

2014 King County budget highlights

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Inside the Orion Center there are programs providing shelter and critical services to homeless youth. The members of the [Metropolitan King County Council's Budget Leadership Team](#) said today that their proposed 2014 budget enhances services like these and protects housing throughout the County.

"Each night over 700 youth and young adults are homeless in King County. In response, we funded shelters, family reunification and employment and education resources in our budget. Protecting our youth and ending the cycle of homelessness prove worthy investments," said Councilmember Joe McDermott, Chair of the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee.

The \$8.9 billion budget proposed by McDermott and the members of the Budget Leadership Team—Councilmembers Kathy Lambert, Jane Hague and Larry Phillips—will be voted on today by the full County Council at its afternoon meeting.

"I'm pleased that our 2014 budget recognizes the importance of the county's role as the local government for the unincorporated areas," said Budget Leadership Team Vice Chair Lambert. "The budget adds two full Sheriff's patrol units—8 officers: 6 deputies and 2 sergeants—and this addition is a statement to all residents of the unincorporated areas that their safety is a primary concern of the county."

"Our priority during this budget process was to continue King County's legacy of delivering quality services that keep us prosperous, safe and healthy," said Hague. "Using 'LEAN's' continuous improvement principles, we have collaboratively done so, and in record time."

"The water quality monitoring restored in the 2014 budget positions King County to effectively respond to threats like ocean acidification, while protecting our cherished lakes, rivers, streams, and Puget Sound," said Phillips. "Unfortunately, and in striking contrast, a \$75 million annual budget shortfall remains in transit funding. We must take action to avoid pending drastic transit cuts, either by the State Legislature coming through on a transportation package in the current special session, or by King County using other funding options."

As the County completes its transition to biennial budgeting, the 2014 budget proposed includes the County's last annual budget. The budget includes a \$718 million General Fund Budget, of which 73 percent is directed toward public safety and criminal justice programs.

As the regional economy continues its climb out of the Great Recession, the 2014 Budget maintains the County's commitment to the County Strategic Plan and its focus on equity and social justice. The budget also preserves King County's AAA bond rating by not using the County's cash reserves or tapping the rainy day fund.

"Today's vote reaffirms the Council's commitment to providing holistic services to the residents of King County," said Council Chair Larry Gossett. "I applaud the Council's budget leadership for addressing many of the needs in our community through this budget. However, the economic crisis is not over for so many and our resources are still not enough. We need a new source of funding to more fully address those needs."

"I am very pleased with the budget that the Council has put together this year," said Julia Patterson, Vice Chair of the Council. "This budget helps provide a social safety net in King County to ensure that many residents receive the human services and housing resources they need."

The Budget Leadership Team came to Youth Care's Orion Center to announce that the 2014 budget will contain \$120,000 in funding to help keep the facility open. The grant that helps support the center is ending, and without the additional funding the Orion would have to close its doors early next year. This funding is part of a comprehensive package to fund key services to address the region's youth and young adult homelessness problem. Emergency youth centers in Seattle, Redmond and Auburn, as well as a program that reunites runaways with their families, will all receive county funding in 2014.

“We are grateful to the King County Council for their leadership and vision in supporting services for our community’s homeless young people. These are our children, and we know what we need to do to help them move out of homelessness and into self-sufficiency – meet their basic needs, connect them to safe shelter, get them into stable housing, and reengage them in education and employment opportunities,” said Melinda Giovengo, Executive Director of YouthCare, the organization that operates the Orion Center. “I am proud to see our community’s Comprehensive Plan reflected in this budget, and I am particularly grateful for the Council’s support for young adult shelter throughout King County.”

The 2014 Budget also works to protect sexually exploited youth. The King County Superior Court’s efforts to implement a statewide system to identify, engage and help prostituted youth become free and recover from their exploitation are funded.

King County is the “local” government for the 250,000 county residents who live in unincorporated communities. The 2014 Budget will include funding for additional staffing in the King County Sheriff’s Office—including funds to reopen the shuttered *Hicks-Raburn Precinct in Maple Valley*.

“Over 70,000 residents of unincorporated King County that I represent will soon feel much safer,” said Councilmember Reagan Dunn, who represents Maple Valley on the County Council. “This budget not only funds the re-opening of the Sheriff’s Hicks-Raburn Precinct in South East King County, but also funds eight new Sheriff deputy positions. I look forward to voting for a budget that clearly illustrates the importance of the County’s role as the provider of law enforcement services to our unincorporated area residents.”

The 2014 Budget makes a contribution to housing services for low-income families and seniors, allowing the preservation and maintenance of 147 units of affordable housing.

Protecting water quality for future generations continues to be a priority for King County. The 2014 Budget support waters quality monitoring in county rivers, to help provide the public with accurate data about the contaminants in King County waterways.

The full County Council is expected to give its unanimous support to the budget this afternoon. After the Council vote, the 2014 Budget will be sent to County Executive Dow Constantine for his signature.

Read more about this legislation on the King County Council’s LEGISEARCH system at

<http://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov> and type in “2013-0422”

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