



## King County | Office of the Executive

### Executive Girmay Zahilay

Chinook Building, CNK-EX-0800  
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800  
Seattle, WA 98104-2391

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Sarah Perry  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Perry:

Pursuant to Ordinance 19783, which adopted the Crisis Care Centers (CCC) Levy Implementation Plan, this letter transmits notification to the King County Council that I have determined that the County is uniquely positioned to purchase an existing facility at 11410 NE 122nd Way in Kirkland, which is already operating as a crisis care center. Items 1-12 below provide the required information called for by the adopted Implementation Plan so that the County can acquire the building for the crisis care center.

As directed by Ordinance 19572, the CCC Levy's paramount purpose is establishing a network of five crisis care centers throughout King County. Currently, the County's behavioral health crisis service system relies heavily on phone support and mobile response, with limited options for people to go for immediate, life-saving care when in crisis. As a result, people experiencing behavioral health crises often end up in the emergency room or jail, neither of which is equipped to provide appropriate care. Using the model in the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 2020 National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care Best Practice Toolkit, the CCC Levy was designed to more quickly address this region's gap of "somewhere to go" in behavioral health crisis.

The CCC Implementation Plan establishes that under exceptional circumstances, the County may be uniquely situated to purchase a site or an existing facility readily available for development of or conversion to a crisis care center. In such situations, to provide the County with the flexibility to move forward expeditiously, the Implementation Plan permits levy funds to purchase such a site or facility. However, the Executive is first required to notify the King County Council that the County has identified a proposed site or an existing facility at least 30 days before proceeding to close on the purchase. The County may then proceed with the purchase if the King County Council has not passed a Motion rejecting the purchase. Because financing for this building acquisition is available

within appropriated and planned budget amounts for the CCC Levy, no additional legislation is required to enable completion of the purchase.

The Implementation Plan enumerates specific information that my notification letter must contain. The information contained in this letter, including the details provided below and in attachments, fulfills the Implementation Plan notification requirement.

**1. A copy of the purchase and sale agreement.**

The purchase and sale agreement between King County and ROX II K405 Owner, LLC is included as Attachment A.

**2. A copy of the written demonstration of the host jurisdiction's support of locating a crisis care center on the site or in the existing facility. Such demonstration may include, but not be limited to, the host jurisdiction's letter of support, memorandum of understanding, or legislation expressing support.**

A written demonstration of the City of Kirkland's support for the County's purchase is included as Attachment B. In addition, two October 2024 letters of support for Connections Health Solutions' (Connections) operation of a crisis care center at this site were included in Connections' application to become a crisis care center operator. In a joint letter, included as Attachment C, the cities of Bothell, Kenmore, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, and Shoreline expressed their "unwavering support" for Connections to be selected as the operator for the CCC Levy's North crisis response zone (CRZ). The City of Kirkland provided another letter stating its support for the site in October 2024, included as Attachment D. The City of Kirkland's October 2024 letter affirmed zoning compliance and confirmed that the City's Deputy Mayor for external relations worked with Connections to engage the community around the siting of the center.

**3. A description of the exceptional circumstances that makes the County uniquely situated to purchase the site or existing facility.**

As established in Ordinance 19572 and the CCC Levy Implementation Plan adopted by Ordinance 19783, the County is committed to establishing a network of five crisis care centers as efficiently as possible. The CCC Levy Implementation Plan identifies the option for the County to use CCC Levy funds to purchase a site or an existing facility readily available for development of or conversion to a crisis care center to allow for a more expeditious implementation of crisis care centers, under exceptional circumstances to achieve this goal.

County acquisition of the 11410 NE 122nd Way building that houses the North CRZ crisis care center provides an exceptional combination of advantages to the County's Crisis Care Centers initiative, as outlined below.

### Cost Savings

Based on information provided by the Facilities Management Division (FMD) and Connections to the Department of Community and Human Services, the County's acquisition of the North CRZ crisis care center facility is projected to be the lowest overall capital acquisition cost as compared to either continued leasing or acquisition by the current operator.

The current lease runs through March 31, 2039, with remaining base rent payments during the lease period totaling approximately \$35 million as of the drafting of this letter. The negotiated purchase price is \$32.63 million. With due diligence, closing, real estate services, and legal services costs estimated at \$125,000, the total acquisition cost is expected to be \$32.755 million. Through acquisition, the County is projected to achieve approximately \$2.25 million in direct savings compared to supporting continued lease payments.

The original financing model anticipated that the operator of the North CRZ crisis care center would purchase the facility using a capital award from the CCC Levy. However, the County has learned that acquisition by Connections as the selected operator for the Kirkland site is expected to result in an estimated \$7.3 million in operator tax liability on the revenue to purchase the building, a cost that would not be covered by the CCC Levy's capital award for the North CRZ. Alternatively, if the County directly acquires the Kirkland facility itself, it can keep the overall cost to acquire the North CRZ facility significantly lower because of the reduced tax liability to the operator. Connections has indicated it supports the County's acquisition of the Kirkland facility.

### Certainty about Center Location for Operator

The County's acquisition of the site would provide greater certainty to the operator than a continued lease. As discussed above, direct County ownership removes the challenge of navigating rising lease costs over time, or the possibility of the building being bought, which could potentially disrupt or stop crisis care operations by forcing a potentially costly relocation when the current lease expires in March 2039. County acquisition provides assurance to the operator and the community that the building will be secured for use as a crisis care center for the long term, as envisioned in the adopted Crisis Care Centers Levy Implementation Plan.

### Long-term Flexibility

County acquisition would also provide long-term flexibility to the County if an operator change becomes necessary at some point in the future, by avoiding additional real estate transactions and associated costs, or potential relocation costs.

### Additional Space

As stated in the CCC Levy Implementation Plan, the County prefers sites for its crisis care centers with "larger facilities that include potential expansion space and/or additional space for supporting service providers." The Connections Kirkland site includes more space than is

currently necessary for the required crisis care center components and already takes advantage of this unique opportunity to co-locate additional services. Specifically, Connections Kirkland includes an Evaluation and Treatment (E&T) unit, which serves involuntarily committed patients and provides an inpatient service beyond the components required by the crisis care center model, which is funded by non-Levy revenue. By acquiring a facility that already has a co-located additional service, the County will be able to support and facilitate easy access to higher levels of care and help fill a gap in the region's care continuum. Additionally, County acquisition of this facility would provide opportunities for future expansion or co-location of even more services as resources allow, including those covered by Medicaid and state funds, rather than CCC Levy funds.

Additional information about the site is available in a property summary prepared by the Facilities Management Division (FMD) that is included as Attachment E.

**4. A description of how this purchase will accelerate the starting of crisis care center operations.**

Crisis care center operations at the North CRZ site in Kirkland are already under way through a lease arrangement. The County's purchase would ensure that operations can continue at the current site over the long term without any risk of interruption.

**5. A description of the competitive procurement process to be used to select the operator of the crisis care center to be developed on the site or in the existing facility, including what if any consideration will be given for the selected operator to develop the site, convert the existing facility.**

DCHS uses a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process to identify the operators for all five crisis care centers. DCHS aims to select providers for crisis care centers that offer the best value to the County and proposals that most closely align with the programmatic, financial, and policy goals described in the CCC Levy Implementation Plan that support expanded and high-quality behavioral health crisis services for King County residents. This includes giving preference to proposals that can be developed and operated more rapidly while meeting crisis care center requirements defined in the Implementation Plan.

DCHS launched its first solicitation to select crisis care center operators in September 2024. Consistent with provisions in the Implementation Plan and the RFP, Connections Health Solutions (Connections) applied as a "launch ready" site and received the award as the North CRZ crisis care center in February 2025. The crisis care center operational contract for Connections Kirkland was executed in August 2025.

Early and active collaboration between the County and Connections Kirkland ensured that the center aligns with the crisis care center model and service delivery approach. As part of the

RFP review and contracting due diligence process with Connections, the County worked closely with the operator to ensure the facility meets the requirements of the Implementation Plan. The operator's involvement informed decisions about clinical spaces, safety and accessibility features, staff workflow, and integration of co-located services. As a result, the physical layout and operational flow of Connections Kirkland meet the unique needs of a crisis care center.

**6. A description of the near- and long-term plans of the County retaining ownership or control of the property. If it is expected that the property will be ultimately transferred to the operator's ownership or control (i.e. lease), what conditions will be imposed on and/or considerations will be received from the operator in exchange for the property.**

If approved, in both the short and long term, the County expects to retain ownership over the facility. The Implementation Plan requires a 50-year use restriction for all crisis care centers acquired with County funds. This acquisition would protect the County's investment over the long term by stabilizing ownership and lease arrangements to support this dedicated use. Should a transfer of ownership be warranted in the future, the Council's approval would be required for any building sale, and the new owner would be required to record a legal covenant requiring 50-year use for CCC Levy purposes.

**7. A description of all funding sources planned to be used for the purchase of the site or existing facility when colocation of other uses at the site or in the existing facility is expected or contemplated, and a breakdown of how much money is anticipated to be expended from each funding source on the purchase of the site or existing facility.**

The County intends to use the CCC Levy capital funds planned for the North CRZ facility to finance the acquisition and has the support of Connections for this funding approach. As described further in Section 3 of this letter, acquisition by the County is expected to require an estimated \$32.755 million in CCC Levy funds, well below the up to \$39.164 million in CCC Levy capital funds that were designated for Connections Kirkland through the CCC Levy procurement that concluded in February 2025.

**8. If the county will be responsible for developing the site or converting the existing facility, description of all funding sources planned to be used for developing the site or converting the existing facility, and a breakdown of how much money is anticipated to be expended from each funding source on the site or converting the existing facility.**

The facility is already operating as a crisis care center. No further conversion is needed for this use of the facility.

In addition to the CCC Levy capital funding for acquisition that is described in this letter, several other state and local investments have already contributed to conversion of this facility into a crisis care center, with most of these expenditures occurring before the facility was designated a crisis care center. Conversion-related funding sources included:

- state Department of Commerce grants in 2022 (\$10 million passed through King County to Connections for this facility, plus \$10.02 million in grants to Connections directly);
- a \$1.5 million contribution of MIDD behavioral health sales tax funds in 2022; private investment from Connections Health Solutions of \$4.69 million; and
- in 2025, up to \$1,427,015 in CCC Levy capital funds, as part of the broader \$39.164 million CCC Levy capital spending amount referenced in Section 7 above, to pay for renovations that allowed the facility to better serve youth. (The authorization to use CCC Levy funds is described further in the DCHS Director's September 30, 2025 notification letter to the Council.)

**9. If the county will be responsible for developing the site or converting the existing facility, then a description of the competitive process to be used to select the design and construction contractor or contractors (design-bid-build, design-build, GCCM, etc.) to develop the site or convert the existing facility to be used as a crisis care center, if known; and if not known, a description of the factors that need to be resolved to select a procurement process.**

As described in earlier sections of this letter, this facility is already operating as a crisis care center. Neither the County nor the operator are contemplating additional work requiring a general contractor at this time. Connections competitively selected Skyline Construction as the general contractor to complete the conversion of the Kirkland facility before the County made its February 2025 crisis care center operator award. As part of its broader work on the facility, Skyline also completed the additional renovations referenced above.

**10. A description of how the proposed site or existing facility to be purchased by the County will satisfy the site or facility requirements and preferences listed in Section V.A. Strategy 1: Create and Operate Five Crisis Care Centers: Crisis Care Center Procurement and Siting Process.**

The Implementation Plan includes five Crisis Care Center site requirements: sufficient size, meaningful transportation access, accessibility, zoning, and licensure feasibility. The Connections Kirkland site satisfies all five requirements.

*Sufficient Size:*

The Connections Kirkland Center building has sufficient space to deliver the crisis care center model's required clinical components. According to the CCC Levy Implementation Plan, sites should be able to accommodate a facility with approximately 30,000 to 50,000 square feet of

licensed clinical space within one building, multiple adjacent buildings, or buildings that are connected by transportation for people accessing services. The Connections Kirkland building exceeds this requirement, at 66,486 gross square feet.

*Meaningful Transportation Access:*

Connections Kirkland provides a range of options for free and low-barrier public access. The facility is a few minutes' drive from Interstate 405 and a six minute walk from the nearest public bus stop at NE 124th Street and 111th Lane NE. In addition, Metro Bus 255 arrives at this bus stop every 15 minutes. The Totem Lake Transit Center, University of Washington Station (Seattle), and other transit hubs are located along the 255 bus route, connecting to multiple other bus lines and enabling individuals from across King County to access the Connections Kirkland center via public transit. Dedicated parking further reduces barriers for vehicle access in this neighborhood. The site accommodates convenient access for ambulances and first responders, and the site configuration offers opportunities for dedicated drop off.

*Accessibility Requirements:*

Per the CCC Initiative's crisis care centers RFP, crisis care center sites and buildings must be accessible for people with disabilities and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Furthermore, the crisis care center selection process prefers facility designs that incorporate the principles of universal design, meaning they are accessible to all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design. As part of its operator selection process, DCHS confirmed that the Connections Kirkland building is fully compliant with ADA standards and adheres to universal design principles.

*Zoning Requirements:*

Connections Kirkland is located in the Totem Lake 10A zoning district of Kirkland, which allows a variety of land uses. An October 2022 letter from the City of Kirkland Planning and Building Director, which is included as part of Attachment D to this letter, stated that the facility meets the City of Kirkland's zoning and land use requirements. The City confirmed this determination in its October 2024 support letter. See section 11 of this letter for further details about the facility's compliance with zoning requirements.

*Crisis Care Centers Licensure Feasibility:*

The crisis care centers RFP requires crisis care center operators to obtain and maintain several licenses, certifications, and accreditations as required by federal regulations, the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), Washington Administrative Code (WAC), King County Code, the DCHS Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD) Provider Manual, and other applicable laws and regulations. Connections Kirkland has all necessary licenses. Specifically, Connections Kirkland is licensed as a Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) and Behavioral Health Agency (BHA) with the following certifications:

- Behavioral Health Information and Assistance - Crisis Telephone;
- Behavioral Health Outpatient Crisis, Observation and Intervention;

- Crisis Stabilization Unit; and
- Involuntary Behavioral Health Residential/Inpatient - Evaluation and Treatment (E&T).

**11. A description of the current land use, zoning, and permitting requirements of the site or existing facility and if the crisis care center use is not allowed outright, the plan to obtain necessary local jurisdiction authorization to develop the site or convert the existing facility to be operated as a crisis care center.**

The facility is currently permitted and operating in Kirkland and is compliant with zoning requirements, as detailed in Section 10 of this letter. Furthermore, as described above and included as Attachment D, the City of Kirkland confirmed zoning compliance in its October 2024 letter of support. The City's October 2024 support letter referred to an October 2022 letter from the City of Kirkland's Planning and Building Director, which stated that the crisis care center use is permitted outright as a "community facility" in the Totem Lake (TL) 10A zoning district where it is located. The City of Kirkland's October 2022 letter is included as part of Attachment D.

**12. Identification if this purchase would result in the first crisis care center for the crisis response zone.**

This purchase would secure County ownership of the first crisis care center in the North CRZ.

**Conclusion**

The CCC Levy was designed to meet the urgent behavioral health needs of King County residents effectively and efficiently. County acquisition of the Kirkland crisis care center facility represents a prudent investment in crisis care infrastructure, providing continuous, long-term sustainability for the crisis care center network, and aligning with the County's commitment to securing essential crisis response services and accelerating the availability of crisis care center services.

I appreciate your continued partnership in the effort to build a network of crisis care centers across the region.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Dr. Susan McLaughlin, Interim Director, Department of Community and Human Services, at 206-263-5780.

The Honorable Sarah Perry

March 18, 2026

Page 9

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karan Gill', written over a horizontal line.

for

Girmay Zahilay

King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Office of the Executive

Jasmin Weaver, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Hyeok Kim, Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Executive

Sierra Howlett Browne, Director of Government Relations, Office of the Executive

Garrett Holbrook, Council Relations Manager, Office of the Executive

Derek Baker, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Office of the Executive

Dr. Susan McLaughlin, Acting Director, Department of Community and Human Services