File #: Res 32174, **Version:** 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION setting out public-safety related funding priorities in anticipation of a proposal that the City impose the additional one-tenth of one percent local option public safety sales tax authorized by the 2025 State Legislature.

WHEREAS, in 2025 the Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2015, authorizing cities and counties to impose a one-tenth of one percent sales tax to generate revenues for public safety purposes, including improvements for behavioral health, as well as community outreach and assistance, diversion and alternative response programs, and mental health crisis response; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, King County suffered 1,044 deaths due to drug overdose, 568 of which occurred in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, addiction to drugs and other intoxicants is a root cause that contributes to the region's ongoing challenges with public safety, homelessness, and caring for those in mental health crises; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that a variety of treatment and recovery services approaches, including crisis intervention and inpatient services for those in greatest need, outpatient support for those living in recovery housing, field-based outreach and case management, overdose prevention strategies with intensive wrap-around services in non-congregate shelter, focused housing navigation, and ongoing support through drug protocols such as buprenorphine, have proven effective in addressing different addiction disorders and related public impacts; and

WHEREAS, Seattle's 2024-2025 pilot program to fund immediate low-friction access for appropriate referrals to private in-patient treatment facilities, including for participants in harm reduction and low-barrier programs, has been well-utilized by individuals for whom Medicaid-funded treatment facilities are not

the appropriate service or are not immediately accessible for a number of reasons, but aftercare supports including recovery housing are needed for most of these individuals; and

WHEREAS, investments in such treatment and recovery services approaches provide the best opportunity to assist individuals in direct need while also building the larger treatment and services infrastructure needed to address one of the most persistent root causes of broader, underlying social harms; and

WHEREAS, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recognizes the four pillars of recovery as access to health services, a safe place to live, connection, and purpose; and

WHEREAS, Congress's Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328), signed into law on December 29, 2022, includes provisions related to recovery housing, including a requirement for SAMHSA to develop and publicly post best practices for recovery housing; and

WHEREAS, data from the Washington State Department of Health shows that the rate of fatal opioid overdoses is two to four times higher for the state's African American and indigenous residents; and

WHEREAS, the regional economy has been experiencing a period of unusually slow growth in the post-pandemic period and now faces broader economic uncertainty created by unprecedented actions at the federal level; and

WHEREAS, slow regional growth has led to a significant reduction in the forecast of City revenues, while at the same time, growing inflationary pressures are increasing City costs beyond anticipated levels; and

WHEREAS, the City is facing sustained, chronic public safety needs and growing challenges created by the impacts of drug use and addiction, while slowing revenue growth, increasing costs, and an expanding budget deficit threatens the City's ability to sustain current funding for a variety of direct service programs, and the federal government is cutting financial support for critical services; and

WHEREAS, although sales taxes represent a regressive form of taxation, the City's taxing authority is constrained by the State of Washington, and as expressed in this resolution a significant share of the revenue that could be generated by a small increment in the City's sales tax would be targeted toward

those who are in the greatest need and have the fewest options; and

WHEREAS, initial estimates from the City's Office of Economic and Revenue Forecasts indicate that a one-tenth of one percent increase in the City's sales tax rate would generate more than $35 million per year in new revenues; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. As part of deliberations for the 2026 Adopted Budget, the City Council will consider legislation implementing the one-tenth of one percent sales tax newly authorized by the State Legislature.

Section 2. If the City implements the sales tax increment, up to 25 percent of the revenue raised should be invested in addiction treatment and recovery services and the facilities needed to provide such services. The investments should be aimed at creating a pathway to recovery for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and individuals diverted from the criminal legal system, including:

A. Expand access to on-demand residential and intensive outpatient substance use disorder treatment as funded in the comprehensive treatment pilot project and make its funding model permanent;

B. Enhance access to recovery housing, as consistent with the clinically proven Continuum of Care model, and recovery-based services, such as contingency management, within existing low-barrier permanent supportive housing;

C. Ensure capacity for low-barrier shelter, case management, aftercare, and legal coordination for people living unsheltered with severe substance use disorder using models such as CoLEAD;

D. Coordinate with King County to increase the number of Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs) operating within Seattle to facilitate referrals to Secure Withdrawal Management and Stabilization (SWMS) facilities, such as the one operated by Valley Cities Behavioral Health Care in Kent;

E. Innovative approaches to addressing Stimulant Use Disorder and expanding the provision of long-lasting buprenorphine injections, a clinically proven approach to managing opioid dependence;

F. Enhance access to job training and job placement services for residents of transitional and permanent supportive housing;

G. Stabilizing diversion services such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) long-term case management capacity for individuals having significant impact in Seattle neighborhoods and needing long-term recovery service navigation and care coordination; and

H. Capital investments to support the facilities where treatment services are provided, including physical improvements to existing clinics and funding to expand facilities or build new ones.

The City Council anticipates that after consultation with stakeholders, potential service providers, and subject matter experts, funding will be allocated in an approach that balances a range of treatment options with appropriate support services, while also providing the resources to support the physical infrastructure needed to provide treatment and related services. Any ongoing spending supported with the new public safety sales tax revenue will focus on models of care that have a strong established evidence base, and providers to implement those models will be selected pursuant to a competitive funding process, requiring regular reporting on program performance relative to specific, quantifiable metrics and a periodic review of overall program effectiveness. Capital investments will be subject to a competitive funding process, including an assessment of the effectiveness of the treatment services currently offered, or to be offered, at a new or expanded facility.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2025, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2025.

_____

President _____ of the City Council

powered by Legistar™

The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2025.

_____

Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2025.

_____

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)