



King County

Shannon Braddock
King County Executive

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

206-296-9600 Fax 206-296-0194
TTY Relay: 711
www.kingcounty.gov

April 10, 2025

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

Dear Councilmember Zahilay:

I am pleased to transmit to you a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, place a measure on the November 2025 general election ballot to reauthorize the six-year Medic One/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) levy at 25-cents per \$1,000 assessed value. The current levy expires on December 31, 2025. If approved by King County voters, the renewed EMS levy would enable the Medic One/EMS system in King County to continue to provide essential life-saving services throughout the region, regardless of location, incident circumstances, day of the week, or time of day.

The 25-cent levy rate supports the programmatic and fiscal proposals developed collaboratively by the region, endorsed by the *EMS Advisory Task Force* in September 2024, and affirmed in the Medic One/EMS 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is transmitted separately and simultaneously with this proposed levy Ordinance.

Medic One/EMS are vital services provided to County residents and visitors, as well as an important part of the quality of life standards afforded to residents of this area. Our regional system is recognized as one of the best emergency medical service programs in the country, and is acclaimed for its patient outcomes, including among the highest reported survival rates in the treatment of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patients across the nation.

Developing the Strategic Plan and levy rate to support the Medic One/EMS system was truly a regional and collaborative effort. Beginning in early 2024, the *EMS Advisory Task Force* worked collaboratively with partners from all parts of the EMS system to develop the future

direction and basis for the next Medic One/EMS levy. The result of this inclusive and complex discussion is a proposal that meets the needs of the EMS system, its users, and our community.

Specifically, the 25-cent levy rate:

- Fully funds eligible advanced life support (referred to as ALS, or paramedic services) costs;
- Continues and increases the contribution to support basic life support (referred to as BLS or “first responders”) and Mobile Integrated Healthcare to address community needs;
- Sustains funding for regional programs and Initiatives that provide essential support to the Medic One/EMS system and are critical for providing the highest emergency medical care possible;
- Funds responsible levels of reserves for unanticipated costs; and
- Upholds current financial policies that provide security yet allow flexibility, including the ability to direct balances into reserves or buy down a future levy rate.

The proposed 25-cent levy rate would cost \$211 per year for the median King County homeowner, based on a \$844,000 home value.

Policies guiding the current levy allow the EMS Division to carry forward \$64 million of 2020-2025 reserves into 2026-2031 reserves for additional security. Partners were committed to maintaining these policies for the 2026-2031 levy so that any funding that is received in excess of anticipated program and reserve needs can be used to reduce a future levy rate.

In accordance with the Revised Code of Washington 84.2.069, approval for placing a 25-cent Medic One/EMS levy on the ballot will be sought from at least 75 percent of those cities with populations exceeding 50,000. Such cities are Auburn, Bellevue, Burien, Federal Way, Kent, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, Sammamish, Seattle, and Shoreline. Representatives from these 11 cities served on the *EMS Advisory Task Force* and were deeply engaged throughout this collaborative process.

The Medic One/EMS 2026-2031 Strategic Plan reflects King County’s mission to provide fiscally responsible, quality driven local and regional services. EMS responses are distributed throughout the region based on service criteria, areas with economic challenges are provided the same level of service as areas with economic prosperity, ensuring access to vital services. In addition, EMS programs directly align with Public Health – Seattle & King County’s core values and priorities of protecting and improving the health and well-being of all people in King County.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this EMS levy proposal for 2026-2031. If your staff have questions, please contact Michele Plorde, Emergency Medical Services Division Director, at 206-263-8603.

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay

April 10, 2025

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Braddock".

for

Shannon Braddock
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
Faisal Khan, Director, Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC)
Michele Plorde, Emergency Medical Services Division Director, PHSKC