

Investing in a just, equitable and thriving King County simply can't wait

Highlights from the King County 2021-2022 Biennial Budget

There is no way to overstate how challenging the pandemic has made life for everyone, and the economic impact will continue to cause harm to families, communities and governments for years to come. In the face of these challenges and massive uncertainty, and facing revenue shortfalls not seen since the Great Recession, we worked together to craft a budget that promotes smart, targeted investments to help our region move forward.

I am pleased to report some very important investments specific to District 8:

- \$1 million capital investment in the White Center Community HUB Project
 - This community developed-led project will create a place of “Hope, Unity, and Belonging,” where working families can find essential services that nurture their stability and create greater opportunity.
- \$1.5 million capital investment in the International Marketplace for the Wajadir project in Tukwila
 - This project developed by the Abu Bakr Islamic Center of Tukwila, in partnership with Forterra, is an opportunity to push back against residential and commercial gentrification by promoting community ownership and a hub for the Somali community in King County.
- \$2 million for the continued rehabilitation for Dockton Park on Vashon Island
 - A treasured community park will be safe and accessible when this important work can be completed in the coming years.
- \$1.2 million for the West Seattle Mobility Transit Hub
 - Allows the county to continue moving forward with developing a multi-modal transit hub – for pedestrians, cyclists, buses, shuttles and vehicles to access the King County Water Taxi operating at Seacrest Dock.
- \$230,000 for the West Seattle and Vashon Senior Centers
 - These critical community centers will receive needed support to meet the needs of our senior neighbors and community members.

Housing can't wait

Our housing crisis is only exacerbated by this pandemic, and the county will continue to play an important role to bring housing within reach of our neighbors living unsheltered.

I was proud to prime sponsor and pass the small sales tax increase that will allow the county to immediately create permanent supportive housing and fund needed behavioral



health care for up to 2,000 people experiencing chronic homelessness. The approved measure will use bonding against proceeds to generate \$340 million to purchase and repurpose existing hotels, motels, and nursing homes to provide housing and supportive services quickly for those who need it most.

Equity can't wait

Black lives matter. If we are truly committed to undoing the damage that structural racism has had on indigenous peoples, Black people, and people of color, then we need to move public investments towards community driven, equitable programs.

We are doing this in the legal system by diverting \$7.5 million towards the community developed Restorative Community Passageways program that will provide community based support and solutions for children and youth so they never have to encounter the criminal legal system. We are also investing \$2.8 million to expunge records, provide relief for legal financial obligations and begin developing a groundbreaking diversion program for adults.

We are doing this in our communities by moving \$4.6 million of marijuana excise tax revenue away from law enforcement and toward community-based programs. This includes funding a community engagement position to coordinate a participatory budget process for over \$11 million in new operating and capital investments in urban unincorporated King County communities where retail marijuana sales tax is generated, like North Highline.

The health of our community can't wait

The County passed five budgets over the course of 2020 to address urgent and emerging needs arising from the COVID 19 pandemic. The federal funds that supported these efforts have dried up due to the inaction by the current Administration and U.S. Senate, and so the County is left to bridge important programs until additional federal relief can be provided next year.

We are authorizing funds to continue vital public health interventions such as testing, contact tracing and the operation of isolation and quarantine sites currently supported by the 2020 federal dollars. And we are also extending one month of funding for the innovative JustCare program that is working with unsheltered individuals in Seattle's Pioneer Square and the Chinatown International District neighborhoods to provide housing and supportive services.



Additionally, we are investing \$600,000 to support community partners' work to develop a regional gun violence strategy – an effort that will rely on the engagement and participation of leaders among affected youth and communities.

Climate Change won't wait

King County is continuing to prioritize carbon emission reduction and protecting our environment because the accelerated change in our climate remains an existential crisis for which we must do our part.

Over \$90 million will be spent in the next two years on the continued electrification of King County Metro's entire bus fleet by 2040. And to purchase, preserve and develop vital green space throughout the County we've authorized \$69 million to be invested through our King County Conservation Futures fund.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about my priorities and values in the coming biennium. Please email or call me anytime with questions or ideas as we move into 2021 and begin to emerge from these challenging times. Our neighborhoods, our communities, our county and our region are resilient, and we will recover together in the coming years.

Stay safe and healthy,

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