

City Manager Statement About La Quinta Inn

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Dear Kirkland Community,

The City has received numerous questions about King County's possible purchase of the La Quinta Inn in Kirkland as part of the County's Health Through Housing Initiative.

King County is considering La Quinta Inn as a possible location for a permanent supportive housing site in Kirkland. As a standard part of the purchasing process, the County is doing due diligence on the property before making a final decision. The City expects that a final decision on the purchase will be made within days or possibly weeks.

King County is considering La Quinta, as it is the only hotel in Kirkland that meets King County's criteria. The City does support this potential purchase of La Quinta Inn for

permanent supportive housing, with the appropriate operating conditions and community engagement. This is consistent with the Kirkland City Council's longstanding commitment to actions to support those experiencing homelessness. These actions include investing millions of dollars for human services; funding Helen's Place, the women and family shelter in Kirkland; investing millions of dollars for low-income housing preservation and construction; and more.

If King County purchases La Quinta, this would become a permanent supportive housing site, which fills a gap in Kirkland's "continuum of care" for people experiencing homelessness. This site would provide a permanent home, including the stability of privacy, the same bed to sleep in every night, and one's own bathroom. Tenants will also have connections to health and behavioral health treatment and services, 24/7 on-site staffing, as well as a case manager to help navigate community systems. Studies show these elements create a solid base to begin to rebuild lives. This would not be a homeless shelter.

There would be a screening and referral process for permanent supportive housing. If the County were to move forward, the individuals that would be moving into this housing site will all be enrolled in the Homeless Management Information System. According to King County, no one who "walks up" would get assigned a room – this would no longer be a hotel, and there would be no walk-ins.

Finally, this would not be a safe injection site. If the County proceeds, La Quinta will be providing homes. Like other private residences in our community, substance use that is legal in anyone's home would be legal here. However, the 24/7 onsite agency staff will directly engage anyone exhibiting problem behaviors due to substance use and offer treatment services. Unlawful activities would not be permitted. Anyone who is unable to abide by the code of conduct and continuously disrupts housing for the other residents would be at risk of expulsion.

The City's highest priority is the health and safety of our community. The City will ensure this location, if secured, is an outstanding neighbor to the surrounding businesses and residents. The City will require a robust community engagement process to ensure our community has a voice in issues related to the ongoing operations of the site. This includes the identification of the site operator and the development of the code of conduct for residents. As indicated by Mayor Sweet, on behalf of the City Council, in the Council's letter of support for permanent supportive housing and the Health Through Housing Initiative, "[o]ur continued support of the operations of the site are based on the County's collaboration with the City on engaging our community."

While King County has not yet made a final decision about La Quinta, the City and County are already initiating a comprehensive community engagement process. Kirkland staff and Councilmembers are already reaching out to key stakeholders near La Quinta and throughout the community. If the County completes the purchase, the City will promote avenues for engagement broadly through the City's methods of communication, with our King County partners, and the City invites continued involvement in this process.

Please visit the [City's information webpage about this](#) for more information and answers to frequently asked questions.

Sincerely,
Kurt Triplett
City Manager, City of Kirkland