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February 23, 2026

The Honorable Sarah Perry
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Perry:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, implement service changes to the King County Metro (Metro) transit system in south King County in accordance with King County Code 28.94.020.B.

Each year Metro implements service changes in the fall and spring. Metro updates service in response to changes in customer needs and changes in the regional transit network, among other factors. The proposed Ordinance aligns transit service with the three new 1 Line stations of Link light rail that Sound Transit opened in Des Moines, Kent, and Federal Way in December 2025. Metro is making administrative changes consistent with this proposed Ordinance to align with the new stations in the spring of 2026. Larger-scale changes and service growth would begin to be implemented in the fall of 2026. Beginning with the service change in the fall of 2026, Metro may partially implement the remaining proposed changes and grow service over time, contingent upon operational capacity.

This proposal is centered on expanding service, delivering an integrated transit system that responds to Link light rail expansion, and improving mobility for historically underserved populations. The proposed network was developed with extensive community engagement and includes increased service in south King County; new access to the transit network; improved access to frequent; improved connections to local and regional destinations, and improved reliability with shorter streamlined routes, and connections to frequent and reliable Link service.

The proposed service changes will add approximately 95,000 annual service hours to the transit system. The added service hours in this project reflect the full restoration of all service hours suspended from 2020 to 2023 on project area routes, plus an additional investment in service growth approved in the King County 2026-2027 biennial budget. This restoration of service hours is consistent with Metro's Service Recovery Plan approved via Ordinance 19581.

Informed by Metro's Service Guidelines and Strategic Plan, the South Link Connections Mobility Project proposed service changes are the result of a two-year collaborative process centered on equity, public input, and service design best practices. To focus investment where needs are greatest, Metro's engagement plans, community relations, and advisory groups centered on priority populations. Priority populations are defined by the Mobility Framework as Black, Indigenous, and other people of color; people with low or no income; people with disabilities; immigrants and refugees; and diverse language speakers.

These improvements will also further the 2025 Strategic Climate Action Plan goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through increasing transit use. Improving transit connections to new Link stations, providing frequent bus service on well-utilized east-west connections, improving span of service, investing in weekend service, and providing more travel alternatives are expected to result in more people choosing mass transit.

The proposed changes are consistent with the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031 and King County Metro Service Guidelines, as they support a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance to approve public transportation service changes for the South Link Connections project area. If your staff have questions, please contact Katie Chalmers, Managing Director, Service Development, Metro Transit Department, at 206-477-5869.

Sincerely,

for

Girmay Zahilay
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council
Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council
Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Office of the Executive
Jasmin Weaver, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Sierra Howlett-Brown, Director of Government Relations, Office of the Executive
Garrett Holbrook, Council Relations Manager, Office of the Executive
Michelle Allison, General Manager, Metro Transit Department