

Update on Recommendations: 2023 Organized Retail Crime Audit

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

JUNE 13, 2024



<https://www.seattle.gov/cityauditor/reports>

Acknowledgements:

Dr. Cynthia Lum, Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy

Dr. Cory Lowe, Loss Prevention Research Council

Report Reviewed by:

- Seattle Police Department
- King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Washington State Attorney General's Office
- Mayor's Office
- Homeland Security Investigations
- Washington Retail Association
- Washington Organized Retail Crime Association



RETAIL BUSINESSES

Small local businesses and large retailers are affected by ORC.



BOOSTERS

People who steal merchandise on behalf of fences are known as “boosters.”



FENCING OPERATIONS

Fencing can be a sophisticated organized criminal activity; merchandise stolen in Seattle may be shipped overseas, sold online, or sold in storefronts or unregulated markets.



SPD Patrol Response to ORC was Equivalent to Nine Full-Time Officers in 2022



100
Seattle
Retailers



13,103
SPD Calls for
Service



18,615
Patrol Unit
Service Hours



SPD Time Spent = 9 Full-
Time Officers





Image Source: Washington Organized Retail Crime Association

Step 1:
Support City
participation in
collaborative
efforts among
agencies.



Operation Boiling Point takes on Organized Theft Groups



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Step 2:
Leverage federal
and state crime
analysis
resources.

Image Source: Homeland Security Investigations





Image Source: Seattle Police Department

Step 3:
Use in-custody interviews of boosters to gather information on fencing operations.



Image Source: San Antonio Fire Department

Step 4:
Explore new uses
of technology to
address
organized retail
crime.





Image Source: Seattle Police Department

Step 5:
Use place-based approaches to disrupt street markets.



WHAT PROSECUTORS MUST PROVE IN RETAIL CRIMES CASES

There are three main topics that must be proven when prosecuting a retail crime:

- 1) The identity of the defendant who committed the crime
- 2) What was stolen
- 3) The value of the stolen items/merchandise

Image Source: King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Step 6:
Follow the King
County
Prosecuting
Attorney's Office
"prosecution
checklist" for
ORC cases.



WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

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Bill Information > SB 5259

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5259 **Bill** Initiative 2023-2024 Search

SB 5259 - 2023-24

Ensuring commerce and workplaces are safe from product theft.

Sponsors: **Keiser, King, Conway, Lovick, Hunt, Kuderer, Nobles, Wilson, C.**

Bill Status-at-a-Glance

See **Bill History** for complete details on the bill

As of Monday, July 24, 2023 09:40 AM

Current Version:	Current Status:
SB 5259	SWays & Means

Where is it in the process?

	Introduced	In Committee	On Floor Calendar	Passed Chamber
In the Senate:	●	○	○	○
In the House:	○	○	○	○
After Passage:	○	○	○	○

Step 7:
 Consider City support of legislation that addresses organized retail crime.

Image Source: Washington State Legislature



Update on Audit Recommendations:

- **Update from Mayor's Office** – Natalie Walton-Anderson, Director of Public Safety, Mayor's Office
- **Addressing illegal street market at 12th and Jackson** - Quynh Pham, Executive Director, Friends of Little Saigon and Barb Biondo, Crime Prevention Coordinator, West Precinct, Seattle Police Department
- **Legislative update** – Mark Johnson, Sr. Vice President of Policy and Government Affairs, Washington Retail Association
- **Vibrant Communities Initiative and prosecutions update** – Patrick Hinds, Chief Deputy, Economic Crimes and Wage Theft Division, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office



2024 Phố Đẹp (Beautiful Neighborhood)

A Place-Based Community-Led Crime Prevention Initiative in Little Saigon

Objective:

Engage community stakeholders, use a problem-solving framework to identify and address the underlying causes of crime at place at hotspot for violent and property crime and overdose response.

Overview of Phase 1:

Develop a Community Safety Plan that identifies evidence-based strategies to change the physical and social environment to reduce opportunities for crime to occur and improve safety:

- Change the physical environment (CPTED)
- Increase guardianship
- Change and/or enforce policies or rules
- Increase social cohesion and collective efficacy

Collaboration: Little Saigon Community Stakeholders in partnership with SPD and other City / Govt agencies



2024 Phố Đẹp: June Updates

Funding

- Secured \$83K and contract for Friends of Little Saigon for Phase 1
- FLS recruiting a representative Community Task Force (CTF)

Review

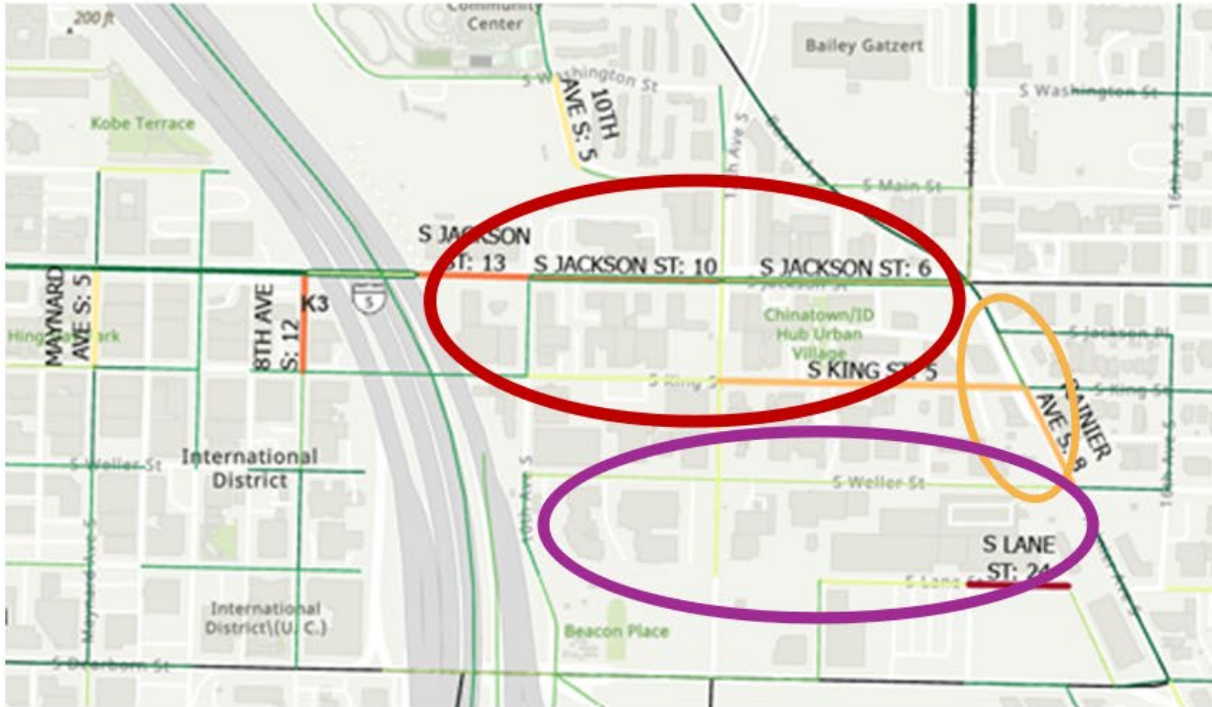
- Preliminary review Crime Data from CAD Data and other data sources (Find It /Fix It)
- Identified multiple hotspots based on crime data, observations of physical environment, activity patterns and distinct stakeholders

Next Steps

- Seeking / applying for Phase 2 implementation funding
- Developing training curriculum for Community-Based Problem-Solving Training for Community Task Force



2024 Phố Đẹp: Hotspots



Base Map: SPD Data-Driven Violent Crime –Street Segment Analysis K3

- 12th Ave / S King St / S Jackson St
 - Stolen goods market & property damage
- 12th Ave / S Weller St / S Dearborn St /
 - Drug sales, drug use, and violent crimes
- Rainer Ave S & S King St
 - Crisis
 - Disturbances



Questions?

City of Seattle Office of City Auditor

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