acknowledgment of your receipt of such paper notices or disclosures. Further, you will no longer be able to use the DocuSign system to receive required notices and consents electronically from us or to sign electronically documents from us.

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To confirm to us that you can access this information electronically, which will be similar to other electronic notices and disclosures that we will provide to you, please confirm that you have read this ERSD, and (i) that you are able to print on paper or electronically save this ERSD for your future reference and access; or (ii) that you are able to email this ERSD to an email address where you will be able to print on paper or save it for your future reference and access. Further, if you consent to receiving notices and disclosures exclusively in electronic format as described herein, then select the check-box next to 'I agree to use electronic records and signatures' before clicking 'CONTINUE' within the DocuSign system.

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- Until or unless you notify King County-Department of 02 as described above, you consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you by King County-Department of 02 during the course of your relationship with King County-Department of 02.