

October 1, 2012

Dear Residents of the North Highline Unincorporated Area:

The City of Burien proposal to annex the North Highline PAA will appear on your November 6, 2012 general election ballot. I have served portions of both the City of Burien and the North Highline Unincorporated Area as a State Legislator, County Councilmember, and now as County Executive, so the common welfare of this area and its people is important to me.

I support the Burien proposal and I urge you to vote in favor of annexation on November 6.

I would like to share some information with you to assist you in making your decision about this potential governance transfer.

- The Washington Growth Management Act, approved in 1992, directs that all areas within the designated urban growth boundaries should be part of cities; with counties left to provide regional services and local services to rural areas. To encourage annexations and incorporations of unincorporated urban areas, cities are given more robust revenue tools, including the ability to assess utility and business & occupations taxes—funding that is denied to counties.
- In 1992, King County provided local services to an urban unincorporated population of more than 450,000 people. By 2004, multiple annexations and incorporations of new cities (including Burien, SeaTac, and Federal Way) had reduced the urban unincorporated population to 219,000. Since then, further annexations have reduced that population to 130,000. But, most of the urban unincorporated areas remaining in County control are largely residential communities, which typically don't produce sufficient revenue to fund services—especially given that counties have fewer revenue tools than cities.

North Highline is bordered by two cities that have expressed interest in annexation—Burien and Seattle. Seattle designated North Highline as a potential annexation area in 2006, but has made no other formal efforts to annex. In contrast, the city of Burien has worked closely with North Highline residents in support of annexation and the Burien City Council voted to put annexation on the November 6 ballot.

My position on North Highline annexation has been consistent over many years: I support the annexation of all of North Highline by a city or cities. Burien annexed roughly half of the former North Highline Unincorporated Area in 2010 and is now proposing to annex the remainder of this area.

Why should you vote for annexation?

First, King County can no longer afford to provide the level of urban services that North Highline residents have come to expect. The ongoing economic downturn and a large reduction in gas tax revenues mean that King County cannot maintain current service levels in urban

unincorporated areas of the county. King County Roads has adopted a tiered service model under which a large number of unincorporated area roads—including many in North Highline—will receive a lower level of service.

Secondly, the City of Burien has actively and sincerely reached out to North Highline residents and invited them to join their community. Burien and North Highline already share a common school district (Highline Public Schools) and a common police service provider (the King County Sheriff's Office serves both areas). More information on specifics, including tax rates, can be found on the City of Burien's website at <http://burienwa.gov/index.aspx?NID=321>

King County has pledged to actively coordinate with the City of Burien to provide a seamless governance transfer upon a successful annexation, as has been done in many other formerly unincorporated areas. And, of course, the County would continue to be involved with Burien residents as a provider of regional services.

Thank you considering my opinion on this important decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dow Constantine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive