

SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Councilmember Tim Burgess, Chair
Public Safety and Education Committee

DATE: 16 Sept 2011

FROM: Deputy Chief Clark Kimerer
Deputy Chief for Administration

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SUBJECT: **Council Question #17 – Neighborhood ViewPoint Project Update**

Please find attached the subject document, identified as Council Question #17 in our internal recordkeeping system.

This item is on the agenda of the Public Safety and Education Committee on Wednesday, September 21st, 2011. Should you have any questions or need additional information on this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment: Council Question #17 – Neighborhood ViewPoint Project Update

Cc: Chief John Diaz
D/C Clark Kimerer, Deputy Chief for Administration
D/C Nick Metz, Deputy Chief for Operations
Carl Marquardt, Mayor's Office
Beth Hester, Mayor's Office
Tim Killian, Mayor's Office
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
Councilmember Sally Clark
Peter Harris, Council Central Staff
Betsy Graef, Councilmember Burgess' Office
Michael Katz, CBO

Council Question #17: Please provide an update on the Neighborhood ViewPoint Project.

SPD Response: An update on the Neighborhood ViewPoint (NVP) Project is provided below.

Project Rationale:

To learn what drives perceptions of crime and public safety in individual neighborhoods and business districts, recognizing that these perceptions are frequently independent of actual crime statistics or objective risk and that SPD internal information is incomplete.

Project Methodology:

Interviews of neighborhood residents or businesspeople by individual officers, using field-tested survey instruments.

Project Timeline:

The NVP Project began in 2010 with a series of three pilot phases, described below.

- *Phase 1 Pilot* – conducted in June and July of 2010, this phase provided a field test of the survey instrument and protocol for interviews of neighborhood residents. CPT officers from North and Southwest Precincts conducted the field test and provided feedback.
- *Phase 2 Pilot* – initiated in the fall of 2010, this phase tested the use of the survey instrument and protocol by patrol officers conducting interviews of neighborhood residents in North, West, South and Southwest precincts in six individual neighborhoods. This phase also tested use of officers across all watches for the NVP interviews.
- *Phase 3 Pilot* – conducted in December 2010 and February/March 2011, this phase tested the use of a modified survey instrument and protocol for interviews with businesses in neighborhood business districts. Using a mix of both CPT officers and patrol officers, business people across nine business districts in all five precincts were interviewed.
- *Phase 4* – currently underway in all five precincts, this phase has involved debriefing of precinct commanders on the findings from the pilot phases in which their officers participated. While commanders are assessing this information, additional officers in each precinct have been trained using revised survey instruments and protocols. Each precinct has launched NVP efforts to complement or expand upon the surveying already accomplished in the pilot phases. In addition, data entry and analysis work is being transferred to the precincts through training of administrative staffers. A final report on the NVP pilot phases is in preparation that will summarize what has been learned and make recommendations and suggestions for ongoing use of the NVP methodology.

Project Findings:

The strength of the NVP project is in its capacity to identify and characterize public safety issues and concerns at the neighborhood level. This has been quite apparent in the pilot phases of the NVP where there was considerable variability among neighborhoods and business districts on many items covered in the survey instrument. For example, when asked where they rely for information about their neighborhood, residents surveyed in West Seattle were far more apt to mention a neighborhood blog (the West Seattle blog) than were residents in other city neighborhoods. Similarly, when asked about things they had done in response to crime issues

that concerned them, business people in the Rainier South business district were twice as likely as those in other business areas to mention purchasing a security alarm or system.

Nevertheless, some findings were relatively consistent among residents and businesses across the city. Below is a summary of some of the more general findings gained from the pilot rounds of the NVP project. These are based upon the nearly 600 interviews conducted among neighborhood residents in nine police beats and businesses in nine neighborhood business districts:

- Nearly two-thirds of the residents interviewed had not had contact with SPD in the last year. This situation was reversed for businesses that were surveyed, where more than two-thirds of the respondents had interacted with SPD.
- Solid majorities of both residents and businesses felt that things in their areas had stayed the same or improved in the last year.
- Both residents and business people could distinguish crimes and other problems occurring in their neighborhoods from those causing them worry or fear.
- In general, property crimes were the most frequently recalled crime incidents and also those raising the most concern. Among residents, drug use and sales rose in prominence as crime incidents causing fear or worry; while among businesses, incidents involving transients were frequently mentioned as causing concern.
- Residents rely most on neighbors and friends for information and to lesser extent on blogs and internet services. Businesses rely on other businesses and police as information sources.
- When asked what would make their areas better places to live or do business, both residents and businesses were most apt to say more police. The second most frequent response was to say that things are fine, no improvements needed. In some neighborhoods, traffic safety improvements were also identified as important needs.
- Interviews took on average ten minutes to complete. Only one person declined to be interviewed, only one person reacted negatively to an officer and only one complaint was received and this was not from someone who was interviewed.