

Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0183, **Version:** 3

Clerk 07/08/2020

A MOTION requesting that the King County office of emergency management and public health - Seattle & King County work collaboratively to update the King County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Regional Coordination Framework, continuity of operations plans, the King County Continuity of Government Plan and all other relevant emergency management plans and documents to address the risks from and response to pandemics, incorporating lessons learned from the COVID-19 outbreak, and to develop a pandemic response plan for King County.

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, public health - Seattle & King County confirmed the first cases of the novel coronavirus ("COVID-19"), including one death, in the county, and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death and can easily spread from person to person; and is classified by the World Health Organization as a pandemic that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death, and

WHEREAS, as of April 23, 2020, King County had reported 5,569 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and at least 384 individuals in King County had died as a result of the virus, and

WHEREAS, while COVID-19 is the worst pandemic to affect King County in several generations, the possibility of pandemics of similar or greater impact in the future is omnipresent, and changing climatic conditions are expected to multiply the threat of zoonotic and other pandemics, and

WHEREAS, the mission of the office of emergency management is "to provide for the effective

direction, control and coordination of county government emergency services functional units, and to provide liaison with other governments and the private, nongovernmental sector, in compliance with a state-approved comprehensive emergency management plan and to serve as the coordinating entity for cities, county governmental departments and other appropriate agencies, during incidents and events of regional significance," and the office is tasked with developing a comprehensive plan and program for emergency management, and

WHEREAS, public health - Seattle & King County is responsible for planning and developing local and regional capacity for responding to public health emergencies and providing for the direction and mobilization of health resources, information and personnel during emergencies and disasters in the county, and

WHEREAS, in 2005, Ordinance 15348 required the executive to develop a pandemic influenza response plan, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 15596 adopted the County's Pandemic Influenza Response Plan in 2006, and Ordinance 15986 adopted an updated version of the plan the following year, and

WHEREAS, public health - Seattle & King County has, in the past, developed other planning documents relating to influenza pandemics, such as the Influenza Pandemic Planning Guide for Homeless and Housing Service Providers, and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic presents an emergency with similar characteristics to a pandemic influenza, with public health responses generally following what is contained in the Pandemic Influenza Response Plan, but future pandemics of different origins may require different responses, and

WHEREAS, the King County office of emergency management develops and maintains a number of planning documents, such as the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, the Regional Coordination Framework, King County continuity of operations plans and the King County Continuity of Government Plan, and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is the first real-world test of these plans in a large-scale, global

pandemic outbreak affecting King County, and the lessons learned in the outbreak must be used to prepare for future pandemics, whether they be viral, bacterial or parasitic in origin, and

WHEREAS, the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak have application outside pandemic planning and should be used to prepare for other types of emergencies under an all-hazards approach to emergency management;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The office of emergency management should work with public health - Seattle & King County to update the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Regional Coordination Framework, King County continuity of operations plans, the King County Continuity of Government Plan and any other relevant emergency management or disaster plans or documents to address the threat of pandemics to King County, using the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and building upon the pandemic response plan described in section B of this motion.

B. Public health - Seattle & King County, in coordination with the King County office of emergency management, should create a new pandemic response plan and update other relevant planning documents, expanding on the existing Pandemic Influenza Response Plan and other emergency and disaster planning efforts, using lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan should include the following topics, at a minimum:

1. A response plan or plans addressing each pandemic phase identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including a description of the responsibilities of relevant governmental and nongovernmental agencies in each pandemic phase, both with and without presence of local cases;
2. Identification of critical infrastructure or resources that are currently lacking that would be required in order to respond to pandemics, the barriers to acquiring or developing the infrastructure or resources and recommendations for how to fill these gaps; and
3. Any other information or strategies deemed appropriate by public health - Seattle & King County.

C. The King County office of emergency management is requested to transmit all updated plans and documents described in section A of this motion, and a proposed motion acknowledging receipt of the updated plans and documents, by September 1, 2022. The plans and documents should be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the committee of the whole or its successor.

D. Public health - Seattle & King County is requested to transmit the pandemic response plan and other updated documents and a proposed motion acknowledging receipt of the pandemic response plan and other updated documents by September 1, 2022. The plan and documents should be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the committee of the whole or its successor.

E. The King County office of emergency management and public health - Seattle & King County are requested to provide a briefing to the council on the status of the pandemic response plan and other plan updates no later than September 1, 2021.