



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

July 8, 2015

Ordinance

Proposed No. 2015-0177.2

Sponsors McDermott and Dembowski

1 AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the
2 qualified electors of King County at a special election to be
3 held in King County on November 3, 2015, a proposition
4 authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy
5 limitations contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for a
6 consecutive six-year period at a first year rate of not more
7 than 14 cents per one thousand dollars of assessed
8 valuation, and limiting annual levy increases to three
9 percent in the five succeeding years, all for the purpose of
10 funding prevention and early intervention strategies to
11 improve the health and well-being of children, youth and
12 their communities.

13 STATEMENT OF FACTS:

14 1. Approximately twenty-five thousand children are born in King County
15 every year. County residents under age eighteen comprise twenty-one
16 percent of the county's population. Nearly half of people under age
17 eighteen in King County are people of color.

18 2. Eighty-five percent of the human brain is developed by age three.

19 According to early childhood development experts, basic skills necessary

to be ready to learn in school and be successful as an adult, such as self-esteem, motivation, coordination, prioritization, management of incoming information, attention and distraction control, are developed by age five before children go to school.

3. A second significant time of brain development is adolescence. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the parts of the brain responsible for controlling impulses and planning ahead, which are the hallmarks of successful adult behavior, mature during adolescence. Adolescence is also the critical period when young people learn to form safe and healthy relationships, and when many patterns of health-promoting or potentially health-damaging behaviors are established.

4. Although King County as a whole is a thriving, prosperous region, there is evidence that some of our children and youth are in danger of being left behind. The percentage of children five and under living in poverty is as low as four and seven-tenths percent in some regions of the county and as high as twenty-six percent in other regions. Infant mortality is four times higher in some areas of King County than others.

Approximately one-third of pregnant women do not receive the recommended levels of prenatal care. One in five adolescents is overweight or obese and only twenty-four percent of adolescents receive the recommended levels of physical activity. Twenty-six percent of adolescents report having depressive feelings and twenty-nine percent report using alcohol or other illicit drugs. Over six thousand King County

43 students are homeless; in some school districts as many as one in ten are
44 homeless.

45 5. All too often the children and youth who are being left behind and are
46 not receiving services before a crisis occurs are children and youth of
47 color. Young people of color make up at least fifty to sixty percent of
48 youth and young adults experiencing homelessness despite only twenty-
49 nine percent of King County's general population being people of color.

50 6. One of the areas where the disparities in those who do not receive
51 appropriate services before a crisis occurs is the juvenile justice system.
52 African-American youth make up approximately fifty percent of those in
53 detention in King County, or five times their rate of representation in the
54 general population. According to a report from the National Conference
55 of State Legislatures as many as seventy percent of youth in the juvenile
56 justice system nationally are affected with a mental disorder, and one in
57 five suffer from a mental illness so severe as to impair their ability to
58 function as a young person and grow into a responsible adult. King
59 County is committed to preventing crises before they occur and ending
60 disproportionality in the juvenile justice system.

61 7. The county actively engages in equity and social justice efforts to eliminate
62 racial disparities in the juvenile justice system and the council will consider this
63 goal when deliberating on future policies and plans related to the proposed Best
64 Starts for Kids levy.

65 8. Investment in prevention and early intervention can prevent long-term
66 harm of children as they grow up. According to the National Scientific
67 Council on the Developing Child, extensive research on the biology of
68 stress now shows that healthy development can be derailed by excessive
69 or prolonged activation of stress response systems in the body and the
70 brain, with damaging effects on learning, behavior and health across the
71 lifespan.

72 9. Prevention and early intervention are also the most effective and least
73 expensive ways to address serious future problems such as chronic
74 disease, mental illness, substance abuse and incarceration. Science tells us
75 that lifelong problems can be prevented: by investing heavily in children
76 before age five; by making strategic investments at critical points in a
77 young person's development before age twenty-four; and by taking actions
78 to ensure that all children and youth have opportunities to live in safe,
79 thriving, health-promoting home, school and community environments.

80 10. Studies have shown that the return on investment in early childhood
81 development, ensuring that children have a strong start in life, is from
82 three to seventeen dollars for every dollar invested. Similarly, the Institute
83 of Medicine and National Research Council's 2009 Preventing Mental,
84 Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People report notes
85 that cost-benefit ratios for early treatment and prevention programs for
86 addictions and mental illness programs range from 1:2 to 1:10. This
87 means a one-dollar investment yields two to ten dollars savings in health

costs, criminal and juvenile justice costs, educational costs and lost productivity.

11. Studies show that prevention has positive economic impacts for business. For example, a healthier workforce can reduce the extent to which health insurance costs and employee absenteeism affects a company's competitive edge. In the United States, full-time employees with chronic disease miss an estimated four hundred fifty million additional work days per year, compared to healthy employees, contributing to a cost of one hundred fifty-three billion dollars in lost productivity every year.

12. Many of the county's current funding sources, as well as other public budgets, are dedicated to responding to crises and negative outcomes, particularly negative outcomes for adults, such as severe mental illness, homelessness and chronic illness, and for youth who have already dropped out of school or who have been involved in the juvenile justice system.

While these are required or necessary expenditures, little funding is available to invest in prevention. For example, seventy-five percent of the county's general fund supports the law and justice system. The veterans and human services levy, because it is focused on services for people who are in crisis, funds services primarily for adults. Only sixteen percent of its total funding is available to support people under age twenty-four and only eleven percent of the total levy funds prevention-oriented services.

110 13. In 2014, the shortfall of funding for the department of public health -
111 Seattle & King County reached a critical point, threatening the loss of
112 proven prevention and early intervention programs for mothers and
113 families, such as the Nurse Family Partnership home visiting program and
114 maternity support services.

115 14. While the proposed Best Starts for Kids levy would allow the
116 department of public health - Seattle & King County to continue providing
117 parent-child health services, such as the Nurse Family Partnership home
118 visiting program and maternity support services, the levy would not
119 stabilize King County's broader public health services. The public health
120 fund remains at risk, as long-term public health funding sources have not
121 been identified.

122 15. The majority of funding for this proposed Best Starts for Kids levy is
123 intended to go to community partners to provide services in the
124 community. As the levy is being implemented, the county's goal is to
125 ensure that diverse communities, such as traditionally isolated immigrant
126 and refugee communities, and small organizations are able to access funds
127 in order to provide culturally appropriate services in King County. The
128 county intends to collaborate with these organizations and help evaluate
129 innovative new programs or services so that promising practices become
130 proven practices.

131 16. Services for children and youth will improve as agencies and
132 organizations working with children and youth have opportunities for

133 training, building organizational and system capacity and sufficient
134 resources to administer programs and services.

135 17. In 2010, the county enacted Ordinance 16857, establishing the King
136 County Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes as one of its goals
137 Health and Human Potential: Provide opportunities for all communities
138 and individuals to realize their full potential.

139 18. In 2010, the county enacted Ordinance 16948, transforming its work
140 on equity and social justice from an initiative to an integrated effort that
141 applies the King County Strategic Plan's principle of "fair and just"
142 intentionally in all the county does in order to achieve equitable
143 opportunities for all people and communities.

144 19. In 2012, the council passed Motion 13768, establishing the Health &
145 Human Services Transformation Plan. The Transformation Plan
146 establishes as its vision that, by 2020, the people of King County will
147 experience significant gains in health and well-being because our
148 community worked collectively to make the shift from a costly, crisis-
149 oriented response to health and social problems, to one that focuses on
150 prevention, embraces recovery and eliminates disparities.

151 20. In 2014, the county enacted Ordinance 17738, establishing the youth
152 action plan task force and providing policy direction regarding the
153 development of a youth action plan.

154 21. In 2014, as part of the implementation of the King County Strategic
155 Plan, the equity and social justice ordinance, the health and human

services transformation plan and as part of the development of the youth action plan, King County staff began examining how the county could balance its investment portfolio towards more preventive approaches that lead to improved outcomes that allow individuals and communities to achieve their full potential. The resulting Best Starts for Kids levy proposal is guided by and represents a further implementation of the county's adopted policy direction.

22. In addition to building on adopted county policy, in developing the Best Starts for Kids levy proposal, King County staff consulted with experts at the University of Washington Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences and with several groups and coalitions, including the Best Starts for Kids Advisory Group, the Youth Action Plan Task Force, the Transformation Plan Advising Partners Group, the King County Alliance for Human Services, the Youth Development Executive Directors Coalition and several early learning coalitions. County staff also reviewed and consulted with jurisdictions and organizations from around the United States and the world regarding best and promising practices.

23. It is the intent of the council and the executive that the strategies supported by the proposed Best Starts for Kids levy will achieve a variety of individual and community outcomes. Individual outcomes will include outcomes such as the following: increasing the percentage of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care; increasing technical assistance to child care providers; reducing psychiatric hospitalizations for

youth; decreasing the percentage of youth using alcohol or drugs;
increasing the percentage of youth who feel they have an adult in their
community they feel they can talk to; and decreasing the percentage of
school-aged youth in south King County who are at an unhealthy weight.

Community outcomes will include outcomes such as the following:
decreasing inequities in outcomes for youth in King County; decreasing
suspensions and expulsions, from child care through high school;
decreasing disparities in health and well-being outcomes between different
areas within King County; decreasing domestic violence; decreasing funds
spent on crisis services, such as incarceration and involuntary
commitment; increasing the number of family and youth who are
prevented from entering homelessness; and improved quality of life index
in communities of opportunity.

24. It is the intent of the council and the executive that the youth and
family homelessness prevention initiative will provide flexible, client-
centered outcomes by providing funding to community agencies to help
prevent homelessness among youth and their families.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this
ordinance unless the context clearly require otherwise.

A. "Communities of opportunity" means the program launched by The Seattle
Foundation and King County in 2014 and memorialized in Contract #5692351, including
any successor contract, to support communities in improving the health, social, racial and

202 economic outcomes of the residents of those communities, and to do so by partnering
203 with those communities to shape and own solutions. In the event the formal relationship
204 described in this subsection A. between The Seattle Foundation and King County ceases
205 to be in effect at any point during the life of the levy, the term "communities of
206 opportunity" shall mean a strategy that is designed to improve the health, social, racial,
207 and economic outcomes of specific communities that is administered by the county and
208 developed in partnership with those communities.

209 B. "Communities of opportunity interim governance group" means the group and
210 any successor group, which shall include one appointee of the executive and one
211 appointee of the council, respectively, specified by ordinance and charged with advising
212 on strategic direction and operations for communities of opportunity. Current interim
213 governance group members include community partners and representatives from local
214 government, from The Seattle Foundation and from King County. If the proposed levy
215 passes, the group will be reconstituted in accordance with section 7.B. of this ordinance.

216 C. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes for the specific purposes and
217 term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with state
218 law.

219 D. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of funds raised by the levy and
220 any interest earnings on the funds.

221 E. "Limit factor", for purposes of calculating the levy limitations in RCW
222 84.55.010, means one hundred three percent.

223 F. "Strategy" means a program, service, activity, initiative or capital facility
224 intended to achieve the goals of this ordinance.

225 G. "Youth" means a person through twenty-four years of age.

226 H. "Youth and family homelessness prevention initiative" means an initiative
227 intended to prevent and divert youth and their families from becoming homeless.

228 **SECTION 3. Levy submittal.** To provide necessary funds for the purposes
229 identified in section 5 of this ordinance, the county council shall submit to the qualified
230 electors of the county a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy in excess of
231 the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive years,
232 commencing in 2016, at a rate not to exceed fourteen cents per thousand dollars of
233 assessed value and authorizing a limit factor of one hundred three percent for each of the
234 five succeeding years, which are 2017 through 2021. In accordance with RCW
235 84.55.050, this levy shall be a regular property tax levy, which is subject to the statutory
236 rate limit of RCW 84.52.043.

237 **SECTION 4. Deposit of levy proceeds.** The levy proceeds shall be deposited in
238 a special revenue fund, which fund shall be created by ordinance.

239 **SECTION 5. Eligible expenditures.**

240 A. Out of the first year's levy proceeds:

241 1. Nineteen million dollars shall be used to fund and administer a youth and
242 family homelessness prevention initiative; and

243 2. Such sums as are necessary to fund the costs and charges incurred by the
244 county that are attributable to the election.

245 B. The remaining levy proceeds shall be used to fund and administer the
246 provision of a wide range of initiatives to:

247 1. Improve health and well-being outcomes of youth, as well as the families and
248 the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to, by ensuring adequate
249 services and supports for pregnant women and newborns; access to safe and healthy food;
250 and developmental screening for youth;

251 2. Prevent and intervene early on negative outcomes, including, but not limited
252 to, chronic disease, mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, domestic violence and
253 incarceration;

254 3. Reduce inequities in outcomes for youth in the county; and

255 4. Strengthen, improve, better coordinate, integrate and encourage innovation in
256 health and human services systems and the agencies, organizations and groups addressing
257 the needs of youth, their families and their communities.

258 C. Of the eligible expenditures described in subsection B. of this section:

259 1. Fifty percent shall be used to fund and administer strategies focused on youth
260 under five years old and their caregivers, pregnant women and for individuals or families
261 concerning pregnancy. Of these funds, not less than \$42.8 million shall be used to
262 provide health services, such as maternity support services and nurse family partnership
263 home visiting program services, that are currently delivered through the county's public
264 health centers;

265 2. Thirty-five percent shall be used to fund and administer strategies focused on
266 youth ages five through twenty-four years old;

267 3. Ten percent shall be used to fund and administer communities of opportunity;
268 and

269 4. Five percent shall be used to fund and administer evaluation and data
270 collection activities and activities designed to improve the delivery of services and
271 programs for youth and their communities.

272 SECTION 6. Call for special election. In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321,
273 the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with
274 the general election on November 3, 2015, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular
275 property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director
276 of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state
277 constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the
278 said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council
279 shall certify that proposition to the King County director of elections in substantially the
280 following form:

281 PROPOSITION___; The King County Council has passed Ordinance
282 _____ concerning funding to improve health and well-being for youth,
283 families and communities. If approved, this proposition would provide
284 funding for prevention and early intervention to achieve positive outcomes
285 related to: healthy pregnancy; parental and newborn support; healthy
286 child and youth development; the health and well-being of communities;
287 and crisis prevention and early intervention for youth, including for
288 domestic violence and homelessness. The measure would authorize an
289 additional regular property tax of \$0.14 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation
290 for collection beginning in 2016 and authorize maximum annual increases
291 of 3% in the succeeding 5 years.

292 **SECTION 7. Youth advisory board and communities of opportunity interim**
293 **governance group.**

294 A. If the levy is approved by the voters, a youth advisory board shall be
295 established by ordinance to serve as the advisory board for the portion of the levy
296 proceeds described in sections 5.C.1., 2. and 4. of this ordinance. The executive shall
297 transmit to the council by December 1, 2015, a plan relating to the youth advisory board
298 and a proposed ordinance that identifies the duties and composition of the youth advisory
299 board. The advisory plan shall be consistent with the recommendations contained in the
300 county's youth action plan, Motion 14378. The youth advisory board shall be comprised
301 of a wide array of King County residents and stakeholders with geographically and
302 culturally diverse perspectives, including, but not limited to: cities; school districts;
303 nonprofits and other entities that focus on youth and families in King County;
304 pediatricians; child development specialists; and representatives of youth and families
305 receiving services.

306 B. The communities of opportunity interim governance group shall serve as the
307 advisory board for levy proceeds described in section 5.C.3. of this ordinance. The
308 executive shall transmit to the council by December 1, 2015, a plan relating to the
309 communities of opportunity interim governance group and a proposed ordinance that
310 identifies the composition and duties of the interim governance group with respect to the
311 levy proceeds described in section 5.C.3. of this ordinance.

312 **SECTION 8. Implementation plans.**

313 A. The executive shall transmit to the council an implementation plan that
314 identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of levy

proceeds described in section 5.A.1. of this ordinance. This implementation plan relating to the youth and family homelessness prevention initiative shall, to the maximum extent possible, be developed in collaboration with the youth advisory board and shall be transmitted to the council by February 1, 2016, for council review and approval by ordinance.

B. The executive shall transmit to the council an implementation plan that identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of levy proceeds described in section 5.C. of this ordinance. The implementation plan shall be developed in collaboration with the youth advisory board and the communities of opportunity interim governance group, as applicable. The implementation plan shall, to the maximum extent possible, take into consideration any recommendations of the county's steering committee to address juvenile justice disproportionality that was formed in 2015. The implementation plan shall be transmitted to the council by June 1, 2016, for council review and approval by ordinance.

C. Except for planning funds, which shall be approved by ordinance and not exceed \$2 million, and funds for public health services described in section 5.C.1., no levy proceeds may be expended for the purposes described in sections 5.A.1 and 5.C. of this ordinance until the date on which the applicable implementation plan is approved by ordinance.

D. The implementation plans described in subsections A. and B. of this section shall each include a proposal for an annual reporting process to the council, including the regional policy committee or a successor committee.

337 **SECTION 9. Ratification.** Certification of the proposition by the clerk of the
338 county council to the director of elections in accordance with law before the election on
339 November 3, 2015, and any other act consistent with the authority and before the
340 effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.
341

342 **SECTION 10. Severability.** If any provision of this ordinance or its application
343 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
344 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.
345

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, ____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None