March 31, 2017

The Honorable Joe McDermott

Chair, King County Council

Room 1200

C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember McDermott:

King County faces unprecedented affordable housing challenges. Amidst tremendous economic and population growth, in places both obvious and hidden, many in our community are struggling to meet their basic housing needs. While King County has supported affordable housing in all its forms, new solutions and increased collaboration are required to address this growing need.

That is why I am pleased to transmit to you today the progress report requested in Council Motion 14754 and a proposed motion to establish a Regional Affordable Housing Task Force, charged with developing a regional affordable housing strategy. I greatly appreciate the work of the Council and Council staff in working with my staff to craft this motion. The creation of a regional affordable housing strategy will allow the County and its many diverse cities to establish an integrated approach that will better respond to our housing challenges.

The need is acute. Nearly 50,000 households earning minimum wage are paying over 50 percent of their income towards their housing costs. These families and individuals are often an illness or injury away from joining the ranks of the homeless. And as we are reminded again and again, there are already over 4,500 homeless individuals living outdoors on any given night in King County. Add to these the projected continued population growth, increased housing costs, and the increased demand for housing near transit, and the need for a regional affordable housing strategy is clear.

King County can, and should be bold, in our approach to addressing the need for affordable housing, but we cannot do it alone. We need to partner with the State, cities, the business community, for-profit and nonprofit housing developers, advocates and the community to make sure the tools being considered address the depth of the need.

Together with many diverse partners and jurisdictions, King County can identify and implement bold solutions to our current and future affordable housing needs. It is only by working closely with these stakeholders that we will be able to make King County a region where everyone can afford to live in healthy, safe and vibrant communities.

The proposed Regional Affordable Housing Task Force would include representatives of the below stakeholders:

|  |
| --- |
| **Task Force Representation** |
| * King County Council (4)
 |
| * King County Executive (1)
 |
| * Sound Cities Association representatives from cities in each of North, East, and South King County and a city from the rural area (4)
 |
| * Mayor of Seattle (1)
 |
| * DCHS Director, Ex-Officio (1)
 |

The Task Force would deliver a work plan to the King County Executive and Council by October 31, 2017 and submit a final affordable housing strategy report to the Executive and Council by December 2018.

Developing a regional affordable housing strategy plan strongly reflects the goals of the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative by addressing disparities in access to affordable housing as well as increasing cross-sector and cross-jurisdictional collaboration. It will also further our King County Strategic Plan *Accessible, Affordable Housing* goal to increase access to quality housing that is affordable to all.

It is estimated that this report required 50 hours, costing $3256.50 to produce. There are no printing costs.

I look forward to working with Council to create the proposed Regional Affordable Housing Task Force and to develop a comprehensive, coordinated vision for addressing our current housing crisis.

Thank you for your interest in our continuing affordable housing efforts. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Adrienne Quinn, Director, Department of Community and Human Services, at 206-263-9100.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

 ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff

 Melani Pedroza, Acting Clerk of the Council

 Carrie S. Cihak, Chief of Policy Development, King County Executive Office

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

 Adrienne Quinn, Director, Department of Community and Human Services