



December 16, 2019

Transmitted electronically

The Honorable M. Lorena González
Seattle City Council
600 4th Avenue, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember González:

During the past year, the City and County have collaborated on the creation of a Regional Homelessness Authority that will transform the manner in which homelessness is addressed across the County. This new Authority will be one of a kind – it will be the first to include representation of people with lived experience at a governing and implementation level, the first to place customers at the center of the Authority’s mission, and the first to center the mission around the disproportional impacts to communities of color, youth, and persons with disabilities. We are proud of what has come from our mutual commitment to designing the Authority for customer-centered service for the most vulnerable individuals in our community. We also recognize that, because the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) was developed with input from all stakeholders, it required compromise.

While we were strongly supportive of the initial proposal introduced in August, we also believe the proposal was made stronger by allowing input from other cities. Homelessness is a regional crisis impacting every city, and Seattle and King County cannot go at it alone.

We appreciate that three members of the Seattle City Council have had input on the proposal as part of the Client Working Group, and most importantly, two of your colleagues proposed changes at the recent Regional Policy Committee, which sought to address concerns raised by you and other City Councilmembers. Two amendments prevailed. This now means that the City of Seattle has additional representation by a member of King County Council and three members of the City of Seattle, as well as potentially two individuals with Lived Experience and the County Executive, who could be from Seattle.

We understand that you and many members of City Council have concerns regarding the voting structure of the Governing Board. We all agree that the recommendations of the Implementation Board should serve as the professional and data-driven approach to delivery of our region’s homelessness services, with the Governing Board having some oversight. This oversight and accountability are important, but it should be rare and require a supermajority of votes to amend plans, policies, goals and the budget. Moreover, we also agree that all the work of the Authority, including the support of suburban cities as they develop their Sub-regional Plans,

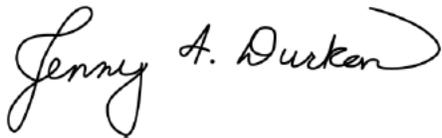
must be aligned with evidence-based practices and all of the values in the ILA’s Guiding Principles.

Currently, the ILA requires that two-thirds of the members present at a meeting must support major amendments to the budget, as well as plans, policies and goals, for those amendments to prevail. Thus, if all members are present it would require a vote of eight members of the Governing Board. We understand that if members of the Governing Committee are not present, including up to seven members from Seattle, then it would require a lesser amount of only six votes. We agree that clarity is better. One of the first tasks of the Governing Committee will be the adoption of Bylaws for the Authority. We are committed to propose, support, and advocate for clarifying changes, through the Bylaws, to require a minimum of eight votes - a 2/3 majority of all members of the governing committee - to approve such amendments.

Because the ILA’s Guiding Principles commit to “data-driven decisions” and “adopt[ing] an evidence-based, housing first orientation” for the Authority, we can commit to incorporating this language in the Bylaws and in the Master Agreement between each of the County and City and the Authority to ensure that funds expended by the Authority will only support interventions that are evidence-based, demonstrate broadly recognized best practices and are aligned with the Guiding Principles of the ILA. We also commit to language in the Bylaws that will clarify the requirement that initial and all subsequent Five-Year Plans and sub-regional plans only include evidence-based approaches, reflect broadly recognized best practices and align with the Guiding Principles of the ILA.

We appreciate your support in moving this work to the important next phase of implementation.

Sincerely,



Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor of Seattle



Dow Constantine
King County Executive