

2012 Seattle City Council Green Sheet

Approved

Tab	Action	Option	Version
116	1	B	1

Budget Action Title: Provide position authority and funding for a four-person team of Precinct Liaison Attorneys; \$376,000 in GSF added to the Law Department, four new positions created, one abrogated and \$127,000 in funding transferred from the Criminal Division to a new Precinct Liaison BCL.

Councilmembers: Bagshaw; Burgess; Clark; Godden

Staff Analyst: Ben Noble

Council Bill or Resolution:

Budget Committee Vote:

Date	Result	SB	BH	SC	TR	JG	NL	RC	TB	MO
11/10/2011	Pass 8- 1-Absent	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y

Summary of Dollar Effect

See the following pages for detailed technical information

	2012 Increase (Decrease)
General Subfund	
General Subfund Revenues	\$0
General Subfund Expenditures	\$376,000
Net Balance Effect	(\$376,000)
Total Budget Balance Effect	(\$376,000)

Budget Action description:

This action would provide sufficient funding and position authority to support *four* precinct liaison attorneys in a new, eponymously titled BCL within the Law Department. Four new positions would be created within the new BCL, while an existing position within the Department’s Criminal Division would be abrogated (position # 10004089). The funding associated with the abrogated position (\$127,000) would be transferred to the new BCL. The net cost of the four new positions is then \$376,000.

Consistent with the description provided in the attached letter from City Attorney Peter Holmes, the precinct liaison attorneys would work closely with police officers and SPD leadership to address a variety of community and neighborhood problems, including nuisance properties, nightlife issues, graffiti abatement, alcohol impact areas, and crime hot spots. The positions would provide legal advice on everyday issues faced by officers and help develop proactive strategies to address the aforementioned community and neighborhood problems. The positions would report to, and be managed by, the City Attorney.

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With four total positions, there would not be sufficient staff to have one attorney assigned to each individual precinct. It is possible that the South and Southwest precincts would “share” one position, but other allocations could be used to make the desired legal advice available to officers in all parts of the city.

The new positions would be located within a newly created “Precinct Liaison Attorneys” BCL. The official purpose of this BCL, as it would appear in the budget book, is as follows:

“The purpose of this BCL is to support a program where attorneys work in each of the City’s five precincts, providing legal advice to police and other City departments. In helping to address a variety of neighborhood and community problems, the precinct liaison attorneys coordinate with the Civil and Criminal divisions to ensure a consistent, thorough and effective approach.”

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Budget Action Transactions

Budget Action Title: Provide position authority and funding for a four-person team of Precinct Liaison Attorneys; \$376,000 in GSF added to the Law Department, four new positions created, one abrogated and \$127,000 in funding transferred from the Criminal Division to a new Precinct Liaison BCL.

#	Transaction Description	Position Title	Number of Positions	FTE	Dept	BCL or Revenue Source	Summit Code	Fund	Year	Revenue Amount	Expenditure Amount
1	Provide funding and position authority for four new precinct liaison attorneys	City Attorney,Asst - FT	4	4	LAW	Precinct Liaison Attorneys	J1700	00100	2012		\$503,000
2	Abrogate one assistant city attorney from the Criminal Division (position #10004089)	City Attorney,Asst-BU - FT	-1	-1	LAW	Criminal	J1500	00100	2012		(\$127,000)

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council Members

FROM: City Attorney Peter Holmes

SUBJECT: Reengineering the Precinct Liaison Program

DATE: October 27, 2011

In our 2012 budget proposal, my office proposes to add five precinct liaisons—one in each police precinct—to help address community and neighborhood problems. This new, reengineered program would expand upon the old liaison program and draw upon the wide variety of litigation and subject-matter expertise found within the City Attorney's Office. We propose that the precinct liaisons perform the following functions:

1. **Problem-Solving With Coordinated Civil and Criminal Remedies.** In the past, the liaisons were typically experienced misdemeanor prosecutors who operated more or less independently. The new program would have more centralized management and oversight in partnership with SPD leadership and other City departments regularly involved in neighborhood and community-specific issues. The liaisons would coordinate with both the Civil and Criminal Divisions on cases and issues to ensure a consistent, thorough, and effective approach.

The previous liaison program was created as an extension of the Criminal Division and continued to function that way. It was not well-linked with the Civil Division, which plays a more significant role than the Criminal Division in advising SPD command staff and working to develop department-wide policies (and an even more significant role relative to the Criminal Division in advising non-SPD departments). I took some steps to begin addressing these issues with the previous program in 2010 by beginning to build connections between the liaisons and the Civil Division, and we achieved significant improvements, particularly in liquor licensing objections, relations with the nightlife industry, and effective enforcement of nuisance laws.

2. **Regulatory Issues.** Liaisons can play a key role in jumpstarting and coordinating regulatory activities conducted by the City. These issues include mobile food vendors, graffiti abatement, alcohol impact areas, dumpster free alleys, street use regulations, homeless encampments, noise, extended nightlife hours (likely to be a new city regulation), medical marijuana, hot spots, and more.

- 3. Legal Advice for SPD Officers and Precinct Leadership.** One of the advantages of having an attorney in each of the precincts is that they are able to establish relationships with officers and be available on site to handle legal questions that arise. Line officers are not normally accustomed to calling the City Attorney's Office for legal advice on everyday issues they face, but in our experience they are very willing to talk to a liaison attorney who is stationed at their precinct.

A good example of this is the new trespass warning program, which required consideration and analysis of several different civil and criminal legal issues. Bob Scales developed the program with SPD, working primarily with Assistant Chief Sanford, and then taped a roll call training video about the trespass warning program. Bob provided his name and number on the video and encouraged officers to call if they had questions, but he received only one call from a line officer about the trespass program. In contrast, Jim Kenny, who was serving as a liaison to the East and West Precincts when the program was initially developed, fielded questions almost daily from officers. It is important to have an open line of communication between the City Attorney's Office and line officers so that we can help ensure that they are following proper procedures. We know from experience that it works better with liaisons.

- 4. Ongoing Activities Requiring City Attorney's Office Involvement.** Our office has a well defined role for liquor license cases and chronic nuisance properties, and we will continue to staff these issues with or without a new liaison program. But a new, reengineered liaison program will allow us to provide better service that is more individually tailored for each precinct, and it will allow us to do more work directly with neighborhoods and communities on issues beyond liquor licensing and nuisance properties.
- 5. Community Problem Solving Activities.** In both the old program and the proposed new program, one of the precinct liaisons' roles is to meet regularly with community groups. In this capacity, they frequently were and would be the first City point of contact when community members raise problems. The new program would reestablish and expand upon that role to include both public safety and other government-related concerns, and the liaisons would coordinate with SPD and other departments to solve those problems.

Some examples include the Aurora Motels, nightlife establishments, drug abatements, the DOC halfway house in the Central District, community relations with public and private schools, and public safety "hot spots." As a practical matter, the types of neighborhood-based problems residents and businesses raise often require interdepartmental solutions not purely in the public safety arena, and effectively addressing them must involve multiple agencies and jurisdictions and both civil and criminal legal remedies. For example, nightlife regulation involves not only SPD but also the Liquor Control Board (liquor licenses and enforcement), DPD (zoning, building code, and noise issues), SDOT (street and sidewalk use issues), Seattle-King County Public Health (restaurant and food vendor health and safety issues), SFD (fire code issues), and even Metro (late night transportation). Likewise, medical marijuana regulation involves not just SPD but also

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DPD (zoning, land use, and building code issues), City Light (electrical supply and safety), SFD (fire safety), and FAS (tax and business license). Liaisons in a new, reengineered program will be expected to understand, communicate with, and proactively work with all of these different agencies—not just SPD—in addressing neighborhood and community problems.

If the Council funds the new liaison program, I will apply the lessons my office learned in 2010 and make additional changes along these lines. Creating a separate budget control level for the liaison program independent of both the Civil and Criminal Divisions would be a beneficial step, and I will ensure that attorneys hired for liaison positions collectively have a better balance of civil and criminal legal experience than the previous liaisons had. These steps will improve the liaisons' ability to work effectively with civil and criminal legal issues, address both public safety issues and other neighborhood/community issues, and understand and navigate the various City, County, State, and other government agencies that affect Seattle's neighborhoods and communities.

I will also regularly examine and reassess the program to determine whether it provides the expected return on investment and to identify and address issues before they become ingrained problems. I will ensure that the liaisons maintain close working relationships and communication with SPD, other City departments, and other governmental entities, attorneys in my Civil and Criminal Divisions, the Mayor's Office, City Council, and me.