King County's unincorporated area is often likened to its second largest city. I'm one of the reasons for King County to claim this virtual second city. My name is Mark Johnston, and I live in Skyway.

I'm here today to speak about how county housing policies have come to affect the need for other taxpayer-funded services in my community, namely emergency medical response.

In order to incentivise projects that offer below market rate housing to low income residents, Washington State law allows property tax exemption for certain properties that offer such housing. Housing like this clearly meets an essential need in King County. The tax exemption for low income housing includes property taxes levied by special service districts, such as King County Fire District 20 in Skyway, that also provide essential services.

In 2013, call volume for basic life support to residents of tax exempt properties made up approximately 20% of calls to which King County Fire District 20 responded. As a service district funded by property taxes, this means that the remainder of property owners in the community of Skyway fund this service, although the low income housing need it serves represents a broader county need fulfilled.

I'm here to encourage the council to consider these facts and to increase funding in the EMS Levy directed at supporting Basic Life Support services.

The 2014 annual report of the King County Emergency Medical Services Division proclaims, "2014 is a year of new programs, new research, and a renewed commitment to equity of care in a socially and fiscally responsible manner for all." The residents and taxpayers of the greater Skyway area hope that the council will bring equity to our neighborhoods by recognizing that policies in one area such as housing do have broad effects in other areas such as emergency medical response. We ask that you take these policies into account and to allocate Basic Life Support services funds to serve these low income residents.

Mark Johnston

KCFD #20
Call Volume 2013
King County

Call Volume

1 - 12
13 - 35
36 - 68
69 - 110
111 - 255

Fire Departments

Low income housing

0   0.25   0.5   1 Miles

Public Health
Seattle & King County

kcfd20.mxd
By D. Sharlov