

REVIEW OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE'S CRIME PREVENTION SERVICES

A Report to the Seattle City Council by the City Budget Office

In adopting the 2011 budget, City Council, prompted by issues raised in consideration of the budgets of the Human Services Department, the Department of Neighborhoods and the Police Department, adopted a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI), calling for a review of the City's crime prevention efforts. This paper addresses the initial step in that review by assembling an inventory of "services that have crime prevention as either a primary purpose or a secondary or indirect purpose." The SLI's definition of what was to be included in the inventory was broadly written, allowing for a liberal interpretation of crime prevention that led to a list of 72 programs from 14 different departments and offices in this initial inventory.

The SLI also called for the review to identify the number of City employees and contracts that provide crime prevention services. Other information provided in the review are the programs' desired outcomes and the means used to achieve them, the crimes that the programs are intended to prevent, the demographic and geographic focus of the efforts, and available information about the programs' success in reducing and preventing crime.

The review is presented in three documents:

- This narrative report summarizes the findings of the review.
- A matrix (Attachment 1) lists each of the crime prevention programs and summarizes information about the following:
 - Full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees performing the services that are provided by City employees.
 - Amount of money contracted with community-based organizations for those services provided by community agencies.
 - Where it is identifiable, the crimes that are targeted by the program.
 - If any, the demographic group that is the focus of the program.
 - If any, the geographic area targeted by the program.
 - Community involvement in the program.
 - Performance measures used to determine the success of the programs in reducing crime.

The matrix is organized under four themes that bundle the programs by similar purposes.

- Attachment 2 has a more detailed description and responses to the questions posed in the SLI for each of the programs.

Categorizing Seattle's Crime Prevention Services

This analysis was challenged with the task of organizing 72 different programs that fit the SLI's broad definition of crime prevention. The approach taken in this report categorizes prevention programs by similar purpose, thus suggesting linkages that could be helpful in future analysis. The following four categories emerged:

- Housing and treatment services
- Recreation, learning and employment activities
- Problem-solving
- Security

However, the framework for understanding crime prevention efforts could be constructed in several different ways. For example, according to Lawrence Sherman, et. al., crime prevention has been defined by the U.S. Congress as “the reduction of risk factors for crime (such as gang membership) and increases in protective factors (such as completing high school)...” (Sherman, et. al., “Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising”). In the same report to Congress, Sherman wrote that crime prevention programs could be categorized in terms of the following seven institutional settings in which they operate:

- Communities
- Families
- Schools
- Labor Markets
- Places (specific premises)
- Police
- Criminal Justice

Sherman’s framework may be a useful context for subsequent work on the crime prevention issue, but was not used in this report.

Housing and Treatment Services

There are 21 housing services and treatment interventions funded by the City that have the avoidance of future criminal behavior as a purpose. Most of these are contracts that the Human Services Department (HSD) and Public Health – Seattle and King County (PH-SKC) provide to private community-based organizations (CBOs). The City’s annual investment in those services is \$8.3 million.

Compared to many other programs in the inventory, treatment services are more focused on the following: people who are at-risk of committing certain crimes, e.g., domestic violence, prostitution and drugs; those who comprise a specific demographic group, e.g., young people, people of color, homeless, public inebriates, or people with a criminal history; or people who live in specified geographic areas of the city, i.e., the Central Area, Southeast Seattle and Southwest Seattle.

While the contracts for these services may be performance-based, what is measured is largely outputs and not outcomes. That is, CBOs are measuring the number of clients served and not the difference the program made on criminal behavior of the individuals or effects on crime in the geographic service area. That information is largely anecdotal and not scientifically based. More rigor is shown in the evaluation of the programs of the Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative (SYVPI) (Case Management, Mentoring and Aggression Replacement Therapy), which have individual program output goals to meet, but also are a part of the overall Initiative, which does measure outcomes. PH-SKC’s Best Beginnings program and Multisystemic Treatment

Program are based on models that have proved to be effective in reducing risks that lead to criminal behavior.

There have been varying degrees of community involvement with these programs. The programs for prostituted youth include public members on a program advisory board. Some services, like two of HSD's crime prevention and re-entry programs (GOTS and CURB) engaged community members while they were being developed. Others, such as the Drug Market Initiative (DMI) and the SYVPI, engaged the community in the process of developing, implementing and following up on the progress of the Initiative.

Recreation, Learning and Employment

Another crime prevention strategy that can be used simultaneously with or in advance of treatment is to provide recreation, learning or employment activities. There are 19.77 FTE that provide these services primarily in DPR and SPD, and the City has contracts with CBOs totaling \$859,000.

All of the programs that use these approaches for preventing criminal behavior are directed at youth. Many focus on young people in the Central Area, Southeast Seattle, and Southwest Seattle, with more specific emphasis on South Park and High Point for two of the programs.

The measures of success used for these programs generally count participants. An exception is that the SYVPI programs measure individual program outputs but are part of the overall Initiative, which measures outcomes in terms of its stated goals. One example of an SYVPI program, SPD's School Emphasis Truancy and Suspension Reduction program, is held to the outcomes of the SYVPI, but evaluates the effectiveness of the School Emphasis Officers (SEOs) by measuring the truancies and suspensions at the schools where they are assigned. At the same time, they count the number of mediations they conduct, referrals for service they make, and the families they engage with home visits. An interesting approach to evaluation is taken by the Police Explorers Program, which tracks intermediate outcome goals by monitoring the participants' completion of individual projects and the overall program goal, which is to interest young people in law enforcement as a career, by tracking those who choose the career.

These services have a strong element of community involvement. Many of the programs, such as the community matching grant proposals and sustainment programs of the SYVPI are grassroots projects that are consistent with the goals of the overall City Initiative. Similarly, DPR's Power of Place services are provided by City employees and community agencies, but are determined by the youth who are being served. SPD's youth outreach programs were developed in collaboration with community members and CBOs. The SYVPI programs were part of a community-engaged process that developed the Initiative, assisted with its implementation and continues to be updated on the progress and allowed to provide feedback about the Initiative.

Problem-solving

There is a category of crime prevention programs for which the purpose is to solve problems that have been identified in the community. The methods used in these programs include community-building, information dissemination, eradication or prohibition of environmental conditions that are conducive to criminal behavior, and implementing law enforcement

strategies that address chronic crime problems. Because these programs are directed at specific crimes and geography, they lend themselves well to the approach of hot-spot policing, as advocated by Anthony Braga and David Weisburd in “Policing Problem Places: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention” and summarized for application in Seattle in the City Auditor’s recent report on “Addressing Crime and Disorder in Seattle “Hot Spots”: What Works?”.

This category bundles both the actions used to identify problems affecting communities that lead to criminal behavior and the means that are used by the City to resolve those problems. Programs in this category employ 78.65 FTE City employees and contract for \$2.4 million with CBOs.

The City employees include SPD’s pro-active gang unit, community police team officers, crime prevention coordinators, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) staff; DON’s neighborhood district coordinators; DPD’s enforcement unit; and SPU, SDOT and DPR’s graffiti abatement staff. They enforce City regulations against graffiti, abandoned buildings, overgrown vegetation and junk storage; work with young people and neighborhoods to prevent gang activity and a variety of crimes that are a concern to the city’s neighborhoods; and build communities to improve their capacity to address crime problems.

Contracted services are provided by Seattle Neighborhood Group’s Safe Communities, the SYVPI contracts for network coordination of the Initiative’s activities in the three neighborhoods in which it operates, and the SYVPI street outreach team that works to engage the neighborhoods’ young people in a positive direction. This category also includes the Office of Economic Development’s (OED) contract programs that provide financial support to revitalize neighborhood business districts and Business Improvement Areas. Improved crime prevention results may be realized by strengthening the ties between what is learned in the problem-solving efforts of SPD, DON, DPD and the City’s graffiti abatement teams, and the investments of OED.

Measures in this category generally report outputs, with one exception being the SYVPI networks, which are measured by their success in reducing certain crimes by youth and by lowering suspensions and expulsions in the schools where the Initiative operates. The Nightlife Initiative has an element of training club staff that is identified in the research as a promising means of reducing violence on the premises and reducing drunk driving. Studies have also indicated that priority-setting community meetings, such as those frequently attended by SPD’s Crime Prevention Coordinators and Community Police Team officers, can reduce the perception of the severity of crime problems, whether or not the crime data supports the perception.

Community engagement is a key element of successful problem-solving. For example, the SYVPI held public meetings to receive input before the Initiative’s programs were developed. Subsequently, community meetings engaged residents and stakeholders, including youth, on a regular basis in the three neighborhoods where the Initiative operates. The Nightlife Initiative also had an aggressive outreach component that was used to inform the Mayor’s proposal. SDOT’s pedestrian lighting program is an example of a program that was initially funded as a part of a neighborhood plan and continues to use the Department’s public planning processes to identify priority projects for implementation. While one of the primary goals of DON’s Neighborhood District Coordinators is to engage the public to work with City departments in helping to solve problems, the program’s manager is the lead in implementing

interdepartmental projects that work with community members to address crime-related problems. Seattle Neighborhood Group, a community partner in crime prevention, works primarily through precinct-based crime prevention councils to engage community members in working with SPD on crime-related issues.

Security

The City secures its utility facilities, libraries, and parks by using City employees to perform the work. The downtown civic center security, including courtroom screeners, is provided under a contract with a private vendor. There are 34.15 FTE that provide direct services and manage the security contracts, which total \$1.7 million.

Community members have been engaged in the park ranger program, which was a proposal advanced by the Center City Task Force to address growing concerns over safety in center city parks. This program was evaluated in 2010. Data is tracked for the rangers' activities and for 9-1-1 calls to the ten largest parks patrolled by the rangers. The library system uses annual internal evaluations, soliciting employee feedback and studying injury reports, and periodic external evaluations to assess the program's effectiveness. SPU's water system security meets the criteria established by the State Department of Health and SCL complies with the federally mandated North American Electrical Reliability Corporation (NERC) Critical Infrastructure Protection Standards (CIPS). SPL's security unit tracks outputs, but FAS does not, although there is anecdotal information available about the successes of the FAS security program.

Features of the Crime Prevention Programs

The inventory of 72 programs is displayed in a matrix in Attachment 1 and described in greater detail in Attachment 2. This section of the analysis summarizes that information under the following headings that reflect information requested in the SLI:

- City FTE (Full-Time-Equivalents)
- Contracted services
- Crimes targeted
- Demographic targets
- Community involvement
- Performance measures

Employees Performing Crime Prevention Activities

137 City FTEs perform crime prevention activities. There are teams of employees who work proactively to prevent crime, such as the Seattle Police Department (SPD) crime prevention coordinators (7 FTE) and community police team officers (21 FTE); teams that work to provide security at City facilities and thus prevent crimes from being committed, such as the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) park rangers (6 FTE), Seattle City Light (SCL) security and emergency management staff (4 FTE), Seattle Public Utilities security staff (9 FTE), and The Seattle Public Library (SPL) safety and security staff (13.5 FTE); and two teams of DPR and SPD employees who conduct programs in community centers to provide a safe place for young people to participate in pro-social activities. The remaining City FTE work in smaller teams or manage contracts for which only part of their job is calculated in the crime prevention inventory.

Contracts with Private Vendors

The City contracts for \$13.25 million in services with crime prevention as a purpose. The greatest investment is in services that provide \$8.3 million in housing and treatment services for people who are living in situations that put them at greatest risk of committing or being a victim of a crime. The intention of these programs is to provide the support needed to avoid criminal activity. City departments also contract for employment and recreational opportunities totaling \$859,000 that allow for positive engagement of youth. Contracted programs that promote problem-solving activities (\$2.4 million) support community-building, information dissemination, operation of the networks and street outreach programs of the SYVPI, improvements that revitalize neighborhood business districts, and pick up illegally dumped materials by the State Department of Corrections, thus preventing the appearance of an area that could be conducive to criminal activity. And finally, \$1.7 million is spent on contracts for security services provided by a private vendor in the City's downtown office buildings.

Targeted Crimes

Most of the programs in the inventory do not target specific crimes, but those that do address the following criminal behavior:

- Domestic violence
- Prostitution
- Illegal drugs
- Arson
- Graffiti
- Illegal dumping

The programs that address these crimes are identified in Attachment 1 in the column headed "Targeted Crimes". Other than graffiti, the programs are in the Housing and Treatment Services category. The City funds advocacy and recovery services for young people in prostitution in order to support them getting out of the lifestyle, shelter services for victims of domestic violence to prevent them from further exploitation, treatment for indigent batterers to prevent future abusive behavior, and drug treatment and intervention to prevent the addicted from committing illegal acts in order to get their drugs. DPR, SDOT and SPU all have coordinated graffiti abatement programs, one of the purposes of which is to prevent the "broken-windows" appearance of an area that might be conducive to criminal activity. Whereas these departments use City employees for the work, SPL contracts to abate graffiti on their facilities.

Demographic Target

The demographic group on which the largest number of crime prevention programs is focused is youth. Not surprisingly, the categories with the most programs focused on a specific demographic are housing and treatment services and recreation, learning and employment services. The SYVPI specifically establishes eligibility between the ages of 12 and 17, while the prostituted youth residential recovery program limits eligibility to those between 14 and 17 years old. Several programs are run by agencies that focus on specific populations; for example, two of the three CBOs that offer services to indigent batterers focus on the Asian- Pacific Islander population, new immigrants and refugees, and African-Americans; CURB's eligibility is limited to people of color who are 18 to 30 years old; GOTS serves adults of color with criminal

histories, who are homeless, mentally ill and/or addicted to drugs or alcohol; and the Drug Market Initiative (DMI) serves non-violent low-level drug dealers.

Geographic Target

While most of the crime prevention programs are citywide in coverage, the activities that provide geographically focused treatment, recreation, learning, and employment often serve the Central Area, Southeast Seattle and Southwest Seattle. For example, those three areas are where the SYVPI is operating. Other programs, such as the DMI (23rd and Union, and Rainier and Pearl), GOTS (23rd and Union) and CURB (Rainier Valley) operate in the Central Area and Rainier Valley. South Park is the focus of an HSD initiative that funds several specific services for youth and their families; and is the emphasis, along with Southwest Seattle, of DPR's Student Teen Employment Program (STEP). DPR, in cooperation with the Seattle Housing Authority, also funds a summer program for young residents of the High Point neighborhood.

The City's seven Business Improvement Areas are eligible for a small amount of annual funding that is available to address problems that are known to be related to crime hotspots, such as litter and graffiti removal, and sidewalk cleaning. Neighborhood business districts are eligible for funding to help revitalization efforts, which often result in improved safety, a high priority for the districts.

Downtown parks are targeted for coverage by the DPR park rangers and the City's downtown civic center facilities are where much of the City's security program is focused.

Community Involvement

Most of the crime prevention programs involve the community in their development, implementation or feedback. While ten of the 72 programs, primarily those that provide security services to City facilities, did not involve the public, the other programs used community members in one or more of the following activities:

- Informing the community about the program and its services;
- Recruiting from the community to participate in the program;
- Responding to community members' input about where services are needed or how services are being performed;
- Including members of the community on advisory boards;
- Collaborating with the community to develop a program; and
- Engaging with the community to create a program, participate in its implementation, and keep the public in the feedback loop on the program's progress.

Most programs in the inventory involve the public to a greater extent than just keeping them informed. Several programs, such as DPR's lifeguard training program and the SYVPI's community matching grant program and sustainment program solicit participation (in the case of the lifeguard training) and grassroots, youth anti-violence projects (SYVPI), encouraging members of the public to participate in the programs or create programs of their own.

Many of the programs feature a community-involvement design that encourages input from members of the community about the need for service at a specific location. Many of these services are the problem-solving approaches to abate graffiti, enforce land use regulations,

address public safety concerns in the City's libraries, and collaborate in solving neighborhood crime problems. SPU's graffiti abatement program has a full-time position dedicated to outreach, education and volunteer coordination. Not only does this expand the resources available to help with the abatement, it promotes the crime prevention activities of building neighborhood cohesion and relying on each other to protect public order.

A handful of the programs involve members of the community through membership on a formal advisory board. Programs using this method are those supporting prostituted youth and HSD's South Park Initiative. The Library Board establishes Rules of Conduct which guide SPL's security services through a public process. PH-SKC adds another element of participation to the advisory board by including public members on the board that makes funding decisions for its youth outreach programs.

There are many crime prevention programs that were either initiated by the community or were developed by the City in collaboration with the community. Examples include GOTS; CURB; SPD's youth outreach programs; the Nightlife Initiative, which used multiple methods of collecting feedback from the community; and SDOT's pedestrian lighting program, which started as a City response to a neighborhood plan request and is now built into SDOT's capital planning outreach process.

The programs that most fully engage the community are those that work with the public from the planning stage through implementation; then periodically meet with stakeholders to report on the results and listen to feedback. Seattle programs that incorporate these actions are the overall SYVPI, the DMI, DPR's park rangers, and certain aspects of HSD's Safe Communities program.

Performance Measures

A vast majority of the programs in the inventory count outputs to measure success. By doing so, they describe or count the results of their activities, but they do not measure outcomes, meaning they do not provide evidence of what difference those activities make. There is a wide range in the thoroughness of the 72 programs' evaluations in the inventory, with some collecting more and better data using more scientific methods than others. However, it is the conclusion of this review that, with the exception of those few programs that model scientifically tested programs, none of the programs can validly claim to be responsible for reducing crime. Even for programs that collected pre- and post-intervention data, none compared the results with that of a control group to determine that the intervention was responsible for the change.

A couple small-scale programs that look at outcomes are the Seattle Fire Department's Fire Stoppers program, which tracks young people served by the program to determine whether behavior change resulted after their participation; and the Police Explorers program that follows up with participants to determine whether the goal of interesting them in law enforcement careers was accomplished.

Recognizing the difficulties in forming control groups to scientifically prove a causal link between programs and crime prevention, some programs have, nevertheless, performed a more rigorous

analysis of their outcomes. There are four examples of larger-scale programs that have looked at outcome measures:

- HSD's three Crime Prevention and Re-entry programs, Co-STARS, GOTS and CURB, for which formal evaluations have been performed. A 2009 assessment of the three programs by the University of Washington concluded that participants in the programs reduced their involvement in the criminal justice system in some fashion. But the programs did not uniformly demonstrate success as measured by reduced jail bookings and time spent in jail. The study also did not have a control group to compare with, and thus it was not possible to conclude that the successes were as a result of involvement in the programs. The most recent study was a Seattle Municipal Court analysis that determined that participants in Co-STARS had fewer criminal charges filed against them after their participation in the programs. But again there was no cohort group against which to compare the experience of similar people who did not receive services.
- Drug Market Initiative (DMI), which tracks criminal involvement of those who participate in the program to determine if the intervention made a difference by avoiding future arrests. The 2010 DMI in the Central Area engaged 16 candidates, nine of which have not re-offended. But again, no cohort group was followed to determine that the DMI services were responsible for the reduction in re-offenses.
- SYVPI, which measures outputs for the individual service programs but is accountable for making the neighborhoods and schools in which it operates safer. In other words, SYVPI's outcome measures describe whether it made a difference in the safety of the Initiative's schools and neighborhoods. While there is not a cohort of similar people who are not receiving the Initiative's services, the Initiative director is working with the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center, a program of the UCLA School of Public Health, to develop a comparison group from programs that they are studying nationwide. It is early in the analysis even for the local data, but preliminary findings suggest that in two of the three Initiative neighborhoods there is a reduction in participants who are being referred for prosecution of selected crimes against persons. When compared to schools that are not in the Initiative, SYVPI schools are showing a reduction in selected disciplinary actions.
- DPR's park ranger program was evaluated in 2010, with a key measure being whether they made a difference in park safety. The evaluation compared police reports written in 2009 (post-implementation) with 2007 (pre-implementation) in ten downtown parks patrolled by the rangers. The data showed significant decreases in police reports being written in all parks, from a low of 14% fewer to a high of 90% fewer and an average of 71%. Nevertheless, the evaluation acknowledges that the improvements reflected in the police data cannot be proved to be attributable to the park ranger program, as those numbers could also have been affected by a comprehensive approach to activation of downtown parks that was initiated at the same time.

The full range of measures for programs in the inventory spans from some that have no goals being set for the program and thus nothing measured, anecdotal information about a program's success, output measurement, outcome measurement, and one program, SPD's If Project, that will have an evaluation performed in 2011.

Further Analysis

Because of the broad definition of crime prevention, the approach of this review was to be more inclusive rather than less and, therefore, identified a large number of programs funded by the City. One next step should be to determine whether to shorten the list of programs that will be studied in future phases. The policy-makers should also determine whether the organization by thematic purpose is a helpful way for them to think of the issue or if they would prefer to see a break-out by other categories; for example, two categories divided into reduction of risk factors and increases in protective factors for crime, or seven categories following Sherman's seven institutional settings.

The fact that this review was initiated during a budget process that closed a \$67 million gap suggests that questions of both efficiency and effectiveness are potential areas of further study. Efficiency issues that might be pursued are whether there is overlap among the responsibilities of the programs – either with City programs or with City and contracted programs. The programs' effectiveness might be studied further at this time when cutting budgets is forcing policy-makers to evaluate trade-offs among current City investments.

The SLI indicates that “a subsequent phase will review the effectiveness of the inventoried services and how they complement the proactive policing efforts called for by the Neighborhood Policing Plan.” Council also intends to study the findings from the best available crime prevention and crime reduction strategies. In the end, the long-term goals of the review, as stated in the SLI, are to determine the following:

- The best way to implement strategies that improve safety,
- The most effective way to organize the efforts,
- The leadership of the efforts, and
- The desired outcomes and how the outcomes will be measured.