

handout #2
Sheriff Rahr
Item 5
Briefing 2011-80054
LJHHS 3/29/2011

March 24, 2011

To: **King County Law, Justice, Health and Human Services Committee**

Chair: Bob Ferguson

Vice Chair: Kathy Lambert

Members: Reagan Dunn, Larry Gossett, Joe McDermott

From: **Skyway/West Hill Community**

Subject: **March 29, 2011 Hearing, Appeal for Funding**

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

We, the undersigned residents of Skyway/West Hill, strongly support Sheriff Sue Rahr in her appeal for allocation of funding from the \$1.5M in the Public Safety Reserve to restore our dedicated storefront deputy and school resource officer to our community.

Skyway/West Hill is an island surrounded by cities with adequate police services, but remote from the commanding precinct in Burien. It is therefore imperative for this community of 17,000 residents to have local storefront leadership.

As you know, we are economically under-advantaged with all the consequent problems. We have a significant gang presence and a high rate of residential burglaries. We have a large and growing apartment population, and an increasing number of foreclosed, empty homes and shuttered businesses. We have latchkey kids lacking adequate adult role models, and gangs poised to recruit them.

We also have a very strong and growing block watch community, which is highly valued by the King County Sheriff's Office. Our volunteer block watch captains and block watch members have been highly reliant on working with our storefront deputy. His loss was a huge blow to the community and our efforts to fight crime.

Our school resource officer worked closely with our storefront deputy and with Fire District 20. His proactive efforts were critical to assuring the safety and well-being of local school children and teens.

Skyway/West Hill is also an area with great diversity and multiple cultures and languages. Our school resource officer and storefront deputy were skilled at understanding culturally-sensitive needs and differences. Our foreign-born community is at a great loss due to the removal of these two key individuals.

As our needs have increased, we have watched our resources shrink, giving many residents the desire to move away. We are therefore asking that you give thoughtful consideration to the

request by Sheriff Sue Rahr on behalf of the Skyway/West Hill Community for restoration of funding for our dedicated storefront deputy and school resource officer. These two positions are critical to our safety and security as a community, and we have deeply felt their loss.

Respectfully,

Bill & Sonja Bowden, S. 126th St.
Erika Tedin - S 120th Pl
Frank Tolomei [block watch captain] So. 129th PL
Alison Bailey Auburn Ave S.
Erik Sackstein - Forest Ave. S.
Rob Detzner - Renton Ave S
Darrell Wagner - Rustic Rd S
Hamdi Abdulle Somali community
Aden Hussein S.C at Creston Point
Liban Abdulle S. C. at creston pPoint
Scott Hinckley - 164th Ave. S
Jenny Farrell--75th Ave. S.
John Mettler-Cornell Ave S
Devin Chicras - 12065 75th Ave S
Doug & Theresa McLean--7004 S. 130th St. (Block Watch captain, Adopt-a-Road coordinator)
Carolyn Burkhardt,
Frank Cappannori--Skycrest
Peter Kwok - S Laurel Street
Queenie Yang - S Laurel Street
Zhili Yang - S Laurel Street
Wei Hua Yang-Chu - S Laurel Street
Ruth Frickle (block watch captain, S. 126th St.)
Theresa Calabro, S. 126th St.
Janice Wrenn 75th Ave South
Frank & Kathy Wilson, 75th Ave South
Darrell Dobson, Crestwood Dr. S.
Karyl Williams, 75th Ave S.
Paul and Nancy Berry, S. 124th St.
Micheal Dunn - 75th Ave S.
Lori Banchemo, S. 128th St. block watch
Charlotte Bowles, S. 128th St. block watch
Judith Wright, 11001 Woodley Ave S.
Robert and Karen Burk 116th So.
Jay Farrell, 12043 Renton Ave. S.
Ken Hempel, 12039 Renton Ave. S.
Steve & Helen Barton - S Langston
Ellen and Geoff Lawson - S 124th St
Dawnzella & Michael Gearhart - 57th Ave S

Michael Keller - 63rd Ave S (CERT)
Dave McMannan & B Renrick Block Watch Captains
Ronald Minter, Minter's Earlington Greenhouse & Nursery
Carolyn Velez, 75th Avenue S
Glen and Lori Carroll - 6455 S. 127th Pl. block watch & neighborhood street pick up crew
Angie Lorbeski 6444 S. 127th Pl. Block watch & neighborhood street pick up member
Theresa Quinn S Lakeridge Dr.
Mark Fitzgerald - West Hill Community Council
Sherry Perkins - 78th Ave S
Marc Nordlund - S 121st St, PTA Treasurer - Byrn Mawr Elementary
Tyson Koyano & Shawn Boyd - 69th Pl S
Erin Doherty - S 115th
Carol Lynn and Dennis Cole, Block Watch Captains, Rustic-Lakeridge
Carolyn and Mark Velez, 75th Ave S
Ciotta Family 6920 S. 130th st. Seattle WA 98178
Kosten Family 6921 S. 130th st. Seattle WA 98178
Margarita Prentice, Senator 11th District
Paula Ross, S. 126th St.
Leland Ross, S. 126th St.
Merryn Hearn, 10659 Cornell Ave. S.
Michele Savelle & Klaus Liebetanz, 10501 Rustic Rd S
Dorian Kensok & Aaron Collier, S. 129th Place
Anjell Ciotta 6912 S. 130th st. Seattle WA 98178
Jean & Til Franceschina 6913 S. 130th st. Seattle WA 98178
Tristan Hansen & Jordan McClellan 11008 Crestwood Drv S. Seattle, WA 98178
Margie & Dick Lindberg, 75th Ave S. 98178
Renee & James Dawson, Lakeridge Dr S. 98178
Jaime Dawson, Lakeridge Dr S 98178
Gurine Nordby, West Hill Community Council
Gene Lux, West Hill Community Council
Lou LeCroy, West Hill Community Council
Curtis Faulks, West Hill Community Council
Sandra Oellien, Marianna Apts.
Barbara Santos-Johnson Lakeridge Dr S 98178
Fred & Cheryl Sakura S. 129th Pl
Michael Saunders & Anne Lowe S. 129th Pl
Mark & Michele Timko, 10825 Rustic Rd S
Ernie and Evelyn Priestley, S 129th Place (Skycrest Subdivision)

On March 29, 2011, Sheriff Sue Rahr is scheduled to appear before the King County Council, Law, Justice, Health and Human Services Committee. She will have an opportunity to appeal for a portion of the \$1.5M public safety emergency fund currently held in reserve in the 2011 budget.

Please take a moment, as others have done, to tell Sheriff Rahr why Skyway needs funding to restore our storefront deputy and school resource officer. We will ask that she convey your messages directly to members of the Law, Justice, Health and Human Services Committee, with the specific request that Skyway should receive a portion of the \$1.5M to restore lost services, and why.

Feel free to mention that we are gaining new apartment complexes and growing our population, as our services and resources continue to shrink.

Comments from Skyway/West Hill residents:

My husband teaches in the Renton school district and we have two young children. We are worried for our safety living in Skyway. Two drug busts have happened on my street in the past few years. In addition, there are several memorials on Renton Ave. of shootings that have occurred in the past 5 years. My kids ask me why a cross is on the side of the road. I have to explain about gun safety to my 3 and 5 year olds which I think is much too young to have to worry about these things. They know Deputy Hodge because he comes to my house for our Block Watch meetings. They feel safe knowing that Deputy Hodge is out there "to get the bad guys". I haven't explained to them what "budget cuts" mean to their safety. Can you? If we could afford to sell our home, we would, but on a teacher's salary, there's no way we can move out of this neighborhood. Please put more funding into keeping Skyway livable and safe.

Jenny Farrell and Mickey Dunn (75th Ave. S. Block Watch)

I plan to move within the next year. I'm tired of the stress and feeling unsafe. After 2 burglaries, 3 cars broken into, and several acts of vandalism not to mention several other scary incidents with people dumping stolen cars in our yard, prowling around outside the house or breaking windows next door. Personally I'm giving up. I wish everyone the best of luck, but you can tell the council members that at least 1 resident is so fed up with the crime that they are leaving. I think restoring the storefront would help but the area is also significantly understaffed. It's one of the worst feelings I've ever had to have to take my son upstairs while he is clearly confused and upset so I can go spend hours picking glass out of his toys and board up windows. To do it twice in 2 months is just too much. There may not be any guarantees in life, but statistically many areas have 1/10 the crime that we do on West Hill, and I'll take those odds.

James Brown

We are worried about the random gunshots that are happening in our neighborhood and the police being reactive instead of proactive to help stop trouble before it happens. We have setup block watches as well as communicate through email and websites, but I get the feeling that trouble as doubled since the storefront has been removed from our neighborhood by seeing the issues that are arising. We pay the same amount in taxes but get the least amount of protect in Seattle\Renton. Our friends, neighbors and family are moving out to find a safer place to raise their kids. I don't feel safe to have my grandkids walking a few blocks to catch bus and safety for the areas around the parks.

Rita Johnson

I live in the Marianna Apartments on Renton Ave S. That's where two glass balcony doors got broken by stray bullets from a gunfight, the last week of January. Each bullet then went through an interior wall and then *crossed a room* before coming to rest in the far wall. No one got hit, and that was lucky. We can no longer feel safe in our own homes, and that's *not* lucky. I counted *four additional* incidents involving shots fired within two miles of here in the ensuing *week*. I do NOT want to accept that this is okay because it's in Skyway. Please don't let anyone give off that attitude without calling them on it. And I do NOT want to accept that there's nothing we can do about it. Please, enlist our help. I don't think I'm the only one here who's itching to DO something about this situation. Prevention, follow-up on punishment, publicity, and anything that makes our neighborhood stronger- how can we work together?

-Rob Detzner

I own and live in a private residence near the park. I know all my neighbors and do all the things Marty tells us to do to protect ourselves and our homes. I own my own business and time is rare. So being able to have him there to answer questions rather than do nothing and have to file a police report is invaluable to me. He is friendly, knows the good people AND the bad people. He helps us by educating us on what WE the public can do to help make our neighborhood safer. He follows up on calls about abandoned cars, weird people, odd things that don't seem right, etc. PLUS he responds to emails, educates, attends meetings, meets us, KNOWS us. And that right there is worth the money. As a taxpayer I would rather have my money spent pro-actively to protect a community who is BEGGING for help and DESPERATELY needs it, than be reactive and end up having my hard earned tax dollars be used paying out some settlement because we didn't have someone to help us. We are working together as a community, and we need YOUR help to make our neighborhood something we can be proud of. PLEASE help our community and HELP us be safe in our homes and on our own streets. We're doing our part, please let Marty continue to do his! Erika Tedin

Our sense of security has diminished since the removal of our local storefront. Access to the deputies working there was invaluable. We knew who each other

was and that, in itself, adds to a sense of well-being. Since the tax cuts demolished the deputies assigned to our area, I've spoken with several neighbors who fear the crime rate that was already on an upswing will continue. They are hoping to put their homes on the market this spring and move to an area that *feels* more safe. Whether the crime rate is actually climbing or is perceived to be on the upswing is moot. Not feeling safe in your home and community is enervating; it affects the entire community. Annie Moore

I am a block watch captain who set the block watch up on my street three and a half years ago because I was burglarized a year earlier and because the house across the street became the site of drug activity. At that time, without a storefront officer, it took 8 months to get the block watch going because finding the right contacts in the department and connecting with them was nearly impossible. Many people don't have the time or tenacity to do what I did, and they shouldn't have to. Because we've had the extra officer in the area to help with such things, we have many more block watches in the area, which expands the power of the officers who are on patrol.

Block watches have to be nurtured. People move, life circumstances change and captains 'retire', feeling a connection to the KCSO helps block watches stay active even through such shifts. Active block watches amplify the effectiveness of the sheriff's department. We need the extra officer to help with that and to provide the small amount of pro-active policing possible with just one more deputy.

I'll be honest. I don't live on a busy street, and there aren't high density dwellings right over the fence from my house. Right now there are no drug houses on my street attracting more criminal activity and I know my neighbors. These things allow me to feel safe when I walk my dog at night, or just when I leave and come home every day. This could change any time with the arrival of a 'bad' renter, or a badly run business like Champ's (a problem bar two blocks from where I live, which was shut down with the help of our storefront officer and my friends and neighbors). I want my sense of security to continue, and more than anything, I want my friends and neighbors who do feel unsafe to have the same sense of security. We all deserve that. Ruth Frickle

Bill and I are co-coordinators of the Skyway Public Safety Initiative. We work very closely with block watch captains and the King County Sheriff's Office, and we also serve in a public safety ombudsman capacity for our community. When the shooting occurred at the Marianna Apartments on January 24th, the owner was in contact with us the next day asking for a meeting for her residents and the King County Sheriff's Office. Normally, we would have contacted Deputy Marty Hodge, our storefront officer, but since Marty was reassigned to patrol duty in April, 2010 due to budget cuts, we contacted the Burien Precinct seeking help. Major Graddon and Capt. Butschli were exceedingly supportive, and a meeting was arranged, but we realized that it would have been so much more efficient for them and for us, if we had our storefront deputy back in the community addressing our local issues.

Marty was an invaluable asset to so many in countless ways , and we have suffered greatly as a community since losing his supportive skills and proactive policing. Our block watch captains in particular have lost a critical source of leadership and support, and we all recognize the high value the Sheriff's office places on block watches due to their effectiveness in stopping crime in progress.

Our community has approximately 17,000 residents spread out over 1897 acres. We need the additional car (Marty's) here on the weekends for backup. We need our school resource officer and our dedicated storefront deputy to provide protection for a community of this size, with all the crime and burglary problems that have been readily acknowledged. To say that a community is already disadvantaged, and has a high crime rate, and then take away services, imperils not only our residents, but also those in adjoining cities.

Finally, we have some existing large apartment complexes in Skyway (Creston Point with 2000 residents, Green Tree, etc.), and we are about to add Cambridge Park (208 units) and Taylor Creek Apartments (67 units). These concentrated multi-family dwellings add to public safety resource demands, as King County continues to strip funding for deputies. This is a precarious situation that needs to be recognized and addressed, so we are asking the Law, Justice, Health and Human Services Committee to restore funding to the Sheriff's budget from the public safety reserve to bring back our storefront deputy and school resource officer.

Sonja & Bill Bowden

We have lived in Skyway for 36 years and raised our family here. We are members of a large blockwatch , Friends of Skyway Park and are coordinators of an Adopt-a-Road program. We've helped with the outdoor summer film series, worked on community gardens, painted a bus shelter, as well as participated in the annual spring and fall Skyway cleanups and many Skyway Solutions projects. Now all this isn't to say how wonderful we are. Rather, we'd like you to have some idea of how much good stuff goes on up on this hill in community meetings, large and small; work parties; discussions, brainstorming, sharing of concerns, fears and information via email and social networking, etc. Citizens care.

This community does not expect the county and the sheriff to do everything for us. But we certainly need a little

As residents of Skyway, we are always concerned about the safety of our neighborhood and surrounding areas. The Sherriff's Storefront is a huge part of keeping the crime in our area as controlled as possible. It has made a significant difference in the past. Without it, our area is going to be much less secure and safe.

I am hoping that you will be able to convince the powers that be to draw from the public safety reserve fund and restore the storefront deputy and the local school resource officer.

Mark and Carolyn Velez

I have lived in Skyway for 5 years and have seen some serious deterioration during that time. In the last 3 months alone, we've had our car stereo stolen, and then the car itself was taken right from our driveway. I understand that budget cuts are necessary, but this community is trying very hard to take back the streets from the thugs. Please don't play into the crooks' agenda by removing one of the strongest allies we have. Return our storefront deputy and school liaison so the good neighborhood feeling can be found once more.

Robin Weller

As a business owner in the Skyway area I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is to restore this very basic service to the small urban Island that is West Hill. The decline of the area and perceived increase in crime is bad for everyone. If there is not visible efforts to make this area a safe place we should never expect businesses to stay in the area, much less relocate and rebuild here. If it continues to spiral downward because of crime it will be as a direct result of the county's inability or indifference to restoring this basic safety function.

Darrell Wagner

Another two voices in support of the return of our storefront deputy and school liaison officer.

Ed and Arlene Koetje

This is another kind request for support in our neighborhood. We just moved here last June, and I was eagerly looking forward to building a block watch nearby. I think it only makes sense to keep a strong and dedicated public servant like Marty Hodge in Skyway. It is an investment in tough times, but it's value multiplies in worth to the families and businesses on the hill. Please hear our heartfelt request.

Freddy and Jenny Bale

We have lived in the Skyway/West Hill area for over 20 years. It is a very urbanized portion of the County and our crime rates are rising. Residents have set up active blockwatches and had established an active partnership with the Sheriff's storefront office, which was recently cut from the budget. We absolutely need our storefront deputy and the school resource officer to feel reasonably safe in our neighborhood. As you can see from the other comments you've received, our residents are willing to work hard to make our neighborhood safe and we can accomplish so much with just a little help from the County. The KC Sheriffs officers in our area are hard-working professional who need all the support they can get. Please restore funding for the Skyway area.

Jeff Brown and Anne Watanabe

I've lived in the Skyway area for over 10 years and it seems like the neighborhood has been hit hard by the economic downturn. If this area doesn't get support to maintain at least the current levels of service, it will make it even harder for this area to recover in the future.

Carl DaVault

As a Westhill resident for over 4 decades I have personally experienced the wonderful area that this once was, vibrant businesses, kids able to walk anywhere without fear of being robbed for a petty item, homeowners who kept up their properties, to the now present state of disrepair at every turn.

Safety was the "key" to living up on the hill and was the big reason folks flocked to live up here. Not only the rural feeling with beautiful views almost on every corner, but the feeling of safety. A truly great area to grow up.

In the late 80's early 90's the area began to change for the worse. Many of our longtime residents moved solely out of fear and this opened up the door to a slew of rental homes and a decline in property upkeep and business closures. This started a spiral effect with the by products of crime and vagrancy, until folks began forming alliances with the police to create Blockwatch Groups and ways of taking back our wonderful little community, one task at a time. We are ***so forever grateful to all of the efforts these folks have and are making to this day***, to restore our once desired area.

This brings me to the key most important factor in our neighborhoods, as well as all neighborhoods. **SAFETY**. Without the safety of our law enforcement we cannot do the work that needs to be done to restore the Westhill. Why is this even an option to cut back on since it is the single most factor to thriving areas. If other areas are entitled to safety, why shouldn't The Westhill? I ***implore*** you Sheriff Rahr, to restore funding for our storefront deputy and restore the faith of the hardworking, law abiding, citizens that make up the Westhill.

The voice of many Westhill residents.

I have lived in Skyway since 2001. I have always felt that this area would become more popular and it has. It has a lot of potential and I would hate to see it fail due to a lack of resources and safety. I believe everyone has the right to safety and it's sad that Skyway appears undeserving to some.

A. Gleason

I am new to Skyway. I have enjoyed peaceful safer communities to live in. The home we are currently living in was sold by people who moved AWAY from Skyway.

I desire to see a revived and vibrant community here and am working toward that

with concerned and pro-active fellow residences. We realize that our community health and progress in the revitalization the process is contingent upon public safety.

We are very grateful for the support we currently have however statistics prove that we need more than "reactive" law enforcement here.

Perhaps in the already-safe communities "reactive" service is acceptable in the current difficult times of "cuts". But by all means, in our neighborhood where everyone understands the vital part public safety plays in the health of a community as well as in the business revitalization, with current polemic crime rate here... please consider our needs when it comes to dividing up the \$1.5 million dollars in the reserve for 2011.

We need PROACTIVE law enforcement and more training for private citizens, perhaps we can work together to create safety, for a more revenue-generating community and for a better quality of life for the people of Skyway.

Steven and Sarah Holmes

The following board members of the West Hill Community Council asked me (Sonja Bowden) to add their names to this request for funding for our storefront deputy and school resource officer:

Gurine Nordby
Gene Lux
Lou LeCroy
Curtis Faulks

I have lived in the Skyway/Lakeridge area for about 10 years now. I have gotten to know my neighbors and see lots of us out while I'm on my morning run. I think we live in a beautiful area with a lot of potential, but for some reason, the "baddies" seem to think it's okay to move in and out of here and to commit their crimes against each other and against us on a regular basis, and to use our neighborhood for a dumping ground. I am very encouraged by the increase in the engagement by us residents, but we absolutely need "official" help. We need law enforcement and King County government officials to begin to take an interest in our area and to make an investment of time and resources to help us turn this around. It is well documented that our South End is suffering from rising crime, and this just does not need to be. With more feet on the street by the police and more engagement with us to help us discourage criminal behavior, we can save our neighborhood from declining further. It is better to turn something around while it is still good then to let it go into complete blight and have to start anew. You have fully engaged citizens here; please meet us halfway by devoting some good resources to helping

us preserve and improve our neighborhood and quality of life here.

- Jane Lockwood

I have another comment to add. We need some detectives up here. It's rare to leave the house and not see drug dealing. It's all around us.

And we always worry about being burglarized every time we go out. That's not a good way to live.

Sonja Bowden

Sam and Denise Rousso

We have lived in the Lakeridge area for almost thirty years and never had to take extraordinary measures for personal and household safety until recent years. We have a great block watch - but it cannot carry the clout against crimes of property and personal injury/death that the sheriff storefront in Skyway can. We have had to install a burglar alarm system in our home because we have been threatened with property burglars. This system isn't just nice for when we are on vacation, it has become essential in day to day living here.. And family members are reluctant to visit us - and simply will not drive through Skyway to our home anymore - they are afraid. The sheriff's have been wonderful in connecting with our community members - getting to know and helping in any way they can to maintain some degree of safety in the West Hill area. Please give them back to us - they are not just a nice presence - they are essential to basic safety in our neighborhood.

Cissy and Mick McLane

I am a resident of the SkyCrest neighborhood and just as recent as two evenings ago, we heard three gun shots fired around 9:30 pm, very close to our home. It turns out that the next morning we noticed the cars' window below our street had been shot out. My family and all my dear neighbors drive this very road that it happened and this could have been anyone of them coming home and been struck by a stray bullet. This is insane to me to think that this is now the normal way of life for some people.

I can only imagine if someone had been sitting in the car at the time of the shooting. We are a VERY vigilant group up here in SkyCrest and will always report anything suspicious to the police. We happen to be very lucky as we have a fantastic BlockWatch captain that we can depend on to report incidents to. He works closely with our Storefront Detective, Marty and was always very successful in getting an officer to respond to our requests. Without that link to the police dept we are in jeopardy of more incidents that will go unresponded to. I really don't want this to make me move as I know that crime and guns are everywhere, but this time it happened way to close for comfort. Please restore our funding for more police presence and maybe we can all sleep better knowing our law enforcement is on our side.

The Kosten family

Who can we turn to now? We felt much safer when we had our store front.

Things have changed so much since we moved here some 40 years ago, we had a fantastic neighborhood, we felt safe, our kids were safe but now ROBBERIES, STOLEN CARS, ATTACKS ON PEOPLE, BEATINGS, DRUG DEALINGS, POT HOUSES AND GUN SHOTS. This week we heard shots in the evening and the next day we saw a car in our neighborhood with the back window completely shot out. Why did they decide to take away our protectors and give us these worries now?? We've paid taxes for years and deserve to feel safe.

We need to allocate funds to bring our heroes back to protect us and are there at the store front when we need them.

Concerned long time resident of Westhill

Its insane to think that the safety of our neighborhoods and law abiding citizens are being jeopardized. Take away the store front and crime will double, or you'll have regular people taking the law into their own hands, Westhill citizens are getting sick and tired of thugs and criminals running the show, bringing down our neighborhoods, and causing homes owners and business's to flee. All the while these criminals get the perks of doing their crime and probably are rejoicing that the budget for our store front has been cut. Westhill citizens have had to deal with more than their share of being put on the "back burner" when it comes to budget cuts. Why must we beg for something that is **so necessary** and vital for a community to thrive? To the powers that be, PLEASE consider our plea for funds to be restored to our store front.

A. Ciotta

Having started a block watch group almost seven years ago because of burglaries in our neighborhood and violent crimes such as a violent home invasion happening very close to us I felt the need to feel safer and become more civic minded.

Since then my co-captain and group members have successfully involved more than 85 people in this neighborhood group as well. Marty's help as well as other deputies being involved have impacted many other people's lives and will continue to do so. We do not want to regress back to the days of more violent crimes in our neighborhoods. It is pure foolishness for all parties involved as well as crazy dangerous for the ultimate safety of all of our police men and women who are trying to protect and make a difference to use lack of resources as the reason to cut back on a Sheriff in our neighborhood specifically. Find a way.....Given what has also just happened in Japan these groups have led our neighborhood to become more prepared for disaster planning and so forth which will help all of you do your jobs

better when, and if these stressed systems will be even more stressed. Please continue to help us have a team for the best and for the many. Please restore this position of our storefront.

Jane Holmes- Lakeridge Drive resident

Years ago a new coworker joined our company. When we asked him where he lived he would say Hilltop (in Tacoma), then he would apologize and say now he knows of the high crime in the area, but he didn't know about it when he moved in. Then he would state that it is getting better because the police and neighborhood residents have joined forces to rid the area of the undesirables. And it worked.

Lately my real estate agent friend told me **not** to tell people that I live in Skyway. He said, because of the high crime reputation of Skyway my friends will **not** want to visit me.

Now our community is considering changing the name because of the reputation as a dangerous place with shootings, drug houses and burglaries.

I cannot tell my friends the Sheriff and the community has joined forces to reduce crime and make the neighborhood safer. Because of mistaken priorities by the County Council we are losing police protection just when we need more.

Please bring back the funding for our Storefront officer. The position is essential to a long term plan to revitalize the community and allow us to say we are proud to live in Skyway.

Fred Sakura
Skycrest Blockwatch
Skyway resident since 1976

We moved to Skyway with the idea that it would continue to improve and be a wonderful community. With the amount of community support, organization, and volunteerism it should be. But with a 2 year old and 6 month old I have to wonder how much longer we can wait. My son is so excited when the helicopters hover or circle around our house. My stomach drops knowing they are in the sky usually because of violence. Losing the storefront undermines all of the hard work the citizens of Skyway are putting into our community. Put your resources into a community that will truly make the most of it.

Lawson Family

Having lived in the Lakeridge community since 1987 I have seen the escalation of crime and diminishing services. This was a safe community. Now we worry

whenever we leave home due to the number of crimes in our neighborhood. It feels as if no one cares or hears us when we ask for more protection. As Block watch captains we scrutinize everyone who walks or drives past our home. When the doorbell rings we do not answer the door unless we are expecting a visitor. To put it bluntly we feel UNSAFE!!!! Restoring our storefront deputy (who knows our community) will help to alleviate much of the stress and demonstrate to us that we matter to the Sheriff's department.

D McMannan and B Renrick

As a local business owner and member of the West Hill Business Association, we have had the express pleasure of working with our storefront officers on a regular basis for many years. They have without a doubt helped to promote a much safer West Hill. Because of their dedication and hard work, and many times on their own time, our area has created a momentum that can only continue if the funding levels for public safety are restored. The strong presence of deputies is critical to our rebuilding and revitalization of Skyway/Westhill. Public vigilance and block watches are great tools, yet need assistance from the police and sheriff departments to be most effective. These officers are vital to our community. Please help our area to improve its image and become an even safer community to work and live in, by funding for a strong police force.

Ronald Minter

Earlington Greenhouse & Nursery

It only makes sense to put resources where the problems are, which is here in Skyway! Officer Marty Hodge has been a boon to the community. He is active with the block watch committees, aggressively follows up on issues, and shares important information quickly. I've lived here since 1988. Things aren't getting better. We need Officer Hodge and the storefront office. We need to be safe.
Ernie Priestley, Skycrest Addi

As the Executive Director of Renton Area Youth and Family Services (RAYS), I represent an agency that has worked on the ground in Skyway for 15 years.

