

As a native of West Seattle

~~I think the city has been pretty shiesty about it's whole approach to this situation by purposely mislabeling the area of it's proposed sites as South Park in the hope that we of West Seattle wouldn't notice. But, as any true West Seattleite knows, anything west of 509, is West Seattle!~~

*How is it that out of 11 possible sites  
2 are within West Seattle or South Park?*

You keep touting the Kent Regional Justice Center as this great example of success, citing its location next to ball fields, and a new hockey stadium. All the while, conveniently omitting, certain other crucial details of its location.

Firstly:

It is in DOWNTOWN Kent!

The very CENTER of its downtown.

There are no residential neighborhoods down there.

It is in a BUSINESS district!

Secondly:

It is in the center of a transportation hub!

A transit station and freeway access, are located DIRECTLY behind the jail to the west.

And a train station 2 blocks away to the east.

Those released from custody can easily and quickly leave.

These factors are in absolutely NO WAY present in these suggested West Seattle locations!

These sites are located in neighborhood backwaters with extremely limited, if any, transportation options for those released from jail. The last thing our neighborhoods need is a bunch of disgruntled people being released into our midst in the middle of the night to mill around in the middle of nowhere with no way to leave.

They are technically stranded.

If the city of Seattle TRULY wanted to follow its much hailed example of the Kent Regional Justice Center, they would be looking in a more appropriate locale, DOWNTOWN!

Sincerely,

Noel Beach  
Highland Park Resident

*Noel Beach 6/25/08*

STATEMENT OF  
STEVE SCHWALB, PRESIDENT AND CEO  
PIONEER HUMAN SERVICES  
7440 W. MARGINAL WAY S.  
SEATTLE, WA 98108

In support of  
Siting the new city jail at 7200 West Marginal Way. South

June 26, 2008

Good evening –

My name is Steve Schwalb. I serve as President and CEO of Pioneer Human Services. Pioneer is a local non-profit that provides a chance for change to individuals overcoming challenges associated with criminal histories, chemical dependency, and mental health issues, by providing them training and employment, treatment and counseling, affordable housing, and re-entry services.

I am here, on behalf of my organization, to strongly endorse 7200 West Marginal Way South for the site of the new city jail. We are close neighbors to this site - Pioneer Human Services has two substantial operations each within two blocks of the proposed site, our headquarters 7440 West Marginal Way South and our manufacturing plant at 7000 Highland Parkway.

I appreciate that, for the average citizen, it seems intuitively certain that such a facility will cause an increase in neighborhood crime and a decrease in property values. However, the facts show, based on decades of irrefutable experience around the country, and right here in King County, that just the opposite is true. I am confident that this site can fulfill the need for additional detention capacity without jeopardizing in any way the safety of the surrounding community or adversely affecting property values. I base this conclusion on several years of experience in the operation and siting of correctional facilities.

I worked for the federal prison system for 30 years. From 1977-1980, I was stationed at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana. My job required that I live in housing on the prison grounds, within sight and walking distance of the prison. My wife and I had two children under the age of 4. Inmates were responsible for mowing the lawn, washing the exterior windows of the house, and shoveling the snow in the winter. The prison was four blocks from the town's large shopping mall and six blocks from a city park and playground. We never once experienced any negative issues. The facility had been an integral part of the city for 40 years and was well regarded as a valuable part of the community.

From 1987 to 1990, I served as Director of the King County Jail in downtown Seattle. The jail was at capacity and we initiated a process to site and construct a second detention facility. I selected and supervised the individual responsible for the detailed planning, design and construction of this second facility. Although I transferred back to the federal prison system before the project was completed, the end result of that effort is the Regional Justice Center (RJC) in Kent.

The RJC, right here in our backyard, is an irrefutable example of what happens to a neighborhood when such a facility is built. When it opened about 12 years ago, it was in a so-so part of town. Since then, due in no small part to its professional design and operation, it has become an integral component of the surrounding development. The Kent Commons has sprung up, the event center is underway nearby, retail businesses have been added, and I understand a community pool is in the works. In short, the neighborhood is thriving economically, property values have not gone down and crime has not gone up.

Shortly after I transferred back to the federal prison system, in 1991, I was put in charge of the site selection process for new federal prisons and jails, including a new Federal Detention Center in Seattle. After the county chose Kent for the RJC site, we were approached by the newly incorporated City of SeaTac, because their proposed RJC site had come in second to Kent. They were very supportive of hosting the Federal Detention Center and we chose that site. Today, the facility has been open about 10 years. It is adjacent to houses, businesses and a golf course. As in Kent, the presence of the facility has supported nearby economic development, and there have been no negative effects.

There are several other examples from the federal system of the “good neighbor” that a detention facility can be. In New York City, the federal jail is adjacent to a catholic church; in Chicago, the facility shares a site with an outdoor plaza and an entrance to the elevated passenger train system; in San Diego, the jail is one block from a very prominent shopping mall and across the street from a high-rise of condos, none of which sell for less than \$1 million; in Los Angeles, the jail is one block from the Los Angeles Children’s Museum.

What these and dozens of other examples clearly illustrate is that correctional facilities can be sited and operated without adversely affecting the surrounding neighborhood. In fact, the effects have been better than “not negative” – they have consistently been positive.

As certain as I am of the facts, I hope you will not accept everything I say without checking for yourself. I would strongly urge that a committee of representatives from our neighborhood surrounding the West Marginal Way site make arrangements to visit with local officials, residents, businesses and others who

are neighbors to the Kent RJC. I am acquainted with the RJC officials and the Kent mayor, and would be happy to assist in this effort.

In conclusion, I believe that building the new City of Seattle jail at the West Marginal Way South site will have a positive impact by providing additional economic development and jobs to the area, by improving the safety of the immediate and adjacent neighborhoods, and by sustaining property values. I would strongly urge us to support siting this facility at the West Marginal Way South site, and to communicate our support to the city officials.

Thank you.