

January 20, 2022



Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Constantine,

Kirkland and our City Council would like to express our strong support for King County's purchase of a hotel in Kirkland for permanent supportive housing as part of the County's Health Through Housing Initiative. We firmly believe in the vision for the Initiative as it aligns with Kirkland's values of providing help and services to those experiencing homelessness in our city and our region. We understand that the County is the final stages of the acquisition process and will be announcing the purchase soon. We urge you to make the announcement as quickly as possible, so that the City and the County can engage the Kirkland community to make this project a success.

We are proud of the County's leadership in this effort. As stated above, the Health Through Housing Initiative aligns with Kirkland's policies and priorities. Briefly, the City's Work Plan for 2021-2022 includes "initiate a supportive housing project in Kirkland" among other housing-related initiatives. The City was also a coalition leader in the construction of Helen's Place, the \$10 million public-private partnership funded by the State of Washington, King County, the City, A Regional Coalition for Housing, foundations, corporations, faith communities, civic groups, and individuals, which provides 24/7 shelter housing for families and women experiencing homelessness. Finally, the City continues to invest significant funding every budget cycle to housing and human service agencies.

We view supportive housing as one step in what the City defines as a continuum of care for people experiencing homelessness. It is a key tactic in helping to end homelessness in Kirkland and across the County, as it is one of the most cost-effective ways to permanently house people experiencing chronic homelessness. Supportive housing serves a different need along the continuum of care than shelters provide, and the County's purchase of a hotel in Kirkland for supportive housing fills a gap in Kirkland's services.

Over the past several months, we have tracked the County's pursuit of purchasing one of a few hotel options in Kirkland. And, although not a party to the negotiations of the specific site, we understand that the nature of real estate negotiations necessitated the privacy of the County's site selection and purchasing process.

Kirkland prides itself on our engaged community committed to contributing to civic life. Upon notification of the County's intent to proceed with a purchase, City staff are immediately preparing to engage our community and key stakeholders on how best to ensure that any forthcoming permanent supportive housing site provides effective service to its occupants and is an outstanding neighbor to the surrounding businesses and residents. Our continued support

of the operations of the site are based on the County's collaboration with the City on engaging our community.

Now that the site purchase is imminent, our interest is ensuring that our community has a voice in issues related to the ongoing operations of the site, including assurances of community safety, performance review and program efficacy, and indicators of the site operator and residents being good neighbors. To this end, we are interested in having a community conversation in early 2022, and we invite County participation at a town hall or other event. The City will also start outreach directly with key stakeholders to engage in discussion about interests and issues. We look forward to regular meetings between the County and City staff to ensure that questions, concerns, and issues from our community stakeholders are responded to promptly and thoroughly by the County and/or City, as appropriate.

Additionally, we would appreciate dialogue with the County on the percentage of units in the facility that will be set aside for Kirkland and the Eastside. While we understand there is a statutory minimum of 15% of units being set aside for local referrals, we would like to jointly set a goal with the County to house more locals than the minimum. We would like to explore how we might formally secure additional units for local referrals from Kirkland and the Eastside.

Finally, we request City representation in the request for qualifications selection process to identify the eventual facility operator for onsite resident supports. A strong and financially sustainable operator is critical for the success of the facility and ensuring its ability to be an asset to the community.

In conclusion, we believe that the conversion of a hotel in Kirkland into a permanent supportive housing site continues Kirkland's commitment to being a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where everyone belongs. We are pleased that the County is moving forward with the purchase of a hotel in Kirkland and would like to invite County representatives to a future Council meeting to learn more about the project, next steps, and how Kirkland's interests can be met.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the County on this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Kirkland City Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Penny Sweet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Penny" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Sweet".

Penny Sweet, Mayor
City of Kirkland

cc: Kirkland City Council