



King County

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April 16, 2020

The Honorable Claudia Balducci
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

I am pleased to transmit to you a proposed ordinance that, if approved, would place a capital improvement bond measure before King County voters on the November 2020 General Election ballot. The measure seeks voter approval of \$1.74 billion in phased general obligation bond funding over 20 years for health and safety improvements at King County's Harborview Medical Center recommended by the Harborview Leadership Group as called for by King County Motion 15183.

Over 13 months of data gathering and analyses by the Harborview Leadership Group found that the aging Harborview Medical Center (HMC) physical plant limits the ability of HMC and King County to provide care and services to the mission population and residents of King County. The report highlights include:

- The medical center's facilities are aging and outdated in terms of modern medical best practice standards for infection control and privacy;
- The hospital operates at almost 100 percent capacity on a daily basis;
- Facility configuration and capacity constraints significantly impact hospital operations, resulting in virtually no vital surge capacity (ability to house more patients in the event of an emergency), no capacity for growth, and limited flexibility for hospital operations; and,
- The older structures on the campus have not been seismically upgraded and pose life safety risks during a major earthquake.

In addition to examining the clinical facility needs of Harborview, the Leadership Group, advised by subject matter experts and the architectural/space planning firm of HDR, conducted assessments of the needs of other subject areas identified for inclusion in a potential bond as required by Motion 15183. As a result, the Leadership Group's

recommendations not only address the clinical facility master plan needs of the hospital, but include recommendations that address the needs of Public Health, Involuntary Treatment Court, behavioral health, and respite housing for the mission population. The capital improvement recommendations, detailed in the Harborview Leadership Group report transmitted separately to the Council include:

- Construction of a new tower on the campus that increases the number of single patient rooms to meet modern infection control and privacy standards, and expands and improves the emergency department;
- Construction of a new behavioral health services building to co-locate new, expanded, and existing services, including the recently launched Behavioral Health Institute, serving growing need for behavioral health services and creating therapeutic environments;
- Seismic upgrades and renovations for the historic Center Tower and Harborview Hall that preserve iconic structures and ensure the life-safety of patients, employees, and visitors to the campus;
- Expansion of King County Involuntary Treatment Court and Public Health spaces to meet growing demands;
- Space for up to 150 respite beds for individuals who are homeless, enabling discharge from hospital to lower-acuity recuperative care, supporting better health outcomes and more efficient use of hospital beds; and
- Seismic upgrades and renovation for the Pioneer Square Clinic that enables the provision of care to extremely vulnerable populations in a more efficient and therapeutic space.

The estimated cost of these vital improvements is \$1.74 billion, or about nine cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for King County homeowners on 20-year bonds. Our Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget projects an average per-year per-home impact of about \$68.

Harborview is the only level 1 trauma center serving the residents of King County and a four state region. The medical center is the regional emergency management command center during a natural disaster or major crisis event. Since 2000, when voters last agreed to support major facility renovations at Harborview, King County's population has grown 28 percent. Just last week King County was named as the third fastest growing county in the US. Harborview Medical Center is in dire need of facility improvements to preserve life-safety, ensure appropriate infection controls, enact modern privacy standards, and provide maximum operational flexibility in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. Behavioral health services are at capacity at Harborview; additional space is needed for existing services as well as for new and innovative approaches to address the growing behavioral health needs of our communities.

As I transmit this important proposed legislation seeking to place a ballot measure before King County voters to support critically needed improvements at Harborview, we in King County are grappling with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. To date 4,697 people have tested positive for the deadly virus and 312 have died in King County. The vital role that Harborview Medical Center plays in the health and safety of King County residents has never been as clear---or as necessary---as it is today.

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One important aspect of the improvements we are seeking for Harborview Medical Center is the economic impact we expect the work to have in our county. Construction of the Improvements will create an estimated 7,700 jobs. The construction is subject to King County's Master Community Workforce Agreement approved by Ordinance 18672, which would create an estimated 2,300 opportunities for apprenticeship and local hire. Harborview is a vital regional employer, with close to 4,500 FTE.

I strongly support the improvements to Harborview Medical Center as outlined in Attachment A and detailed in the Harborview Leadership Group Recommendation Report. These improvements and recommendations were unanimously endorsed by the Harborview Leadership Group, the Capital Planning Oversight Committee of the Harborview Board of Trustees, and the Harborview Board of Trustees. The improvements position King County and Harborview to meet the growing needs of our region while using this world renowned resource to greater effect. Ultimately, the improvements will help protect and serve King County residents in the face of the next disaster, epidemic, or pandemic.

This proposed legislation supports and furthers the King County Strategic Plan goal of improving the health and well-being of all people in our community.

Thank you for your consideration of this vitally important proposed legislation. I look forward to working the King County Council on the passage of this legislation.

Please contact Kelli Carroll, Director of Special Projects in my office, should you have questions at 206-477-0876.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
 ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff
 Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council
Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Karan Gill, Director, Council Relations, Office of the Executive
Dwight Dively, Director, King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget
Sid Bender, Analyst, King County Office of Performance Strategy, and Budget
Tony Wright, Director, King County Facilities Management Division
Leslie Miles, Project Manager, King County Facilities Management Division