October 10, 2013

The Honorable Larry Gossett

Chair, King County Council

Room 1200

C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

This letter transmits a report required by Ordinance 17476, relating to King County’s response to human trafficking.  Ordinance 17476 directed the executive to report to the King County Council on issues and recommendations related to human trafficking in King County.

*PROVISO P1, DIRECTED TO THE KING COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE, PROVIDED THAT:*

*Of this appropriation, $250,000 shall not be encumbered or expended until the executive transmits a report as required by section 57, Proviso P1, of this ordinance and a motion that acknowledges receipt of the report, and the motion is passed by the council. The motion shall reference the proviso's ordinance, ordinance section, proviso number and subject matter in both the title and body of the motion.*

*By June 1, 2013, the sheriff's office must submit the data and recommendations that are required by this proviso to the director of public health, with a copy in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the law, justice, health and human services committee or its successor.*

*The sheriff's office shall convene a working group comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement, the prosecutor's office, superior court, council staff, executive staff, the United States Attorney's Office, the Washington state Attorney General's Office and other appropriate county or local agency representatives, to gather data and make recommendations to the council on the most appropriate methods for the suppression of human trafficking in King County. The data and recommendations shall be integrated into a report compiled by public health - Seattle and King County, as required by section 57, Proviso P1, of this ordinance. The data gathered should include, but not be limited to:*

*A. Identification of incidences of intelligence, investigations and arrests, related to commercially sexually exploited youth and human traffic victims;*

*B. Data on the linkage of human trafficking to interaction with gangs, transnational criminal organizations and other criminal enterprises;*

*C. Identification of the number of youth and adults involved as victims, including their entry point and mode of entry into the sex trade and their entry into King County;*

*D. Identification of trends and geographic data;*

*E. Information on pimps, prostitution rings, massage parlors and points of contact where individuals are approached for entry into illegal sex trafficking or engage in related behavior;*

*F. Identification of best practices for the suppression of human trafficking;*

*G. Identification of the opportunities for federal or other grant funding to support services that suppress human trafficking;*

*H. Identification of strategic investments that the county could make into interdiction and suppression of human trafficking in the region; and*

*I. Recommendation on the establishment of a multijurisdictional task force with the primary goal of the interdiction and suppression of human trafficking in the region.*

*PROVISO P1 DIRECTED TO THE KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE, PROVIDED THAT:*

*Of this appropriation, $250,000 shall not be encumbered or expended until the executive transmits a report and a motion that acknowledges receipt of the report, and the motion is passed by the council. The motion shall reference the proviso's ordinance, ordinance section, proviso number and subject matter in both the title and body of the motion.*

*The executive must file the report and motion required by this proviso by September 1, 2013, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the law, justice, health and human services committee or its successor.*

*The executive shall convene an interagency workgroup of representatives from the department of community and human services, public health - Seattle and King County, the sheriff's office, the transit division, the prosecutor's office, the council, superior court, youth-serving organizations, faith-based organizations, organizations serving refugees and human trafficking victims and other organizations as appropriate, to produce a report that includes the following:*

*A. Data on individuals who are victims of human trafficking, including children who are involved in commercial sex trade, adults who are coerced or deceived into commercial sex acts and anyone forced into labor or services against their will including:*

*1. Demographic data on how the trafficked individuals entered the county and entered into the human trafficking activities, and how the activity was identified; and*

*2. Demographic data on the perpetrators of human trafficking;*

*B. Identification of best practices and necessary services for human trafficking prevention and intervention, and to assist individuals to exit human trafficking;*

*C. Identification of best practices and necessary services to aid formerly trafficked individuals into successful community reentry, including, but not limited to, family reunification, education, housing and employment services;*

*D. Identification of the opportunities for federal or other grant funding to support these services listed in subsection C. of this proviso;*

*E. Identification of strategic investments that the county could make into prevention, intervention and exit services for victims of human trafficking; and*

*F. Recommendation on the establishment of a countywide task force with the primary goal of coordinating the prevention, intervention and exit services for victims of human trafficking.*

*This report, along with information provided to public health - Seattle and King County by the sheriff's office as required by section 20, Proviso P1, of this ordinance shall be integrated into the report that is called for by this proviso.*

Human trafficking has been called a type of ‘modern day slavery’. Three different types of human trafficking are known to exist in the United States: Labor trafficking, commercial sex trafficking (prostitution) of youth and children, and commercial sex trafficking (prostitution) of adults when fraud, force or coercion are present. Victims of human trafficking may experience physical violence, economic and psychological manipulation, loss of economic and educational opportunity, isolation or imprisonment, and short and long-term physical and mental health impacts, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Response to human trafficking comes from government, nonprofit agencies and the private sector. King County has traditionally played a focused and narrow role on investigation, intelligence and arrests in commercial sex trafficking cases within King County’s jurisdiction, and prosecution of trafficking-related felony cases referred by all King County jurisdictions. Some direct services for youth victims have also been funded.

Recently, the Council directed the Executive to enhance its work to support raising community awareness of the signs of human trafficking, leading to an increase in calls to the national hotline. King County has also begun to train staff to recognize and respond to potential trafficking situations, including training law enforcement, human services and code inspection staff. Creation of a new strategy to support youth victims includes development of multi-disciplinary teams to identify appropriate response.

For purposes of this report, for the years 2011-2012, quantitative data was collected from the Washington State Patrol for felony and misdemeanor arrests for human trafficking and other related crimes reported from arresting jurisdictions in King County; qualitative data was collected by the King County Sheriff’s Office (KCSO) and the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office (PAO) from case files to provide more information. Victim services data was requested from local nonprofit agencies.

At the present time, data on the scope and extent of human trafficking in King County is limited. Arrest and prosecution data remain the best source of quantitative information of those crimes related to human trafficking that are intercepted through law enforcement efforts. Because charges under the specific Washington human trafficking statute are not disaggregated between labor and commercial sex trafficking in 2011-2012, it is unclear how many of the specific trafficking charges relate to labor cases. No comprehensive population data exists on victims and perpetrators of either labor or commercial sex trafficking to understand thoroughly the nature and location of recruitment, crimes and victim needs.  National and international reviews of literature on human trafficking interventions also note the lack of an evidence base due to the difficulty in data collection.

King County has many priorities in addressing public health and criminal justice issues and the needs of those in poverty and the underserved – including strategies to address homelessness, veterans services, access to health care for all residents, gun violence prevention, and support for high-need health and human services system utilizers.

As a result of the new focus based on Council direction, I recommend a continued approach to human trafficking that emphasizes the County’s targeted and focused roles in responding to trafficking, within existing resources.

My recommendation to continue a targeted and focused role recognizes that the County’s response to human trafficking must fit within the context of broad King County priorities and intentionally places emphasis on where King County has had past success and where King County is focused currently.  It also intentionally places emphasis on where King County has a clear role and defined strategies. It allows King County to continue to learn about the work of partners who are more centrally involved in responding to human trafficking, including the federal and state governments and nonprofit agencies, as data regarding trafficked individuals and appropriate interventions become more available.

King County remains committed to addressing human trafficking from an equity and social justice perspective. No person in King County should be a victim of human trafficking, and all King County residents have an obligation to be part of the solution, as does King County government.

The Report and Recommendations on Human Trafficking Response by King County supports King County Strategic Plan Justice and Safety Goal, Objectives 1. “Keep people safe in their homes and communities”and 2. “Ensure fair and accessible justice systems”; Health & Human Potential Goal Objectives 3. “Support the optimal growth and development of children and youth” and 4. “Ensure a network of integrated and effective health and human services is available to people in need.”

Preparation of this report involved approximately 400 staff hours costing roughly $22,000.

Thank you for your consideration of this reports. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Betsy Jones, Health and Human Potential Policy Advisor, King County Executive Office, at 206-263-9618.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Michael Woywod, Chief of Staff

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Carrie S. Cihak, Chief Advisor, Policy and Strategic Initiatives, King County

Executive Office (KCEO)

Betsy Jones, Health and Human Potential Policy Advisor, KCEO

Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance Strategy and Budget