March 16, 2018

The Honorable Joe McDermott

Chair, King County Council

Room 1200

C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember McDermott:

With this letter, I am transmitting the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) Implementation Plan. Ordinance 18555 was enacted in July 2017, presenting voters with the VSHSL Ballot Measure and requiring transmittal of this plan to govern the VSHSL’s strategies, programs and expenditures.

The VSHSL was proposed to replace and expand the previous Veterans and Human Services levies that voters approved in 2005 and 2011, significantly strengthening the community commitment to local veterans, active duty personnel and their families, and other individuals and families in need throughout King County. This new levy adds robust investments to support older adults, healthy aging and a focus on housing stability for all three target populations. Demonstrating their commitment to honoring our veterans and improving the quality of life across King County, the voters resoundingly approved the levy renewal by 68 percent.

The expanded levy will generate nearly $360 million in total over six years, with $300,000 reserved annually for prorationing, if needed. The bulk of the funds are split into three equal shares: one-third for veterans, service members and their families; one-third for vulnerable populations; and embracing a new priority population, one-third for seniors and their caregivers. Each third will start at about $18 million annually. The implementation plan includes a clear financial plan for expenditures of those revenues.

At least 25 percent of the funds from each third of this levy in each year will support housing stability, including capital projects and innovative new approaches to expanding housing stability like master leasing. The implementation plan provides detail on housing proposals to help people of all ages achieve and maintain stable housing.

In keeping with our commitment to continuously improve and strengthen partnerships with communities in King County, staff consulted the community and held a total of 72 meetings or focus groups all across King County. These included 35 community conversations in 25 different cities or unincorporated areas, with staff visiting several of them multiple times. They also hosted 37 different focus groups with veterans groups, community boards and councils, human services agencies, senior centers, and current levy service providers and they offered four online surveys to gather information. The team received responses in ASL, Spanish, Somali, Khmer, Korean, Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese and Arabic. The overall goal was to determine which veterans and human services levy programs were working well, and in what areas service gaps exist in the community.

The VSHSL Implementation Plan is the third of three required plans I am submitting for Council review and adoption. The VSHSL Transition Plan already approved by the Council is making it possible to continue without disruption previously funded levy-supported programs such as the King County Veterans Program (KCVP) and the Mobile Medical Van. Approval of that plan also facilitated our ability to move more quickly on initiatives to help address the homeless and housing affordability crisis in King County, including master leasing and capital projects. Finally, the Council’s previous approval of the transition plan allows the County to move forward with the first steps toward increasing support for the fastest growing segment of our population, older adults.

The Council has also received my VSHSL Governance Plan, which is currently under review. King County was fortunate to have strong resident input into the first and second levies through active oversight boardmember review and guidance. I am confident the County will benefit from similar oversight once the Council adopts a final governance plan.

Just as the expanded levy ballot measure built on the successes of the previous two Veterans and Human Services levies, so, too, does the attached VSHSL Implementation Plan build and expand upon the previous two Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plans governing the 2007 and 2012 levies. The overarching vision is to improve connections, among the people the levy serves and among the people and organizations that provide the levy’s services.

The VSHSL Implementation Plan is structured around five result areas for the three target populations:

1. Housing Stability
2. Financial Stability
3. Social Engagement
4. Healthy Living
5. System Access and Improvement.

To help achieve the connections the levy seeks, and to improve evaluation and reporting capabilities, the levy is shifting to a Results Based Accountability (RBA) focus. Every strategy in this plan was chosen to contribute to a larger community-effort to make positive changes for King County’s veterans, seniors and vulnerable populations, and every strategy and program in this plan will be measured, assessed and continuously improved to understand how it improves the lives of the clients it serves. This change to RBA brings the VSHSL in alignment with both the Best Starts for Kids and the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) initiatives.

The VSHSL Transition Plan strongly supports the goals of the King County Strategic Plan, working to provide opportunities for all individuals and communities to realize their full potential. The VSHSL plays an important role in three goal areas of the King County Strategic Plan: the *Health and Human Services* goal of improving the health and well-being of all people in our community; the *Accessible, Affordable Housing* goal of increasing access to quality housing that is affordable to all; and the *Safety and Justice* goal of implementing alternatives to divert people from the criminal justice system. This plan closely aligns with the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan by investing in broadened community partnerships to eliminate racially disparate health and human services outcomes in King County.

Completion of this plan required approximately 376 hours of staff time, costing $20,950 to produce.

Thank you for your support for our veterans, seniors and other individuals and families in need. I look forward to working with you as we move forward with the full implementation of the new services and supports for our county’s residents.

Please feel free to contact Adrienne Quinn, Department of Community and Human Services Director,at 206-263-9100, with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Grant Lahmann, Chief of Staff to Chair McDermott

Jeff Muhm, Director of Council Initiatives

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

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

Adrienne Quinn, Director, Department of Community and Human Services