

**MOTION 2020-10:
A MOTION OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION**

To add economic development to the permissible uses for the South King County Fund, in support of local recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**ADOPTED
APRIL 28, 2020**

INTRODUCTION

In response to the extraordinary circumstances posed by the COVID-19 public health crisis, the Port Commission has set a number of goals and tactics for relief and recovery efforts – from how to sustain and support the Port, its operations and its employees to how to engage in regional partnerships that create jobs, increase equity, retain small businesses, improve the environment and restore quality of life. One aspect of that recovery effort is expanding the permissible uses of the South King County Fund (the Fund) to allow for investments in economic recovery and development.

TEXT OF THE MOTION

The Port Commission hereby adds “Economic Development” to support recovery for the region from the COVID-19 pandemic to the permissible uses for the South King County Fund.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION

On November 27, 2018, the Port Commission adopted Motion 2018-14, which provides “funding, not to exceed \$10 million, designated for a South King County Support Program, which will be budgeted at \$750,000 in 2019, to be used to provide resources and support for Sea-Tac International Airport area communities . . . uses may include support for addressing airport noise and for other projects that support environmental health and enhance sustainability.”

In June 2019, the Commission approved the following principles for implementation of the South King County Fund:

- (1) The Fund will be used to fund projects in the South King County area;
- (2) The Fund will prioritize community input to inform Port decision making;
- (3) The Fund will support Port equity policies and practices, including giving underrepresented communities access to opportunities and using equity policies to evaluate potential initiatives and establish desired outcomes;
- (4) The Fund will provide added benefit to current Port programs to address airport noise, increased environmental health, and sustainability;
- (5) The Fund will prioritize projects that are ready to proceed;

- (6) The Fund will build on established programs and commitments to fulfill current obligations;
- (7) The Fund will promote innovation; and
- (8) The Fund will encourage matching funds where possible.

COVID-19 has had multiple economic impacts, including workers having to stay home, interruptions to supply chains, disruptions to small businesses and hourly workers, and export-dependent businesses struggling to deliver products to key international markets.

The legislature has authorized port districts to engage in economic development activities. RCW 53.08.245 provides that it is “in the public purpose for all port districts to engage in economic development programs.” The Port’s economic development purposes, to advance economic development, advance trade and commerce, to promote industrial growth and to stimulate economic development, also include economic development activities such as occupational job training and placement, job advancement and job retention, preapprenticeship training, occupational education programs, or apprenticeship and employment strategies for youth. The Port’s economic development and recovery efforts will be tied to activities that benefit the Port, its tenants, or Port-related industries.

In the July 1, 2014, “Motion of the Port of Seattle Commission Increasing Workforce Development and Career Opportunities Activities,” the Port of Seattle Commission stated that workforce development is critical to achieving the Port’s primary mission to serve as an economic development agency generating quality, family-wage jobs and economic growth for the region and increasing operational efficiency and economic mobility.

The Port of Seattle Commission defined workforce development in the July 1 motion: “workforce development is defined as education, training, job matching, and related services that both help connect local workers to careers, and that help ensure area companies have access to the skilled workforce they need to thrive and grow.”

The Port of Seattle and other public entities in the Seattle region have also defined economic development broadly to address equity and environmental justice concerns. For example, the PSRC’s regional economic strategy distinguishes between “traditional economic development priorities such as transportation, education, international trade and the region’s business climate” and “newer emphasis areas,” which “include a specific rural strategy, initiatives to grow jobs throughout the region, advancing social equity” The Port’s current workforce development policy, passed in the 2014 motion, embraces this broad application of economic development. The Port’s Economic Development Partnership program, and Toursim grant program, are also economic development investments that support tourism promotion, small business assistance, business recruitment, trade development and workforce development.

The Commission confirms and declares that port-related workforce development provides a substantial public benefit consistent with the Commission’s economic development goals, and is consistent with ongoing worker training initiatives in place in the port district.

One of the current purposes of the Fund is to advance equity. The Port recognizes that communities of color and other historically marginalized communities tend to be more vulnerable throughout all phases of a large scale public crisis or disaster, from preparedness to immediate response to longer-term recovery. In its response to the pandemic, the Port has an opportunity and responsibility to ensure equitable engagement for the most vulnerable.

The Fund principles approved in June 2019, along with the new element of economic recovery, will continue to guide the distribution of money from the Fund as the Executive implements the COVID-19 recovery plan. Funding will continue to be available for the environmental projects previously planned under the authority of this fund.