

**Overview and Initial Issues Identification
SEATTLE YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE (SYVPI)**

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Introduction:

The Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative (SYVPI) was established in 2009 in response to a series of youth homicides in the City of Seattle. It utilizes a neighborhood-based approach to reduce youth violence in the city. These networks, located in the Central, Southeast, and Southwest portions of the City, offer services including case management, mentoring, employment, school resources, and aggression replacement programs. Outreach teams involve elements of the courts, the police, schools, families, faith communities, parks, and other youth service providers. An initial assessment or screening helps determine the degree of risk of violence and what services may be beneficial to a particular youth. Table 1 shows that the total number of youth involved in SYVPI has grown steadily each year. Parks and Recreation has recorded the greatest number of involved youth.

Table 1: SYVPI Youth Served Per Investment Area and Year

Investment Area	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*
ART	14	63	43	43	27	41
Case Management	80	536	554	561	485	449
Community Matching Grants (2011-2014)/ Neighborhood Matching Funds (2009-10)	32	33	130	90	187	209
Employment	86	204	390	367	486	381
Mentoring	48	197	231	200	225	335
Parks and Recreation	43	331	116	474	765	925
Street Outreach	4	36	226	249	196	124
Mini Community Grants	-----	-----	42	280	203	152
Youth Served	307	1400	1732	2264	2574	2616

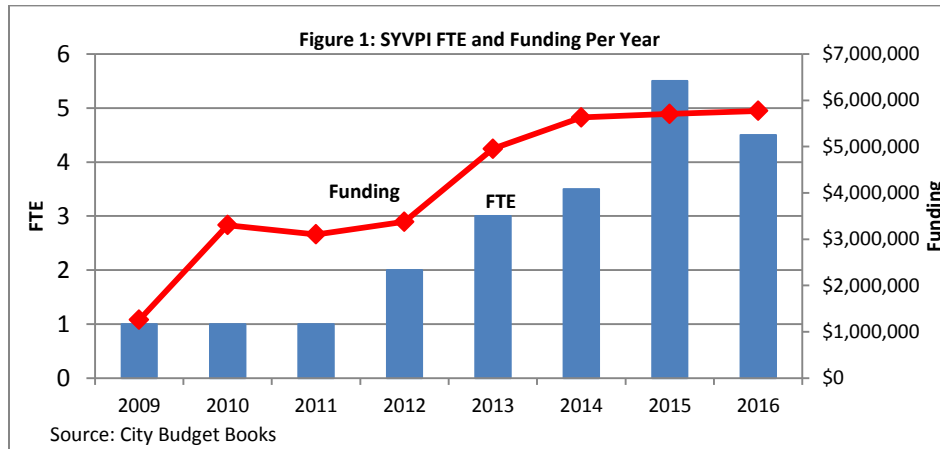
*Figures as of 10/20/14
Source: CBO

This initiative was slated for evaluation in 2014. However, prior to attempting an evaluation, the City Auditor oversaw an examination of the program’s ability to be evaluated. The results of this work determined that SYVPI lacked vital elements that would allow it to be rigorously evaluated as one program. While researchers found some evidence-based components, dedicated staff, and a culturally relevant approach in place, it lacks a clearly defined target population, a coherent logic model, feasible evaluation methods, a proper control group, and data collection methodologies.¹

The Mayor’s proposed budget moves SYVPI from the Department of Neighborhoods to the newly proposed Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL). After the program’s

¹ Glosser, A., Obara, E., Dyke, A., Harris, A., & Kim, E. (2014, October). Seattle youth violence prevention initiative – Evaluability assessment. *The City of Seattle Office of City Auditor*. Retrieved from advanced copy

development in 2009 SYVPI's funding has grown steadily over time – adding several dedicated FTE along the way. Figure 1 shows this growth.



In the proposed budget, it maintains its \$5.6 Million dollar budget and proposes to add two positions – both using existing initiative resources. In response to the aforementioned examination of SYVPI the Mayor proposed using 2015 to address the programmatic issues highlighted by the evaluability assessment. In concert with existing research partners, 2015 funding would be used to:

- Clearly identify SYVPI's target population and conduct a needs assessment;
- Develop a coherent logic model that is directly aligned with SYVPI's goals;
- Identify feasible evaluation methods;
- Identify an appropriate comparison group; and
- Develop robust data collection and methods.

Identified Issue:

1. New Positions

The two proposed positions are meant to assist the initiative with adjustments stemming from the assessment.

Strategic Advisor 1

- Help with the new risk assessment tool and assist providers in its implementation
- Funded through savings achieved through changes to SYVPI recreation, network, and street outreach contracts

Strategic Advisor 2 (sunsets at the end of 2015)

- Research and hands-on work related to the evaluation readiness work plan
 - Provide Mayor and Council with updates on evaluation readiness work plan progress
- Funded with existing resources associated with the original program evaluation

process

The intent is to make changes to the initiative and transform it into a program that can be properly evaluated. Given this, evaluation funds will be needed over the next year or two. The proposed budget allocates these funds to the new Strategic Advisor 2 position to perform elements of the work plan related to evaluation readiness. The City maintains a research focused relationship with George Mason University's Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy and UW Division of Behavior Health and Justice Policy. The Mayor's proposal for this program calls for working collaboratively with these entities on revamping it. The evaluation components related to this one year position may be better suited for these research oriented partners.

Options

- A. Do not add the Strategic Advisor 2 position in the 2015 budget, use research partners for work plan assistance and needs assessment, and maintain any additional savings for future initiative evaluation.
- B. Adopt the Mayor's proposal with no changes.

2. Tracking the Progress

The Mayor's budget proposes to tackle the issues identified in the evaluability assessment in order to get SYVPI in position to perform a rigorous evaluation of the program. This involves clearly identifying the program's target population, assessing the needs of that population, developing a coherent logic model that is directly aligned with SYVPI's goals, identifying feasible evaluation methods that include a proper control group and robust data collection methods. This must be done promptly - in order to ensure that money spent on this program is attending to the appropriate population with evidence-based programs to generate the intended results of reducing the risks of youth violence in the community. The assessment identified these needs in the logical progression to ensure the program is set up for best opportunity for success and for it to be evaluated in a meaning way.

Options

- A. Council may want to consider a SLI that requests regular updates on the progress of this work. It could be structured along the lines of the five main elements of the evaluation readiness work plan (shown in the middle of page 2).

3. Racial Impacts and Restorative Justice

The recent Land Use Code amendments related to the King County Juvenile Justice Center have sparked intense interest in the topic of juvenile incarceration – particularly the racial disparity associated with those held in jail. The resulting dialogue has generated a great deal of interest in assessing the degree of the racial impact and fostering greater

restorative justice efforts focused on keeping kids out of jail and providing them with services and skills to facilitate a pathway to a better life.

Racial Impact Assessment

Councilmembers may be interested in participating with King County on a racial impact assessment of the King County Juvenile Justice Center. Some discussions with King County related to the scope of this work have already taken place. The initial phase may not require funding, but subsequent elements of a complete racial impact assessment will take additional resources. The results of this work may guide design and programmatic aspects of the new Juvenile Justice Center.

There are racial considerations for at-risk youth and the juvenile justice system. Juvenile court referrals are a measure used by SYVPI. The initiative serves both those at risk of being victimized by violent crime and those at risk of perpetrating violent crime. Given the connection with at-risk youth and the desire to reduce the racial impact of the criminal justice system, the assessment and restorative justice share some common threads with SYVPI.

Options

- A. Proviso approximately \$50,000 of SYVPI funds for the purpose of the racial impact assessment with King County.
- B. Add approximately \$50,000 from the General Subfund to the SYVPI budget for the purpose of contributing to the racial impact assessment with King County.

Restorative Justice

Councilmembers may be interested in exploring ways that the City could contribute to the restorative justice process. In late 2013 and 2014, there was a City restorative justice initiative that focused on forming an alternative process to incarceration. A City employee was working on the initiative that involved creating a mediation process between low level crime victims and perpetrators with the goal of facilitating an outcome that did not include jail. That person was funded through salary savings in the Seattle Police Department (SPD).

A year ago, the Mayor's proposed budget added approximately \$200,000 and a new position for a restorative justice initiative. The proposed funding and position were cut by Council during last year's budget process. The work continued and the employee was funded through salary savings in the SPD budget. In September 2014, the City employee who was doing this work transitioned the work back to a community-based format and formed Seattle Restorative Justice with the goal of cultivating an inclusive, collaborative Restorative Justice network and to provide support for the implementation of restorative justice processes in Seattle. As a result, there is currently no specific City restorative

justice initiative or program in the City. The Mayor's proposed 2015-2016 budget does not include any funding or position for the restorative justice initiative.

Restorative justice is a process that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by crime. It theorizes that if victims, offenders, and community can come together to decide how to repair the harm caused by one's criminal activity, the results can be transformational for all involved. This is particularly true with juvenile related incidents. Given its focus on serving as an alternative to confinement, restorative justice contributes to alleviating the racial disparity in the criminal justice system. It can also have a meaningful impact on a young person and reduce the likelihood that he or she will continue with criminal behavior and lessen the risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Options

- A. Council may wish to incorporate restorative justice into its 2015 public safety work plan.
- B. Council could add some amount from the General Subfund to SYVPI to support a restorative justice effort.