

King County Councilmember Larry Gossett

District 2

Winter 2007

Happy New Year!



Council Chair Larry Gossett will be joined by Vice-Chairs Jane Hague (left) and Julia Patterson (right) to form the bipartisan leadership team that will direct the King County Council in 2007.

Dear Friend,

I am excited to announce that on December 11th, my colleagues unanimously selected me the new Chair of the King County Council for 2007. Holding this position is an honor and a privilege, and I look forward to serving in this leadership capacity this year.

My job is to represent your interests and articulate your needs on the Metropolitan King County Council. For me to do this well, I would like to hear from you. Let me know of concerns you have that you think local and regional government should address. My mailing address is the King County Courthouse, 516 Third Ave, Room 1200, Seattle, WA 98104, and my e-mail is Larry.Gossett@MetroKC.gov.

Finally, I would like you to know that this year, the County looks forward to unveiling its new logo. On February 27, 2006, the County Council adopted an ordinance changing the County logo from an imperial crown to an image of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I hope you will agree with me that Dr. King will be an outstanding symbol of our government. You will begin to see the new logo on County letterhead in 2007.

I hope you find this newsletter helpful, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family the best for the New Year!

Sincerely,

Larry Gossett



University Heights Community Center Director Richard Sorenson and staff join Councilmember Larry Gossett during a tour of the center and community garden.

Accomplishments and challenges in public health

In the past year, King County has made an effort to look more closely at public health issues and how they affect our residents. As a member of the King County Board of Health, I am especially committed to highlighting the achievements and areas needing improvement in our public health system. In 2006, the Public Health Department issued a report entitled "The Health of King County 2006," citing many improvements as well as continuing and emerging concerns.

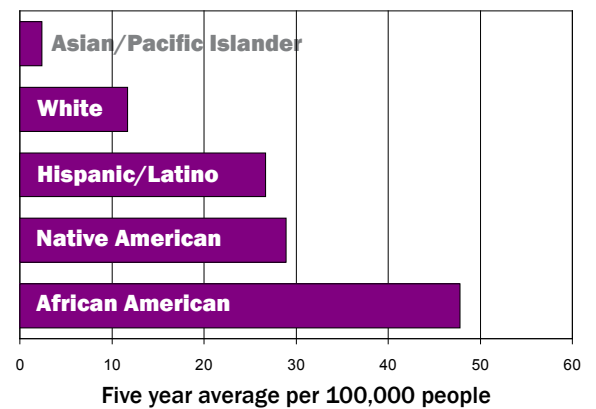
We can be proud that King County remains one of the healthiest locales in Washington State and the entire nation. For example:

- ▶ Residents of King County can expect to live five years longer than they did 20 years ago, exceeding life expectancy totals throughout state and the country. Males average 78 years, and females, 82.5 years.
- ▶ Infant mortality is at its lowest ever in the County.
- ▶ Smoking rates have declined steadily.

Despite this positive news, we still have a ways to go, particularly with regard to health disparities among the poor and communities of color. The following statistics illustrate this problem:

- ▶ The life span of African American and Native American males is about eight years less than their White counterparts in King County.
- ▶ While AIDS has moved from eighth to the 14th leading cause of death for all individuals in King County, African Americans are now 3.4 times more likely than Whites to die from HIV, compared to 1.5 times ten years ago.
- ▶ Nearly 25% of people with annual incomes of less than \$25,000 reported serious unmet medical needs.
- ▶ Frequent mental distress affects 20% of those in the lowest income bracket. There is also a higher rate of suicide deaths and hospitalizations in areas of high poverty.

AIDS incidence in King County by ethnicity 1999-2003



King County will continue to support programs and practices that promote a healthier community and work to eliminate these disparities, so that we can improve the quality of life for all residents of Martin Luther King County. For more information on the 2006 Health of the County Report, visit www.metrokc.gov/health/hokc/index.htm.

Restoring public trust in the Sheriff's Office

A special Blue Ribbon Panel formed by the Sheriff's Office lead a distinguished 10-person panel of professionals and community leaders through a nearly year-long review of officer discipline and personnel issues within the King County Sheriff's Department. The panel was led by former King County Executive Randy Revelle and former Washington State Supreme Court Justice Faith Ireland.

This panel provided the Sheriff with a series of six interrelated recommendations for improving accountability, operational effectiveness, and policies for handling officer discipline and civilian oversight. The centerpiece of the recommendations was creating an Independent Police Oversight Board.



Continued on reverse



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- ▶ Sheriff's Office reforms
- ▶ Transit Now benefits
- ▶ News from Councilmember Gossett

Selected winter events:

- MLK Day Rally and March, January 15
- Homeless One Night Count, January 26-27
- Asian Pacific Islander Leadership Conference, January 27
- Tet Festival, February 4-5
- Festival Sundiata, February 17-18
- Northwest Flower & Garden Show, February 14-18

Details and more events inside



King County

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I invite you to join me for the annual MLK March on January 15th! (For more information, see the events section.)

Riders to benefit from passage of Transit Now

In November, voters decisively passed King County Proposition No. 2, otherwise known as "Transit Now," a measure that increases the sales tax in King County by one-tenth of a percent (0.1) to provide expanded Metro bus service to county residents. The focus over the next few years will be on assigning more buses to high ridership routes within core communities in Seattle. There will be an effort to support and coordinate service integration with the Sound Transit Light Rail Line that will open in 2009. You will be pleased to know we plan to add new buses to busy routes as early as February 2007. This increase will be implemented before Metro begins to collect the sales tax revenue in June. Planned route improvements for District 2 are as follows:



- ▶ **3/4, 11, 48, 60** (serving First Hill, Madison Park, Rainier Beach, Capitol Hill, Beacon Hill, University District, Downtown Seattle): Add more trips when ridership is greatest and adjust schedules to improve on-time operations.
- ▶ **36** (serving Rainier Beach, Beacon Hill, Downtown Seattle): Extend trolley bus service to Othello/New Holly Link Station and improve evening and Saturday service.
- ▶ **44** (serving University District, Wallingford, Ballard): Extend duration of 10-minute peak service on weekdays.
- ▶ **70** (serving University District, Eastlake, Downtown Seattle): Add evening and Sunday service to replace 71-72-73 local service between University District and downtown Seattle.

For information on Transit Now, visit: www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/transitnow.

Sheriff's Office reforms *continued from front*

The King County Council voted unanimously on October 9th to establish a new Office of Law Enforcement to examine complaints of misconduct filed against the sheriff's deputies. This office will also have the authority to review and analyze staffing and supervisory issues that may arise in the future.

The Blue Ribbon Panel's report included six major recommendations and 36 implementing actions. In the 2007 budget, over \$1.3 million was included to begin funding a number of these recommendations, with an additional \$1.5 million put into reserves for future implementation of additional recommendations

It is my belief that this office will help expand public trust in the ability of the County Sheriff to discipline those few officers involved in conduct or behavior serious enough to require disciplinary action.



Selected events

MLK Day Rally & March: Solidarity for Peace, Human Rights, and Economic Justice (pictured above). Monday, January 15, 2007, Franklin High School (3013 Mt. Baker Blvd). Participate in the largest tribute to Dr. King in the Pacific Northwest. Includes workshops (9:30 am), a rally in the gymnasium (11 am), and a march to MLK Memorial (noon). Call CAMP, (206) 812-4940, or visit www.mlkseattle.org.

Homeless One Night Count: Saturday & Sunday, January 26 & 27. Participants will walk the streets and count people who are sleeping outside because of lack of housing. Contact the Church Council, (206) 525-1213 or info@thechurchcouncil.org.

Fifth Annual Asian Pacific Islander Leadership Conference. Saturday, January 27, Seattle University. Leadership training workshops and interaction with other API community leaders from the Pacific Northwest. Contact Jade Agua, jagua@leap.org or (213) 485-1422 ext 4107, or www.leap.org.

Association for African American Historical Research and Preservation Fourth Annual Black History Conference. Saturday, February 3, Seattle University. Full schedule of topics pertaining to black history. Information: www.aaahrp.org or Ed Diaz, history3@comcast.net or (206) 547-5394.

Tet Festival: Celebrating Vietnamese Lunar New Year. Saturday & Sunday, February 10 & 11, Seattle Center House. Includes traditional lion dance and firecrackers. Call (206) 706-2658.

Festival Sundiata: An African American Celebration. Saturday & Sunday, February 17 & 18, Seattle Center. Information: (206) 329-8086 or visit www.festivalsundiata.org.

Northwest Flower and Garden Show. February 14-18, Washington State Convention Center. Six acres of inspiring gardens, free seminars for all gardening levels, and shopping at 300 exhibits. Information: www.gardenshow.com/seattle/index/index.asp.