



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0318, **Version:** 3

A MOTION requesting that the King County executive transmit a report to the King County council that includes plans for assessing and addressing safety concerns relating to City Hall park and the King County Courthouse, providing shelter and services to any current and potential future occupants of City Hall park and assessing and recommending options for the county to acquire City Hall park.

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

WHEREAS, the King County Courthouse is the seat of government for all of King County and is where all 2,300,000 residents are able to access justice as well as other county services, and should be able to be assured they can do so safely, and WHEREAS, City Hall park is owned and operated by the city of Seattle, and WHEREAS, the area surrounding the King County Courthouse and City Hall park has been the scene of a number of violent incidents that have been recognized as a significant problem for safety of the public, the county, local residents, businesses and their employees, courthouse employees and other county employees working at the civic campus, and

WHEREAS, county employees and members of the public have been and are at risk of being assaulted while trying to enter or depart their places of work or use public facilities, such as the courthouse, and

WHEREAS, King County has appropriated approximately \$2.7 million to enhance security in and around the courthouse since 2019, and

WHEREAS, people experiencing homelessness had been living in the park in a tent encampment, and

WHEREAS, King County has appropriated \$50 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act moneys to support emergency homelessness response and related behavioral health services to provide safe and healthy settings for at least 500 people living outside or in vehicles in downtown Seattle and the urban unincorporated areas of the county, and

WHEREAS, from that appropriation, King County has allocated significant funding, in partnership with the Public Defender Association, its partners and the city of Seattle, to provide those living in the park with services and assistance in procuring temporary housing, and

WHEREAS, the King County council desires to understand various options and approaches to creating a safe environment for county employees and members of the public in and around the courthouse and City Hall park, including the feasibility of the county acquiring City Hall park from the city of Seattle to be used for future county purposes such as improving the current county civic campus, or revitalizing the park in a creative way to the benefit of King County employees and users of the courthouse and other county buildings, as well as the general public;

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

A. The council requests that the executive transmit a report that includes:

1. A description of the key factors driving violence and disorder around the courthouse and prior efforts to address the problem, including, but not limited to:

- a. crime and incident statistics from Seattle police department, the King County facilities management division, and the King County sheriff's office from 2018 to July 1, 2021;
- b. mapping nearby homeless shelters and services active in the summer of 2021;
- c. engagement and workgroups with the city of Seattle, neighborhood groups, business organizations and service providers; and
- d. programs funded by King County and the city of Seattle designed to address homeless encampments in City Hall park; and

2. A plan to address safety concerns in and around the courthouse, including City Hall park. The plan should take a holistic look at the problem and provide a recommended course of action, which could include, but is not limited to:

a. an assessment and analysis of approaches to address safety and other concerns, using methods such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, which is also known as CPTED, or another similar multifaceted approach;

b. a description of ways in which the county will engage with the city of Seattle, the Metro transit department, local businesses, residents and neighborhood and community-based groups to address safety and other concerns;

c. a plan for relocating any current or any potential future occupants of an encampment located in City Hall park to temporary housing or shelters, or permanent supportive housing, as needed;

d. a cost-benefit analysis of restoration of the original courthouse entrance located on Jefferson Street, which abuts City Hall park;

e. if an agreement between the city of Seattle and King County to acquire City Hall park has not been reached by December 31, 2021, an assessment of options for acquiring City Hall park from the city of Seattle for the purpose of using the park for future county needs including, but not limited to, financial, operational, legal and other considerations, as well as possible future county uses of the park including, but not limited to, improving the current county civic campus; and

f. a description of how the recommended course of action informs and relates to the current civic campus planning initiative.

B. The executive should electronically file the report no later than January 15, 2022, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.