



South King County Mayors Hoping for Further Discussion on New Felony Charging Practices

This week, the mayors of Auburn, Federal Way, Kent, and Renton met with the King County Executive, King County Prosecutor, and senior staff to collaboratively work toward solutions to address the regional rise in violent gun and drug related crimes. Our meeting was productive and will require much more effort to effectively reach a consensus on how we may reduce these troubling trends in our communities.

During this meeting, we learned that the King County Prosecutor's office implemented a diversion program in November for youth that enter the criminal justice system called Restorative Community Pathways (RCP).

While we support RCP for simple misdemeanor crimes for first-time juvenile offenders, we are alarmed to learn that felonies such as bringing a gun or other weapon to school or a physical assault will not result in an arrest, at a time when we are seeing rising violence and mental health crises in schools.

Our cities are already seeing an increase in residential and commercial burglary, car theft, organized retail theft, felony harassment, and other felonies that will also be deferred to RCP.

As the Mayors of Auburn, Federal Way, Kent, and Renton we call on the King County leadership to immediately pause this program and engage in further conversation. Together, we can find a balance between restorative justice and the safety of our communities. Failure to prosecute felony crimes is taking King County in the wrong direction and is making our communities less safe.

We have offered to continue working toward better solutions that will reduce crime. It is our sincere belief that in working together we can address these serious crimes and keep our communities safe.

Mayor Nancy Backus
Auburn

Mayor Jim Ferrell
Federal Way

Mayor Dana Ralph
Kent

Mayor Armondo Pavone
Renton

Dec. 17, 2021