

King County Councilmember

District Eight

December 2006



King County Courthouse

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King County

Dow Constantine

Dear Friend:

This year, as Chair of the Annual Budget Committee, I led the King County Council in adopting not just a new budget, but a new approach to county budgeting. We began by creating a policy framework for our deliberations called **Priorities for People**.

These priorities—grouped in the subject areas of **Earning Public Trust, Enhancing Quality of Life, and Protecting Public Health**—identify the policy areas we felt most needed to be addressed in the final budget.

Using our Priorities for People as a yardstick, we reviewed the Executive's proposals, modified them as warranted, and added some of our own initiatives. The result is a 2007 King County Budget that all nine Councilmembers agree implements our Priorities for People.

I insisted that we stick to an internal set of working principles:

- Spend less,
- Save more, and
- Prioritize,

while protecting the Council's policy making responsibility.

We **spent less**, trimming the proposed General Fund budget by \$3.2 million dollars and the total budget by \$24 million dollars. We **saved more**, creating \$3.6 million dollars in new general fund reserves.

This newsletter reports on a few aspects of King County's 2007 Budget that are of particular importance to you and your community.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions or concerns.

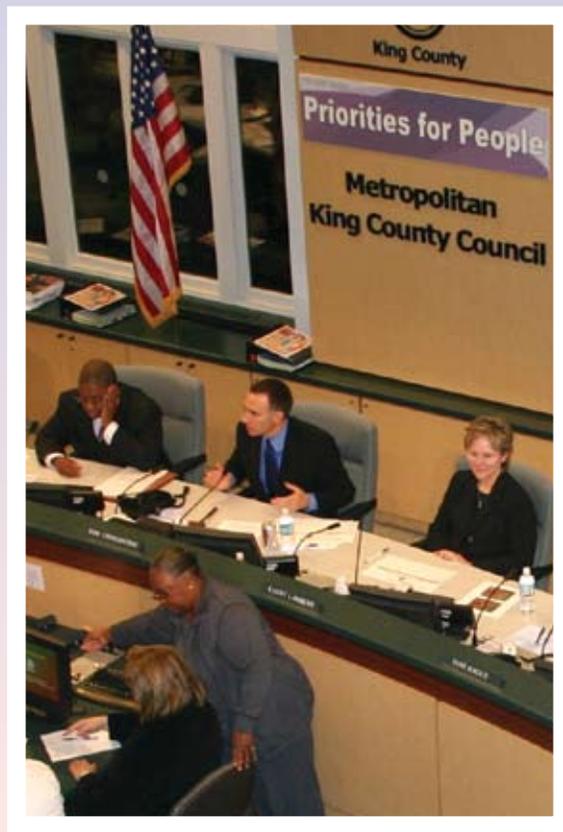
Sincerely,

Dow Constantine
Metropolitan King County Councilmember

Highlights of King County's 2007 Budget

Countywide measures:

- We established **independent civilian oversight** of misconduct complaints involving **King County Sheriff's deputies**. Our 2007 budget increases supervision by hiring new sergeants while maintaining current patrol staffing strength.
- We addressed the fiscal crisis in our Public Health system, funding the operation of all **County Public Health Centers** through 2007, while creating an expert panel to craft a strong community health care safety net.
- We responded to voter support for the "**Transit Now**" package by funding the installation of interior readerboards announcing "next stop" information, by building more bus shelters, and by eliminating the use of advertising wraps that obscure the view of bus riders.
- We honored King County's commitment to those who served in our military by investing the initial proceeds from the voter-approved **Veterans and Human Services Levy** into services and housing for vulnerable veterans and others in need.



Chairing a budget public hearing in Council Chambers.

Programs specific to the West Seattle and White Center neighborhoods:

- **Morgan Junction Park:** \$475,000 in Conservation Futures funding for land acquisition.
- **Greenbridge Foundation:** \$100,000 in capital funds to aid in the renovation of the Jim Wiley Community Center, home of the Southwest Boys & Girls Club.
- **Neighborhood House:** \$75,000 to provide operating funding for the new neighborhood/family center at High Point. Also, \$300,000 for center construction.
- **White Center Community Development Association:** \$10,000 in funding to help in outreach efforts for the community-led White Center neighborhood plan.
- **Lafayette Playground:** \$25,000 to help fund improvements at the playground adjacent to Lafayette Elementary School.
- **Seattle Chinese Garden:** \$100,000 for ongoing development of this community asset at South Seattle Community College.
- **Fauntleroy Community Association:** \$5,000 to help fund mitigation for and research on the "Fauntleroy Stink," an odor which may be related to decaying seaweed.

2007 King County Budget by the Numbers:

- The \$3.86 billion total budget is \$24 million less than originally proposed.
- The general fund budget totals \$628 million.
- The Council budget reduces proposed general fund spending by \$3.2 million, and increases general fund reserves by \$3.6 million.
- This is the fourth consecutive year in which the County Council has unanimously adopted the annual County Budget.
- Over the course of five weeks of review and deliberation, more than 500 people offered testimony, either by speaking at one of five public hearings or submitting comments by letter or e-mail.

Priorities for People

The adopted budget implements "Priorities for People," the 11 guidelines in three major subject areas which the Council adopted in October as a yardstick by which to measure the final budget. These subject areas are:

- Earning Public Trust
- Enhancing Quality of Life
- Protecting Public Health and Safety

Joining Councilmember Larry Gossett and members of a youth group from the Asian Counseling and Referral Service for a ceremony at which we presented the keys to a retired King County van.



Speaking to Tukwila community leaders at a joint reception with Councilmember Julia Patterson. The city of Tukwila is almost evenly divided between my Eighth Council District and her Fifth Council District.



Receiving the Vision 2020 Award honoring the work of the Green/Duwamish River basin salmon habitat recovery plan (which I chair) with staff members from King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks. From left: Joanna Richey, Dennis Clark, me, Kathy Wright.



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West Seattle/North Highline budget news

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