



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Parks & Community Services
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MEMORANDUM

To: David Ramsay

From: Jennifer Schroder, Director, Parks and Community Services
Carrie Hite, Deputy Director
Sharon Anderson, Human Services Coordinator
Human Services Advisory Committee

Date: March 3, 2009

Subject: Communities Count Presentation

RECOMMENDATION:

City Council be informed of the 2008 King County Communities Count Report. The Eastside Human Services Forum and the Human Services Advisory Committee would like to invite City Council, and all interested citizens to attend an upcoming forum to learn the results of the Communities Count and how it impacts the Eastside. This is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2009, 4:00-6:00 at Bellevue City Hall.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The Communities Count Initiative is a collaboration among local cities, King County, non-profit organizations, and a variety of private institutions. Communities Count releases detailed reports every three years on the health and well-being of people and communities in King County, and identifies strengths as well as areas that need attention. The most up-to-date Communities Count Report, released in late December 2008, includes a set of 38 social, health, environmental and arts indicators for use by city and county government, public agencies, foundations, human service providers, non-profit agencies, community-based organizations, and King County residents. The report includes a perspective on regional differences and disparities by race, income, education, age and gender. The information is provided on both a regional scale and is broken down to local city and neighborhood levels where possible. Unique in the 2008

report is an in-depth look at the choices King County households are making in order to balance affordable housing, transportation and quality of life.

Highlights of the 2008 findings include:

- The majority of King County residents reported good quality in many aspects of life, including involvement in arts and culture, perception of neighborhood safety, and neighborhood social cohesion.
- King County is making progress in many areas, including rates of violent crime and auto theft, motor vehicle accidents, adult smoking rates, commute habits, and water conservation.
- Many challenges still exist. For example, the number of uninsured people remains high, many families are not earning a living wage, the percent of children living in poverty has increased, housing costs continue to rise, and obesity rates have nearly doubled in the past decade. Meanwhile, countywide, the health of the environment continued to be threatened as more forested areas gave way to urban sprawl.
- Inequities persist. There are differences among many of the key indicators according to race/ethnicity, income level, education, age and gender.

Some of these results, as well as comparisons across the region, and separated by income, educational levels, race, age, and gender differences, will be presented at the Community Counts Forum on March 25, 2009.