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Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to public transportation; adopting the Congestion Reduction Plan to guide the expenditures of revenue collected from a proposed congestion reduction charge; repealing Ordinance 17147, Section 1; and declaring an emergency.

Sponsors: Larry Phillips

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Attachments: 1. Ordinance 17168.pdf, 2. A. Congestion Reduction in King County: Sustaining the King County Metro System - Dated August 15, 2011, 3. A. Congestion Reduction in King County: Sustaining the King County Metro System - Dated August 15, 2011

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Clerk 08/11/2011

AN ORDINANCE relating to public transportation; adopting the Congestion
Reduction Plan to guide the expenditures of revenue collected from a proposed
congestion reduction charge; repealing Ordinance 17147, Section 1; and
declaring an emergency.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Findings:

A. The 2011 Washington state Legislature adopted Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5457, which became Chapter 373, Laws of Washington 2011, which amends chapter 82.80 RCW to provide the King County council with the authority to impose a congestion reduction charge of twenty dollars on vehicle registration renewals for two years to allow Metro transit to continue to provide the current level of transit service that helps reduce congestion and the corresponding burdens placed on local roads and highways.

B. Before imposing the charge, the legislation requires the completion of a congestion reduction plan that indicates how revenues from the charge are to be expended. The legislation also requires that revenues from the charge be expended in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the 2010 regional transit task force.

C. Approval of the Congestion Reduction Plan and congestion reduction charge would enable Metro to avoid transit service cuts in the 2012-2013 biennium - cuts that could result in the loss of up to nine million passenger trips annually and lead to an associated increase in traffic congestion.

D. In 2010, the regional transit task force was convened to make recommendations regarding the policy framework for the Metro transit system.

E. Following seven months of intensive deliberations, the task force delivered its final recommendation report with the unanimous support of task force members. The recommendations in the task force report focused on the following areas:

1. Transparency and clarity: that the transit division should provide more transparency and clarity to the public on the agency's decision-making process and develop a set of performance measures and clear and transparent guidelines to be used in service allocation decisions;
2. Cost control: that the transit division should continue to control costs and build toward a more sustainable financial structure over time; and
3. Productivity, social equity and geographic value: that in making decisions about service reduction and service growth, the transit division should emphasize productivity, ensure social equity and provide geographic value.

F. The Congestion Reduction Plan is consistent with the King County Strategic Plan's Economic Growth and Built Environment goal to encourage a growing and diverse King County economy and vibrant, thriving and sustainable communities, and, specifically, the goal's objective of meeting the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county.

G. As reflected in the Congestion Reduction Plan, the proceeds from the congestion reduction charge will be used in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the regional transit task force.

H. The Congestion Reduction Plan adopted by this ordinance is consistent with direction from the state Legislature in Chapter 373, Laws of Washington 2011, and is consistent with the policy framework and recommendations of the regional transit task force. This plan also implements the proposed Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and the Metro Transit Service Guidelines.

I. In light of recent economic developments relating to the federal debt limit and global economic turmoil, the Congestion Reduction Plan adopted by Ordinance 17147 must be amended to clarify the use of proceeds from the congestion reduction charge in the event that revenue from other Metro funding sources falls below the levels currently estimated for Metro planning purposes.

J. Immediate adoption of an ordinance to impose the congestion reduction charge is critical to enable funds to be available for transit congestion reduction as soon as possible so as to avoid significant increases in traffic congestion and resulting harm to the regional economy and environment.

K. This ordinance, adopting the Congestion Reduction Plan, must be enacted as an emergency to ensure that the Congestion Reduction Plan is approved before the enactment of legislation to impose the congestion reduction charge.

SECTION 2. Ordinance 17147, Section 1, is hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. The Congestion Reduction Plan, dated August 15, 2011, which is Attachment A to this ordinance, is hereby adopted.

SECTION 4. For the reasons set forth in section 1 of this ordinance, the county council finds as a fact and declares that an emergency exists and this ordinance is necessary for the immediate preservation of public peace, health or safety or for the support of county government and its existing public institutions.