

## **Overview of Proposed Seattle City Council 2007-2008 Comprehensive Public Safety Funding Package**

The work of the Seattle Police Department (SPD) has resulted in a reduction in violent and serious property crimes over the years. This is the first priority of any police department. Yet, less serious felonies and misdemeanors result in many citizen complaints and its incidence is consistent with our own crime data.

The Council is proposing to amend the Mayor's budget to both a) improve upon the current SPD staffing available to respond to serious crime and do proactive policing while b) including a comprehensive set of public safety strategies.

A comprehensive approach can support SPD's enforcement efforts to continue to respond to violent crime when it happens and to decrease property crimes and support SPD's proactive policing to reduce quality of life crimes. It can do this while also funding collaboration with neighbors and agencies to prevent crime and funding the intervention strategies to minimize the impact of less serious crimes. This way, we can act *before* we begin to see an uptick in all crime.

In recent years, Seattle has made some policy-making decisions that recognize a theory of healthy communities. The academic framework for this is the research of Collective Efficacy; "the most important influence on a neighborhood's crime rate is neighbors' willingness to act together for one another's benefit, and for the benefit of one another's children."

Dr. Felton Earls, of the Harvard School of Public Health, pioneered this research. It has been said that his work challenges the 20 year old "Broken Windows" theory. Yet, Dr. Fells accepts the theory that physical and social disorder may lead to increases in crime. Where Collective Efficacy differs with the Broken Windows theory is in its view of *how* government responds to this disorder.

Broken Windows posits that government address disorder with an arrest-based, zero-tolerance approach. Collective Efficacy, on the other hand, suggests that government respond by supporting – also in a zero-tolerance way - cooperative efforts that encourage neighbors to work together to respond and quickly address, disorder. For example, a community graffiti clean up – working with the offender - is a more effective tactic to affect the recurring incidence of graffiti than having City crews do the clean-up and prosecute the graffiti violator to the fullest extent of the law.

In recent budget years, due to funding shortfalls, the City has made some reductions to the programs that support this approach. Last year, the Council has begun to restore support for these programs. At the 2005 Citywide-Neighborhood Crime Summit, the public called for the restoration of SPD officer positions cut in previous budgets as well as funding cut in previous years supporting collaboration with citizens and other agencies.

In response, the Council passed Resolution 30773 to request from the Mayor a 2006 budget that included new hires for SPD as well as including funding law enforcement functions that work collaboratively with citizens such as Crime Prevention Coordinators, Citizen Service Officers, and School Resource Officers. The Mayor's proposed 2006 budget recommended funding 25 new SPD hires but was non-responsive to the rest of

the Council's request. Consequently, the Council approved the funding for 25 additional officers and amended the 2006 budget to: a) restore two Crime Prevention Coordinators, b) to fund a program linking law enforcement and human services, c) fund a Precinct Liaison position, linking a City Attorney to a Police Precinct, d) fund a position for Mental Health Court, e) fund a Graffiti Abatement coordinator, f) increase funding for Community Court-related services, g) provide \$325,000 for a day reporting program to reduce incarceration, and h) fund elder abuse investigations. Later the same year, the Council approved funding to additional 8 officer positions.

This year the Mayor was asked again to include funding in the proposed 2007-2008 budget to restore funding for additional community-driven, collaborative law enforcement efforts such as Community Service Officers, School Resource Officers, and dedicated bike or walking beats. The Mayor's proposed 2007-2008 budget was non-responsive to this request.

The proposals before you today are the efforts of the Council's continuing efforts to develop comprehensive public safety funding for the 2007-2008 biennium. The Seattle City Attorney also recognizes the importance of this approach. His 2005 Annual Report says his department has, "come to realize that some public safety and neighborhood livability problems can be better addressed through community-oriented problem solving rather than by traditional 'case-by-case' prosecution."

In summary, the proposed additions to the 2007-2008 budget in the following presentations fall into three categories. Each of these three categories are supported by the framework of a) Collective Efficacy, b) the recommendations of the public, c) the public safety challenges as evidenced by the crime data for Seattle, and d) the previous efforts of the Council.

These three categories for proposed funding in the Council's proposed Comprehensive Public Safety are, **Prevention** - reducing the incidence of a public safety threat, **Intervention** - minimizing the impact of a public safety threat on community or the individual engaged in the harmful activity, and **Maintenance** - response to the public safety challenge.

To close, I offer a quote heard, just last week on a discussion about an increase in gang violence throughout the nation on CNN's Larry King Live. "You cannot just have the arrests component. You need intervention, you need focus on prevention. So...while it's controversial that the idea can a gang member truly turn their lives around, we have to try that approach. We cannot give up on the idea that intervention works." Chief William Bratton, the Police Chief of Los Angeles, former New York City Police Chief under Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

*\*Funded by the National Institute of Justice's and the MacArthur Foundation's largest grants for any other work (\$18 million and \$23.6 million respectively) this is the largest and longest study in the history of criminology. Jeremy Travis, former director of the National Institute of Justice, said of the work, "It is far and away the most important research insight in the last decade." Similarly, Francis T. Cullen, past president of the American Society of Criminology, said "It is perhaps the most important research undertaking ever embarked upon in the study of the development of criminal behavior."*