

ICYMI: Community response to King County Council committee action on Polyclinic Crisis Care Center proposal

SEATTLE, Sept. 17, 2025 – Last week, King County Council’s budget committee advanced three ordinances tied to purchasing the former Polyclinic on Capitol Hill for a new crisis care center — but did so without recommendation. The move followed testimony from a coalition of Capitol Hill and First Hill residents, schools, businesses, property owners, and nonprofits who attended the meeting to raise concerns about public safety, transparency, and oversight.

The lack of endorsement signals that significant questions remain ahead of the full Council vote on October 7. The coalition of community members issued the following statement in response:

“We appreciate that Councilmembers are listening. Capitol Hill and First Hill face long-standing, escalating public safety risks that we’ve raised with officials for years. The City Auditor has identified this area as having the highest rate of violence and overdoses in Seattle.

“This is the daily reality for residents, small businesses, nightlife workers, people living unsheltered, and the thousands of students at the seven nearby schools.

“These challenges remain unaddressed — which makes it deeply concerning that officials quietly selected our neighborhood for this center without fixing today’s realities or being transparent about the process.

“It’s also troubling that DCHS, the department responsible for this project and recently found to have mismanaged millions of public dollars, could move ahead without first addressing its oversight failures or the community’s concerns.

“Trust has been eroded as officials weigh a 50-year commitment that could overwhelm a neighborhood already at its limit. We support crisis care centers, but success requires slowing down to build a shared strategy and rebuild trust before moving forward.”

Transaction Questions

The coalition also raised concerns about the real estate transaction to purchase the site:

“Serious questions remain about the deal’s structure — including the \$11.5 million assignment fee, the absence of a County appraisal, the decision to waive environmental review, and zoning concerns.

“We agree with Budget Chair Rod Dembowski, who stressed the importance of getting this location right. At this point, we have little confidence that is happening.

“DCHS did not disclose its site decision publicly until months after the deal was signed, and initial outreach has targeted only select audiences instead of fully informing the community.

“Waiving environmental review undermines trust further. These reviews don’t just address environmental factors; they also evaluate impacts on nearby residents, schools, and businesses.

“We hope the additional time before the October 7 vote allows Councilmembers to explore these questions with DCHS present — and to guarantee safety for patients, residents, visitors, businesses, and the more than 14,000 students who attend nearby schools.”

Community members are continuing to organize and inform neighbors, businesses, schools, and families about the lack of progress on public safety in Capitol Hill and King County’s rushed crisis care center siting process. Conversations are underway about potential community-led events, such as town halls or panels, ahead of the October 7 Council meeting.

King County Budget Committee: Key Moments

- The committee moved the ordinances forward without recommendation, indicating that more questions must be resolved before the October 7 vote.
- Budget Chair Rod Dembowski flagged multiple financial concerns, including the \$11.5M assignment fee to Guntower Capital LLC, lack of a County appraisal, and whether the County was directly approached about the sale.
 - Dembowski also acknowledged Capitol Hill and First Hill need immediate public safety investments, suggesting funds be dedicated to cleaning and securing nearby blocks before the center opens.
- Councilmember Claudia Balducci urged the Council to host meetings to address community questions.
- Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda introduced an amendment aligning with the Mayor’s conditional support letter and called for stronger mitigation funding.

Watch the Meeting

- Full video: [King County Council meeting](#)
- Financial questions: ~1:57:50
- Chair summary: ~2:41:08
- Siting discussion: ~2:48:00

About the Coalition

We are an informal coalition of residents, schools, businesses, property owners, and nonprofits in Capitol Hill and First Hill. With no formal membership or single leader, we collaborate to ensure our collective voice is heard. We support crisis care as an essential service and are working to ensure King County and City leadership deliver a plan that is transparent, financially responsible, respectful of public input, and safe for patients, nearby vulnerable populations, and the broader community.