



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

July 30, 2002

Motion 11491

Proposed No. 2002-0334.1

Sponsors Constantine, Pelz, Patterson,
Phillips, Sullivan, Gossett,
Edmonds, Lambert, Irons,
McKenna and Hague

1 A MOTION establishing policy direction for addressing the
2 King County fiscal crisis and requesting the courts,
3 prosecutor, sheriff and all other agencies involved in the
4 criminal justice system within King County to work
5 together to identify efficiencies and possible reductions.

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8 WHEREAS, King County has been a home rule county since the county charter
9 was approved by the voters in 1969, and

10 WHEREAS, state law and the county charter establish three branches of county
11 government: the legislative branch, with a thirteen-member elected county council; the
12 executive branch, with an elected county executive; and the judicial branch, with a
13 superior and district court, and with elected superior and district court judges, and

14 WHEREAS, the legislative branch is the policy making body and possesses
15 powers to, among other things, adopt and enact ordinances, levy taxes, appropriate
16 revenue and adopt budgets, and

17 WHEREAS, the executive branch is responsible for, among other things,
18 operating county government, delivering county services and presenting an annual budget
19 to the county council for review and approval, and

20 WHEREAS, the judicial branch is responsible for the administration of civil and
21 criminal justice, and

22 WHEREAS, certain elements of county government are the responsibility of
23 separately elected officials, including the assessor, 51 superior court judges, 26 district
24 court judges, the prosecuting attorney and the sheriff, and

25 WHEREAS, King County's total 2002 budget of \$2.9 billion is supported by a
26 variety of revenues, and

27 WHEREAS, most of these revenues – \$2.4 billion of the \$2.9 billion total – are
28 expressly restricted by state law to the purposes for which they are collected, and

29 WHEREAS, the remaining revenues of \$500 million, which constitute the
30 county's current expense (CX) fund, are the only funds available to fund many additional
31 county services, and

32 WHEREAS, some of the services funded by the county's CX fund are required by
33 the United States and Washington state constitutions, state law or the county charter,
34 while others are not so required, and

35 WHEREAS, services required by state law consist largely of those services
36 related to the criminal justice system, which is law enforcement, courts, adult and
37 juvenile detention, prosecution and indigent defense, and some services related to public
38 health, and

39 WHEREAS, services required by law also include government functions such as
40 elections, property tax assessment and collection, the county executive and the county
41 council, and

42 WHEREAS, the laws requiring particular services do not usually define the
43 specific level of service that must be provided by the county, and

44 WHEREAS, services that are not required by the county charter or state law are
45 parks and recreation, arts and landmark programs, health and human services and the
46 governmental services that support the operation of the government, such as payroll
47 processing, computer and telephone support and personnel recruitment and selection, and

48 WHEREAS, 68% of the 2002 CX budget is devoted to the criminal justice
49 system, followed by 18% for governmental services, 7% for public health and health and
50 human services, 6% for parks and recreation and 1% for capital projects, and

51 WHEREAS, King County can no longer sustain its CX fund services at existing
52 levels due to a severe and continuing fiscal shortfall, and

53 WHEREAS, the fiscal shortfall has been brought about by several factors,
54 including:

55 A. Annexations and incorporations that have reduced the county's sales tax
56 revenues without substantially reducing its responsibilities;

57 B. Increased demand for services;

58 C. Increased cost of providing those services;

59 D. Initiative-driven limits on taxes; and

60 E. The current economic recession, and

61 WHEREAS, this fiscal crisis has required the county to reduce the CX fund
62 budget by \$41 million in 2002, and will require the county to reduce the CX fund budget
63 by \$50 million 2003, with additional reductions of \$30 million 2004 and another \$30
64 million in 2005, for a total of \$151 million over four years, and

65 WHEREAS, a deficit of this magnitude will require the county to resize CX-
66 funded services and to make difficult choices among all of the services the county
67 provides, and

68 WHEREAS, to comply with state law the council must adopt a balanced budget
69 for 2003 by December 1, 2002, and

70 WHEREAS, parks and recreation, arts and landmark programs and health and
71 human services are not required by law, but contribute significantly to the quality of life
72 in the region, improve the business climate and the county's ability to attract and retain
73 employers and provide family wage jobs, and are highly valued services that many
74 citizens have come to expect the county to provide, and

75 WHEREAS, the balance between services that are legally required and services
76 that are not legally required involves policy decisions for the council to make when it
77 considers the 2003 executive proposed budget and three-year CX fund financial plan, and

78 WHEREAS, if the budgets for the services that are not required by law (parks,
79 health and human services, and arts) were reduced by 70% over the next three years, the
80 county would save \$40 million, and

81 WHEREAS, if other expenditures for governmental functions and public health
82 were reduced by 30% over the next three years, the county CX fund would save \$20
83 million, and

84 WHEREAS, even with this savings of \$60 million, other reductions totaling \$50
85 million will be necessary to make-up the \$110 million shortfall over the next three years
86 and balance the budget, and

87 WHEREAS, to balance the CX budget over the next three years, the county must
88 therefore look for ways to reduce costs in the criminal justice system, and

89 WHEREAS, the council must consider a variety of policy options for
90 improvements and efficiencies in the criminal justice system that will reduce costs to help
91 offset the three-year, \$110 million shortfall, and

92 WHEREAS, over the past several months, the executive, courts, prosecutor,
93 sheriff, and all other agencies involved in the criminal justice system, under the
94 leadership of the council's law, justice and human services committee, have undertaken
95 innovative and thoughtful discussions about how their operations can be changed to
96 achieve cost savings and still preserve public safety, and

97 WHEREAS, this effort will result in legislation establishing county criminal
98 justice policy as identified in the ordinance enacting the Adult Justice Operational Master
99 Plan, and requiring a plan to implement the policy and regular reporting on the progress
100 of developing the plan, and

101 WHEREAS, the county is committed to protecting public safety and ensuring a
102 just, fair, efficient, effective and functioning criminal justice system, and

103 WHEREAS, the council recognizes that improvements and efficiencies in the
104 criminal justice system must be jointly developed by the elected officials responsible for
105 the separate elements of the system, and

106 WHEREAS, the council is leading by example such that in 2003, it will reduce its
107 own expenditures by approximately \$2.2 million, or about 15%;

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

109 1. The council will work with the executive to identify additional significant
110 reductions to the budgets relating to governmental functions, including the budgets of the
111 executive's office and the council.

112 2. The council requests the courts, prosecutor, sheriff, and all other agencies
113 involved in the criminal justice system to prepare for the budget process this year and in
114 the next two years by identifying policy and operational changes, developing proposals
115 and identifying cost savings that will contribute to a balanced budget, and which will
116 offset the \$110 million budget shortfall by as much as the \$50 million that may be
117 required to balance the budget.

118 3. These proposals should be the result of collaborative discussions among the
119 county executive, the prosecuting attorney, the sheriff, the presiding judge of the superior
120 court and the presiding judge of the district court.

121 4. Proposals for reducing criminal justice system costs should consider the policy
122 framework established in the ordinance enacting the Adult Justice Operational Master
123 Plan, which requires system improvements and efficiencies, a policy for the use of secure
124 detention, and expanding the use of alternative options and sanctions, including treatment
125 services. The proposals should integrate existing treatment services with the criminal
126 justice system to improve public safety.

127 5. These proposals should be submitted to the council by October 1, 2002, and
128 should reflect a three-year phased implementation beginning in 2003. It is the council's

129 intent that these proposals be developed in conjunction with the implementation plan
130 required by the ordinance enacting the Adult Justice Operational Master Plan.

131 6. The council intends that the county continue to provide those human services
132 that reduce involvement in the criminal justice system or increase the efficiency and
133 effectiveness of criminal justice interventions.

134 7. The council will consider these proposals as it reviews the 2003 executive
135 proposed budget. The prosecuting attorney, the sheriff, the presiding judge of the
136 superior court and the presiding judge of the district court will have ample opportunity to
137 present their proposals, and to advise the council of the impacts their proposals will have
138 on their ability to provide vital services.

139 8. Public hearings on the 2003 proposed budget will be held in multiple locations
140 in the county.

141 9. The council recognizes that reductions deeper than those described above may
142 be necessary in services that are *not* required by law, in order to allow the county to
143 provide adequate levels of services that *are* required by law. However, given the
144 county's fiscal situation, prudent planning requires the council to examine all possible

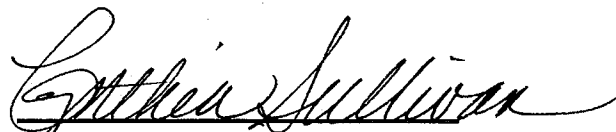
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145 cost and service reductions before deciding on the steps necessary to achieve a balanced
146 budget.
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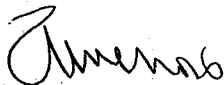
Motion 11491 was introduced on 7/22/2002 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 7/29/2002, by the following vote:

Yes: 10 - Ms. Sullivan, Ms. Edmonds, Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Pelz, Mr. Constantine, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague and Ms. Patterson
No: 1 - Mr. Pullen
Excused: 2 - Mr. McKenna and Mr. Irons

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Cynthia Sullivan, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Ron Sims, County Executive

Attachments None