

## SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Sally Clark  
President, Seattle City Council

DATE: 07/20/2012

FROM: John Diaz, Chief of Police

**SUBJECT: STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT: 24-1-A-1**

Please see below the Department's response to the Neighborhood Policing Plan Statement of Legislative Intent. We acknowledge and regret that the SLI is being transmitted after its due date. Please note that this is in part due to a redefinition of scope and timeline resulting from a meeting that occurred last spring between SPD, the Executive (CBO Director) and the Central Staff Director. At this time, the parties agreed to a scope that was significantly smaller than the original SLI and one that did not require a full deployment plan with a new beat structure or forward looking strategic staffing targets.

It is our hope that this document speaks to our deployment priorities and provides its reader with a better understanding of how we are using our staff resources to address crime in Seattle. We intend to provide 1) a snapshot of the NPP to date; 2) our efforts to deploy effectively with our existing staff resources; 3) what we have learned about NPP and how we are deploying to address recent violence; and 4) our outlook moving forward.

We look forward to presenting this report before the Public Safety, Civil Rights & Technology Committee on August 1<sup>st</sup>. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

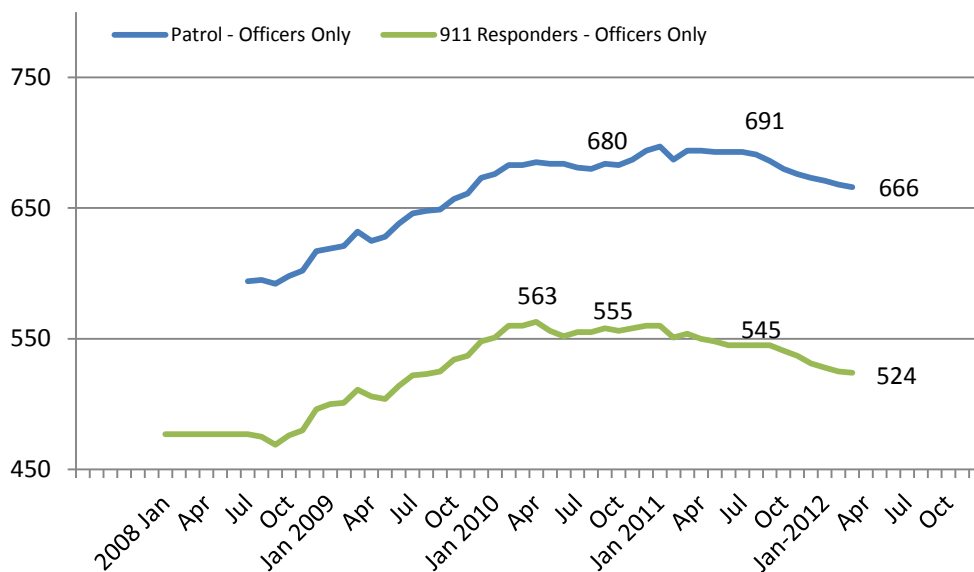
## A snapshot of the NPP to date:

The 2008 Neighborhood Policing Plan (NPP) updated the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) deployment structure to shorten and equalize emergency response times throughout the city while providing officers with more time to work proactively on crime problems with members of the community. Specifically, the plan set a number of measurable targets for the Department, as follows:

- To respond to high priority emergency calls in an average of seven minutes or less - a commonly accepted response time for police forces in larger cities.
- To allow patrol officers to do more proactive policing (30% of officer time) to help resolve the underlying conditions that create violations of law and/or public order.
- To deploy 10 additional "back up" police vehicles citywide. These cars (two in each precinct) provide better area coverage and improve back-up capability to enhance officer safety.

The plan also called for expanding SPD patrol staff by hiring 105 new officers in the period between 2008 and 2012 to achieve the NPP objectives. The addition of 105 first responders would have built upon officer adds that the City made in the period between 2005 and 2007, and ultimately, would have resulted in a bank of 605 officers that would have been available for 911 response and proactive work in the community. To implement this plan, the City added \$2 million in each of 2008, 2009 and 2010 to allow the Department to hire between 20 and 21 new officers each year.

### Staffing History – NPP Period 2008-2012



Unfortunately, budget challenges resulting from the Great Recession resulted in the City putting a 'pause' in the NPP hiring plan in 2010, a situation contemplated in the original plan.

*"If economic growth slows....the time line for implementing the hiring targets will be extended. The extension would be for as short a period as affordable, but would not extend the initiative beyond ten years."*

Facing mid-year reductions in 2010, the City did not hire the 20 officers originally slated for 2010. By 2011, hiring was put on hold. Without recruits "in the pipeline," the Department's number of sworn staff began to decline from the all-time highs reached in mid-2010. While hiring for attrition has resumed for 2012, sworn staffing levels remain below what was contemplated in the original NPP and the City's budget situation suggests that chances are slim over the next two years that the Department will be in a position to resume growing the force as originally contemplated under the NPP. However, the Department has focused on deploying staff in a way that would not adversely impact the Department's ability to meet the NPP goals.

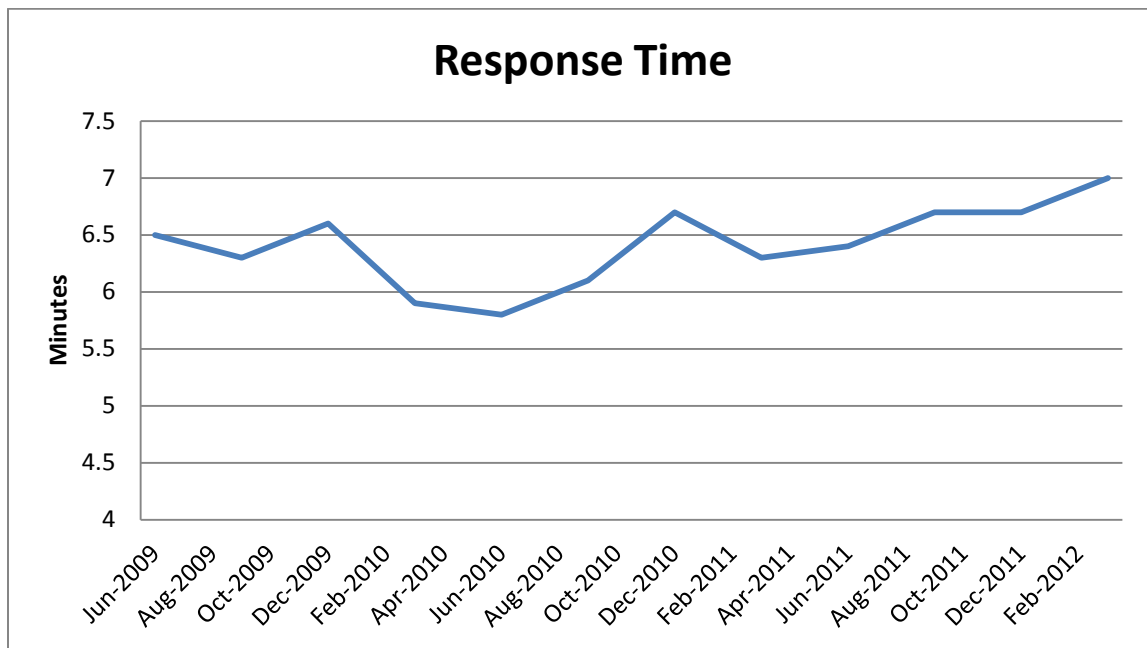
#### NPP Sworn Hires & Separations 2008 to 2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 est.	2013 est.	2008- 2013
Filled sworn positions at beginning of year	1,255	1,294	1,333	1,338	1,297	1,276	
Recruits completing academy training	78	57	25	0	10	44	214
Trained officers hired	16	9	6	0	11	10	52
Sworn separations	(55)	(27)	(26)	(41)	(42)	(47)	(238)
Net change	39	39	5	(41)	(21)	7	28
Filled sworn positions at end of year	<b>1,294</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>1,338</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>1,276</b>	<b>1,283</b>	

These figures are drawn from Table 3 in the 2011 year end and Q1 2012 update. It counts recruits only when they complete academy training, not when they are hired. Thus it does not count recruit separations during academy training, only separations among trained officers, including lateral hires and officers in field training.

Through its flexible and adaptive approach to allocation of staff resources, SPD is putting officers where they are needed most to fight and, more importantly, prevent crime. The Department's focus on 911 response is allowing it to continue to meet the NPP response time metrics, have available an aggregate of no less than 30% of patrol time for proactive work on chronic neighborhood crime and safety-related issues; and have at least 10 patrol units available citywide at any time for emergency backup.

As the chart below demonstrates, the Department has consistently achieved its average response time objectives of 7 minutes or less since 2009. The Department's best average response times – at less than 6 minutes – came in mid-2010, as SPD's sworn ranks reached its peak levels (see above table). While still within the 7 minute objective, average response times began approaching the 7 minute mark in the past couple of months. SPD has responded by redeploying officers from lower priority functions to Patrol in order to keep the response time within the stated goal. For example, this summer the Department has temporarily moved into Patrol 18 officers from lower priority functions like Precinct Desk Clerks. This is to help maintain response times as the summer workload typically increases by 19%.



While staffing levels can impact 911 response times, so too can caseload, explaining some of the variability in response times documented in the table above. For example, as the Department moved into 2011, call volumes increased from 199,000 in 2010 to 207,000 in 2011. This helps explain the increase in response times in late 2010. As SPD moves into 2012, call volumes have again increased. Through May of 2012, dispatched calls have increased by 9% when compared with the same period in 2011.

**Effective deployment with existing staff resources:**

As is mentioned above, the Department is making the best use of its officers by strategically redeploying officers from lower priority functions to Patrol to meet current workload needs. For the purpose of maintaining response time, 911 response will be temporarily bolstered by 11 Precinct Desk officers, 5 Community Police Team officers, and 2 Traffic officers. The potential impacts from these transfers may include a closed front office at every precinct. Each precinct is developing strategies to accommodate citizens who visit the precincts during this time and will work to get the message out that

the staffing change is necessary to meet the additional workload that it will see this summer. Below we will discuss the transfer of an additional 7 sworn personnel to augment the Department's current anti-violence efforts. Command Staff has said that these transfers will stay in place through the summer, but may need to stay in place longer if the additional summer workload or the recent increase in violence does not subside.

When making decisions concerning the deployment of its limited sworn resources, the Department carefully examines incidents, calls for service and reports of activities observed by officers as they are recorded across the city. Well-established methodologies, in place since the mid-1990s,<sup>1</sup> are employed to address so-called "hot spots" and persons displaying chronic criminal and anti-social behaviors. The logic behind these methodologies is that a small number of places and persons can command a disproportionate share of police attention and resources. By identifying and targeting such persons and places for intervention, police not only impact these situations, but also effect overall public safety objectives.

Complicating efforts at hot spots and with respect to chronic behaviors, however, is the fact that the underlying issues giving rise to problem places and persons are rarely only – or even principally – law enforcement in nature. Instead, substance abuse, mental illness, economic dislocation, homelessness and black and gray market commerce play significant roles in concentrating criminal incidents at specific locations and in defining the dynamics of chronic behaviors that disturb and vex community members and businesses.

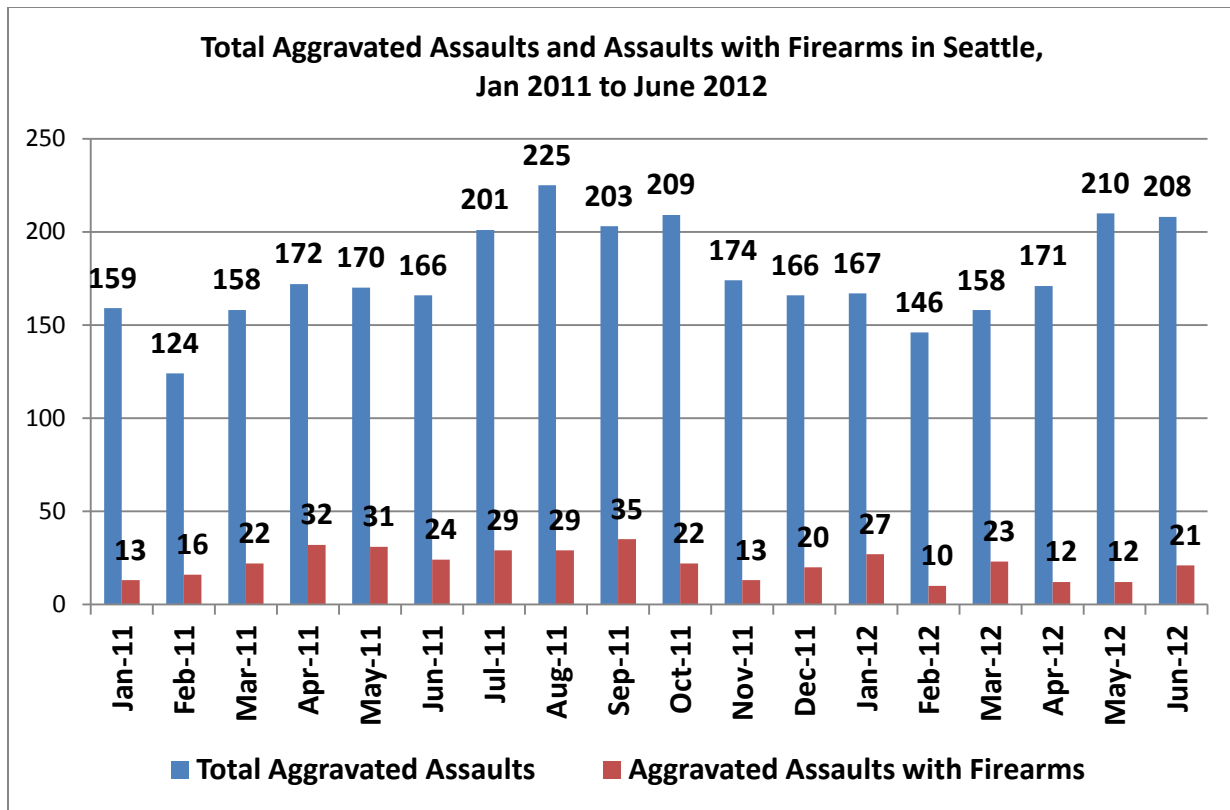
Crime analysts in each precinct regularly mine crime data to discern patterns and profiles that can guide deployment efforts around hot spots. Using Koper Curve principles, Precinct commanders strategically assign resources at identified locations and toward chronic behaviors, with the objective of withdrawing them before the point of diminishing returns is reached or until higher priorities place a claim on these resources.

The surge in homicides across the city this year has created its own deployment challenges. Many of these have been random acts, borne of illness or rage, and they have not happened in predictable locations. Meanwhile analyses of other violent crime data through May reveal that while serious assaults are up citywide by 9%, gun assaults (excluding homicides) are actually down by 26%, when compared with the first five months of 2011.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> SPD crafted performance measures for its hot spot and chronic crime enforcement efforts in 1997, long before the Department possessed the database and data analysis capacity to execute these measures.

<sup>2</sup> Assaults involving firearms represent a relatively small proportion of serious assaults. In 2010 about 11% of serious assaults involved guns. That proportion climbed to 13% in 2011, but through May of 2012, guns have been involved in just under 10% of aggravated assaults.



## What we have learned about NPP: Deploying to prevent violence

Department Command Staff understand well that reactive response to calls for service and random patrolling are not enough to effectively address crime. In an effort to curb the recent increase in violence, the Department is implementing violence prevention emphasis patrols in every precinct of the City. In addition to the emphasis patrols, the Department is also undertaking many operational responses to address these very serious violent crimes.

Units from the Special Operations Bureau are supporting Patrol by enhancing police presence at gun violence hotspots. Criminal intelligence and gang intelligence are identifying these sites through analysis of gun incidents within the last year, using current crime data.

Roll calls will be sharing specific locations within each precinct where gun violence has occurred within the past year and assigning officers to monitor those locations as part of directed patrol assignments during all three watches. Officers will be using Koper curve deployments to maximize visible presence in the problem areas.

To add more manpower, SWAT and Anti Crime Teams are being redeployed to focus on violence prevention. These groups have been assigned geographic responsibility for

specific locations where violence has occurred. Their efforts are being augmented by a reinforced Gang squad that will include three officers loaned from Federal Task forces and up to four officers that currently serve as School Emphasis Officers.

The Department is also using its purely proactive Patrol resources to address issues in the downtown core. Foot and bike patrols are being deployed at Rainier and Henderson as much as practical, with near twenty-four hour coverage being assigned to the area of 9400 Rainier Ave South. SPD bike and foot beat officers are also attacking 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue hot spots by emphasizing street checks and other approaches found to be successful in the Belltown emphasis. Through the first half of 2012, computer aided dispatch (CAD) events logged in this area are down 7% when compared with the same time period in 2011. This kind of dedicated proactive approach is essential if the Department is to directly address the underlying causes and conditions of street disorder. Through NPP implementation, the Department has learned that it must have both generalist proactive time among 911 forces as well as dedicated proactive time exemplified by the bike and foot beat and specialty units (highlighted above) for effective policing.

### **Maintaining an Emphasis on Solving Crime:**

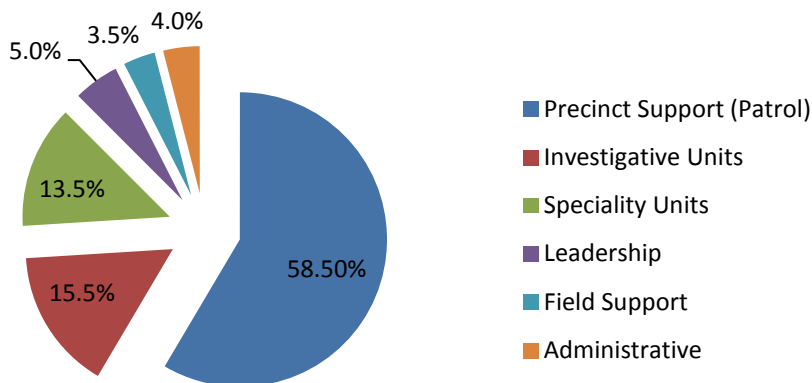
At the beginning of the NPP period (2008-09), the Department began to put more focus on the work being done by its Investigative Procedures Committee (IPC). The IPC was charged with utilizing the new CAD and RMS systems to automate case management and create reports that Command Staff can use to guide Detective workload. These tools have helped SPD managers to maximize the efficacy of investigative staff.

Through a more dynamic use of personnel, including use of some on-loan detectives, the Department has improved its robbery clearance rate to 34%, which is significantly higher than comparable cities at 24%. Additionally, the Aggravated Assault clearance rate has jumped to 63%, which also is much higher than that of comparable cities at 49%. Domestic Violence, Homicide and Gang Detectives have helped by concentrating on the most serious offenders, which has contributed to this result.

The Department is also using 5-6 on-loan positions to increase the capacity of the Major Crimes Task Force. These officers have been key to addressing burglary crimes across the City and were responsible for the success of Oliver's Twist, one of the largest stolen goods busts in SPD history.

## Looking forward:

The Department will continue to place a primary emphasis on the Precinct-based Patrol function, which includes dedicated proactive and 911 response units in all precincts, on all watches, as well as their supervisory ranks and support staff that respond to 911 calls for service, emergencies and observed public safety incidents. The chart below highlights sworn activities by functional area:



SPD will also continue to place a primary emphasis on maintaining its NPP response time metric. This is because we have found that all other metrics rise and fall on this number.

Although response time can depend on a variety of factors, such as patrol staffing, volume and priority of calls for service, and even traffic or weather conditions, one fact is clear: a prompt response is important to police customers. A quick response may well set the tone for the entire police contact as it can convey to the citizen that the police are concerned with expediently handling their individual situation.

The First Quarter Staffing Report for 2012 indicates that the Department is currently employing 1,289 sworn officers. The report notes that the Department is in the process of testing officer candidates and is planning to hire in the fall a total of 31 laterals & recruits. This hiring effort will result in additional personnel hitting the streets in the first and second quarters of 2013.

Meanwhile, the SPD will continue to accrue attrition losses throughout the rest of 2012. This attrition may bring the sworn force down to a year ending low of 1,276 sworn



positions. The Department is doing the best it can to manage its workload with a reduced force and, as noted above, is moving into 911 response 18 positions from lower priority, non-patrol functions to at least temporarily enhance the patrol ranks.

Any additional loss of officers may translate into changes in service levels. To date, Seattle has avoided such changes by shrinking or temporarily reassigning its investigative or specialty functions to help mitigate losses in its Patrol ranks. The Department is making similar adjustments with on-loan personnel that are helping boost crime clearance rates (e.g. loans into the Major Crimes Task Force).

Other cities have not been able to find such mitigation. For instance, the budget shortfalls have created a situation where the City of Oakland is maintaining its response times by no longer responding to burglary calls unless they are in progress.

As we look toward the future, the Department is committed to ensuring that all NPP metrics are met first and foremost. Any significant staffing changes would be discussed with the Council and Executive. We value the positive relationship that we have had with City leaders and look forward to the opportunity to continue the dialog on the best, most effective use of our resources.