



City Neighborhood Council

February 27, 2014

Honorable Mayor Ed Murray
Seattle City Councilmembers
600 4th Avenue, 7th & 2nd Floors
Seattle, WA 98104

King County Executive Dow Constantine
King County Councilmembers
King County Chinook Building, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

VIA EMAIL

Subject: Metro's Package of Cuts and Restructures

Dear Elected Officials:

In responding to Metro's package of Cuts and Restructures developed to address the projected budget shortfall, the City Neighborhood Council, (CNC), has the following concerns:

- The package imposes severe impacts on the communities served by transit and if adopted will seriously curtail the ability of many transit-dependent riders to participate in civic life. Maintaining mobility is important to preserving independence and a sense of self-worth as well as accessing jobs, education and services.
- In some areas of Seattle the transit network will become less accessible or more time consuming to navigate, significantly reducing or altering access to jobs and services. Many of these communities have been built around existing transit and new land use decisions assume the existence of transit access when allowing for increased density. Housing decisions both by residents and developers are made based on access to transit particularly in a dense city such as Seattle. These substantial investments are not easy to pick up and move.

In the CNC's judgment, should these severe cuts go forward, more public input will be necessary on the implementation of the Metro service guidelines, including plans for the restoration of service when new funding is obtained. Though the service guidelines are an excellent starting point, local users have much to contribute to assessing and suggesting alternatives. Also, no guidelines have been adopted for the restoration of temporary cuts in service. For example, if a route is restructured but that action is reversed only months or a year two later, it is very disruptive to the community. A better guideline would be to avoid such restructures where feasible.

On the other hand, restructures that are likely to be permanent should go through a community sounding board process; that is, cuts should not be used to bypass this process. The CNC is hearing from District Council members that some citizens are getting very frustrated, as one might expect. State political gridlock may be the real obstacle, but anger could be misdirected toward the City and County nevertheless. Even a temporary fix, such as a Transportation Benefit District, (TBD) will need strong public support.

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The CNC supports the TBD as an emergency measure, but wants assurance that King County will seek to replace the regressive TBD taxes (car tab fee and sales tax) as soon as feasible by sources of revenue that are not only well balanced, but are also much more progressive, preferably that reduce dependence on fossil fuels as well. For this reason, TBD revenue should be voted only for a relatively short period, such as two years.

Should the TBD vote fail, the CNC would want an emergency, compressed public process for any restructurings that could happen in September, plus a longer, more in depth process for 2015 restructurings, with no decision until all backup funding options have been explored.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laine Ross - Alexis Gallegos, Co-Chairs
City Neighborhood Council



Dick Burkhart - Tod Rodman, Co-Chairs
City Neighborhood Council, Transportation Committee