



February 24, 2014

The Honorable Larry Phillips
Chair, King County Council
516 Third Ave, Rm. 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Chair Phillips:

On behalf of the Sound Cities Association (SCA), I am writing to express our support for action to address the critical transportation needs facing King County and our member cities, and to provide much needed funding for both roads and transit.

The Sound Cities Association (formerly the Suburban Cities Association) was founded in the 1970s to help cities in King County act locally and partner regionally to create vital, livable communities through advocacy, education, leadership, mutual support, and networking. Collectively, our 36 member cities represent nearly one million constituents in King County.

Transportation is a top priority for SCA. As you well know, Metro Transit will face significant cuts without additional funding. These cuts would be particularly devastating to residents of SCA member cities. The bus is the family car for many residents in our cities. Substantial cuts to bus service would make it difficult or impossible for residents to get to their jobs, and needed community services.

The need for additional transportation funding for local roads and other local transportation infrastructure is similarly critical. Cities in King County maintain five thousand five hundred miles of streets plus bridges, sidewalks, drainage systems, traffic signals, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and trails. Revenue sources currently available to cities are not keeping pace with the costs of replacement and expansion to meet growth. King County cities have experienced a substantial downturn in revenues in the past decade. Many cities in King County have been forced to supplement their road funds with general fund dollars, which have themselves not been keeping pace with inflation. Using general fund dollars to maintain roads and other transportation infrastructure means that there are fewer dollars available to fund public safety, parks, human services, and other critical city services.

A lack of dedicated funding for transportation projects has made it increasingly difficult for King County cities to raise matching funds to compete for State and Federal transportation grant dollars, and State and Federal transportation grant opportunities have dwindled. King County cities are beset by failing roads and bridges, congested corridors and bottlenecked interchanges, which undermine the mobility of vehicles, buses and freight carriers to transport people and goods.

Cities in King County have over \$1.3 billion in maintenance and preservation needs alone over the next six years, and have identified a need of over \$3 billion for mobility projects over the next six years. Cities in King County are responsible for the repair and replacement of 22 bridges in King County with a sufficiency rating of fifty or less, equating to more than \$775 million in bridge repair/replacement costs

over the next six years. The lack of adequate transportation funding is a public safety crisis in King County.

The Sound Cities Association (SCA) supports the formation of a countywide Transportation Benefit District (TBD) in King County and a public vote to raise revenue for a countywide TBD to address critical transportation needs facing the County and cities throughout the County, provided that:

- 60% of the funds are distributed to Metro for transit service and 40% of the funds are directly distributed to the County and cities based on population to be used for transportation needs authorized under state law, including maintenance and preservation of roads and bridges, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and additional transit, as determined by each jurisdiction,
- An annual Vehicle License Fee up to \$60 per vehicle and imposition of a sales tax up to 0.1% shall be the maximum amount submitted to the voters by the King County TBD, and
- Any resolution adopted by the King County TBD submitting a transportation funding ballot measure to the voters shall require that an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) shall be developed and executed by the cities, County and the King County TBD prior to the collection of any revenue, which shall address risk management and provide for 60% of the funds to be distributed for Metro transit service and 40% of the funds to be directly distributed to the County and cities based on population for transportation needs, as determined by each jurisdiction, as long as the Transportation Benefit District collects revenue from any source.

Our Board unanimously adopted this position at our Board meeting on February 19, 2014.

While we support submission of a ballot measure for funding to the voters to address our local roads and transit needs, we recognize that this is just one piece of the puzzle. We also need the Legislature to move forward with a statewide transportation package in order to make investments in key corridors that tie transportation improvement to job centers, such as Interstate 405 from Renton to Bellevue, the State Route 509/167 "Gateways" project, the I-405/SR 167 interchange, funding to complete State Route 520, and more.

We look forward to a continued partnership with the County to address our shared transportation needs.

If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director Deanna Dawson at (206) 433-7170, or at Deanna@SoundCities.org.

Sincerely,



Matt Larson
Mayor, City of Snoqualmie
Vice President, Sound Cities Association

Cc: King County Council
King County Executive Dow Constantine
SCA Board of Directors
SCA Public Issues Committee Members