



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0248, **Version:** 1

Clerk 06/22/2021

A MOTION requesting that the King County executive consult with the King County prosecuting attorney's office to condemn City Hall park.

WHEREAS, City Hall park is located directly adjacent to the King County Courthouse in downtown Seattle, and

WHEREAS, throughout the past year, City Hall park has been the location of violence and criminal activity, including drug trafficking, firearm trafficking, assault and homicide, that negatively impact pedestrians, courthouse employees and people experiencing homelessness, and

WHEREAS, recent violent crimes committed at City Hall park include a fatal stabbing that occurred at 4th Avenue and Jefferson Street on June 17, 2021, and

WHEREAS, a survey of two hundred twenty employees conducted by King County prosecuting attorney's office resulted in one hundred sixty comments expressing concerns about courthouse safety, and

WHEREAS, in recent months, the King County prosecuting attorney's office has received two to five assault reports each week from courthouse employees regarding activities within City Hall park, and

WHEREAS, the current conditions at City Hall park make it impossible to be used as a public gathering place and park, and

WHEREAS, RCW 35.80A.010 allows for the condemnation of blighted properties if the property constitutes a threat to the public health, safety, or welfare as determined by the executive authority of the county, city, or town, or the designee of the executive authority, and

WHEREAS, RCW 8.08.010 grants counties in Washington state the power to condemn properties for

general county purposes;

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

A. The council requests that the King County executive make a finding that City Hall park constitutes a threat to public health, safety, or welfare under RCW 35.80A.010, and initiate the process of condemnation or acquisition of the property from the city of Seattle as a hazard or nuisance.

B. In condemning and acquiring the property, the executive is requested to take steps to abate the current public health and safety concerns, including relocating the residents of the park to transitional or permanent housing, providing additional security and restoring damage caused the current encampment.

C. Further, the executive is requested to explore future use of the park as an enclosed meeting and events space as part of the King County Courthouse campus.

D. The executive is requested to report to the council on the status of the condemnation process by September 1, 2021, and associated future steps. The executive should electronically file the report with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.