

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**  
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

<b>AGENDA TITLE:</b>	Public Hearing and Adoption of Resolution No. 332 Supporting Approval of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Levy on the November 6 General Election Ballot
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	City Manager's Office
<b>PRESENTED BY:</b>	Scott McCall, Intergovernmental Relations Manager Debbie Tarry, Assistant City Manager
<b>ACTION:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion

**PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:**

On July 9, 2012, the City Council discussed the Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Program in King County and the renewal of the levy that will appear on the 2012 November general election ballot. The purpose of the July 9 discussion was a result of the Suburban Cities Association's (SCA) Public Issues Committee (PIC) considering taking a position on the potential renewal of King County's AFIS levy. Since that time Council has requested that staff provide Council with a resolution in support of the levy renewal and schedule the discussion and potential adoption of the resolution for the September 4 Council Meeting.

State law requires that if the Council is considering taking a stance in favor or in opposition to a ballot measure that equal time must be provided for the public to make statements in favor or in opposition to the measure. Tonight staff has scheduled a public hearing on the AFIS levy and the hearing was appropriately advertised.

AFIS is a voter-approved, levy funded, countywide program that matches suspects to crimes through fingerprint and palmprint identification technology. Effective January 2013, a new AFIS levy is required to maintain the program; this new levy will be put to the voters in the general election on November 6, 2012.

Tonight Carol Gillespie, Regional AFIS Manager for the King County Sheriff's Office, will be present to provide a brief presentation and respond to questions from the City Council.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The current levy expires at the end of 2012. The AFIS Advisory Committee recommended and the King County Council adopted Ordinance 17381 authorizing King County to have a proposition to support continuation of the regional AFIS program by renewing and replacing authorization of an expiring property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in RCW 84.55. The proposed renewal levy rate is 5.92 cents per thousand of assessed valuation starting in 2013, with annual increases by the percentage increase in the consumer price index or 1%, whichever is greater, with a

maximum increase of 3% for the five succeeding years. The owner of a \$350,000 home would pay approximately \$20.72 in 2013. If approved by voters, the measure would raise \$118.9 million to maintain the current level of services and support current technology over the six-year period.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council first hold a public hearing to receive comments on Resolution No. 332 supporting the approval of the AFIS levy and then adopt Resolution No. 332 supporting and endorsing the King County AFIS levy and urging citizens to vote yes on November 6, 2012.

Approved By:           City Manager ***DT***   City Attorney ***FC***

## **INTRODUCTION**

AFIS is a valuable public safety tool that allows criminal justice agencies to fingerprint and identify arrested individuals or suspects of crimes. The AFIS program is funded by a voter-approved levy and provides the technical platform for fingerprint identification services throughout the county with links to other state, regional, and federal databases. The program allows the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO), its contract cities, the Seattle Police Department, and the suburban police departments within the county to access to fingerprint identification information. Central to the program is the AFIS Database and Image Archive System housed at the King County Sheriff's Office and shared by Seattle Police Department and Bellevue Police Department through remote workstations. The King County Regional AFIS Computer was first implemented in 1988, with a "Year 2000" upgrade in 1999.

King County voters have approved levies to support AFIS in 1986, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2006. Effective January 2013, the AFIS program will require a renewal or other dedicated funding source for continuation of this critical forensic tool. On November 6, 2012 King County voters will be presented with a ballot measure to approve a six-year levy to continue providing the AFIS program.

State law permits legislative bodies to vote on a resolution to support or oppose a ballot proposition so long as (a) any required notice of the meeting includes the title and number of the ballot proposition, and (b) members of the legislative body or members of the public are afforded an approximately equal opportunity for the expression of an opposing view. *RCW 42.17.130*.

The AFIS program's primary functions are to:

1. CAPTURE fingerprints from suspects;
2. STORE fingerprints and palmprints in databases;
3. SEARCH AND IDENTIFY individuals from fingerprints and palmprints in order to
4. SOLVE CRIMES by identifying prints left at crime scenes; and
5. SHARE prints and arrest data with other jurisdiction.

Since the inception of AFIS in 1988, more crimes have been solved where the detectives have no known suspect. Capturing fingerprints and palm prints from every subject booked into jail, storing those fingerprints in electronic databases, and using those prints to match against prints left behind at crime scenes have enabled police detectives to solve crimes with unidentified suspects. The system is also used to store DNA collected at crime scenes and to store booking photos. In March 2011 a new AFIS system went live, introducing palmprint matching for the first time in King County.

This new technology was used in a rape callout of a 12-year old girl in Shoreline. At the scene an examiner lifted a palmprint off a glass-topped dresser in the girl's bedroom. With the New Generation AFOS, the palmprint could be electronically searched and matched. The examiner used this new technology to identify a suspect and then notified the detective. As a result, the King County Sheriff's Office and Shoreline Police Department quickly arrested a suspect within a few days of the crime. The suspect was charged with first degree rape and first degree burglary with sexual motivation.

## **BACKGROUND**

Live Scan is a means of capturing fingerprints and other identifying arrest data electronically; then transmitting it directly into local, state, and federal identification systems for processing. The first 22 Live Scan Capture Stations were installed in the year 2000. In 2012, the King County Regional AFIS Program supports 38 active Live Scan Capture Stations located throughout the county, eleven of which are capable of electronic palm capture. There were 74,192 Live Scan prints taken at all sites in 2011.

### **King County Regional Jail Identification Unit**

Six of the highest-volume Live Scan Capture Stations make up the King County Regional Jail Identification Unit, located at three county detention sites: the King County Correctional Facility in Downtown Seattle, the Regional Justice Center in Kent, and the Youth Services Center (Juvenile Detention) in Seattle. The Jail Identification Unit takes fingerprints, palm prints, and mug shots for all agencies that book suspects into these locations, including the Seattle Police Department. They also take DNA samples for certain offenses, as required by state law. The first goal of the Jail Identification Unit is to print 100% of inmates, so that the King County Sheriff Office (KCSO) and/or Seattle Police Department (SPD) Ten-Print Unit can identify them before they are released from custody.

The second goal of the Jail Identification Unit is to take the highest quality prints possible, capturing as much clear ridge detail as possible for the AFIS Database. Establishing expertise in fingerprinting has far-reaching effects. Staffing the jails with fully trained, dedicated AFIS personnel has improved the quality of the King County Regional AFIS Database, which has increased the possibility for “hits.” In turn, this ultimately increases warrants served on persons using false names (“liars”), and crime scene cases solved by the Latent Print Units.

### **Share Print and Arrest Data with Other Jurisdictions**

The AFIS Computer communicates with Washington State Patrol (WSP) and through them with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to add the latest arrest information to the individual suspect’s criminal history record (rap sheet). WSP and the FBI will only accept this information for entry to the rap sheet if it is accompanied by verifiable fingerprints. Pursuant to state law, arrest information and fingerprints must be sent to the WSP within 72 hours of an arrest. The King County Regional AFIS Program was unable to meet this timeline prior to Live Scan Technology implementation. Currently, on average, it takes under two hours from the time a person is booked for their arrest record to be transmitted to WSP.

When local searches are unsuccessful, fingerprint experts in the Ten-Print and Latent Print Units are also able to electronically search other databases, such as those at WSP, FBI, California Department of Justice, Orange County (California) Sheriff’s Office, and the Western Identification Network.

Courts, correctional facilities, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and citizens also rely on AFIS data to identify criminal history information for multiple purposes:

- Sentencing and release considerations
- Determination of public and officer safety threats
- Police investigations
- Hiring considerations (i.e., teachers, healthcare workers, or other occupations requiring unsupervised work with children, handicapped individuals, and the elderly).

### 2013-2018 Levy Planning

The AFIS Advisory Committee consists of the following individuals:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
David Cline, Chair	City Administrator	City of Tukwila
Karim Miller, Vice-Chair	Forensic & Digital Imaging Manager	City of Seattle
Rick Kieffer	Police Chief	City of Normandy Park
Cathy Schrock	Civilian Operations Manager	City of Federal Way
John Manning	Police Major	City of Bellevue
Penny Bartley	Director	SCORE
Mark Mount	Lietenant	City of Seattle
Don Berard	Budget Supervisor	City of Seattle
John Resha	Senior Legislative Analyst	King County Council
Doug Palmer	Budget Analyst	King County Office Of Performance, Strategy, and Budget
Robin Fenton	Chief	King County Sheriff's Office
Carol Gillespie	Regional AFIS Manager	King County Sheriff's Office

In 2011, the AFIS Advisory Committee appointed a levy planning group that comprised of program staff and financial and policy advisors. This group met monthly to create a new six-year operational and levy plan. Its review included staffing revisions, end-of-life technology replacement needs, and other business needs such as supplies, equipment, and facilities. The plan suggests a new levy rate that will provide the revenue needed to maintain existing services. The levy plan was submitted to the King County Executive and Council for consideration on the 2012 general election ballot.

If the AFIS levy is not renewed it only has funds on hand to operate through June 2013. Given that this is a regional service, alternative funding would need to be made available from the budgets of the 39 participating cities and unincorporated King County. The City of Shoreline has not budgeted dollars separately for this service and would likely require that elimination of current services to fund the City's allocation.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

RCW 84.520.043 allows jurisdictions to levy a property tax; King County can increase a levy with voter approval under RCW 84.55.050. In King County, the Regional AFIS Program is a countywide, levy-funded program and requires voter approval every levy period.

The AFIS levy is a regular property tax and is subject to the growth limitations contained in RCW 84.52.050 which limits the rate growth in AFIS levy revenue by one percent plus the prior years' new construction even if assessed values increase at a higher rate, unless voters approve a higher rate of increase. The original AFIS levy was passed in 1986. The current levy expires at the end of 2012. The AFIS Advisory Committee recommended and the King County Council adopted Ordinance 17381 authorizing King County to have a proposition to support continuation of the regional AFIS program by renewing and replacing authorization of an expiring property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in RCW 84.55. The proposed renewal levy rate is 5.92 cents per thousand of assessed valuation starting in 2013, with annual increases by the percentage increase in the consumer price index or 1%, whichever is greater, with a maximum increase of 3% for the five succeeding years. The owner of a \$350,000 home would pay approximately \$20.72 in 2013. If approved by voters, the measure would raise \$118.9 million to maintain the current level of services and support current technology over the six-year period.

The 2007-2012 AFIS levy was originally approved at 5.68 cents per thousand of assessed valuation. Given the steady increase in assessed valuation during the early years of the levy and budget efficiencies gained during the levy period the 2012 levy rate is 3.53 cents per thousand of assessed valuation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council first hold a public hearing to receive comments on Resolution No. 332 supporting the approval of the AFIS levy and then adopt Resolution No. 332 supporting and endorsing the King County AFIS levy and urging citizens to vote yes on November 6, 2012.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Resolution No. 332 Supporting and Endorsing the King County AFIS levy

Attachment B: King County Ordinance No. 17381

Attachment C: AFIS Levy Frequently Asked Questions

**RESOLUTION NO. 332**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SHORELINE,  
WASHINGTON, SUPPORTING THE AUTOMATED  
FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AFIS) LEVY AT  
THE NOVEMBER 6, 2012 STATE GENERAL ELECTION**

WHEREAS, AFIS is the voter-approved, levy-funded countywide Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification System Program, a valuable public safety tool that quickly assists criminal justice agencies to fingerprint and identify arrested individuals or suspects of crimes; and

WHEREAS, the AFIS Program's primary functions are to capture fingerprints and palm prints from subjects, to store fingerprints in databases, to search and identify individuals from fingerprints in order to solve crimes by identifying prints left at crime scenes, and to share fingerprint and arrest data with other jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, King County is one of only two counties in the state of Washington with its own AFIS computer, and it is the only county with a shared regional model that provides services to all local law enforcement agencies and King County owns the only palmprint database in the state; and

WHEREAS, in the levy period of 2007 – 2012 AFIS has been utilized in over 36,000 investigations; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, AFIS has assisted detectives in processing 18,959 pieces of evidence for finger and palm prints; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 alone, AFIS identified 732 individuals who gave false names at the time of arrest, 3,930 crime scene fingerprints were identified and 216 crime scene palmprints were identified using the new AFIS; and

WHEREAS, at the State General Election on November 6, 2012, King County voters will be presented with a ballot measure to approve the six-year levy at a rate of 5.92 cents per \$1,000 assessed value in 2013 and annual increases by the percentage increase in the consumer price index or 1%, whichever is greater, with a maximum increase of 3%, for the five succeeding years; and

WHEREAS, the Shoreline Police Department has benefited from the use of AFIS equipment and solved crimes with the assistance of print identification including identification of a rape suspect of a 12-year old girl; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with RCW 42.17.130, the public meeting notice included the title and number of the King County AFIS levy and members of the public were given equal opportunity to give testimony on the measure.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1.** The City Council of the City of Shoreline hereby declares its support for and encourages approval of the King County AFIS levy, which will be presented to the voters at the November 6, 2012 State General Election.

**ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 4, 2012.**

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Keith A. McGlashan, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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Scott Passey, CMC  
City Clerk





# King County

## Certified Copy

Ordinance: 17381

1200 King County  
Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

File Number: 2012-0210

Enactment Number: 17381

AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the qualified electors of King County at a special election to be held in King County on November 6, 2012, of a proposition to support continuation of the regional automated fingerprint identification system program by renewing and replacing authorization of an expiring property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW, for a consecutive six-year period, at a first year rate of not more than \$0.0592 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation for collection beginning in 2013, with subsequent maximum levy collections being increased by the greater of one percent or the percentage increase in the consumer price index as long as that amount does not exceed three percent, for the purpose of funding the continued operation of the regional automated fingerprint identification system and related technology and services, which expand crime scene and arrest identification capabilities for all criminal justice agencies in King County.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Findings:

A. To expand and enhance upon the limited identification services provided by individual city agencies or at the state level, in 1986 the voters of King County approved funding for the purchase of a shared regional automated fingerprint identification system ("AFIS") computer which matches unknown fingerprints to known fingerprints. King County's AFIS database holds over seven hundred thousand fingerprint records, over three hundred thousand palmprint records and approximately thirty-six thousand unidentified crime scene fingerprints. The King County AFIS is a regional system with service available to every city and unincorporated area in King County.

B. The AFIS computer is used for two primary purposes:

1. To quickly identify arrested individuals, and prevent the wrongful release of those who use false names to evade arrest warrants or hide criminal records; and
2. To search fingerprints and palmprints collected from crime scenes to identify unknown suspects and

aid in convictions.

C. The county first purchased the shared AFIS computer after the voters of King County approved a property tax levy for that purpose in November 1986. The ballot measure was authorized by Ordinance 7747. The technology at the time did not include palmprint searching. Since 1986, the voters of King County have continued to endorse this service by approving renewal property tax levies ranging from \$0.0200 to \$0.0665 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation to support, expand, and enhance AFIS services as needed. The levy history is as follows:

1. Five-year renewal levy approved in November 1990. The ballot measure was authorized by Ordinance 9603;
2. Five-year renewal levy approved in November 1995. The ballot measure was authorized by Ordinance 11948;
3. Five-year renewal levy approved in September 2000. The ballot measure was authorized by Ordinance 13894. Through careful fiscal management, the county accumulated a fund balance, which sustained AFIS program operations through 2006 without a concurrent property tax levy; and
4. Six-year renewal levy approved in September 2006. The ballot measure was authorized by Ordinance 15537. Again, careful fiscal management accumulated a fund balance, which this time was returned to taxpayers through reduced levy rates in 2011 and 2012.

D. The 1986 AFIS computer, partially updated in 1999, was completely replaced with a new system in 2011. This new system introduced palmprint searching for the first time in King County, and has improved matching capabilities and increased storage capacity. Since its installation, nineteen identifications have been made on cold cases and from palmprints left at crime scenes.

E. On December 31, 2012, the 2006 AFIS levy, which was adopted at a rate of \$0.0568 per one

twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, for the quick identification of arrested individuals;

4. Examiners who collect prints from crime scenes, process them chemically and photographically for better clarity, search them in AFIS, and make identifications of unknown potential suspects or store the unidentified prints for continual search as new records are added to the system; and

5. Training on fingerprint collection and crime scene processing, and customer support for all law enforcement agencies.

H. The AFIS program has met all goals set forth in the current levy, well below the budget projections made in 2006. Some of these goals included:

1. Procurement, implementation, and support of a new AFIS, replacing the twenty-year-old original system with a more efficient and effective model capable of both fingerprint and palmprint searching and storage;

2. Purchase of additional criminal Livescan fingerprint capture stations, and upgrade of image resolution for print clarity, at high volume sites; and

3. A pilot for remote hand-held fingerprint capture devices that allow officers to search the regional AFIS from the field, and a study on the benefits and impacts of fingerprint capture stations in the courts.

I. With the oversight of the AFIS advisory committee, the AFIS program has prepared a new six-year financial and operational plan. The recommended levy maintains current services, streamlines staffing, and replaces an aging regional laboratory, all at a rate that is less than the voters passed in 2006. It also identifies several areas of reductions and efficiencies. The financial plan includes:

1. A reduction of eleven positions and other savings equating to approximately \$6.75 million over six years, with no corresponding reduction in services. This was achieved by identifying efficiencies and refining staffing models;

thousand dollars of assessed valuation, will expire. This ordinance proposes a renewed AFIS levy at a rate of \$0.0592 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation starting in 2013. Without renewed revenue, funding for this program will run out in June 2013, ceasing operations.

F. Large cities and metropolitan areas around the country have realized great benefit from having their own AFIS technology. King County is one of only two counties in the state of Washington with its own AFIS computer, and it is the only county with a shared regional model that provides services to all local law enforcement agencies. King County owns the only palmprint database in the state. It is larger than the one used by Washington State Patrol, although King County AFIS staff have the ability to search that database as well. The AFIS program has made one hundred eighty palmprint 'hits' or identifications since the 2011 implementation of the new AFIS computer. In 2011, the AFIS program searched more than seventy-four thousand fingerprint records and processed almost nineteen thousand pieces of evidence. The program identified almost four thousand latent crime scene prints, and over seven hundred thirty individuals who had given false names when arrested.

G. King County's AFIS program is proven as essential to law enforcement, and is recognized for its exceptional service. The program's regional model has provided excellent and effective crime-solving support to all the criminal justice agencies in King County since its inception in 1988. The current AFIS program provides for many shared services, including:

1. The purchase, maintenance, and staff operation of the AFIS computer;
2. The purchase, maintenance, training and support for forty-eight Livescans, which are devices installed at thirty-five law enforcement agencies throughout King County for the purpose of collecting better quality prints and transmitting them electronically for a faster and more efficient response;
3. The collection of high quality fingerprints in county jail facilities, and fingerprint examiners available

2. Continued support for the remote fingerprinting initiatives started under the 2007-2012 levy; and

3. Replacement of the county's latent processing lab, which is substantially undersized to handle the volume of work it supports. The new lab will provide more space to allow different chemical processes to be performed separately and simultaneously without concerns of cross-contamination. It will also address safety concerns that are present in the current laboratory, which resides in an outdated building.

J. The AFIS program produces publicly available annual reports that provide status updates on program initiatives and accomplishments. The success of the regional AFIS program has been a result of regular collaboration with law enforcement agencies across King County.

K. Under state law, a levy lid lift is limited to a maximum term of six years if the levy provides for a specified index to be used to determine the limit factor. The proposed levy is limited to six years.

**SECTION 2. Definitions.** The definitions in this section apply throughout this ordinance unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

A. "AFIS" means automated fingerprint identification system.

B. "AFIS computer" means the automated fingerprint identification system, which is the computer system that utilizes AFIS as its foundation, and through modular design incorporates other databases of criminal identification records, and related equipment, technology, networks, and interfaces employed by trained staff for capturing, storing, and comparing criminal identification records based on friction ridge analysis, or successor technology.

C. "AFIS program" means the acquisition, implementation, maintenance and operation of the regional AFIS computer. It also means the countywide effort of trained personnel who, through fingerprints, palmprints, and other identification methods: identify detained persons; identify suspects of crimes from fingerprints and palmprints left on evidence at crime scenes; assist in the conviction of criminals through

identifying this crime scene evidence; train law enforcement on crime scene evidence collection and identification methods; support accurate and complete criminal history records; conduct field research aimed at improving and enhancing program services; and otherwise enhance public safety as consistent with this ordinance and permitted by law.

D. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes, for the specific purpose and term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with state law.

E. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of funds raised by the levy, any interest earnings on the funds and the proceeds of any interim financing following authorization of the levy.

F. "Limit factor" means the greater of one percent or the percentage increase in the consumer price index as long as that amount does not exceed three percent. The consumer price index is defined as the ratio of the most recent June Consumer Price Index to the immediately previous June Consumer Price Index (final published CPI-W Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, as calculated by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, or its successor) expressed as a multiple of one hundred percent to achieve the result of one hundred percent plus inflation.

**SECTION 3. Levy submittal to voters.** To provide necessary funds for the AFIS program, the King County council shall submit to the qualified electors of the county a proposition to renew and replace an expiring levy and authorize a regular property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive years, commencing in 2012, with collection beginning in 2013, at a rate in this first year not to exceed \$0.0592 per one thousand dollars of assessed value, with subsequent years limited by the limit factor as defined in section 2 of this ordinance.

**SECTION 4. Deposit of levy proceeds.** All levy proceeds collected as authorized in this ordinance shall be deposited into and retained in a designated AFIS fund.

**SECTION 5. Eligible expenditures.** If approved by the qualified electors of the county, all proceeds of the levy authorized in this ordinance shall be used to pay the costs of the regional AFIS program, together with the necessary software and hardware operations and maintenance expenses. Eligible expenditures include the salaries, benefits, training, office and laboratory supplies and equipment, work space, contracted goods and services, related studies and research, administration and other costs incidental to the operation and enhancement of the regional AFIS program. Work space expenditures may include the lease or rental of property, or the purchase of land and any construction or tenant improvements needed to house AFIS program technology, staff, or laboratory functions.

Eligible expenditures shall also include non-bonded debt and finance costs and the reimbursement of extraordinary expenditures incurred by the county after the effective date of this ordinance with regard to the AFIS program.

The AFIS levy is intended as supplemental funding to provide expanded crime scene and arrest identification technology and services on a regional basis. This levy shall not at any time provide general criminal justice funding or fund programs or purposes not otherwise consistent with this ordinance.

**SECTION 6. Call for special election.** In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321, the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with the general election on November 6, 2012. The King County director of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council shall certify that proposition to the King County director of elections in substantially the following form, with such modifications as may be required by the prosecuting attorney:

The King County council has passed Ordinance \_\_\_\_ concerning this proposition for the

automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS) levy. This proposition would replace an expiring levy and fund continued operation of the regional AFIS program, which provides enhanced forensic fingerprint and palmprint technology and services to identify criminals and aid in convictions. It would authorize King County to levy an additional property tax of \$0.0592 (5.92 cents) per \$1,000 of assessed valuation in 2013 and annual increases by the percentage increase in the consumer price index or 1%, whichever is greater, with a maximum increase of 3%, for the five succeeding years. Should this proposition be:

Approved    ☐

Rejected    ☐

**SECTION 7. AFIS advisory committee extension.** If the levy is approved by the voters in accordance with section 6 of this ordinance, the AFIS advisory committee previously authorized by the voters shall be retained to review AFIS operations and expenditures and make recommendations concerning the AFIS program.

**SECTION 8. Ratification.** Certification of the proposition by the clerk of the King County council to the director of elections in accordance with law before the election on November 6, 2012, and any other act consistent with the authority and before the effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

**SECTION 9. Severability.** If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.



I, , certify that this is a true copy of Ordinance No. 2012-0210, passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 07/23/2012.

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date Certified**

# AFIS Program FAQs

## 2012

### 1. What is an AFIS?

An Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is a searchable database of finger and palm print records used to verify identity or link unsolved crimes.

In King County, the AFIS serves two primary purposes:

- To search fingerprints and palmprints collected from crime scenes to identify unknown suspects and aid in convictions;
- To quickly identify arrested individuals, preventing the wrongful release of those using false names to evade arrest warrants or hide criminal records.

### 2. What is the AFIS levy?

In 1986, King County voters approved a property tax levy for the purchase of a shared, regional AFIS computer, and have renewed their support four times over the last 25 years.

This technology and regional approach enhanced the limited criminal identification services previously handled by individual police agencies or provided by the Washington State Patrol (WSP).

The levy funds not only the technology, but also the staff behind the scenes who fingerprint in the regional jails, respond to major crime scenes, and identify individuals as they are arrested throughout the county, 24 hours, seven days/week.

The King County's AFIS program is nationally recognized for its high standards, quality of services, and exceptional expertise. It also recently received international accreditation from Forensic Quality Services, which assesses every aspect of the crime laboratory operations including procedures, technical qualifications, and competence.

### 3. What is the benefit of having a shared regional AFIS?

**At the city level** AFIS and biometric technology is costly, and too great of an investment for most local agencies to support on their own. Similarly, fingerprint examiners require specialized training and experience, and the volume of work generated by a single agency would likely not support the expense to retain experts. Although criminals tend to commit their crimes in the same geographic area, they frequently cross city boundaries. Having separate local systems could result in missed identifications, or require additional time and effort to search other systems.

**At the state (or federal) level** State and federal systems are built to serve as repositories that retain arrest and conviction information. Many counties throughout the nation choose to implement their own AFIS for a number of reasons.

- Most crime scene prints are identified to criminals in the same geographic area. State and federal systems must search a significantly larger database, which can 'dilute' the results returned, taking more time and producing candidates who have never been in the King County area.

# AFIS Program FAQs

## 2012

- The quality of images in a countywide database can be more tightly controlled than at a state or federal level, resulting in a higher quality database and increased matching potential.
- Decisions regarding technology, procedures, and workflow are made at a local or regional level, as opposed to depending on a state's or federal priorities.
- State services are often subject to funding limitations that reduce operating hours and limit the types of services available. These can be critical factors in quickly and successfully identifying suspects.

**A regional, countywide AFIS** provides enhanced criminal identification technology and services, for an investment that local police agencies would not be able to fund on their own. The sharing of resources and information lends to greater efficiency in crime-solving efforts.

Similar models can be seen in other large metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles County, San Francisco, and New York. Another successful regional system is the Northern Virginia Regional Identification System (NOVARIS), which also cites the importance of local control and quality of database and services.

Although most crime scene prints are identified to criminals in the same geographic area, it is important for agencies to have the capability to search other agencies' AFIS computers when no local hit is found. This interoperability is being driven by many agencies at the local, county, state, and federal levels, and is continually improving.

#### **4. Why isn't this program funded in the County's current expense budget?**

The current expense budget funds the basic identification services for unincorporated areas of the county. By state law, local police agencies representing incorporated cities are required to handle their own identification services or depend entirely upon the state for basic services.

Through King County's regional AFIS program, services are provided to all police departments within the county. There is no county- or state-level mandate or funding mechanism for a shared regional program of this nature.

#### **5. What would happen if the levy failed and there was no further funding?**

Without sustained funding, the responsibility for criminal identification would revert to each local city's police department, or the Sheriff's office for unincorporated areas, per state law.

The elimination of AFIS funding would likely result in a severe reduction or elimination of county-supported crime scene and arrest identifications. Most cities would not be able to fund their own examiners or technology. The King County regional jails would likely need to hire additional staff to handle the fingerprint, mugshot, and DNA collection processes performed by AFIS staff today.

A city's options would be to fund its own staff and services or rely upon WSP's minimal identification services. Another option may be for cities to contract with the County for what remained of AFIS services.

# AFIS Program FAQs

## 2012

WSP's absorption of the high volume of work performed in King County, the largest in the state, would result in tremendous backlogs. Due to low staffing levels, WSP limits the types of cases worked. WSP is also not staffed 24/7 to provide immediate identification upon arrest; therefore, some individuals giving false identities would be released into the community prior to positive identification.

### **6. How much does the levy cost? What does it include?**

The proposed renewal levy rate is \$0.0592 per \$1,000/assessed valuation (AV), which will continue program funding for the next six years, 2013-2018. The AFIS levy would cost the owner of a \$350,000 home about \$20.72 per year, or \$1.73 per month.

The proposed legislation would continue funding current services, including the new palmprint-matching AFIS installed in 2011. This maintenance levy would also replace an aging and inadequate regional processing lab and continue technology improvements started in the current levy cycle such as remote fingerprinting in the field by officers and/or in the courts.

Efficiencies in the proposal include a reduction of 11 positions through attrition over the life of the levy, estimated to save \$6.75 million.

### **7. Isn't fingerprint technology getting old? What about DNA, iris scanning, or facial recognition?**

The use of *both* fingerprints and DNA are important in evidence collection, but one does not replace the other. Many times, only fingerprints are left at crime scenes, and no DNA evidence is found.

DNA cannot distinguish between identical twins, but fingerprints can.

Iris scanning is primarily used for access control and does not have much application in crime scene evidence recovery.

Facial recognition is limited to surveillance and investigations where photos or video are available.

Investigators use any and all forensic science disciplines available: again, one does not replace the other. However, fingerprints remain the 'bread and butter' of criminal identification.