

Based off the Kitsap County Department of Community Development issuing a final type 1 decision stating that the property used by WSS was in violation of Title 17 of the Kitsap County Zoning Code for un-permitted use in rural residential zoning, it has become imperative that WSPS and citizens work with local officials and their city governments across the county to create similar ordinances. To that end WSPS sent the following to the mayors within Kitsap County.

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Washington State for Public Safety (“WSPS”) is a non-profit organization formed by concerned citizens of Kitsap County. This organization formed in response to a facility opening in North Kitsap County with the intent and purpose of housing sexually violent predators (“SVPS”) civilly committed under 71.09 and conditionally released on a less restrictive alternative (“LRA”). WSPS is committed to stopping the unsafe placement of level III sexually violent predators in residential neighborhoods. Our mission includes working with other community organizations to ensure the safety of our most vulnerable citizens against sexual predators through improved notification, information dissemination, education, and public awareness.

Westsound Support Services, LLC (“WSS”) was created to provide services to SVPs conditionally released from the Secure Commitment Center (“SCC”) on November 7, 2017. WSS entered into a contract with DSHS on December 12, 2017. In January 2018, WSS started housing SVPs in a residential neighborhood just outside of the Poulsbo city limits. There are currently 4 SVPs living at the WSS facility. Although the Superior Court ordered the release of these individuals, there was no notification to the local government or public about the creation of this facility.

In response to this housing, Kitsap County enacted an Interim Zoning Ordinance for Group Residential Facility – Secured High Risk on February 6, 2019. This ordinance limits the zoning areas that would allow this type of land use to commercial, regional center, industrial, business park and business center zones. This ordinance also provides for public hearings to be conducted before the County’s Hearing Examiner before a permit is issued. A copy of the Frequently Asked Questions for Interim Zoning is attached to this letter.

After a thorough investigation, the Kitsap County Department of Community Development issued a final type 1 decision stating that the property used by WSS was in violation of Title 17 of the Kitsap County Zoning Code for un-permitted use in rural residential zoning and required that the use of the property as a LRA facility cease. WSS and/or the property owners have until March 20, to comply or appeal this decision. It is unknown at this time if WSS will relocate or appeal.

We are writing to urge you to adopt a zoning ordinance within your city limits that would prohibit this type of housing in residential neighborhoods. Chris Wright, DSHS media relation manager, reported that DSHS was purposefully looking for housing in Kitsap County for SVPs. He stated that the SCC has over a dozen SVPs from Kitsap County. This coupled with the fact that it is unknown if/where WSS will relocate requires action on behalf of local governments to protect the citizens of our communities. The safety of our children should be of paramount interest to you. These facilities should never be located near schools, school bus stops or in residential neighborhoods. Please consider taking action to prevent this nightmare from happening within your city limits.

Thank you for your consideration,  
WASHINGTON STATE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY  
Pamela Benson, Executive Director

Please follow up with your mayor with your opinion.

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