



# Doug Richardson

Pierce County Council Chair | District 6

*Serving Anderson & Ketron Islands, Steilacoom, JBLM, DuPont, Lakewood & Parkland*

## CONTACT ME

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For more information go to:  
[piercecountywa.org/district6](http://piercecountywa.org/district6)

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- Community Development
- South Sound 911 Policy Board
- Law Library Board of Trustees
- Performance Audit Vice Chair
- Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Disability (LEOFF)
- Pierce County Flood Control Zone District
- Pierce County Regional Council
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Transportation Benefit District
- South Sound Military and Communities Partnership
- Pierce County Reserve Officers Board of Trustees

## Dear Friends and Neighbors,

In January I was elected chair of the Pierce County Council for 2016. At a retreat shortly thereafter, each councilmember discussed their priorities for the year. Every councilmember spoke of their concern for the growing number of nuisance properties in neighborhoods and the increase in homelessness.

Nuisance properties have a negative impact on property values as many of the homes are abandoned, attract vandals, and have overgrown vegetation. Often criminal activity takes place on the property and trash accumulates, attracting rodents that create a community health problem. The Council established a fund two years ago and has provided funding to support the abatement of blighted properties. In 2016 we will explore options to more quickly deal with the most egregious.

Illegal encampments have sprung up throughout the County mirroring a national trend. The encampments pose a threat to public safety, human health, the environment and the homeless themselves. In Pierce County most are established on public property. When encampments are taken down, a significant amount of County funds are expended to clean up the property and

usually involve expensive hazardous materials teams, especially when there is drug activity on-site.

Some of the homeless have lost their homes due to unemployment and the economy. Unfortunately, research shows a large percentage have substance abuse problems and need treatment to get sober to be placed in shelters and return to the workforce. The homeless with mental health issues similarly need access to health professionals.

This year the County Council will establish a team of health professionals, housing agencies, County departments, and law enforcement to develop a strategy to combat this growing problem. Taken together with our focus on property crime, quality of life in Pierce County for all residents will be improved.

My door is always open so please contact my office with any concerns or questions about your County government. Looking forward to a great summer in beautiful Pierce County.

Respectfully,

Doug Richardson  
Pierce County Council, 6th District



*Anderson Island Ferry Landing*

## Changes Coming to **Parkland**

On March 15 the Council adopted an ordinance to transfer Parkland's "Hope Property" across from Gonyea Park to the Pierce County Community Development Corporation. The change of hands paves the way for development of approximately 45 mixed-income, owner-occupied, single-family houses on the site.

Sager Family Homes was selected as the private developer for the project. The local homebuilder has strong ties to the community and extensive experience with this type of development. In addition to home construction and other improvements, Sager will install sidewalks and other pedestrian enhancements along the project's frontage with 10th Avenue South, and landscape the west side of 8th Avenue Court South.

I am enthusiastic about this new development and the changes coming to Parkland. The project will help boost home ownership rates in the neighborhood and provide job opportunities in the construction trades. The development will also help alleviate reoccurring problems on the Hope Property, including illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, and transient encampments.

Sager hosted a community meeting March 31 to gather public input on the project. Development is expected to begin later this summer, and the first homes could be ready for occupancy as early as winter 2016.

## Keeping You Connected **Pierce County Ferry**

After recent service disruptions and communication issues, the policy was changed so that Ferry Alerts are now issued for any run leaving later than ten minutes and a detailed reason is now stated. I have met with the Executive and Public Works staff so ferry customers can expect real enhancements to communication, customer service, and improvements to the schedule. One improvement coming this summer is the new ticketing system that will provide customers the ability to use their mobile devices to purchase and use tickets.

The Airport and Ferry division also completed a Waterborne Transportation Study with Burk Consulting to address current and future demand for ferry service. In response to the more frequent schedule delays, the Airport and Ferry Division is developing service options that include adding time between runs and adding an early morning and later evening runs during the work week. These options will be presented to the public and the Council this spring.

Sign up to receive rider alerts by visiting [www.piercecountywa.org/ferry](http://www.piercecountywa.org/ferry)





## Early Success for Property Crimes Unit

As I reported in my last newsletter, the Pierce County Council voted unanimously to create the Property Crimes Unit through the sheriff's department to help reduce property crime in our area—and better protect residents and business owners. The unit has been in operation for just a few months, but we're already seeing good results.

**To date, over a dozen arrests have been made.**



## Mental Health Analysis

In September 2015 the Pierce County Council passed a resolution to authorize a comprehensive study of the County's behavioral health systems by an independent consultant. Specifically, the study will identify current gaps in service and current resources available to meet those needs, and prioritize how to meet unmet needs.

The County selected Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), a firm with over 40 years experience in behavioral health, for the project. We anticipate the work will take place over several months. A final report will be presented to the County Council in September 2016.



## Pierce County Responds How it Works

We get a lot of calls about junk vehicles and problem houses. We also hear complaints about inaction on these issues. Individual calls or reports to different agencies don't necessarily make it to the appropriate place of action, which can result in delays and frustration.

You should always call 911 in the case of medical emergencies and criminal activity. Land-use violations, public nuisances, illegal dumping, abandoned cars, environmental concerns, and encampment issues in unincorporated Pierce County should be directed to Pierce County Responds, a division of Public Works. Pierce County Responds investigates complaints, provides technical assistance to property owners, and organizes solutions for code enforcement. The division partners and coordinates with the appropriate agency to resolve the issue.

To report a violation or concern, call the Pierce County Responds hotline at (253) 798-4636 or report it online at [www.piercecountyresponds.org](http://www.piercecountyresponds.org).

Feel free to follow up with my office.

## Sewer Task Force

Sewer service is an essential utility, but the permitting and design process can be time consuming and costly. Last year Pierce County formed a sewer task force to improve this process for businesses and homeowners. A number of changes are expected to improve the customer experience, reduce permitting and system-development costs, and ensure more timely and predictable permits—all while maintaining high standards. That's good for the local economy.

I have long advocated for improvements to the sewer permitting system, and I look forward to implementation of the task force recommendations over the coming months.

View the task force recommendations at [www.piercecountywa.org/sewertaskforce](http://www.piercecountywa.org/sewertaskforce).





## Lakewood celebrates 20 years

On February 28, 1996, the City of Lakewood officially incorporated and opened its doors for business. Today, the community boasts some 500 acres in parks and open space; millions invested in sewer, street, sidewalk and other infrastructure; a strong police department and outstanding regional partnership with Joint Base Lewis McChord.

In February I joined the Lakewood City Council to celebrate the city's 20th birthday and present a proclamation on behalf of Pierce County. I encourage you to celebrate, too, by getting to know the community better. Mark your calendar for the opening day of the Lakewood Farmers Market on Tuesday, June 7, in front of City Hall.



## Pierce County

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- Changes Coming to Parkland

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# District 6 Newsletter

**Doug Richardson**  
Pierce County Council Chair

