



**REAGAN DUNN**

**Metropolitan King County Council, District Nine**

August 4, 2006

Kevin Desmond  
General Manager  
King County Metro Transit Division  
201 South Jackson  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Desmond,

As Chair of the Regional Transit Committee, I am writing with regard to the RTC's plans for updating King County's transit policy framework. As you will recall, this was the subject of a 2006 Transit Budget proviso by which the Council requested "a detailed work plan for an update of the long-range planning framework for public transportation and development of an operating master plan." In response, you asserted in a June 20<sup>th</sup> letter that your Transit Now initiative "forms the immediate long-range (10-year) transit plan for the county" but, as I noted at the time, this position is unacceptable. Not only does this response not satisfy the proviso request, but it also does not recognize the long range planning needs of Metro.

From a procedural standpoint, it is unacceptable to justify a plan for the next ten years by saying that it is fully consistent with a 1993 long-range plan that the Council has already identified as in need of an update. But regardless of whether your Transit Now initiative is ultimately approved by the voters, it is far too limited to guide our entire transit system for one year, much less ten. If voters approve the proposed sales tax increase they will be directing slightly more than 10 percent of Metro Transit's annual sales tax revenues for the next ten years to fund, at some unspecified level, several types of transit service and related capital projects. While the Transit Division has provided estimates of the amount of new service and the types of capital investments that could be funded by the additional sales tax, nothing, other than an earmark for partnership service, is specified in the legislation or the attached six-page program description.

In addition, Transit Now leaves unaddressed the future direction of the transit system which is supported by the existing eight-tenths of one percent sales tax and projected to grow by 190,000 service hours through 2016. King County also appears to be moving toward a commitment to partner with the City of Seattle on a new streetcar line and maintenance facility and is in the midst of formulating a county-wide ferry district plan. What policies have guided those discussions? How will the Transit Division respond to King County's growing emphasis on strategic planning and performance measurement and the recommendations of the 2005 Transit Capital Planning and Management Audit?

These and other fundamental questions about the future of King County's transit system will be addressed as the Regional Transit Committee proceeds with the work requested by the Council's budget proviso. As the attention of Transit Now fades, I hope that you will collaboratively join our efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reagan Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Reagan Dunn  
King County Councilmember

Cc: Regional Transit Committee Members