



King County

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September 30, 2021

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

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

This letter transmits the Skyway-West Hill and North Highline Anti-displacement Strategies Report as required by Action 19 of the 2020 update to the King County Comprehensive Plan, adopted by Ordinance 19146, which incorporates Motion 15539. This report analyzes 14 anti-displacement strategies and recommends implementation of 10 of them to help Skyway-West Hill and North Highline residents remain in the neighborhoods of their choice.

Sometimes households are forced to relocate due to increased housing costs, evictions, or the loss of neighborhood community connections. Moving due to these negative reasons is known as displacement. Over the past eight years, housing costs have increased rapidly throughout King County and even more rapidly in Skyway-West Hill and North Highline. The combination of rising housing costs and lower median incomes puts Skyway-West Hill and North Highline residents at increased displacement risk. This will have a disproportionate impact on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), who make up 64 percent of Skyway-West Hill residents and 54 percent of North Highline residents. Both neighborhoods are more racially diverse than King County as a whole.

Displacement increases the risk of homelessness and may have lasting negative impacts on health, education, and earnings. Displacement disrupts people's lives and weakens the cultural fabric of a community. It can distance households from cultural anchors, businesses, community establishments, and faith-based organizations that bring neighbors together and provide direct support or connect people to support systems. The undermining of these community connections is particularly apparent in historically underserved areas with higher percentages of BIPOC residents, such as Skyway-West Hill and North Highline.

I commit to partnering with community-based organizations to implement the recommended anti-displacement strategies in this report. Many of this report's strategies require additional funding. Some strategies require either a new fund source or additional flexibility for existing resources. I will work proactively over the near and long term to help stabilize the Skyway-West Hill and North Highline communities, to create affordable housing with a priority on

leasing to people with a connection to the community, and to protect important cultural connections in Skyway-West Hill and North Highline.

Executive departments can take action to implement certain recommendations in the near term, using existing resources and staff capacity. This includes establishing a community preference policy and increasing education and outreach for the existing property tax exemption and priority hire programs. I have directed staff to complete these initial tasks as soon as possible during the 2021-2022 biennium.

The Council's legislative action is needed to implement the inclusionary housing and relocation assistance program recommendations. I released a public review draft of the proposed inclusionary housing legislation in coordination with this transmittal. The legislation for relocation assistance is in early program design and is expected to be available in 2022. More funding, outreach, and analysis are needed to implement these two strategies.

Strategies requiring construction of housing units will take multiple years and significant public funding. I will begin implementation of the homeownership down payment assistance, affordable rental housing, and community land trust recommendations in the near term, recognizing that additional funding is required to achieve the desired outcomes. This report also identifies manufactured housing preservation and the redevelopment assistance program as long-term strategies that have high costs and require additional evaluation prior to implementation.

King County staff conducted a robust community outreach process which resulted in substantive contributions to the report's recommendations and helped build trust and relationships between County staff and community members. County staff contracted with a team of facilitators with close ties to the North Highline and Skyway-West Hill communities to co-design and facilitate nearly all public meetings. The community facilitators provided critical leadership and feedback to County staff to ensure that engagement was meaningful and authentic.

This report furthers the goal of the King County Strategic Plan to improve the health and well-being of people in our community through housing and aligns with the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative and the County's pro-equity policy agenda for access to safe and stable housing for all. This report also furthers goals 2, 4, 5, and 7 of the King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force's Five-Year Action Plan through its recommendations to increase construction and preservation of homes that are affordable to households earning less than 50 percent of the area median income, to increase tenant protections, to protect existing communities of color and low-income communities from displacement, and to engage local communities and other partners in addressing the urgent need for and benefit of affordable housing.

Production of this report required an estimated 4,472 hours in Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and Department of Local Services (DLS) staff time, costing approximately \$454,873 in staff hours, as well as \$22,000 to contract with community facilitators, and \$54,975 in consultant costs, for a total estimated report cost of \$531,848.


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Thank you for your consideration of this report and its recommendations. While challenging work to implement these recommendations lies ahead, King County will work with community members and stakeholder organizations to stabilize long-time BIPOC residents and cultural connections in Skyway-West Hill and North Highline.

We welcome the opportunity to brief you and your colleagues on the progress of these anti-displacement strategies.

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

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Janine Weihe, Interim Chief of Staff
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council
Shannon Braddock, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Karan Gill, Director, Council Relations, Office of the Executive
Leo Flor, Director, Department of Community and Human Services
John Taylor, Director, Department of Local Services