

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

King County Executive

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www.kingcounty.gov

February 16, 2023

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

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

I am pleased to transmit a proposed ballot measure Ordinance to renew the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) for a third time. If adopted by the King County Council, this proposed legislation will offer King County voters on August 1, 2023 the opportunity to ensure that veterans, seniors, and resilient communities remain connected and supported across the region. The second VSHSL, approved by voters in 2017, is set to expire in December 2023.

If adopted by the Council and approved by voters, a renewed VSHSL would continue to fund community-driven programming through 2029. This programming would continue to support King County residents' healthy living, housing stability, financial stability, social engagement, and access to the services and resources they need to be healthy, happy, and connected to community.

My VSHSL proposal would present to voters a six-year property tax levy lid lift at \$0.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value, starting in 2024. This proposal is the same rate as the 2017 measure unanimously approved by the King County Council via Ordinance 18555. The owner of a median-priced home in King County would pay approximately \$83.75 per year based on estimated 2024 home values, or about \$17.45 more per year than the current levy, thus expanding the levy's resources. The proposed VSHSL is expected to generate approximately \$581 million between 2024 and 2029.

If approved, the proposed Ordinance would require transmittal of an implementation plan to the King County Council, including a spending plan, by October 31, 2023. In addition to sustaining existing critical services, I intend to prioritize expanded levy resources toward the following goals:

- **Build the nation's strongest local veterans program** - The levy sustains and expands innovative partnerships and programming through the King County Veterans Program (KCVP) that provide comprehensive case management and behavioral health counseling

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for veterans and their families and caregivers.

- **Keep reducing homelessness** - Over the next six years, we will use VSHSL funding to further reduce veteran homelessness in King County. We will achieve this by creating at least 200 dedicated affordable housing units for veterans; making the Collaborative Case Management program permanent; and funding housing navigators to assist people in their affordable housing search.
- **Double funding for senior centers** - Levy funds will boost senior services that made a difference in the pandemic; strengthen and sustain senior center programming to provide social connection; and provide for green energy improvements that help senior centers reduce their carbon footprint, cut utility bills, and provide refuge in extreme weather.
- **Strengthen communities and build resiliency** - Levy funds play a critical role in investing in the people who support those in need, making our communities a place where people can thrive, and ensuring human services are accessible, effective, and equitable. A renewed VSHSL will:
 - Support our workforce and partnerships with unions and community organizations to help ensure that critical staff have a stable work environment to best serve veterans, seniors, and resilient communities, enabling more support for and retention of staff.
 - Deepen funding for our prevention efforts and responses to survivors of gender-based violence, doubling funding for a countywide 24-hour multilingual and multimodal domestic violence hotline and mobile advocacy support.

The VSHSL advances the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan by funding programs and services that remedy the structural inequities that cause race and place to be predictors of well-being.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation allows King County voters the opportunity to continue investing in the people, providers, and programs that strengthen connection and build accessible communities.

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

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

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cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Shannon Braddock, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Karan Gill, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Services