



KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
516 Third Avenue, W-116
Seattle, WA 98104

Patricia Cole-Tindall
Sheriff

April 23, 2024

Dear Community Member,

I appreciate the many comments people have sent me to share their concerns about people living unhoused in Burien. I understand the challenges facing Burien and am also concerned. I assure you that our police officers and I are committed to ensuring the safety of everyone in the community, even as we are working through challenges with the City's recent changes to its public camping ordinance and contracts for social services. The City of Burien could best support the community and officers by readopting its prior ordinance and re-engaging with its social service providers.

Burien's police officers are committed to ensuring safety of every person living in, doing business in, and visiting the City of Burien. The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) recently provided information about the work that KCSO has been doing under contract with the City of Burien. Under Chief Boe's leadership, Burien PD has made 439 arrests, led by 82 arrests for public use or possession of drugs, and 70 arrests for assault this year. Auto theft, residential burglary, vandalism, and assault were all down from last year over the same time period. An increase in robbery was tied to a specific crime spree where the suspects are now in custody. These results were consistent with preliminary 2023 stats, which showed a 7% decrease for Burien in both crimes against persons and crimes against property. KCSO has been responsive to the needs of the Burien community within the scope of the law.

Many people have commented to me about our enforcement of Burien's public camping ordinance. Before the City recently changed its public camping ordinance, officers enforced the public camping ordinance in partnership with the city's social service contractors. Unfortunately, the Burien City Council passed a new public camping ordinance in March that police officers cannot enforce because it is unconstitutional. The City of Burien then discontinued social service contracts, which are necessary to have effective enforcement and compliance with public camping ordinances. As a result of these decisions, the City of Burien has taken away those tools which police officers and other community members needed. Burien's City Council is in the best position to restore these tools.


People have also shared concerns with me about the police enforcing access required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on city sidewalks. Burien's police chief provided the city manager options to address access, including for ADA purposes, across sidewalks. Compliance with

the ADA is a civil code enforcement process led by other city departments and services; police can provide support when needed or required. Occupying a sidewalk or failing to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act are not criminal offenses that a police officer could arrest someone for.

Your elected representatives on the Burien City Council can correct their action by readopting the previous constitutional camping ordinance, prioritizing outreach services, and utilizing the \$1 million and 35 pallet shelters that were offered by the County almost a year ago to help address the challenge of homelessness in Burien. Absent making these changes, the County, the City, the community, and residents who are unhoused will continue to wait for a court to decide the issue.

The County has asked for quick resolution from the court and the City of Burien continues to delay and attempt to redirect blame. People on both sides of this issue want a more immediate resolution from the City Council instead of waiting for a decision from the Federal Court. You can contact the City Councilmembers at their council meetings and by email. The following link is to the council's meeting calendar [City of Burien - Meeting Schedule \(civicweb.net\)](http://www.civicweb.net) and their email address is council@burienwa.gov.

Respectfully,


Patricia Cole-Tindall
SHERIFF