



## Legislation Text

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Clerk 09/12/2007

AN ORDINANCE approving the District Court Facility Master Plan.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. The district court is the county's court of limited jurisdiction and is the largest court of limited jurisdiction in the state.
2. The court has responsibility for traffic infractions, certain civil matters, and misdemeanor criminal offenses in the county's unincorporated areas and in cities that contract with the court. The court also has responsibility for the adjudication of "state" offenses, which include those violations of state statute that occur within the county or when the arresting agency is the Washington State Patrol.
3. The requirements and structure of the district court are contained in state statute, county code, and are also governed by court rules. State law empowers the local county legislative authority with significant flexibility in the development of the court's jurisdictional structure.
4. K.C.C. 4.04.200 establishes the processes for operational and facilities master planning efforts that include current and future workload assumptions.
5. Ordinance 8935, Section 3, now codified as K.C.C. 2.68.005 and formerly K.C.C. 2.68.060, adopted in 1989, established a single, unified, countywide district court.
6. Ordinance 11578, adopted in 1994, established the policy for the regional provision of district court services through an operational master plan pursuant to K.C.C. 4.04.200.
7. Ordinance 14430, adopted in 2002, gave the council's approval to the Adult Justice

Operational Master Plan, establishing county policies for the use of secure detention capacity and emphasizing system and process efficiencies for both the superior and district courts that would reduce the utilization of jail and reduce overall criminal justice expenditures.

8. Ordinance 14797 required that the executive and district court develop an updated and comprehensive operational master plan.

9. Ordinance 15195, adopted in 2005, gave the council's approval to an updated district court operational master plan that reaffirmed for the long term the county's aspiration to be the court of choice for court of limited jurisdiction in the county, focusing its energy and resources on improving operations and services, while balancing the needs of citizens, the court, the county and the cities. The council finds that the district court should develop and apply quality service standards and measures for its operations. The council also found that the county shall:

A. Continue to support problem-solving courts, improving access to problem-solving courts and incorporating problem-solving courts in the district court's planning process;

B. Continue and make explicit the strategy of improving efficiency through unification of governance, administration and planning, centralizing workload where appropriate;

C. Continue to develop and implement technological improvements to support the district court operations in order to increase access to court services and information;

D. Continue to support the district court's function to serve cities through contracts and support flexibility in providing services and facilities for district court customers;

E. Continue to support a unified, countywide district court, using existing facilities, to provide for a more equitable and cost effective system of justice for the citizens of King County:

(1) Ensuring court facilities promote system efficiencies, quality services and access to justice;

(2) Consolidating district court facilities that exist in the same city;

(3) Reconsidering facilities if there are changes with contracting cities or changes in leases; and

F. Work together with stakeholders to gain cooperation and assistance to meet the needs of the judicial system at the state and local levels.

10. Ordinance 15195 also directed the executive, in conjunction with the district court and court stakeholders, to develop a facility master plan for approval by council.

11. Ordinance 15529, implemented the district court redistricting committee's amendment to the districting plan for the 2006 primary and general elections and amended the district court plan to increase the number of electoral divisions from three to five for those and subsequent elections.

12. Ordinance 15380, adopted in 2006 authorized the county executive to enter into interlocal agreements with existing contract cities relating to the continued provision of local district court services. The county and the cities in negotiating the agreement created a long-term arrangement that allows the county to recover its costs, supports the directions outlined in the operational master plan, provides structures for all parties to communicate regularly and resolve issues and recognizes specific circumstances under which either party as a last resort can terminate the agreement.

13. In 2006, district court and the facilities management division convened a work group to develop a facility master plan that identifies facility related issues within the court system that need improvement over the next six to ten years. The work group operated on a consensus-based model for decision making to ensure the facility master plan reflected the input of all participants.

14. Members of the work group met frequently with a wide-array of stakeholders including council staff, superior court representatives and cities that contract with King County for municipal court services. The comments of the stakeholders were considered in the

development of facility options.

16. The work group deliberated and based the options and analysis of the district court facilities master plan on the policy directive of the operational master plan, adopted by council by Ordinance 15195.

17. The work group also took into consideration the other ongoing operational and facility efforts within the county, and based options and analysis on the understanding that those efforts could influence the final outcome of the district court facility master plan. Other efforts include but are not limited to the superior court operational and facility planning effort, the sheriff's operational and facility planning efforts, the department of adult and juvenile operational and facility planning efforts, the Integrated District Court Facility Master Plan and others.

18. District court has been an active participant in the development of the District Court Facility Master Plan document. Its content has been reviewed by staff and stakeholders, and approved by the district court executive committee. After presentation of the materials to the full judges committee, it was approved by them as well.

19. As required in K.C.C 4.04.200, the King County executive has approved the District Court Facilities Master Plan and has transmitted it to council for its review and action.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. In accordance with K.C.C. 4.04.210, the District Court Facility Master Plan, Attachment A to this ordinance, dated March 2007, is hereby approved.

SECTION 2. The executive shall report, by letter, to the county council on the outcome of its negotiations for court facilities in the cities of Bellevue and Kent within ninety days of the conclusion of the negotiations, and show how those decisions will be integrated into the facilities plan for the district court. The letter shall be filed in the form of eleven copies with the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and will

forward copies to each councilmember and to the lead staff of the law, justice and human services committee, or its successor.