

DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Bruce Harrell, Chair
Public Safety, Civil Rights and Technology Committee
Honorable Nick Licata, Vice-Chair
Honorable Sally Bagshaw, Councilmember

DATE: 3/7/14

FROM: Harry Bailey, Interim Chief of Police

SUBJECT: SLI RESPONSE: Measuring Neighborhood Public Safety and Street Disorder

Please see the attached response to SLI 128-7-A-1. If you have any questions, please contact Angela Socci at 5-1230. Thank you.

Cc: Honorable Tim Burgess
Honorable Sally J. Clark
Honorable Jean Godden
Honorable Mike O'Brien
Honorable Tom Rasmussen
Honorable Kshama Sawant
Rebecca Herzfeld, Interim Council Central Staff Director
Christa Valles, Council Central Staff
Vihn Tang, Councilmember Harrell's Office
Newell Aldrich, Councilmember Licata's Office
Jennifer Samuels, Councilmember Harrell's Office
Nate Van Duzer, Councilmember Burgess' Office
Tina Podlodowski, Mayor's Office (MO)
Robert Feldstein, MO
Michael Fong, MO
Ben Noble, City Budget Office (CBO)
Tom Mikesell, CBO
Jeanette Blankenship, CBO
Candice Livingston, CBO
Lisa Mueller, CBO
Assistant Chief Michael Washburn, SPD
Angela Socci, SPD
Mark Bridge, SPD
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Response to Statement of Legislative Intent 128-7-A-1
Budget Action Title: Measuring Neighborhood Public Safety and Street Disorder

March 7, 2014

Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 128-7-A-1:

The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program and the Center City Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) both focus their operations on individuals, but are intended to improve the street environment by reducing crime and disorder. The more we know about the specific neighborhood problems we are trying to solve with these and other public safety efforts, the more focused these efforts can be, and the more likely we will know whether they are effective.

To these ends, the Council requests that the Executive clearly identify the problems to be addressed in downtown neighborhoods, measure and document the extent and location of the problems, and report quarterly to the Council on progress being made to resolve the identified problems.

This means measuring street crimes and infractions by time and location. It means connecting those crimes and infractions, where possible, to proximate causes, and identifying locations where similar or related crimes and infractions cluster. This is primarily a job for the Police Department.

It also means measuring other forms of street disorder that may also contribute to street crime and fear of crime, such as graffiti, litter, vacant storefronts, poor lighting and broken facilities. This would be a job for multiple Departments, including but not limited to Police, to be led by the Executive.

It also means determining whether street crime and disorder are concentrated in small geographic areas, as is often the case. The Council requests that the Executive identify any such areas and explain whether and how LEAD, the MDT and any other interventions will be focused on them.

The Council requests that the Police Department and Executive specify the problems to be measured by February 1, 2014, produce the initial baseline measures by June 30, 2014, and report quarterly to the Council on progress being made to resolve the identified problems.

While the initial focus of this SLI is our downtown neighborhoods, the protocols and practice developed here to diagnose, treat and monitor harms can be applied as well in other neighborhoods.

Scope of Work for Measuring Public Safety and Street Disorder

in the Downtown Neighborhoods

I. Background

In 2012, the Mayor's office launched the Center City Initiative (CCI) in an attempt to organize vested parties to address a variety of issues in the downtown neighborhoods. CCI is one of many efforts more recently introduced to combat crime and disorder in downtown Seattle. The CCI Roundtable provided a venue for an open dialogue between local law enforcement, prosecutorial and human services agencies, other City departments, the Mayor's Office and neighborhood interest groups regarding crime and disorder in the downtown core. As part of CCI, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) was also established to ensure that the initiative was successful in addressing service gaps and service planning for a target population downtown (See response to SLI 128-4-A-1). Still, clear performance metrics were never established for CCI.

As part of the 2014 Budget Process, Council ordered a series of SLIs, requiring key CCI members to provide a framework for establishing task-focused projects and measuring program outputs and outcomes related to public safety and disorder in the downtown neighborhoods. To that end, the following scope of work has been developed by the Police Department at the direction of the Mayor's Office to describe a proposed approach to diagnosing, treating and monitoring problems in downtown Seattle. This scope of work includes a discussion of the theoretical lens through which the Police Department analysts will conduct a problem analysis of urban crime. The scope of work establishes clear goals and outlines specific objectives and deliverables. It also builds in a level of flexibility that allows the Police Department's analysts to explore a number of data-supported variables for the purpose diagnosing the crime problem downtown.

Theoretical Lens

The scientific study of urban crime and criminality is a relatively recent initiative. Drawing from the positivist movement, this "rational basis" approach to complex social problem solving identifies social structures and environment as criminogenic. Under this school, crime or social deviance is a natural outgrowth of our inherent nature in social context, not the result of a genetic predisposition or a general inferiority.

Sociologists of the "Chicago School" began work in the 1920's which guides scientific discovery to this day. Strain Theory (see General Strain, Agnew, 1992) and Social Disorganization (see Sampson & Groves, 1989) are two such areas which continue to yield valid, impactful guidance on the causes and cures of various social harm. In addition to these foundational studies, work on Environmental Criminology (see Covington & Taylor, 1992) and Routine Activities Theory flesh out the body of literature to explain the manifestation of crime in our social sphere.

Modern policing generates an extraordinary amount of data. Viewed through the appropriate theoretical lens, this data (e.g. calls for service, contact data and arrest data) lends important insight into the social, causal factors unique to a community. With the support of nearly 100 years of accepted science, a treatment plan can be designed to target the root cause of social

harm. With associated performance metrics and monitoring, a community may treat their response plan as a social experiment with the goal of continually improving upon service.

We are entering an era of operationalized criminal theory. For many years, policing was a reactive component of the instruments of formal social control. Today, the state of literature and technology combine to operationalize theory in a way never before possible. A phased, deliberate approach to identification, treatment, monitoring and continuing improvement of the issues identified in the SLI will yield progressive improvements to the affected areas and establish the City of Seattle as a leader in scientific, socially just public policy.

References¹

Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency*. *Criminology*, 30(1), 47-88.

Covington, J., & Taylor, R. B. (1991). Fear of crime in urban residential neighborhoods. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 32(2), 231-249.

Groves, W. B., & Sampson, R. (1989). Community structure and crime: Testing social-disorganization theory.

II. Overall CCI Goals

The Executive and CCI Roundtable Stakeholders are committed to developing clear goals and the tools to measure the effectiveness of various intervention strategies to address problems in the downtown core. In 2014, this effort will include the following:

- Review, refine and clarify goals identified for CCI;
- Finalize data collection protocols and metrics for MDT and LEAD;
- Analyze and create a baseline set of metrics for crime and disorder problems in the downtown core using a scientific, data-driven approach;
- Determine whether other qualitative and quantitative metrics in consultation with CCI Roundtable Stakeholders will be useful indicators as it relates to improving the environment in the downtown core; and
- Develop a reporting framework for how this data and information will be monitored and collected.

The Executive, and CCI Roundtable Stakeholders, will monitor and evaluate the extent for which existing CCI programming (MDT, LEAD, other strategic approaches) addresses the problems being identified and whether progress is being made toward meeting the overall CCI goals. The

¹ This is not intended to be a comprehensive literature review. References are presented as examples of instructive pieces on the subject.

Executive will continue to identify potential gaps and determine whether additional strategies, new programming or interventions are necessary.

This SLI response will focus on the third bullet listed above related to metrics for crime and disorder problems in the downtown core. SPD will be the lead agency in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Policy and Innovation. Upon completion, this will be one set of metrics used to monitor and evaluate progress toward addressing the problems identified as part of CCI. The broader goals and metrics development work for the Initiative as articulated earlier in this section will require stakeholder engagement and other City departments to identify qualitative and quantitative measures that are separate from those that SPD will be working on for tracking criminal activity and problems with disorder.

The following is an outline of the approach SPD will execute to deliver a final proposal for the Mayor and Council's review.

III. Objectives / Deliverables

Phase I: Strategic Problem Analysis Process

Methodology – SPD Baseline and Metrics

The SLI calls for the clear identification of measurable problems and establishes an expectation that the Police Department will use location-based analyses to measure street crimes and infractions and assess proximate causes. It also requires the Executive to coordinate with various stakeholders, including non-police agencies and the community, to conduct location-based analysis of street disorder indicators.

Due to the complex nature of problem analysis (e.g., locations, offenders, victims, property), the level of analysis and response required by the SLI requires a sophisticated and structured approach. SPD will use a problem-solving model structures problem analysis in four stages:

1. Problem identification (Phase I)

The analysis of crime, disorder, and arrests identifies and prioritizes current problems in the selected location (i.e., downtown vicinity). Police data is limited by nature and may not incorporate all aspects of crime and disorder problems, therefore other available data sets from City departments and the community (e.g., interviews and surveys) will be considered in the Analysis stage.

2. Analysis (Phase I)

SPD will research what is known about the problem type in order to understand local context, and develop hypotheses that can be tested by statistical analyses. In this phase, a combination of spatial, temporal and socio-demographic variables should be considered in determining identification and prioritization of place-based problems and disorder.

3. *Intervention (Phase II)*

This phase will identify realistic interventions based both on successful current approaches to problem solving, best practices in other jurisdictions, and new innovative ideas. This analysis should assist in selecting appropriate and specific responses to problems and identify responsible parties and specific objectives.

4. *Evaluation (Phase II)*

The final assessment should consist of a process and impact evaluation. Regular assessments of the data will be used to “course correct” – Are the desired outcomes being achieved? If selected interventions were not effective, why not? (e.g., are the new responses being implemented correctly? Do they need changes?) If so, why so? (e.g., what’s working best? What should we be doing more of?).

The use of a problem-solving model will also allow for replication of the problem analysis in other parts of the City where similar problems of crime, homelessness and disorder persist.

Objectives

- ✓ Conduct location analyses of Police data (offenses, calls for service, arrests) in order to identify areas of high concentration in the downtown neighborhoods.
- ✓ Select areas using spatial statistics in order to determine significant concentrations of crime and disorder.
- ✓ Conduct micro-analyses using measures of central tendencies and other analytical techniques in order to identify priority problems in conjunction with space and time, which will aid in both the response and assessment phases.

Deliverables

Should Council endorse the approach to the SLI described in this scope of work, the problem analysis will likely be governed by a formal research plan. Any such research plan would describe in greater detail the following proposed deliverables:

Geographic models:

The Police Department will produce maps showing the identified locations of offenses, calls for service, or arrests, corresponding tables with summary statistics, and temporal considerations for the identified crime and disorder problems within the respective selected geographic areas.

Data modification subcycle:

The Police Department will likely need to conduct a data modification subcycle based on other variables and data sets incorporated from the Executive and partnering agencies. The analysis process is not linear and will be affected by other data sets and considerations. This step is a subprocess of the overall analysis and will allow for more informed results.

Baseline measures:

A baseline will be drawn from selected problem types located in the geographic areas in order to create a template for regular reporting. Interventions and significant incidents (e.g., policy changes) should be noted in order to create a timeline of events to be assessed in future impact evaluations.

Final report:

The Phase I final report will describe in detail the problem analysis process used for the identification of the baseline problems. A comprehensive literature review of references used to inform Phase I can be provided with the final report.

Phase II: Development of Treatment and Monitoring Plan

Immediately following the Phase I process, the Executive, Police Department and partnering agencies will conduct an assessment to establish a treatment plan, using task-focused projects, to address the baseline problem set.

Specific objectives and deliverables for Phase II will be provided in a detailed scope of work at the conclusion of Phase I.

IV. Administration

Executive Role

The Center City Initiative is overseen from the Mayor's Office by Deputy Mayor Hyeok Kim, in conjunction with staff from the Office of Policy and Innovation. The Mayor's Office is hoping to hire a staff person in the Office of Policy and Innovation dedicated to work on the Center City Initiative and related projects focusing on the overlap of public safety and social services.

Seattle Police Department

The Police Department will play a key role in Phase I and Phase II of this SLI response. The department will utilize staff resources with expertise in criminology, data-driven policing and crime analysis to inform the problem analysis process. The Chief of Staff will be responsible for overseeing the response effort within the department, as commander of the SPD's Finance, Strategic Policy & Planning Section.

The Police Department is the keeper of a large majority of the crime data that will be used to identify the problem set in Phase I. Data sets for calls for service, offenses and arrests are readily available for use in the problem analysis. The Police Department can retrieve location-based data sets through advanced queries. These data sets can be stored and calibrated for use with existing Geographic Information System (GIS) tools. In the subject analysis, GIS tools will enable the department to capture, analyze and report on location-based crime and disorder data, as required by the SLI.

At this time, the Police Department is unable to perform location-based analyses of infraction data because only limited citation data is available in the department's existing databases. Most social contacts or incidents that are cleared with a citation, such as traffic and liquor violations, can be queried using the Police Department's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. The data pulled from CAD is geo-coded. Most civil infraction data, on the other hand, is manually entered into the Seattle Municipal Court's database only. The Court has no business use for infraction location information. The SLI asserts that civil infraction data should be used in the Phase I problem analysis. However, the Police Department believes that civil infraction data would have little to no value in the overall problem analysis for the following reasons:

1. Infraction data is subject to a number of driving factors, including but not limited to: policy, officer proactive time, enforcement priorities, staff resources, weather, etc. The variables can be difficult to identify and/or isolate in order to properly account for or weight them in an analysis.
2. Data quality issues – Infraction detection rate is typically very low and the capture rate is even lower when compared to crime data. CAD data is backed by clear and consistent policy and systems, meaning there is greater consistency in the officer contact data contained in CAD.

The problems with civil infraction data are especially apparent when considered in the context of outputs and outcomes. With so many variables driving infraction data, issuance statistics (i.e., the outputs) are inconsistent and unreliable. Therefore, infraction outputs cannot lend any useful information to outcome measurements or problem analyses, even if location information is available. An analysis of limited or inconsistent output data that has been affected by both major and minor factors cannot be used to produce reliable measurements of any perceived outcomes. For infraction data, there are simply too many variables. The issue is further compounded by extremely low detection and capture rates, which also makes weighing the data to account for variation essentially impossible.

That said, the Police Department acknowledges that there may be value in collecting location-based infraction data in the future for information on officer outputs and behavior. If the tools and/or resources to collect location-based data are made available to either the Police Department or the Court in the future, it might be possible to report on infractions by time and location if the information is properly geo-coded. Even then, so long as the above factors are still in play, the Police Department will be reluctant to use infraction data for problem analysis or as an indicator of program outcomes.

Other departments / agencies

The following list of CCI partners may possess data that would be valuable to the problem analysis. It is likely that any external data sets retrieved from outside the Police Department will need to be manually calibrated and geo-coded to provide comparative value in the Phase I geo-spatial analysis. This could be time and labor intensive, depending on the accessibility and state of the data. The Office of Policy and Innovation will work with these CCI partners to facilitate the collection of data as needed for Phase I.

Seattle Municipal Court (SMC)

SMC is currently the keeper of the Police Department's reportable infraction data. The Court does not enter location information for infractions. Location information is written on the infraction form.

SMC Contact: Nick Zajchowski

Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) / Metropolitan Improvement District (MID)

DSA / MID collect data related to street disorder in the downtown core. (MID Activity Report Statistics: <http://www.downtownseattle.com/mid/mid-activity-report/mid-activity-report-statistics/>)

MID Contact: Joshua Curtis

Seattle City Light (SCL)

SCL has data related to downtown lighting issues.

SCL Contact: Eyvind Westby

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)

SPU has data collected in connection with CCI.

SPU Contact: Tim Croll

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

SDOT has City street clean-up data, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) data, and will collect data in connection with the Pike/Pine Renaissance.

SDOT Contact: Barbara Gray

V. Timeline

The SLI requirements will be met in a phased approach. The Phase I problem analysis will be conducted in 2014. The Executive projects that it will take the full remainder of the year to properly conduct a comprehensive problem analysis and produce the final report on the results of that analysis.

Phase II will be initiated immediately following Phase I. An updated Phase II timeline will be transmitted with the Phase II scope of work.

As mentioned earlier, this scope of work is related to one element of the broader CCI goals and metrics examination the Executive intends to do in 2014. Our plan is to report back to Council later this year with an update on the entire body of work aimed at having a clear set of goals and metrics related to CCI and framework for regular reporting to the Mayor, Council and CCI Roundtable Stakeholders.