April 8, 2019

The Honorable Rod Dembowski

Chair, King County Council

Room 1200

C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Dembowski:

This letter transmits an ordinance requesting increased appropriation authority for the Metro Transit Department to help Metro develop a framework for the equitable implementation of innovations in transit service and mobility and prepare updated information for METRO CONNECTS, Metro’s adopted long-range plan. Metro will also conduct an outreach and engagement effort that puts the voices of historically disadvantaged populations at our decision making table, while seeking input from a wide variety of stakeholders. Finally, Metro will use this authority to implement a regional planning process for the funding and implementation of METRO CONNECTS over the next decade. These efforts are being undertaken in response to Motions 15252 and 15253, which the Council passed last year.

The proposed supplemental appropriation will not have an impact on the General Fund. It will simply provide additional appropriation authority for Metro so that we can both fulfill our existing responsibilities over the course of the biennium and also complete this important planning effort.

The legislation would provide additional authority for $1,075,000 to provide support for the consultant team that will assist existing Metro staff with transit demand and financial modeling, best practices review, the development of policy recommendations, materials production, and outreach and engagement, including consultation with community-based organizations and an equity cabinet.

We see our work on the equitable mobility framework and regional planning effort as foundational for the implementation of regional transit service over the next decade. Our work this year and the policy choices that will be made by the Council and elected leaders around the region will advance goals in the Strategic Plan for Equity and Social Justice by adapting policies, programs, services, and investment strategies to better advance equity through our operations. In addition, these policy choices will provide guidance for:

* Updates to Metro’s Strategic Plan for Public Transportation and Service Guidelines in ways that center equity and sustainability, while reflecting the region’s growth, emerging technologies, and Metro’s role as a mobility agency;
* The Transportation sections of the 2020 updates to both the Strategic Climate Action Plan and the King County Comprehensive Plan;
* Updates to the Pro-Equity Transportation & Mobility Policy Agenda of the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan
* The development of Metro’s 2021-2022 biennial budget, as well as our ongoing relationship with the Seattle Transportation Benefit District and, potentially, new regional funding sources to expand the transit system to meet the region’s needs; and
* Metro’s role within the County’s larger efforts to support housing affordability and access to transit, in particular affordable transit-oriented development.

We intend to further engage with Councilmembers as we launch this effort to ensure that we meet the Council’s expectations as embodied in Motions 15252 and 15253 and to achieve our mutual goals of livable communities, a thriving economy for all, and a sustainable environment.

Thank you for your consideration of this ordinance. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact John Resha, Assistant General Manager, Metro Transit at 206-477-0889.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Rob Gannon, General Manager, Transit Department

Chris O’Claire, Mobility Division Director, Transit Department