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The Melissa Ann is the foot ferry that serves the Vashon-downtown Seattle route.

Courtesy photo

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County ferry district foregoes some funding in hopes that Metro can collect the difference

Today, 4:00 PM · **UPDATED**

The King County Ferry District board voted Monday to reduce the amount of money it collects from taxpayers, abandon proposed demonstration ferry routes and focus only on the Vashon-Seattle and West Seattle-Seattle foot ferries.

Lowering the levy rate to a third of a cent per \$1,000 of assessed home value could free up funds for Metro bus service, officials said — a sector that's been hard hit by recent budget cuts.

“In light of tight economic times and the transit crisis King County is facing, we hope that these savings will allow us to preserve bus service,” said King County Ferry District board member Jane Hague, sponsor of the proposal. “Estimates show that these savings could translate into more than 180,000 hours of bus service.”

The new levy rate amounts to approximately \$1.20 per year for a \$400,000 home. The original rate, set in 2007, was 5.5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed home value — or \$22 a year for a \$400,000 home.

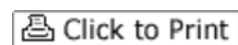
The ferry district's levy reduction action gives the King County Council the option to add a property tax for Metro Transit bus service, which would offset recent cuts, without any additional financial impact to King County taxpayers.

The ferry district was formed in April 2007, in large part to take on the Vashon-downtown Seattle route after the state Legislature decided it would no longer fund the service. The ferry district had planned to add five demonstration routes to its ferry service offerings, in Kirkland, Kenmore, Shilshole, Renton and south Puget Sound.

For more information about the King County Ferry District, visit www.kingcountyferries.org.

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