

*Distributed @ 8/31 BFM  
Diane Carlson*

**City of  
Bellevue**



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August 30, 2005

The Honorable Larry Gossett  
King County Councilmember  
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200,  
Seattle, WA 98104-3272

Dear Councilmember Gossett,

On behalf of the Bellevue City Council, I am writing to reiterate the City's concern about the recommendation of the King County Regional Policy Committee (RPC) for a 2005 ballot measure to increase property taxes to fund veterans services. The Council sent a letter to the RPC in April expressing this concern. I am providing this restatement of that letter to you now, as I understand the King County Council Budget and Fiscal Management Committee is considering whether to accept the recommendation of the RPC to place this issue on the November ballot.

There is no question that the human services needs of veterans are great and the demand for services funded by King County exceed the available resources, particularly now with the increased number of active military and returning veterans. However, we continue to believe that a ballot measure that generates funding for a specific population is not the best approach in view of the need for a more comprehensive plan for regional human services.

Bellevue has been an active participant in the RPC's human services workplan for the last three years. One of the initial products of this work was the development of a list of regional human services programs proposed for a countywide partnership. Emergency and transitional housing are two of the services for veterans offered by the County that are also considered regional human services. In addition, veterans and their families seek and receive other regional human services such as homeless services, special needs housing, homelessness prevention, domestic violence and sexual assault services, to name a few. These regional human services are also underfunded. A ballot measure increasing funds only for County-funded services would not address the comprehensive needs of veterans and their families.

We are concerned that a ballot measure this year focused only on veterans services would most likely pre-empt the efforts to develop a comprehensive approach, which is underway through the RPC's work and implementation of the recommendations of the King County Task Force on Regional Human Services. The Healthy Families and Communities Task Force has recently begun its work and is focused on determining the financing need for regional health and human services in King County, finding a new dedicated revenue source to fill this need, and developing a countywide public education campaign to generate support for human services. Bellevue Deputy Mayor Phil Noble is a member of this new task force.

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Single population, dedicated revenue streams are not an appropriate long-term solution to funding regional human services and the City believes the RPC, the County, and the Healthy Families and Communities Task Force should continue their efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy looking at all human services needs and how best to fund and deliver them. Services for veterans are certainly a critical component in regional human services and should be included in the development of a comprehensive strategy.

The City of Bellevue is committed to continuing its partnership with King County and other jurisdictions in seeking long-term solutions for planning and funding regional human services and would certainly support veterans services in those solutions. We urge the King County Budget and Fiscal Management Committee not to support a ballot measure focused only on veterans services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie B. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Connie B. Marshall  
Mayor

Cc: Bellevue City Council  
King County Council  
Regional Policy Committee  
King County Executive  
Suburban Cities Association