

Re: Executive's request (3/13) for discussion of ARPA and Healthy Children's Fund.

The HCF levy was designed to build on pre-existing goals for ARPA Childcare capital set by Council. That is what was proposed to voters, and approved.

The Prop. 5 campaign only mentioned small projects. Likewise, the Health Department memo (2/27) on implementation of HCF for years 1 and 2 only mentions small capital projects.

Council considered that HCF implementation plan at the 2/21 at Committee of the Whole; and on 3/7 at COTW, and at an evening public hearing on 3/7, making no recommendations to cut Council-approved ARPA Childcare Capital funds and replace those with HCF dollars that voters approved for other purposes. And now we are asked to consider supplanting those funds.

The HCF implementation plan Council and the public have been reviewing states (p. 19):

"The spending plan was developed in the context of....ARPA. Under direction of the County Council...this commitment of ARPA funds to large capital investment was taken into consideration when determining HCF strategies to fund in years 1 & 2. These initial strategies do not have a significant focus on large capital investments because of this ARPA commitment."

Moving \$4.5m in ARPA money away from childcare capital, to SAC recommendations for behavioral health & public safety, is inconsistent with the promise of HCF supporting ongoing childcare services, and inconsistent with the Council's goal of using ARPA funds to invest in *Childcare Capital*.

HCF is primarily designed to expand ongoing services. Supplanting \$4.5m in ARPA funds Council intended for Childcare Capital will put investments in large capital projects at risk.

Directing the supplanted \$4.5m in one-time ARPA funds toward BH / PS services will not provide sustained BH / PS services. That will create new, ongoing costs that must be covered with new local (?) revenues when ARPA funds are gone.

Transferring \$4.5m of ARPA childcare capital funds to "facilities" associated with new Justice Facility goals is an inappropriate "down payment" on those goals. That should be funded with dollars generated by a new jail / public safety levy.

We have over \$12m in RFPs for investments large childcare capital that can be transformative in leveraging HCF dollars to expand child care in Whatcom County.

We need the \$4.5 in ARPA funds Council has prioritized for that, and probably more.

Todd Donovan, Whatcom County Council.