



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

July 22, 2015

Ordinance 18088

Proposed No. 2015-0177.3

Sponsors McDermott and Dembowski

1 AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the
2 qualified electors of King County at a special election to be
3 held in King County on November 3, 2015, a proposition
4 authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy
5 limitations contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for a
6 consecutive six-year period at a first year rate of not more
7 than 14 cents per one thousand dollars of assessed
8 valuation, and limiting annual levy increases to three
9 percent in the five succeeding years, all for the purpose of
10 funding prevention and early intervention strategies to
11 improve the health and well-being of children, youth and
12 their communities.

13 **STATEMENT OF FACTS:**

- 14 1. Approximately twenty-five thousand children are born in King County
15 every year. County residents under age eighteen comprise twenty-one
16 percent of the county's population. Nearly half of people under age
17 eighteen in King County are people of color.
- 18 2. Eighty-five percent of the human brain is developed by age three.
19 According to early childhood development experts, basic skills necessary

20 to be ready to learn in school and be successful as an adult, such as self-
21 esteem, motivation, coordination, prioritization, management of incoming
22 information, attention and distraction control, are developed by age five
23 before children go to school.

24 3. A second significant time of brain development is adolescence.
25 According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the parts of the brain
26 responsible for controlling impulses and planning ahead, which are the
27 hallmarks of successful adult behavior, mature during adolescence.
28 Adolescence is also the critical period when young people learn to form
29 safe and healthy relationships, and when many patterns of health-
30 promoting or potentially health-damaging behaviors are established.

31 4. Although King County as a whole is a thriving, prosperous region,
32 there is evidence that some of our children and youth are in danger of
33 being left behind. The percentage of children five and under living in
34 poverty is as low as four and seven-tenths percent in some regions of the
35 county and as high as twenty-six percent in other regions. Infant mortality
36 is four times higher in some areas of King County than others.

37 Approximately one-third of pregnant women do not receive the
38 recommended levels of prenatal care. One in five adolescents is
39 overweight or obese and only twenty-four percent of adolescents receive
40 the recommended levels of physical activity. Twenty-six percent of
41 adolescents report having depressive feelings and twenty-nine percent
42 report using alcohol or other illicit drugs. Over six thousand King County

43 students are homeless; in some school districts as many as one in ten are
44 homeless.

45 5. Studies have shown that adverse childhood experiences, such as
46 domestic violence and sexual assault, increase the odds of experiencing
47 homelessness as an adult, as well as mental health and physical health
48 problems. The significance of the impact of those experiences on the
49 development of children and youth emphasizes the necessity of the
50 provision of robust social services and shelter programs for at-risk
51 children and youth in domestic violence and sexual assault situations to
52 prevent homelessness and physical and mental health problems later in
53 life.

54 6. All too often the children and youth who are being left behind and are
55 not receiving services before a crisis occurs are children and youth of
56 color. Young people of color make up at least fifty to sixty percent of
57 youth and young adults experiencing homelessness despite only twenty-
58 nine percent of King County's general population being people of color.

59 7. One of the areas where the disparities in those who do not receive
60 appropriate services before a crisis occurs is the juvenile justice system.
61 African-American youth make up approximately fifty percent of those in
62 detention in King County, or five times their rate of representation in the
63 general population. According to a report from the National Conference
64 of State Legislatures as many as seventy percent of children and youth in
65 the juvenile justice system nationally are affected with a mental disorder,

66 and one in five suffer from a mental illness so severe as to impair their
67 ability to function as a young person and grow into a responsible adult.

68 King County is committed to preventing crises before they occur and
69 ending disproportionality in the juvenile justice system.

70 8. The county actively engages in equity and social justice efforts to eliminate
71 racial disparities in the juvenile justice system and the council will consider this
72 goal when deliberating on future policies and plans related to the voter-approved
73 best starts for kids levy.

74 9. Investment in prevention and early intervention can prevent long-term
75 harm of children as they grow up. According to the National Scientific
76 Council on the Developing Child, extensive research on the biology of
77 stress now shows that healthy development can be derailed by excessive
78 or prolonged activation of stress response systems in the body and the
79 brain, with damaging effects on learning, behavior and health across the
80 lifespan.

81 10. Prevention and early intervention are also the most effective and least
82 expensive ways to address serious future problems such as chronic
83 disease, mental illness, substance abuse and incarceration. Science tells us
84 that lifelong problems can be prevented: by investing heavily in children
85 before age five; by making strategic investments at critical points in a
86 young person's development before age twenty-four; and by taking actions
87 to ensure that all children and youth have opportunities to live in safe,
88 thriving, health-promoting home, school and community environments.

89 11. Studies have shown that the return on investment in early childhood
90 development, ensuring that children have a strong start in life, is from
91 three to seventeen dollars for every dollar invested. Similarly, the Institute
92 of Medicine and National Research Council's Preventing Mental,
93 Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People report
94 released in 2009 notes that cost-benefit ratios for early treatment and
95 prevention programs for addictions and mental illness programs range
96 from 1:2 to 1:10. This means a one-dollar investment yields two to ten
97 dollars savings in health costs, criminal and juvenile justice costs,
98 educational costs and lost productivity.

99 12. Studies show that prevention has positive economic impacts for
100 business. For example, a healthier workforce can reduce the extent to
101 which health insurance costs and employee absenteeism affects a
102 company's competitive edge. In the United States, full-time employees
103 with chronic disease miss an estimated four hundred fifty million
104 additional work days per year, compared to healthy employees,
105 contributing to a cost of one hundred fifty-three billion dollars in lost
106 productivity every year.

107 13. Many of the county's current funding sources, as well as other public
108 budgets, are dedicated to responding to crises and negative outcomes,
109 particularly negative outcomes for adults, such as severe mental illness,
110 homelessness and chronic illness, and for children and youth who have
111 already dropped out of school or who have been involved in the juvenile

112 justice system. While these are required or necessary expenditures, little
113 funding is available to invest in prevention. For example, seventy-five
114 percent of the county's general fund supports the law and justice system.
115 The veterans and human services levy, because it is focused on services
116 for people who are in crisis, provides for services primarily for adults.
117 Only sixteen percent of its total funding is available to support people
118 under age twenty-four and only eleven percent of the total levy provides
119 for prevention-oriented services.

120 14. In 2014, the shortfall of funding for public health - Seattle & King
121 County reached a critical point, threatening the loss of proven prevention
122 and early intervention programs for mothers and families, such as the
123 Nurse Family Partnership home visiting program and maternity support
124 services.

125 15. While the voter-approved best starts for kids levy would allow public
126 health - Seattle & King County to continue providing parent-child health
127 services, such as the nurse family partnership home visiting program and
128 maternity support services, the levy would not stabilize King County's
129 broader public health services. The public health fund remains at risk, as
130 long-term public health funding sources have not been identified.

131 16. The majority of levy proceeds from the voter-approved best starts for
132 kids levy is intended to go to community partners to provide services in
133 the community. As the levy is being implemented, the county's goal is to
134 ensure that diverse communities and small organizations, including those

135 that are using emerging and innovative approaches to provide services, are
136 able to access moneys in order to provide culturally appropriate services in
137 King County. The county intends to collaborate with these organizations
138 and help evaluate innovative new programs or services so that promising
139 practices become proven practices.

140 17. Services for children and youth will improve as agencies and
141 organizations working with children and youth have opportunities for
142 training, building organizational and system capacity and sufficient
143 resources to administer programs and services.

144 18. In 2010, the county enacted Ordinance 16857, establishing the King
145 County Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes as one of its goals
146 Health and Human Potential: Provide opportunities for all communities
147 and individuals to realize their full potential.

148 19. In 2010, the county enacted Ordinance 16948, transforming its work
149 on equity and social justice from an initiative to an integrated effort that
150 applies the King County Strategic Plan's principle of "fair and just"
151 intentionally in all the county does in order to achieve equitable
152 opportunities for all people and communities.

153 20. In 2012, the council adopted Motion 13768, establishing the Health &
154 Human Services Transformation Plan. The Transformation Plan
155 establishes as its vision that, by 2020, the people of King County will
156 experience significant gains in health and well-being because our
157 community worked collectively to make the shift from a costly, crisis-

158 oriented response to health and social problems, to one that focuses on
159 prevention, embraces recovery and eliminates disparities.

160 21. In 2014, the county enacted Ordinance 17738, establishing the youth
161 action plan task force and providing policy direction regarding the
162 development of a youth action plan. The youth action plan task force
163 members helped shape the best starts for kids levy.

164 22. In 2014, as part of the implementation of the King County Strategic
165 Plan, the equity and social justice ordinance, the health and human
166 services transformation plan and as part of the development of the youth
167 action plan, King County staff began examining how the county could
168 balance its investment portfolio towards more preventive approaches that
169 lead to improved outcomes that allow individuals and communities to
170 achieve their full potential. This resulting best starts for kids levy
171 ordinance is guided by and represents a further implementation of the
172 county's adopted policy direction.

173 23. In addition to building on adopted county policy, in developing this
174 best starts for kids levy ordinance, King County staff consulted with
175 experts at the University of Washington Institute for Learning & Brain
176 Sciences and with several groups and coalitions, including the Best Starts
177 for Kids Advisory Group, the Youth Action Plan Task Force, the
178 Transformation Plan Advising Partners Group, the King County Alliance
179 for Human Services, the Youth Development Executive Directors
180 Coalition and several early learning coalitions. County staff also reviewed

181 and consulted with jurisdictions and organizations from around the United
182 States and the world regarding best and promising practices.

183 24. It is the intent of the council and the executive that the strategies
184 supported by the voter-approved best starts for kids levy will achieve a
185 variety of individual and community outcomes. Individual outcomes will
186 include the following: increasing the percentage of pregnant women who
187 receive early and adequate prenatal care; increasing technical assistance to
188 child care providers; reducing psychiatric hospitalizations for children and
189 youth; decreasing the percentage of children and youth using alcohol or
190 drugs; increasing the percentage of children and youth who feel they have
191 an adult in their community they feel they can talk to; and decreasing the
192 percentage of school-aged children and youth in south King County who
193 are at an unhealthy weight. Community outcomes will include the
194 following: decreasing inequities in outcomes for children and youth in
195 King County; decreasing suspensions and expulsions, from child care
196 through high school; decreasing disparities in health and well-being
197 outcomes between different areas within King County; decreasing
198 domestic violence; decreasing moneys spent on crisis services, such as
199 incarceration and involuntary commitment; increasing the number of
200 families and children and youth who are prevented from entering
201 homelessness; and improved quality of life index in Communities of
202 Opportunity.

203 25. It is the intent of the council and the executive that funding for the
204 youth and family homelessness prevention initiative will allow the
205 initiative to be flexible, client-centered and outcomes-focused and will
206 provide financial support for community agencies to assist clients.

207 26. It is the intent of the council and the executive that levy proceeds
208 described in section 5.C. of this ordinance shall be distributed in a
209 geographically equitable manner, in furtherance of the King County
210 Strategic Plan, the equity and social justice ordinance and other adopted
211 county policies.

212 27. The council and the executive recognize the concerns of senior
213 citizens, low-income households, and other vulnerable populations
214 regarding housing costs and affordability. While the county would be
215 authorized to implement a maximum increase of three percent annually
216 from 2017 through 2021 if the best starts for kids levy is approved by
217 voters, it is the intent of the council and the executive to consider
218 economic conditions that affect those senior citizens, low-income
219 households and other vulnerable populations, such as the year-over-year
220 change in the national consumer price index for urban wage earners and
221 clerical workers (CPI-W), as calculated by the United States Bureau of
222 Labor Statistics, in determining the percentage by which to increase the
223 levy each year.

224 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

225 **SECTION 1. Definitions.** The definitions in this section apply throughout this
226 ordinance unless the context clearly require otherwise.

227 A. "Children and youth" means a person through twenty-four years old.

228 B. "Communities of opportunity" means the program launched by The Seattle
229 Foundation and King County in 2014 and memorialized in Contract #5692351, including
230 any successor contract, to support communities in improving the health, social and
231 economic outcomes of the residents of those communities, and to do so by partnering
232 with those communities to shape and own solutions. In the event the formal relationship
233 described in this subsection B. between The Seattle Foundation and King County ceases
234 to be in effect at any point during the life of the levy, "communities of opportunity"
235 means a strategy that is designed to improve the health, social and economic outcomes of
236 specific communities that is administered by the county and developed in partnership
237 with those communities.

238 C. "Communities of opportunity interim governance group" means the group and
239 any successor group charged with advising on strategic direction and operations for
240 communities of opportunity. The communities of opportunity interim governance group
241 shall include one appointee of the executive and one appointee of the council,
242 respectively, who shall be confirmed by ordinance. Interim governance group members
243 as of the date of enactment of this ordinance include community partners and
244 representatives from local government, from The Seattle Foundation and from King
245 County. If the proposed levy passes, the group will be reconstituted in accordance with
246 section 7.B. of this ordinance.

247 D. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes for the specific purposes and
248 term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with state
249 law.

250 E. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of moneys raised by the levy and
251 any interest earnings on the moneys.

252 F. "Limit factor," for purposes of calculating the levy limitations in RCW
253 84.55.010, means one hundred three percent.

254 G. "Strategy" means a program, service, activity, initiative or capital investment
255 intended to achieve the goals of this ordinance.

256 H. "Youth and family homelessness prevention initiative" means an initiative
257 intended to prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming
258 homeless.

259 **SECTION 3. Levy submittal.** To provide necessary moneys for the purposes
260 identified in section 5 of this ordinance, the county council shall submit to the qualified
261 electors of the county a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy in excess of
262 the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive years,
263 commencing in 2016, at a rate not to exceed fourteen cents per thousand dollars of
264 assessed value in the first year and authorizing a limit factor of one hundred three percent
265 for each of the five succeeding years, which are 2017 through 2021. In accordance with
266 RCW 84.55.050, this levy shall be a regular property tax levy, which is subject to the
267 statutory rate limit of RCW 84.52.043.

268 **SECTION 4. Deposit of levy proceeds.** The levy proceeds shall be deposited in
269 a special revenue fund, which fund shall be created by ordinance.

270 **SECTION 5. Eligible expenditures.**

271 A. Out of the first year's levy proceeds:

272 1. Nineteen million dollars shall be used to plan, provide and administer a
273 youth and family homelessness prevention initiative; and

274 2. Such sums as are necessary to provide for the costs and charges incurred by
275 the county that are attributable to the election.

276 B. The remaining levy proceeds shall be used to plan, provide and administer the
277 provision of a wide range of strategies to:

278 1. Improve health and well-being outcomes of children and youth, as well as the
279 families and the communities in which they live, including, but not limited to, by
280 ensuring adequate services and supports for pregnant women and newborns; access to
281 safe and healthy food; support for hospitals and other mental health providers in King
282 County to provide children and youth with access to mental health services; and
283 developmental screening for children and youth;

284 2. Prevent and intervene early on negative outcomes, including, but not limited
285 to, chronic disease, mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, domestic violence and
286 incarceration;

287 3. Reduce inequities in outcomes for children and youth in the county; and

288 4. Strengthen, improve, better coordinate, integrate and encourage innovation in
289 health and human services systems and the agencies, organizations and groups addressing
290 the needs of children and youth, their families and their communities.

291 C. Of the eligible expenditures described in subsection B. of this section:

292 1. Fifty percent shall be used to plan, provide and administer strategies focused
293 on children and youth under five years old and their caregivers, pregnant women and for
294 individuals or families concerning pregnancy. Of these moneys, not less than \$42.8
295 million shall be used to provide health services, such as maternity support services and
296 nurse family partnership home visiting program services;

297 2. Thirty-five percent shall be used to plan, provide and administer strategies
298 focused on children and youth ages five through twenty-four years old;

299 3. Ten percent shall be used to plan, provide and administer communities of
300 opportunity; and

301 4. Five percent shall be used to plan, fund and administer the following:

302 a. evaluation and data collection activities;

303 b. activities designed to improve the delivery of services and programs for
304 children and youth and their communities;

305 c. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by metropolitan
306 park districts in King County. Of these moneys identified in this subsection C.4.c., an
307 amount equal to the lost revenues to the metropolitan park districts resulting from
308 prorationing as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, up to one million dollars, shall be provided
309 to those metropolitan park districts if authorized by the county council by ordinance; and

310 d. services identified in subsection B. of this section provided by fire districts,
311 in an amount equal to the lost revenues to the fire districts in King County resulting from
312 prorationing, as mandated by RCW 84.52.010, for those services, to the extent the
313 prorationing was caused solely by this levy and if authorized by the county council by
314 ordinance.

315 **SECTION 6. Call for special election.** In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321,
316 the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with
317 the general election on November 3, 2015, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular
318 property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director
319 of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state
320 constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the
321 said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council
322 shall certify that proposition to the director of elections in substantially the following
323 form:

324 PROPOSITION___; The King County Council has passed Ordinance
325 _____ concerning funding to improve well-being of children, youth,
326 families and communities. If approved, this proposition would provide
327 funding for prevention and early intervention to achieve positive outcomes
328 related to: healthy pregnancy; parental and newborn support; healthy
329 child and youth development; the health and well-being of communities;
330 and crisis prevention and early intervention for children and youth,
331 including for domestic violence and homelessness. The measure would
332 authorize an additional regular property tax of \$0.14 per \$1,000 of
333 assessed valuation for collection beginning in 2016 and authorize
334 maximum annual increases of 3% in the succeeding 5 years.

335 **SECTION 7. Governance.**

336 A. If the levy is approved by the voters, an oversight and advisory board shall be
337 established by ordinance to serve as the oversight and advisory board for the portion of

338 the levy proceeds described in section 5.C.1., 2. and 4. of this ordinance. The executive
339 shall transmit to the council by December 1, 2015, a plan relating to the oversight and
340 advisory board and a proposed ordinance that identifies the duties and composition of the
341 oversight and advisory board. The duties of the oversight and advisory board shall
342 include making recommendations on and monitoring the distribution of levy proceeds.
343 The oversight and advisory plan shall be consistent with the recommendations contained
344 in the county's youth action plan, adopted by Motion 14378. The oversight and advisory
345 board shall be comprised of a wide array of King County residents and stakeholders with
346 geographically and culturally diverse perspectives.

347 B. The communities of opportunity interim governance group shall serve as the
348 advisory board for levy proceeds described in section 5.C.3. of this ordinance. The
349 executive shall transmit to the council by December 1, 2015, a plan relating to the
350 communities of opportunity interim governance group and a proposed ordinance that
351 identifies the composition and duties of the interim governance group with respect to the
352 levy proceeds described in section 5.C.3. of this ordinance.

353 **SECTION 8. Implementation plans.**

354 A. The executive shall transmit to the council an implementation plan that
355 identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of levy
356 proceeds described in section 5.A.1. of this ordinance. This implementation plan relating
357 to the youth and family homelessness prevention initiative shall, to the maximum extent
358 possible, be developed in collaboration with the oversight and advisory board and shall
359 be transmitted to the council by March 1, 2016, for council review and approval by
360 ordinance.

361 B. The executive shall transmit to the council an implementation plan that
362 identifies the strategies to be funded and outcomes to be achieved with the use of levy
363 proceeds described in section 5.C. of this ordinance. The implementation plan shall be
364 developed in collaboration with the oversight and advisory board and the communities of
365 opportunity interim governance group, as applicable. The implementation plan shall, to
366 the maximum extent possible, take into consideration the county's youth action plan,
367 adopted by Motion 14378, and any recommendations of the county's steering committee
368 to address juvenile justice disproportionality that was formed in 2015 that are adopted
369 into policy. Along with the implementation plan required by this subsection B., the
370 executive shall transmit to the council for approval by motion a policy that identifies the
371 economic indicators the council should consider each year in determining the percentage
372 by which to increase the levy for the subsequent year. The motion shall also include the
373 executive's recommendations for the percentage by which the levy should change based
374 on changes in the identified economic indicators. The implementation plan shall be
375 transmitted to the council by June 1, 2016, for council review and approval by ordinance.

376 C. Levy proceeds may not be expended for the purposes described in section 5.A.
377 and C. of this ordinance until the date on which the applicable implementation plan is
378 approved by ordinance, .except for planning funds, which shall be approved by ordinance
379 and not exceed two million dollars, the funds required for elections costs described in
380 section 5.A.2. of this ordinance, and funds for public health services described in section
381 5.C.1. of this ordinance

382 D. The implementation plans described in subsections A. and B. of this section
383 shall each include a proposal for an annual reporting process to the council, including the
384 regional policy committee or a successor committee.

385 SECTION 9. Ratification. Certification of the proposition by the clerk of the
386 county council to the director of elections in accordance with law before the election on
387 November 3, 2015, and any other act consistent with the authority and before the
388 effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

389 SECTION 10. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application

390 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
391 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

392

Ordinance 18088 was introduced on 5/4/2015 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 7/20/2015, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague,
Ms. Lambert, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski and Mr. Upthegrove
No: 1 - Mr. Dunn
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this 23 day of JULY, 2015.



Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None