

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

King County Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy

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City Manager's Office

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) Chief of Staff Kelly Rider and Adult Services Director Leon Richardson will present information on King County's proposed Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy renewal. Tonight's presentation is an opportunity to learn about proposed services for East King County and to ask questions.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The King County August 1 special election ballot will include renewal of the Veterans, Seniors, Human Services levy (VSHSL). The property tax levy would generate an estimated \$564 million over six years (2024-2029). Since 2006, three consecutive King County levies have funded a wide range of programs that connect veterans, military service members and their families, as well as individuals and families in need with affordable housing, employment, behavioral health treatment, and other services. The current levy expires in December 2023. If renewed, the 2024-2029 VSHSL will:

- Support veterans through sustaining and expanding innovative partnerships and programming, comprehensive case management, and behavioral health counseling for veterans and their families and caregivers. This includes two King County Veterans Program sites at Northgate and Tukwila. Both sites provide mental health counseling to veterans, servicemembers and their families.
- Reduce veteran homelessness by creating at least two hundred dedicated affordable housing units for veterans, making permanent the Collaborative Case Management program, and funding housing navigators to assist veterans and seniors in their affordable housing search.
- Double the funding for senior "hub" centers. VSHSL will reinforce services for seniors, strengthen, and sustain senior "hub" center programming to provide social connection, and invest in green energy improvements like heat pumps, solar panels, and air filtration that help senior centers reduce their carbon footprint, cut utility bills, and provide refuge in extreme weather.
- Invest in workforce to provide human services to veterans, seniors and those in need.

Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services in Bellevue

The 2018-2023 VSHSL funds the following human service agencies that provide services to Eastside residents:

- Congregations For Homeless Shelter (Bellevue)
- Therapeutic Health Services (Bellevue)
- King County Veterans Program
- Catholic Community Services
- Eastside Legal Assistance Program
- Friends of Youth (Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah)
- HealthPoint (Redmond)
- Tavon Learning Center (Issaquah)
- Hopelink
- International Community Health Services
- YWCA
- Plymouth Crossing
- Kirkland Place
- North Bellevue Community Center
- Alefba Group
- Indian American Community Services
- Issaquah Senior Center
- Mount Si Senior Center
- Sno-Valley Senior Center
- Encompass Northwest
- King County Housing Repair Program

In 2020, the Veterans, Seniors, Human Services Levy began a partnership with the City of Bellevue to create and fund the North Bellevue Community Center (NBCC) Senior Hub. Total VSHSL NBCC “Senior Hub” five-year funding is \$265,000 of which \$35,000 is designated for capital support in equipment. Approximately 1,500 Bellevue residents, over the age of 55, participate in the NBCC Senior Hub.

The VSHSL and City of Bellevue partner with Chinese Information Services Center, Indian American Community Services and SeaMar to serve participants through a variety of programs, which include life celebrations; gardening; sports and exercise programs; health and wellness series; English as a second language and holiday lunches.

Levy Governance

The renewal levy was referred to the King County Regional Policy Committee (RPC) and the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee. Bellevue Councilmember John Stokes is a Sound Cities Association appointee to the RPC, which made several amendments to the levy ballot measure, including requiring King County to report on future VSHSL expenditures by ZIP code. This data will

provide transparency as to whether levy proceeds are distributed proportionally across the County. Councilmember Stokes supported the amendments and the RPC's recommendation that the King County Council adopt an ordinance at \$.10 per \$1,000 assessed property tax rate and to place the levy on the August ballot. The King County Council considered increasing the rate to \$0.12 per \$1,000 assessed value but ultimately approved the ordinance at the \$0.10 rate.

If approved by King County voters, the renewed Veteran, Seniors, Human Services Levy requires the Executive to transmit a proposed levy implementation plan to the County Council for adoption by ordinance, by October 31, 2023. The proposed implementation plan will direct levy expenditures and set more detailed implementation policies. The Implementation Plan will be referred to the RPC for review and potential amendment before the King County Council considers adoption.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

N/A. This is information only.

Fiscal Impact

The King County Executive has proposed funding these investments with a six-year levy renewal, which would increase the levy rate by \$.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The King County Council approved the renewal levy to be listed on the August 1, 2023 ballot with collection to begin in 2024. The levy would generate approximately \$564.7 million over the six-year period, an increase of approximately \$200 million compared to the 2018-2023 VSHSL.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A