

Town Council,

This correspondence is the inaugural edition of periodic updates from the residents of the Northside District. Our intent is to do a better job of keeping the Town Council and Chapel Hill Police Department apprised of the concerns of residents in our community, as well as relay the successful outcomes of the Town's and Police Department's efforts to address these concerns.

The focus of this letter is to relay our community's desire for a more effective Police presence in the Northside District. While our community praises the Town Council and Police Department for creating the Sykes Rd. substation, we are disappointed that there has been little, if any, notable increase in Police presence. The substation has been operated as a Police 'outpost' instead of the Police 'hub' that it had been billed as to the community. Its 9AM-5PM hours-of-operation ignore the swell of illicit activity that takes place during the evening and early morning hours. Further, the lack of Police traffic to and from the substation has also contributed to its lack of efficacy, and has limited the area of positive impact to a one block radius, at best. That said, keeping the substation open 24 hours and implementing policies to encourage Officers to visit more often would still fall short of Northside resident's expectations. We ask the Town Council and Chapel Hill Police Department to add Police foot patrols and/or bike patrols dedicated to the Northside District. Northside residents, Chapel Hill Police Officers, and the criminals who plague Northside streets alike, agree that Police cruiser patrols simply result in temporarily dispersing individuals who engage in illicit activity. Once a cruiser rounds the corner, the criminals haughtily return to their crimes. The Police Department have proclaimed that they rely on the residents to call 911 to report illicit activity each and every time they witness it. Unfortunately, the same Police Department's patrolmen advise residents NOT to file charges when a crime is committed for fear of retribution from the transgressor. What has resulted is a neighborhood replete with criminals who roam the streets freely and without fear of consequence, and residents who feel helpless and fear for their property and safety. The only feasible resolution to this catch 22, in the eyes of the Northside residents, is to put Officers on the ground who can witness for themselves the crimes that occur on a daily basis on our streets. An Officer on foot/bike is much less conspicuous than a Police Cruiser and can better position him/herself to subvert the illicit activities that continue to degrade the quality of life in Northside. It is a self reinforcing cycle. Officer's testimony in Court carries more authority than a resident's and should result in a higher rate of prosecution, deterring future crimes. Officers do not have to fear the potential for retribution that has discouraged our residents from participating as actively as we would like. In time, as Northside residents experience a decline in crime on our streets, we expect many more will gain the confidence to participate in the process. We ask that the Town Council and Police Department to implement foot/bike patrols immediately. We feel that this measure is aligned with the 'Community Policing' that our Town Council and incoming Police Chief have lauded in recent news articles. Thank you for your consideration

Northside Community Watch