



King County

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

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February 4, 2021

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

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

Please find the enclosed King County Human and Civil Rights Commission Feasibility Study as called for by Ordinance 19047. The study provides an analysis of the feasibility of changes made by Ordinance 19047. The study also provides an analysis of the Korematsu Center for Law and Equality report recommendations.

King County has defined equity as the ardent journey toward well-being as defined by those most negatively affected. King County government and the residents of the county face an unprecedented time in history. America's national conscience is beginning to awaken to the brutal reality of racism, with its generational and continuing impacts. This awakening is also taking place in King County, along with a deeper understanding of the institutional nature of 'isms'- not only the oppressive and discriminatory attitudes and beliefs which undermine efforts to advance equity in King County, but also the structural and institutional systems which are based on, incorporate, and maintain them. These 'isms', including ableism, ageism, classism, racism, and others which are directly in opposition to our True North: "Making King County a welcoming a community where every person can thrive".

Since Ordinance 19047 passed in December 2019, the King County has taken decisive, bold action to advance equity at King County: declaring racism as a public health crisis; reinvesting revenue generated by marijuana tax away from law enforcement and into community; strengthening our commitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act and disability; and appointing our first Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer. All of this was accomplished during the incredible hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to significantly impact the lives of King County residents, families, businesses, and communities. King County government is also experiencing the effects of COVID-19 on operations and funding. COVID-19 has also shifted the priorities of many community partners as they assist those most in need in critical

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areas. COVID-19 significantly changed how King County staff have been able to interface with stakeholders and community members, with digital communication taking the place of face-to-face meetings, including outreach and engagement meetings, including outreach related to the enclosed feasibility study. Yet, despite the engagement challenges staff were able to conduct nearly 40 engagement sessions with individuals and groups for this study.

I support expanding and enhancing civil rights protections within King County including through the creation of the new commission. The enclosed feasibility study provides my response regarding key elements of Ordinance 19047 and the Korematsu Study's 11 recommendations. I'm pleased to support the majority of the Korematsu recommendations and elements of Ordinance 19047, with a few noted exceptions and clarifications based on legal guidance from the Prosecutor's Office and our current fiscal realities.

I am ready to collaborate with the King County Council, community, employees, and advocates to co-create a new commission that will act to meaningfully protect and advance sacred civil rights for all of King County.

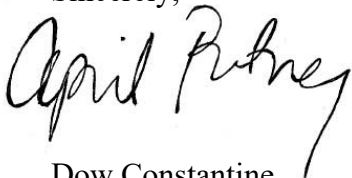
This study supports King County Strategic Plan's goal to improve the health and well-being of all people in our community. This report aligns with the goals of the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan by highlighting ways the County can utilize civil rights to work upstream and advance equity and social justice principals in the workplace and workforce, and in building community partnerships.

It is estimated that the report required 200 hours to produce this report, costing approximately \$10,560. The estimated printing cost for this report is nominal.

Thank you for your consideration of this study and its recommendations. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on implementing the recommendations of this study, including the creation of a new commission.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Anita Whitfield, Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer, at (206) 477-2669.

Sincerely,



for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

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Dwight Dively, Director, Performance, Strategy and Budget, Office of the Executive

Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Karan Gill, Director, Council Relations, Office of the Executive

Anita Whitfield, Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer, Office of the Executive