

Dembowski moved Amendment 1.
The motion carried.

1

April 16, 2024

Replace Attachment A

[B. Paribello]

Sponsor: Councilmember Zahilay

Proposed No.: 2024-0081.2

- 1 **AMENDMENT TO PROPOSED MOTION 2024-0081, VERSION 2**
- 2 Insert Attachment A, 2025 Annual Budget Priorities Document, dated April 16, 2024.
- 3
- 4 **EFFECT prepared by B. Paribello: *Replaces Attachment A with an updated version.***

KING COUNTY COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR THE 2025 ANNUAL BUDGET

Investing in Community Safety

King County's public safety system has been impacted by nationwide staffing shortages stemming from the pandemic and, as a result, our community members face challenges and delays with access to justice. Our budget decisions should focus on improving community safety and preserving investments at every level of the criminal legal system. The 2025 Annual Budget should support staff recruitment and retention efforts of public defenders, prosecutors, King County sheriff's deputies, and corrections officers. To achieve a high-quality, well-trained, and accountable public safety system, we need appropriate and sustainable staffing levels.

Our budget decisions should also aim to reduce the amount of mandatory overtime from corrections officers by working with staff and leadership to implement changes to improve scheduling in the county's detention facilities. Our efforts should also focus on improving overall conditions for youth and adults in custody while ensure the safety of workers and facility.

Alongside working on these efforts, our county should support the courts' ongoing work to reduce the criminal case backlog. When possible, we should continue to support remote court proceedings for cases such as those related to gender-based violence, among others. Our budget decisions should preserve access to low-cost and free civil legal aid, language translation, and court interpretation services for individuals requiring these resources.

The budget should avoid interrupting any county services for victims belonging to vulnerable and historically underserved populations and should prioritize services for survivors of gender-based violence, sexual assault, and harassment. Overall, survivors' access to legal advocates and counseling resources should not be reduced in the budget as these needs have only increased since the pandemic.

Our investments in public safety should mirror King County's racial and social justice values by trust-building with communities harmed by law enforcement. The 2025 Annual Budget should continue supporting co-response models and community-based violence prevention strategies. These efforts include the Regional Peacekeepers Collective (RPKC), organizing community safety meetings, and supporting common-sense gun safety proposals.

Our budget decisions should maintain investments in evidence-based diversion and restorative justice programs serving both youth and adults in our communities. The budget should recognize that investing in residents through human services and other supports is necessary for community safety. These community-based resources should continue being options for eligible individuals; and these resources must uphold their accountability to outcomes as effective public safety strategies. Consequently, reporting requirements and transparency are essential to track their impact in our regions.

Maintain Access to Critical Healthcare Services: Close the Gap

Our county will prioritize serving marginalized populations facing acute healthcare needs and individuals confronted with barriers to behavioral healthcare like substance use disorder treatment. King County's behavioral health facilities should remain open even as we face budget shortfalls. Preserving access to substance use disorder treatments, behavioral health services, and affordable reproductive health services in our clinics is imperative for the health and wellness of our communities. Our budget decisions should avoid reducing services that harm people facing the highest need in our communities and prevent any community health clinic closures. Our budget should also continue the ongoing investments in the implementation and regional development of the Crisis Care Centers.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, our public health workforce should be protected; the county must prevent staffing reductions in this critical department. The 2025 Annual Budget must apply an equity lens to any reduction impacts in budget decisions and critically evaluate proposed reductions reflected in King County's equity and social justice values.

Housing Our Neighbors

Our region's housing crisis requires continued investments in affordable housing developments, permanent supportive housing units, and expanding overall emergency shelter capacity. The cost of living in our region supersedes average hourly wages which displaces countless of our neighbors further away from their communities every year. Our region must focus on efforts to increase the housing supply to meet the overwhelming demand for affordable housing and shelter for vulnerable populations. The 2025 Annual Budget should focus on housing our neighbors by expanding short and long-term shelter capacity and working with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) to achieve these goals, especially during extreme weather events.

Our budget decisions should ensure that county-owned Health Through Housing locations are permitted to operate in designated locations to increase our housing capacity to serve people in need. Our government will work and collaborate with regional partners, community-based organizations, and local municipalities towards reducing the revolving need for emergency response and support services resulting from people being chronically unsheltered. These efforts are critical to preventing more people from going unhoused and unsheltered in our region.

Supporting Food Security

Some of our county's families and community members live in "food deserts", or geographic areas that have limited or restricted access to fresh foods, food banks, and grocery stores within a convenient traveling distance from their residences. Food deserts harm an individual's health and expose people to food insecurity. Our neighbors should not rely on limited, unhealthy food options because of the geographic area they live in, and this should not dictate their standard of living. Our government should

continue supporting investments in food banks and community-based programs that address food scarcity in our communities. The 2025 Annual Budget should make meaningful contributions to advance food security efforts in our region and meet the poverty support needs for vulnerable populations like seniors, children in the summer months, and veterans in need of assistance.

Connecting Our County through Public Transit Investments

King County Metro connects our region with reliable transit service options, from fixed-route bus service and two water taxi routes to on-demand neighborhood transit service provided by ACCESS Paratransit and Metro Flex. Restoring county-funded Metro service hours and routes consistent with the adopted Metro Service Recovery Plan (Ordinance 19581) is critical for our region and our communities. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that there is a high demand for all-day bus service throughout the county, including in Unincorporated King County, in both rural and urban areas. It is important that Metro service and regional connectivity keep improving and are constantly growing. Our 2025 Annual Budget should continue to fund transit services, consistent with the adopted King County Metro Service Guidelines (Ordinance 19367) aimed at those most reliant on our system, such as youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities, by providing fixed-route bus service, ACCESS services, Metro Flex shuttles and low-income fare options, and by supporting efforts to publicize the free youth fare (Ordinance 19474).

The King County Council should support and expand transit safety initiatives to encourage public usage and inform riders of the safety systems in place. Our budget decisions should continue investments in Metro staff recruitment and retention, while prioritizing funding for transit safety projects in underserved areas and rural Unincorporated King County.

Preserving Services in Unincorporated King County

Our Unincorporated King County communities should be fully supported by budget decisions in the 2025 Annual Budget process. We should preserve investments in Roads Division funding, Code Enforcement, and support expediting permitting processes for affordable housing developments. We should focus on the Department of Local Services' accountability to outcomes by setting benchmarks and timelines that address the 150% backlog in code enforcement. Our budget decisions should preserve investments in code enforcement and permitting staff to avoid negative effects on our climate action plan and meeting our housing capacity goals.

King County's unincorporated areas require additional support for fire recovery efforts, roads, bridges, and infrastructure maintenance, and we must avoid any reductions to these services. Our government should use an equity lens in the budget decision-making processes to prevent any negative impact to serving our Unincorporated King County communities that are heavily reliant on the Department of Local Services for their daily and urgent needs. As our budget process moves forward, we should consider other revenue options for Roads Division funding to support the high maintenance and repair needs in Unincorporated King County roads.