

**King County****Dow Constantine**

King County Executive
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August 30, 2021

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

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

Pursuant to Ordinance 19236 and King County Code 24.30, I am pleased to transmit the Initial Health through Housing Implementation Plan and a proposed Ordinance that, if enacted, would adopt the plan and form the Health through Housing Advisory Committee. Upon its adoption, this plan will govern the administration and implementation of King County's Health through Housing initiative from 2022 through 2028.

The Health through Housing initiative directs proceeds from an ongoing sales tax authorized under RCW 82.14.530 and imposed by Ordinance 19179 to achieve the paramount goal of creating, operating, and maintaining 1,600 units of emergency and permanent supportive housing for King County residents who are experiencing or at risk of chronic homelessness for the period 2022 through 2028. The enclosed Health through Housing report outlines seven supporting goals, along with six strategies, to achieve the paramount goal.

Our Health through Housing initiative invests in the premise that a person's ability to be housed is a fundamental component of that person's ability to gain and maintain health. The Health through Housing initiative arose in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic posed a once-in-a-generation challenge to the King County region and the world. COVID-19 amplified pre-existing crises of homelessness, housing affordability, and racial inequity. The confluence of crises required King County to move with unprecedented speed and to form new partnerships. This created new opportunities to take transformative action to make long-term progress.

The County created Health through Housing to incorporate the lessons from its urgent and early pandemic response that single room settings are more supportive of a person's stability, health, and ability to maintain housing. We are taking advantage of a counter-cyclical housing investment opportunity to substantially grow the region's stock of affordable homes in months rather than years. We are also establishing partnerships with cities across King

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County to site and operate emergency and permanent supportive housing at a speed and scale not previously possible.

Among the King County Strategic Plan's guiding principles is addressing the root causes of inequities. Health through Housing advances this principle through its explicit focus on reducing disproportionality among people experiencing chronic homelessness. The initiative supports the Strategic Plan goal of increasing access to quality housing that is affordable to all. Health through Housing directly impacts this goal through its coordinated regional effort to substantively expand housing and services in this region for people experiencing chronic homelessness. Finally, both the housing and behavioral health components of the Health through Housing initiative support the Strategic Plan goal to improve health and well-being to create thriving communities.


In accordance with the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan, King County actively seeks to eliminate racially disparate health and human services outcomes in this region. The Health through Housing initiative furthers the King County ESJ Strategic Plan by directly targeting racial-ethnic disproportionality among people experiencing chronic homelessness, incorporating a pro-equity approach, and advancing social justice values by focusing on the people and places with the greatest needs. It also advances the ESJ Strategic Plan's specific goals for housing by targeting funding to address specific affordable housing needs through appropriate housing interventions.

This plan required approximately 375 hours of staff time to produce, costing an estimated \$34,710.

Thank you for your consideration of this plan for King County's most comprehensive initiative to rapidly expand and perpetually operate housing for King County residents who are experiencing or at risk of chronic homelessness. Our Health through Housing initiative offers an opportunity to apply to the crisis of chronic homelessness the same commitment to action, evidence, partnership and equity that propelled the region's response to COVID-19. This plan's success will require the region to nurture new partnerships, build upon existing coalitions, and recognize that implementing solutions for big issues like homelessness will depend upon consistent cooperation, clear communication, and common cause.

If your staff have questions, please contact Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Services at 206-477-4384.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

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Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Janine Weihe, Interim 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, Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget

Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Services