

April 6, 2025

Honorable Assembly members,

Chiming in on the drug dog issue that is coming up for a vote soon. It's never a simple decision when the community faces one of those "but it's free" type situations and I appreciate your diligence on debating this and am proud of the community stepping up to help privately fund a local concern... I vividly remember the concerns over the fire hall that was "free" (fyi... I glad we have the fire hall). So here's my opinion to add to the debate.

I am opposed to the dog for the following reasons:

1.      money: hardly needs to be said that we are entering a period of extreme austerity, local, state and federal. My top priority is basic city functions and school funding, not adding new "tools" that will continue to add costs, Even if private donations cover part of the cost, the community will likely still bear the long-term costs of training, maintenance, and handler staffing—expenses that could grow significantly over time and take away from other important services.
2.      Need: I may be myopic on this, and I don't mean to sound uncaring, but none of my family or friends uses drugs, I have a sense of the local characters I might assume have drug issues and it seems like they are never forced to pay for their involvement even though I am fairly certain the police likely know who uses/deals drugs in town. Maybe the tool we need is law/judicial change ( more judges/magistrates?) or we could invest instead in education, treatment programs, or youth programs which might better reduce substance abuse and crime over the long term.
3.      Use: In my opinion, drug dogs never make me feel secure when I see them in the public, like at SeaTac. I worry about my rights if they pick up the wrong scent on me. They can be quite unnerving in public settings. If it's a dog used to subdue criminals that is trained to attack people, it would not have any value in public relations or use with kids in the schools. I worry they could be used for things not related to drugs, such as large public gatherings. Introducing a drug dog sends a message that our community is prioritizing a punitive approach to a social problem. They are an intimidating tool that could distance our small friendly local police force from the public they are meant to serve and protect.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dan Sullivan