2012 Seattle City Council Statement of Legislative Intent

Ready for Notebook

Tab	Action	Option	Version
24	1	A	1

Budget Action Title: Police: Update Neighborhood Policing Plan

Councilmembers: Bagshaw; Burgess; Clark

Staff Analyst: Peter Harris

Date		Total	SB	BH	SC	TR	JG	NL	RC	TB	MO
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

Statement of Legislative Intent:

In approving the budget for the Police Department, it is the Council's intent that the Department update and refine the Neighborhood Policing Plan and that the Mayor propose a 2013 budget consistent with the updated plan. The Council requests that the Department provide the updated plan no later than June of 2012.

The Council expects the updated plan to be fiscally realistic. The purpose of the plan is to show how to provide the most public safety for the resources available.

This statement of intent outlines topics the updated plan should address.

Background:

The current Neighborhood Policing Plan reflects six years of discussion among the Police Department, the Executive and the Council about increasing the ability of patrol officers to improve public safety throughout the city:

> In a 2006 Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI), the Council asked the Department to expedite the implementation of geographic based policing to better match patrol deployment with patrol workload in order to improve the Department's ability to respond to emergency calls and increase the amount of time patrol officers spend on proactive policing. In another 2006 SLI, the Council proposed that the Council and Executive jointly develop performance measures for the Department.
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> In October 2006, Resolution 30930 asked the Mayor to recommend the appropriate number of police officers for the years 2008 through 2012 based on desired public safety outcomes and to propose a 2008 budget consistent with this plan.

In March 2007, the Department issued the Neighborhood Policing Plan (NPP), which proposed to redraw patrol beats, create new patrol work shifts and add 105 patrol officers between 2008 and 2012, all to make patrol officers available when and where they are needed and to give them more time for proactive work.

In September 2007, Resolution 31014 endorsed the NPP; Resolution 30996 established performance measures for the Department; and the Mayor proposed a 2008 budget to implement the NPP. The Council approved the budget in November 2007.

In 2008 and 2009 combined the Department exceeded the hiring goals of the NPP with a net increase of 69 officers in those two years. Due to budget constraints the Department stopped hiring in mid-2010, leading to a net decrease of 44 officers in 2010 and 2011 combined. The 2012 Proposed Budget proposes no change in the number of officers. As a result, by the end of 2012, the Department will have added 25 officers over the five years covered by the NPP rather than the planned 105. Because it has not met the NPP hiring goals, it has not yet established new work shifts for patrol officers. It remains uncertain whether and when the NPP will be implemented.

Topics the updated Neighborhood Policing Plan should address:

1. Core NPP principles

The Council continues to support the core principles of the NPP:

Patrol officers should be deployed in ways that strengthen officers' sense of ownership of the neighborhoods they serve.

Patrol deployment should match workload by geography and time.

Responses to 911 calls and proactive policing should be provided equitably and dependably in all parts of the city at all times.

Proactive time should be used to achieve public safety outcomes identified by command staff and the public.

2. Measuring NPP implementation

The first three principles above imply that patrol officers in every beat in the city should have enough proactive time to address neighborhood crime problems at the times those problems can be addressed most effectively. Successful implementation of the plan should be measured in part by whether this is the case. The proactive work of specialized units within the five precincts is a valuable supplement to the proactive work of patrol officers, but is not a substitute for it.

3. Improving patrol shifts

The plan to hire 105 additional officers assumed that meeting the objectives for 911 response and proactive time would require at least 605 patrol officers. This in turn assumed that all patrol officers

would work 10-hour shifts. A shift structure combining 9-hour shifts and 10-hour shifts may be more efficient, and thus may make it possible to meet the objectives with fewer patrol officers. The Council believes such a shift structure can be beneficial to individual officers as well as to the public.

4. Roles of officers outside patrol

Because the NPP would create more time for patrol officers to investigate and otherwise address neighborhood crime problems, it implies a complementary change in the roles of precinct detectives, centralized investigation units and other centralized sworn mission specialists who also address neighborhood crime problems. The City's budget situation may require that any patrol staffing requirements be met in part by transferring officers from other units into patrol rather than only by adding officers to the Department. For these reasons an updated plan should comprehend the work of sworn mission specialists as well as patrol officers.

5. Using scientific knowledge

The goal of giving patrol officers more useful proactive time is based in part on research showing that focused problem solving by officers is among the most effective forms of policing for preventing crime. The science of what works in policing has continued to progress in the years since the plan was proposed. The Department and the City should take advantage of this knowledge on a continuing basis. The recent Drug Market Initiative and the Department's intention to explore the benefits of place-based policing are excellent examples.

6. Limiting change in the number of officers

Large fluctuations in the number of officers hired each year create inefficiency in recruiting, evaluating and training new officers. When the Department meets budget by stopping hiring entirely, the number of fully trained officers continues to decline well after hiring resumes. When Mayor and Council ask the Department to meet higher staffing goals fast, the training operation must increase fast, and the quality of recruits and the quality of the training they receive may go down. For these reasons the City and the Department should limit year-to-year changes in the number of officers hired. A reasonable target may be to limit annual hiring to a range between one-third more and one-third less than the number needed to replace the officers who leave the force in the year.

Responsible Council Committee(s): Public Safety and Education

Date Due to Council: June 29, 2012