



Seattle

Police Department

June 6, 2025

Council President Sara Nelson
Councilmember Rob Saka
Councilmember Mark Solomon
Councilmember Joy Hollingsworth
Councilmember Maritza Rivera
Councilmember Cathy Moore
Councilmember Dan Strauss
Councilmember Robert Kettle
Councilmember Alexis Mercedes Rinck

Dear Members of City Council:

Thank you for this opportunity to respond in writing to questions concerning selected topics of interest in advance of the June 10th Public Safety Committee meeting. The focus of these questions aligns seamlessly with issues I have been working on since Day One of my tenure, and I am pleased to be able to report to this Committee perspectives that have shaped my first months in Seattle, the significant steps I and my team have taken towards our collective goals of improving the operational and administrative functioning of the Seattle Police Department, and to preview work well underway and upcoming across each of SPD's priority areas: Crime Prevention, Community Partnerships, Retention and Recruitment, Employee Safety and Wellness, and Continuous Improvement.

For ease of presentation and given the overlapping themes of many of the questions provided, I have organized my response by topic area, rather than to each question individually, to ensure I provide as comprehensive and coherent a response as I am able on this timeline. At the same time, to ensure that I am also answering specific questions raised by individual councilmembers, I have tailored my responses so as to reference each concern.

I look forward to our upcoming discussion.

Respectfully,

Shon F. Barnes Ph.D.
Chief of Police
Seattle Police Department

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Community Partnerships	4
a. CM Kettle Question c:	4
b. CM Rivera Question b:.....	4
c. CM Rinck Question f:	4
d. CM Rinck Question e:.....	6
2. Accountability and Continuous Improvement	9
a. CM Kettle Question a:	9
b. CM Rinck Question h:	12
c. CM Rinck Question l:	15
d. CM Rinck Question i:.....	16
e. CM Rinck Question g:.....	17
3. Leadership Principles	19
a. CM Kettle Question b:	19
b. CM Solomon Question a:	19
4. Crowd and Demonstration Facilitation.....	24
a. CM Rivera Question a:.....	24
b. CM Hollingsworth Question c:	27
c. CM Saka Question c:.....	28
d. CM Rinck Question k:.....	29
5. Legitimacy	29
a. CM Hollingsworth Question a:	29
b. CM Hollingsworth Question d:	29
6. Crime Prevention	31
a. CM Hollingsworth Question b:	31
b. CM Saka Question f:	31
c. CM Saka Question d:	37
d. CM Rinck Question b:	38

e.	CM Rinck Question c:.....	40
f.	CM Rinck Question d:	41
g.	CM Rinck Question a:	41
h.	CM Rinck Question j:.....	43
7.	Employee Wellness	45
a.	CM Saka Question a:.....	45
8.	Retention and Recruitment	48
a.	CM Saka Question e:.....	48
b.	CM Saka Question b:	49

1. Community Partnerships

a. CM Kettle Question c:

A cornerstone of public safety is public outreach and understanding a community, a neighborhood, or a city's concerns or needs with respect to its safety. Can you outline your beliefs on this topic?

b. CM Rivera Question b:

What is your approach to community policing and how will you bring that to Seattle? What will that look like and what can the public expect to see in the coming weeks, months, years? How will you address the public safety issues by neighborhood?

c. CM Rinck Question f:

The last five years have been turbulent for SPD, and many have pointed to a resultant loss of trust with the community. Sue Rahr has said that improving trust starts by building better trust within SPD's ranks and moving from there. As you continue to do this, what would the next steps for building trust with community look like to you?

At the heart of any successful public safety strategy is a clear understanding of the community's concerns, values, and lived experiences. As the Chief of Police, I firmly believe that the voice of the community is not just important—it *is foundational*. Public safety cannot be achieved without public trust, and public trust cannot be built without active, continuous, and authentic community engagement.

My philosophy of community-oriented policing is rooted in principles that are harm-focused, intelligence-led, and neighborhood-oriented—whether residential, business, educational, or civic. It must be problem-oriented, evidence-based, and, most importantly, sustainable. The goal is not to treat symptoms temporarily but to understand the underlying root causes of crime and disorder so that communities are not repeatedly subjected to the same harm(s) they have unfortunately grown accustomed to.

The first step in truly engaging any community is to understand the historical and contemporary challenges that impact police legitimacy, especially among communities that have long borne the brunt of misinformed policies and harmful practices. To put this into perspective, consider that in 1972 there were approximately 300,000 people incarcerated in the United States. Today, there are over 2.3 million. An additional 6 million Americans are on probation or parole and more than 70 million have experienced some

form of contact with the criminal justice system. These are not just statistics—they represent lives, families, and entire communities whose trajectory has been altered.

The Equal Justice Initiative reports a 240% increase in the incarceration of women over the last two decades, 70% of whom are mothers. These outcomes have generational cultural, economic, and social consequences. Law enforcement, as the most visible arm of government, has often been the face of these outcomes. As a police chief, I acknowledge these truths. They are essential to understanding community concerns, especially in cities like Seattle, where history and policy have shaped deep-rooted perceptions and relationships.

My belief is simple: you cannot understand a community from a distance. As police officers, and especially as leaders, we must be proximate. This principle informs our strategy at every level. Precinct commanders are empowered to engage at the sector, neighborhood (e.g. Micro Community Policing Plan areas), and beat level, working directly with the community to understand their specific needs. Officers are encouraged, and expected, to spend time in communities when not responding to calls for service. Proximity is essential to effective problem-solving. When we are not present, we miss important contextual details and, more critically, we miss opportunities to connect with the people we serve.

To support this, I have authorized a comprehensive staffing study aimed at reassessing our resource allocation to ensure officers have the time and flexibility to be present in their communities. It is my hope that this study will inform innovation in this area, providing framework to foster agility, perhaps around reshaping precinct boundaries, patrol deployment, and beat structures so that we can better serve each neighborhood's unique needs based on the evidence. This may also reduce the volume of community concerns escalated to city leadership by creating more direct, local points of contact.

More specifically in answer to CM Rivera's question about actions, to build on this philosophy, we are piloting a Police Neighborhood Resource Center. This initiative places officers directly within communities—physically and relationally—by establishing local offices where community members can speak directly with a designated officer. This program is designed to build relationships, not just respond to emergencies.

We are also developing a Community CompStat model in partnership with the Department of Neighborhoods. This monthly meeting will bring together community members, precinct commanders, and city partners to review data and discuss the issues that matter most to the people who live and work in our neighborhoods. Unlike traditional CompStat models, which often focus narrowly on crime trends, this approach emphasizes collaboration,

transparency, and co-produced solutions. It's a first for Seattle, and an important step forward.

To further enhance communication, I have hired a Chief Communications Officer with a clear mandate: develop systems for precinct-level communication through blogs, updates, and community meetings. These platforms allow us to explain not just what we are doing, but why. They also ensure city leadership, particularly the Mayor's Office and City Council, are informed partners in our work.

Public safety cannot be achieved without procedural justice. Community members must believe that our actions are fair, our decisions are neutral, and that we are committed to treating all people with the dignity and respect they deserve. We demonstrate this by how we respond to concerns, how we allocate resources, and how we communicate the results of our work. To CM Rinck's question, this is how we build trust.

Community policing is not a seasonal initiative, but rather a continuous commitment to listening, improving, and adapting. Each precinct in Seattle is tasked with developing Problem-Oriented Policing Plans and Micro-Community Policing Plans in collaboration with academic partners like Seattle University. This ensures that our strategies are data-informed, research-backed, and grounded in real community input.

My approach to public outreach and understanding community concerns is not just philosophical—it is operational. It is built on proximity, communication, collaboration, and sustained engagement. As Chief of Police, I remain committed to ensuring that every community in Seattle feels heard, respected, and protected. True public safety is not just about enforcement—it's about trust, and trust begins with listening.

d. CM Rinck Question e:

I was interested to read about the type of school resource officer program that you used to supervise. One thing that struck me was that most of what you described – de-escalation, talking to parents, mediation, etc. These are things we are already doing within the Seattle schools through civilian violence interrupter and restorative justice programs. What do you think about this approach? What are the pros and cons of running this type of program through civilian channels versus through the police department?

When implemented effectively, school resource officer programs function as partnerships that leverage various community resources. The fundamental concept is that police officers serve as conduits for resources designed to support student success. The focus of these programs should not be on determining who leads the restorative justice or

intervention process; rather, the priority should be on enhancing student outcomes. I often hear responses asserting, “we’re already doing this” when examples arise of how different organizations, including police departments, address challenges in the community. While I appreciate these efforts, there is always room for improvement. If we are already engaged, the question should shift to how we can enhance our efforts and collaborate more effectively.

Crime prevention is a collective responsibility, not solely the duty of the police department. It is essential to recognize that we often serve as the first responders to symptoms of underlying social issues and, as police officers, we bear the responsibility of providing resources to those in need. There are no disadvantages to working collaboratively with the community to better serve our students. Throughout my career, I have rejected the divisive mindset of “us versus them,” believing instead that the community and the police should work together as allies.

The Seattle Police Department that I envision is one that genuinely values partnerships. We see ourselves not as part of the problem, but as part of the solution. Under my leadership, we have acknowledged the missteps and shortcomings of not just our department but also other police agencies across the nation. However, we can no longer shoulder the entirety of public safety issues alone; commitment to moving forward alongside our community is crucial. As a police chief who began my career as a public school teacher, specifically teaching 10th-grade U.S. history, I take immense pride in collaborating with our school systems to create an environment where students feel safe—a sanctuary conducive to their academic, social, and emotional well-being.

It’s time to transcend the old debates of pros and cons, civilians versus police, and recognize that police officers are humans too. Many of us have children, loved ones, and relatives in the school system, and many, like myself, have backgrounds as teachers, coaches, or administrators. To dismantle existing barriers, I need strong support from our city council. Unfortunately, when elected officials—who are, in essence, part of the policing command structure—view the police as adversaries rather than partners, it undermines our ability to forge meaningful collaborations and implement successful programs.

Let me be unequivocal: I support the school resource officer program, and I have developed a vision for what this initiative could look like. However, as a servant leader, I recognize that my vision must not be the sole guiding force. The program should reflect the collective vision of all stakeholders involved, including teachers, students, parents, administrators, and elected officials. Together, we can craft a program that serves as a national model for others to emulate.

A successful SRO program must be rooted in a student-centered approach that prioritizes safety while fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students, regardless of background or identity. Rather than serving as enforcers of discipline for school administration, SROs should operate as part of a broader student support system, with their role focused strictly on emergency response, violence prevention, and safety planning. To fulfill this mission effectively, all SROs must receive comprehensive training in adolescent development, trauma-informed care, mental health awareness, cultural competency, de-escalation, and restorative justice. These training components are essential to ensuring that officers are prepared to work within an educational environment and are aligned with the values of equity and fairness.

Critically, SROs will not be involved in routine disciplinary actions, as those remain the responsibility of school administrators. Instead, their role will center on building trust through community engagement and relationship-building efforts, including mentoring programs, participation in school events, and delivering gang and drug intervention education. Transparency and accountability are also foundational to the program's success, which is why regular reviews will be conducted in partnership with school leadership, parents, students, and civil rights organizations. Additionally, SROs will be expected to provide consistent communication through forums such as PTA meetings and other school-based gatherings.

Ultimately, the goal is to maintain school safety while reinforcing trust, dignity, and equitable treatment for all students, fostering a culture that supports growth and community confidence.

Turning to the second part of the question, non-profit associations are significant partners working with unsheltered, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, criminal justice diversion and reentry programs. These associations greatly assist by focusing on reducing harm, working directly with those in need, and knowing what is most needed at any given time, and they understand that needs are generally immediate in response to a crisis.

Community Violence Interrupter programs (CVI) are important in public safety. A successful public health model treats violence like a contagion¹ and comprises three components: Street Community Violence Interrupters, Community Outreach Workers, and Community Therapists. These form concentric rings working with individuals, with issues, with communities. To be successful, CVI needs all three components. One component of

¹ [Cure Violence Global — Stopping the Spread of Violence](#)

CVI are credible messengers, embedded in community, they engage with individuals, working to break the cycle/spread of violence.

I have worked in three departments that have used CVI, in conjunction with other non-profits, to impact violence. To be successful, CVI must have a clear mission and work closely with the City and non-profits. However, as described in detail above, I do not believe that one approach should necessarily be chosen over the other; there is enough work for both CVI and SROs to collaborate, connect, and ultimately improve the safety of our students.

2. Accountability and Continuous Improvement

a. CM Kettle Question a:

What is your direct experience, if any, working with police accountability partners? If no direct experience, can you speak to the issue generally?

Civilian oversight of law enforcement has evolved over the decades in response to community concerns and incidents of police misconduct. The earliest recorded attempts at civilian oversight date back to the 1920s, with the Los Angeles Bar Association establishing a committee to document police misconduct complaints in 1928.² Yet it was not until the mid-20th century that more formal structures emerged, such as the first civilian review board in Washington, D.C., established in 1948 in response to complaints about excessive force used by police against African Americans.³ These developments reflect a broader movement towards police accountability and community engagement.

I believe that civilian oversight agencies (e.g., police accountability partners) have been instrumental in addressing these issues by reducing workloads for law enforcement officers and providing a mechanism for public complaints. The National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) recognized my contributions in this effort as the only active police chief in the country that has previously worked in civilian oversight as an accountability partner. NACOLE is a prominent organization dedicated to promoting effective civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies across the United States.⁴ Founded in 1995, NACOLE serves as a resource for communities seeking to enhance police

² Walker, S. (2006). The history of citizen oversight. In J. Cintrón Perino (Ed.), *Citizen Oversight of Law Enforcement* (pp. 1-10). ABA Publishing.

³ Alpert, G. P., & Dunham, R. G. (1997). *Policing urban America*. Waveland Press. (General reference for police accountability)

⁴ National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE). (n.d.). About NACOLE. Retrieved June 1, 2025, from https://www.nacole.org/about_nacole (https://www.nacole.org/about_nacole)

accountability and transparency through civilian oversight mechanisms, including review boards, ombudsman systems, and other forms of independent examination of police practices.⁵

Previously, I held the position of Director of Training and Professional Development for the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) in Chicago, Illinois. While at COPA I was responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of training programs aimed at ensuring that the staff and stakeholders involved in police accountability were well-equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. This role involves designing training modules that address various aspects of police accountability, including investigative techniques, community engagement, and understanding police policies and practices.

I firmly support police accountability. The civilian oversight of police actions, particularly when investigations are carried out by qualified, trained, and impartial bodies, ensure that such inquiries are both thorough and timely. Throughout my career, I have actively advocated for stronger civilian oversight mechanisms and have taken on speaking engagements, including keynote addresses at the National Organization of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement conference in Chicago in 2024 and the International Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement conference in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2025. Recognized as an expert in this field, I have assisted several communities in understanding how effective civilian oversight can harmonize with police accountability. For instance, I collaborated with the Rochester, New York, police department to conduct a virtual panel with community members, educating them on how the accountability process could foster mutual benefits for both the department and the community.

It's also important to fully define what "accountability" means. For many people, police accountability hinges on the actions taken to punish officers who fail to follow proper procedures and strict adherence to the law. I agree that there is a place for a punitive response, under certain circumstances. I also believe that true police accountability begins long before any incidents arise that draw scrutiny from oversight bodies. For me, police accountability encompasses not only the officers' commitment to the department, but the department's commitment to its officers – i.e., the proactive measures that equip officers with the essential tools, training, teamwork, technology, and time they need to perform their duties effectively and appropriately. It should go unremarked that this premise is explicit in paragraph 221 of the Consent Decree, which holds the City responsible for providing SPD with the necessary support and resources to meet its commitments to reform – commitments that are now engrained in the policies,

⁵ Eck, J. E. (2018). Police accountability: Why is it important? Harvard Kennedy School. <https://pksoi.army.mil/documents/168530/754507/Police+Accountability.pdf>

procedures, and operations of the department and that will continue to require support and resources. I want to thank Council for its work to ensure the necessary resources and legal frameworks that empower our work and ensure the safety of community members. By passing ordinances aimed at addressing quality-of-life issues, such as prostitution and drug use, or advancing legislation that enhances our ability to recruit and retain a qualified workforce, the city council plays a vital role in defining what police accountability means in practice.

I welcome the opportunity to engage with our accountability partners, as we all share a collective responsibility to ensure that policing in Seattle is conducted in a manner that is fair, just, and legitimate, ultimately bolstering the integrity of the city government. Through collaboration and open dialogue, we can build a system of law enforcement that better serves and reflects the values of the communities we protect. In 2020, as the Chief of Police for the Madison Police Department in 2020, I supported the city's decision to establish an independent monitoring system to enhance police accountability. Upon my arrival, I promptly reached out to the civilian oversight board, only to find that they were not yet organized and prepared to begin collaborative efforts with the police department. Following several unsuccessful attempts to engage with the oversight board, an independent monitor was finally hired in 2023, three years after the establishment of the Office of Independent Monitor. However, it took an additional year for the office to build its staff, and by the time I departed in 2025, the office had neither accepted nor reviewed any complaints. Consequently, I was not afforded any direct experience as a police chief working alongside an independent monitor or civilian oversight body during my tenure in Madison.

In contrast, my experience with civilian oversight in Seattle has been markedly different. Since my appointment, I have actively engaged with all three independent accountability partners and have focused on building strong relationships with them. This collaboration has provided me with the opportunity to review adjudicated cases and submit my recommendations regarding disciplinary actions. I recognize that relationship building is an ongoing process, and I am pleased to report that our partnerships are both solid and effective. I look forward to advancing our collaborative efforts within the City of Seattle.

While I understand that disagreements may arise from time to time, I am confident in my ability to communicate my perspectives clearly and professionally. Should any situations present disruptions or confusion regarding the findings of our accountability partners, I am poised to navigate these challenges constructively. My goal is to foster an environment of transparency and mutual respect, ensuring that we can work together effectively to enhance police accountability and maintain the trust of the community we serve.

b. CM Rinck Question h:

When talking about police accountability, I thought it was really interesting that you're the only chief who has also worked for civilian oversight. Our accountability system has been hamstrung by a police contract that doesn't allow for our landmark accountability ordinance to go into effect so the system can work as designed. What can you do as Chief to ensure accountability is taken more seriously by the department?

It is clear that we share an ongoing commitment to accountability in its myriads of forms. As discussed above, police accountability encompasses not only back-end measures in the form of consequences for out of policy behavior, but also the proactive measures that equip officers with the essential tools, training, teamwork, technology, and time they need to perform their duties effectively and appropriately. The department holds itself accountable through many systems of critical self-analysis, such as the Force Investigation Team, the Force Review Board, our on-going commitment to analyzing performance to achieve better outcomes, and our regular engagement with the Community Police Commission and the Office of the Inspector General to collaborate on ways we can improve. This is wholly consistent with the department's commitment to continual improvement, having emerged from the Consent Decree as a learning organization. All of this exists upstream of discipline, which ultimately is the backstop of accountability.

The public entrusts law enforcement with significant authority to ensure safety and maintain order. With this authority comes the responsibility to act with integrity, fairness, and professionalism. While most interactions between police personnel and the community are conducted appropriately, there are occasions when the public justifiably question the use of police authority. Unfortunately, there are also instances where this authority is misused.

To uphold public trust and maintain our department's professionalism, it is essential to have a fair and effective system of corrective action. The most successful system combines the reinforcement of core values with clearly established behavioral standards. Every member of the Seattle Police Department must adhere to the policies, rules, and regulations that define our professional expectations. Given the dynamic nature of policing, it is impossible to foresee every situation an officer may encounter. Therefore, employees must exercise sound judgment and common sense in their decision-making.

Our officers are expected to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, respect, trust, accountability, and stewardship. In turn, they deserve to be treated fairly and respectfully by their peers, supervisors, and accountability partners. The department has a duty to clearly communicate its expectations and ensure that the consequences of failing to meet them are well-defined. While setting expectations is straightforward, determining the appropriate disciplinary response can be complex. Factors such as situational circumstances, intent, and prior performance must be carefully evaluated.

Consistency and fairness are the cornerstones of effective corrective action. Consistency means holding all employees equally accountable for misconduct, while fairness requires an assessment of the circumstances leading to the behavior and applying consequences that reflect this understanding. Discipline decisions should be guided by a balanced consideration of several key factors:

- **Employee Motivation** – Officers are expected to act in the public interest. A policy violation committed in an effort to achieve a legitimate public safety goal will be weighed differently than one driven by personal gain or malice. While innovation in problem-solving is encouraged, violations of constitutional rights or fundamental policing principles cannot be justified.
- **Degree of Harm** – The consequences of an error must be considered, including financial costs, physical harm, and damage to public trust. Serious misconduct, such as criminal behavior or excessive use of force, demands a strong disciplinary response to reinforce public confidence in the department's integrity.
- **Experience and Training** – Officers with less experience or those in unfamiliar roles may be given more leeway for judgmental errors. Conversely, experienced officers who make errors inconsistent with their training and expertise should expect greater accountability.
- **Intentional vs. Unintentional Errors** – Mistakes happen, and unintentional errors, particularly those resulting from split-second decisions or momentary lapses, will generally be met with corrective rather than punitive measures—unless they become habitual. However, intentional violations of law, policy, or ethical standards warrant more severe consequences. Acts of dishonesty, theft, or physical abuse are wholly incompatible with the responsibilities of policing and will not be tolerated.
- **Employee's Past Record** – Whenever legally and ethically permissible, an employee's prior performance history will be considered. A history of repeated violations may warrant progressively stricter consequences, while a record of commendable service may be factored into the disciplinary response.

All disciplinary decisions will be based on a comprehensive evaluation of the relevant factors, ensuring that consequences are applied fairly and proportionally. The rationale for corrective actions will be clearly articulated to reinforce transparency and accountability.

The Seattle Police Department has a proud tradition of service, integrity, and professionalism. To preserve and enhance that tradition, every employee must take responsibility for upholding the highest standards of conduct. By maintaining these standards, SPD will continue to serve as a national model for exceptional policing.

Finally, it is my understanding that the vast majority of the Accountability Ordinance is fully in effect; indeed, the ordinance was recently amended on the recommendation of our accountability partners. While there are certainly legitimate labor considerations, which the Ordinance fully recognizes⁶, I am heartened by the Federal Monitoring Team’s assessment of the current state of accountability in Seattle:

After reviewing the past and current state of the Seattle police accountability mechanisms, we agree with a report completed by 21CP Solutions in 2019 that “[t]he **City of Seattle has one of the most multi-layered and sophisticated oversight systems in the United States** [and]...[t]he current state of accountability appears to be quite effective...” [internal citation omitted]. Further, we agree with the majority of stakeholder opinions reported herein that the Accountability Triad is positioned to provide sustainable oversight in the future – even if there is potential for future internal and external challenges and interagency conflict.⁷

In other words, even as the Department of Justice’s 2011 investigation found that Seattle’s accountability processes were “sound and that the investigations of police misconduct complaints are generally thorough, well-organized, well-documented, and thoughtful,” the work Seattle has done since has only strengthened this system.

⁶ “Provisions of the ordinance introduced as Council Bill 118969 subject to the Public Employees’ Collective Bargaining Act, chapter 41.56 RCW, shall not be effective until the City completes its collective bargaining obligations.” <https://www.seattle.gov/a/83748>.

⁷ 2023 [Seattle Accountability System Sustainability Report](#) at 6.

c. CM Rinck Question I:

You did your dissertation on racial profiling in traffic stops, and we have data from the consent decree that shows that SPD still stops and searches Black and Indigenous people at much higher rates than white people, even though white people are more likely to have weapons. How are you planning to work to improve SPD's record in this area?

There is no question that racial disparities exist at all levels of the criminal justice system, and certainly in the area of enforcement; there is also no question that bias – implicit or, too often, explicit – plays a factor in perpetuating those disparities. At the same time, it is also true that many of the disparities we see in policing are not caused by policing; rather, any intellectually rigorous approach to examining disparities in policing must also account for disparities far upstream of policing (housing, education, healthcare) that in turn feed those factors that are the most significant drivers of criminal behavior – all fundamentally rooted in poverty. Systemic disparities across all facets of our society should not land solely at the feet of police to absorb; the impact of centuries of systemic racism cannot be undone by a simple policy, or training, or even the strictest of accountability measures. Nor is disparity even one that lends itself to easy calculations; while a common approach, the practice of simply using census-based comparisons to discern equity in particular outcomes has been roundly rejected as a methodology. See, for example, the federal monitor's [2022 Comprehensive Assessment](#) at p. 16:

As the previous Monitor observed, comparing police activity to population provides a “generalized type of analysis that does not tell us much about what is driving disparity.” Further, determining the extent of racial disparity caused specifically by policing is difficult to quantify. **Directly comparing stop or frisk rates to the racial composition of Seattle's population does not, by itself, render conclusions on biased-policing or tell us the amount of disparity caused specifically by SPD's practices, because racial disparities evident in police data may be impacted by societal inequities, not just by the actions of individual subjects or officers.**

(Bolded in the original.)

As commended by both the DOJ and the Monitor, SPD has developed robust programs that use advanced analytics (propensity score matching) to create quasi-experimental approaches to digging into disparities in its data, particular with respect to those actions that depend heavily on officer discretion (such as the decision to stop a subject or the decision to frisk). Yet even this methodology is not discrete enough to capture subtle nuances in a particular encounter that may influence an officer one way or another.

I will continue to lean into and advance SPD's work to reduce any disparities in its data that are caused by officer decision-making through the continued heightened analysis at the individual event and systemic levels (supervisor reviews of stops and detentions, bias reviews by chains of command, OPA review, and OIG review), supporting SPD's analytics team as it continues to refine its approach to the data, and – critically – through my commitment to community policing and bringing officers together with the communities they serve.

d. CM Rinck Question i:

There has been a lot of news coverage about former Officer Kevin Dave, who hit and killed Jaahnavi Kandula in a crosswalk while speeding to answer a call. It came out that SPD was aware of Dave's problematic history as a police officer in Tucson, Arizona, where he was fired for failing to meet their standards for recruits and also had an alleged drunk driving incident on his record. It seems like this was a huge oversight on SPD's part that unfortunately led to death of a young woman going about her day. Are you planning to look into SPD's backgrounding process as part of responding to this failure. How else can we safeguard against this happening again?

The death of Jaanavi Kandula is a tragedy that impacted our local communities, her family and her community in India, SPD employees, and ultimately, the involved former officer in many ways – exacerbated by the horrific comments captured on the body-worn video of an officer wholly unrelated to the event.

As this matter is in litigation, I am limited in the extent to which I can discuss specific allegations that may be at issue in this case. Indeed, I do not even have all of the facts that have been subject to discovery. Just as I expect a full briefing from the City's Attorney's Office in the coming months, I understand that City Council will likewise be briefed in Executive Session and questions about what happened and any causal factors are best addressed in that context. Until then, I would encourage all of us not to rely exclusively on media reports for a comprehensive understanding of this truly tragic incident.

Without implying any opinion as the process previously in place, SPD's new backgrounding model and implementation of eSOPH, an automated case management system, has not only made the backgrounding process more efficient, but more organized. This should improve accuracy, clarity, and consistency in hiring practices.

e. CM Rinck Question g:

With the consideration of the research that has come out from the National Institute of Criminal Justice Reforms stating that one half of all call types are best responded to by civilian responders, are there plans to listen to both SPD command staff as well as leading researchers? How will your approach to leadership include the research and data that will ensure a team-oriented approach, including civilian responders?

I support a diversified response plan, with the right resource – CARE, SFD, Patrol, CSOs, Crisis Response Teams, SWAT, ABS, Harbor, and potentially a wide-variety of community responders – being deployed at the right time for the right reason. On civilian response, the department has invested heavily in its Community Service Officer program, championed under a prior iteration of City Council, and in addition to regularly utilizing CSOs, works alongside (and diverts responses to) CARE responders routinely.

With respect to the work of NICJR and, in particular, SPD's engagement of NICJR to examine opportunities for building out alternative response programs, it's important to ensure that we are all operating off a common understanding of the NICJR report and SPD's work to facilitate and build on that report - particularly insofar as very few of those initially involved in this work remain with the City. (One independent analysis of this work that I found particularly useful in navigating diverse perspectives around the report and its findings can be found at <https://sccinsight.com/2021/11/11/understanding-the-nicjr-report/>.)

At the outset, SPD *agreed* with the premise of the report in that there are without question calls for service that default to SPD, but which ultimately do not need a police response. SPD's concerns with the report, and particularly about relying exclusively on this report to radically shift dispatch protocols, were not rooted in any fundamental disagreement about the value of non-police response services; rather, SPD had concerns about (1) broad inferences from the limited values of initial call type and call disposition as to the necessity for police intervention (i.e., the methodology did not account for the quality of the response that may impact the ultimate disposition) and (2) determining from these limited data call sets that could be shifted from police categorically, rather than based upon factors and circumstances unique to each call.

As originally proposed in SPD's response to SLI SPD-017-A-001, SPD undertook to build upon the work of NICJR to develop a more nuanced model for identifying call triage that better accounted for the inherent risks that can come with any call for service. This model – the Intelligent Risk Management (IRM) system – was the brainchild of SPD's Senior

Director of Performance Analytics and Research (Loren Atherley), formed the basis for Dr. Atherley's dissertation research (undertaken under the tutelage of one of modern policing's foremost scholars at Cambridge University (UK) and with advisory support from academic experts at leading institutions in the United States.⁸ I am extremely proud to report that, just this week, SPD and CARE have begun implementation of this system with the support of nearly \$700,000 in grant funding (originally through the Bureau of Justice Assistance and subsequently picked up by the National Policing Institute).

Rather than using categorical distinctions to discern the routing of calls, this IRM system is a technology solution designed to support 911 call takers in making evidence-based decisions about appropriate emergency response resources. The system uses Natural Language Processing to analyze call audio in real-time, providing a risk forecast that helps identify when it's safe to dispatch non-police responders. This human-machine interface serves as intelligent decision support rather than replacing human judgment, creating cognitive synchronism when the system and call taker agree, and prompting deeper consideration when they disagree.

Technical implementation of the IRM system involves several Amazon Web Services components working together to process emergency calls. The system transcribes live call audio, analyzes the text using a machine learning model trained on historical call data, and displays a visual risk assessment on a simple web interface. The display shows which response tier is recommended (police response, co-responder assisted police response, police assisted co-response, or deferred response) along with the confidence level of that recommendation, all updating in near real-time as the call progresses.

Evidence-based response is critical because the current system relies heavily on professional judgment, which can be inconsistent and vulnerable to human factors like fatigue or bias. With 97% of calls resolving differently than their initial classification (one difficulty with validating the NICJR report based on the data available at the time), and over 42,000 possible permutations of call characteristics, human judgment alone cannot reliably identify the appropriate response in every situation. The IRM system standardizes risk assessment while keeping a human in the loop, allowing for both consistency and flexibility in emergency response decisions.

The grant award to operationalize Seattle's IRM demonstrates the potential impact of this approach, not just in Seattle but throughout the field of emergency response. By providing

⁸ I do want to note, responsive to the reference to the research community, that many who are active in this research space are members of SPD, including Dr. Atherley – widely considered one of the leading scholars in modern police theory and who, alongside myself, is a member of the George Mason University Evidence-Based Policing Hall of Fame. It was in part the caliber of SPD's research team that initially drew my interest to Seattle.

objective, data-driven support for call triage decisions, the IRM system enables more efficient allocation of emergency resources, potentially recovering up to 26% of police capacity currently spent on non-police matters. This technology represents a significant advancement in public safety management, allowing communities to deploy the right resources to the right situations while maintaining safety for both responders and the public they serve.

I trust that this work demonstrates SPD's commitment to advance the goals around alternative response articulated in Executive Order 2020-10, a commitment that I wholeheartedly support. That said, I am mindful that I cannot work outside of existing laws, including labor laws governing bodies of work and prohibitions against skimming. Whatever I would personally like to do, I cannot change existing structures on my own without city support and agreement between many interested parties. In fact, the primary authority for collective bargaining is the Labor Relations Policy Committee, or LRPC, which currently includes five members of City Council and five members of the Executive, who jointly hold far more sway in changing bodies of work.

3. Leadership Principles

a. CM Kettle Question b:

Often we get focused on specific issues and challenges that arise. More broadly, though, it's important to understand your leadership principles, approaches, and lessons learned over the course of your career. Can you speak to this point?

b. CM Solomon Question a:

At the South Precinct community meeting, you [Chief Barnes] shared your priorities as Chief of Police for our City. May you please share these priorities with my colleagues and briefly remark on how or why they were chosen? (CM Solomon)

Throughout the course of my 25-year career in policing—and a lifetime of service that includes time as a U.S. Marine, public school teacher, and athletic coach—I have learned enduring lessons that continue to guide me as a leader. These lessons have not only contributed to my professional success but have also shaped my approach to leading with purpose, clarity, and compassion.

Leadership begins with self-awareness. I have come to understand that knowing oneself—both strengths and limitations—is foundational to effective leadership. With this

understanding, I have always sought to build teams that are well-rounded and diverse in human, technical, and conceptual skills. Setting the example is critical. I strive to maintain a positive and grounded outlook, especially in challenging times. While I never deny the reality of difficult situations, I recognize that people often look to me to gauge whether to remain calm or panic. Emotions are contagious, and as a leader, I must choose to spread optimism, confidence, and purpose.

A key element of modeling the way also lies in decision-making. Over the years, I have learned the value of discernment in when and how to act. I make routine decisions quickly to maintain momentum, but take a more deliberate, thoughtful approach with complex or high-stakes choices. The ability to strike this balance has been critical in fostering trust and consistency throughout my career. A safe and vibrant city cannot be achieved by police alone—it requires the participation and commitment of all stakeholders, from community members to civic partners. My role is to unite people around that shared vision and to inspire collaboration at every level, and welcome respectful disagreement and diverse perspectives. Innovation is born from challenge and conversation. I have made it a point to surround myself with the best and brightest minds in law enforcement, encouraging them to challenge traditional approaches and bring forward new ideas.

This openness has led to improved processes, policies, and outcomes. The status quo should never be a destination; it should be a launching pad for constant growth. I envision a Seattle Police Department that is known for being innovative and forward-thinking. Empowering others is not only a core leadership principle but a necessity in any large, complex organization. I believe in the importance of clear, transparent communication—early and often. People are more effective when they feel informed, trusted, and valued. I also believe leadership should exist at every level of the organization. When tasks are clearly communicated, supervised effectively, and held to high standards, individuals are given the space to grow, excel and lead. Empowered employees become the backbone of a high-functioning department, and it is my duty to create the conditions for their success.

Perhaps most importantly, I believe in knowing and caring for the people I serve and lead. Leadership is not only about strategy—it's also about humanity. One of my departmental priorities is employee safety and wellness, a commitment that spans five dimensions: mental health, spiritual wellness, physical health, financial health, and social health. These are the principles I have followed. Modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, encouraging others to act, and enabling the heart are more than abstract concepts. They are the lived values that have guided me from the classroom to military service, and from the patrol car to the Chief's office. Leadership is not about titles or ranks—it is about service, integrity, and the willingness to learn and grow alongside

those you lead. I remain committed to these principles, not only as a police chief but as a lifelong servant to the communities I am honored to serve.

Finally, I have made it clear to my leadership team and indeed, the whole department, that Crime Prevention, Community Partnerships, Retention and Recruitment, Employee Safety and Wellness, and Continuous Improvement, are **departmental priorities**, not Chief's priorities. While I may have set these priorities, they need to be owned at every level of the department and should continue to shape how we approach our missions.

Crime Prevention, Community Partnerships, Retention and Recruitment, and Continuous Improvement are addressed throughout this document, but I would like to share a little more on Employee Safety and Wellness specifically in response to CM Solomon, and why that priority is so important to me.

I had the profound opportunity to serve on President Obama's Taskforce on 21st Century Policing⁹, where I was assigned to Pillar Six: Officer Wellness & Safety. Prior to working on this report, I was honestly not previously focused on this critical aspect of policing. This collaborative experience was transformative and employee wellness has become a core value to me, both personally and professionally.

Though there is still much work to be done, I want to commend SPD for its commitment over the past eight years to zealously pushing the business case for building out its wellness services and for highlighting the significant risk management value of investment in this area. Though these are not my words, I could not agree more with SPD's past advocacy, and (with apologies for the length but with the earnest ask that you take to heart), borrow here from its 2019 business case to advance officer wellness as a pillar of broader enterprise risk management:

“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to walk through water without getting wet.”

Occupational safety has long been an unquestioned priority for law enforcement generally. Recognizing the physical demands of the job, many agencies equally prioritize the physical health of their officers through either mandatory physical fitness requirements or incentive packages to maintain a level of physical well-being. Yet despite the overwhelming body of research showing the psychological damage caused, acutely and cumulatively, by the vicarious trauma to which officers are routinely exposed, the

⁹ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-J36-PURL-gpo64136/pdf/GOVPUB-J36-PURL-gpo64136.pdf>

undeniable interplay between mental health and physical well-being, and the impact of both on officer performance, it has only been relatively recently that the urgency of prioritizing first responder mental health has been advanced as an integral and equally critical component of comprehensive police reform.

The integrity of officer wellness to comprehensive reform efforts is evidenced through the evolution of DOJ investigations and actions since the issuance of the Final Report of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, published in 2015. This report, which now sets the standards on which federal consent decrees are based, calls out Officer Wellness as a key pillar of reform, on equal footing with other core pillars reflected in consent decrees prior to 2015. For example, whereas Seattle's consent decree focuses almost exclusively on issues concerning transparency and accountability in police/community interactions and operations, consent decrees implemented in the years following show the increasing awareness to holding jurisdictions and agencies equally accountable to their officers – to ensure that officers are receiving not just the training they need to provide the community the safe and Constitutional policing it deserves, but the support they need to mitigate against the daily trauma they are expected to bear. See, for example, the DOJ's 2017 Findings Letter into the practices of the Chicago Police Department:

Policing is a high-stress profession. Law enforcement officers often are called upon to deal with violence or crises as problem solvers, and they often are witness to human tragedy. ... The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing put it well, noting that "the 'bulletproof cop' does not exist. The officers who protect us must also be protected – against incapacitating physical mental, and emotional health problems as well as against the hazards of their job. Their wellness and safety are crucial for them, their colleagues, and their agencies, as well as the well-being of the communities they serve."

This is echoed in a report from DOJ to Congress in support of the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017, signed into law in January 2018 with broad bipartisan support:

Good mental and psychological health is just as essential as good physical health for law enforcement personnel to be effective in keeping our country and our communities safe from crime and violence. An officer's mental state affects his or her behavior in a variety of situations and can influence decision-

making and judgment. However, the current state of support for officer wellness nationally is disjointed and faces both cultural and logistical obstacles.

The daily realities of the job can affect officers' health and wellness. They face a constant need to be vigilant, long hours and shift work, exposure to the daily tragedies of life, and regular interaction with people who are in crisis or hostile toward them. Patrol officers face a national undercurrent of heightened public scrutiny of the profession that overshadows the legitimacy of their individual efforts. ... All of these things added to the ordinary hassles of the workplace and their personal lives can lead to cumulative stress and burnout.

*Officers anticipate and accept the unique dangers and pressures of their chosen profession. However, people under stress find it harder than people not experiencing stress to connect with others and regulate their own emotions. They experience narrowed perception, increased anxiety and fearfulness, and degraded cognitive abilities. This can be part of a healthy fight-or-flight response, but it can also lead to significantly greater probabilities of errors in judgment, compromised performance, and injuries. **Failing to address the mental health and wellness of officers can ultimately undermine community support for law enforcement and result in officers being less safe on the job.***

Officer wellness matters. The impacts, neurobiologically, psychologically, behaviorally, and organizationally of job-related stress are undisputed in the literature:

- Decades of research supports that diminished mental health in first responders is attributable, directly and indirectly, to the vicarious trauma first responders, and those in their support, experience as a routine part of the job. Indeed, increasingly, jurisdictions are recognizing, as a rebuttable presumption, PTSD in first responders as an occupational injury resulting from cumulative exposure to trauma. (In Washington, e.g., see RCW 51.08 et seq.)
- Unmitigated/treated, vicarious trauma can manifest in poor officer behavior/performance and an unhealthy organizational culture in numerous ways:
 - **Performance:** Decrease in quality/quantity of work, low motivation, task avoidance or obsession with detail, working too hard, setting perfectionist standards, difficulty with inattention, forgetfulness.

- o **Morale:** Decrease in confidence, decrease in interest, negative attitude, apathy, dissatisfaction, demoralization, feeling undervalued and unappreciated, disconnected, reduced compassion.
- o **Relational:** Detached/withdrawn from co-workers, poor communication, conflict, impatience, intolerance of others, sense of being “the only one who can do the job.”
- o **Behavioral:** Calling out, arriving late, overwork, exhaustion, irresponsibility, poor follow-through.

These traits spread, polarizing employees between those who are underperforming and those who perceive themselves (often inaccurately) to be overperforming. This polarization can further manifest in distrust between ranks, a sense of isolation, and spiral throughout the organization, impacting not only organizational performance and reputation, but also the ability of the organization to attract and maintain a high-quality workforce, and ultimately, community safety.

SPD has done good work in this area and our Employee Support Services Bureau, housed off-site from SPD, is developing well. But we must do more. It is my belief that, fundamentally, we cannot talk about changing the organizational or occupational culture of policing without also talking about officer wellness.

4. Crowd and Demonstration Facilitation

a. CM Rivera Question a:

What are your strategies for crowd control, de-escalation, and handling protests? What methods have you found to be successful in your career and will/can they be implemented in Seattle?

Throughout the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to manage all manners of protests and demonstrations, including many that can evoke strong passion, such as protests involving white supremacy, Black Lives Matter, Confederate statue sympathizers, pro-choice and anti-choice activists, and, during my time as Chief in Madison, demonstrations at the state capitol building that involve unique security considerations. I understand from science and my own personal experience that maintaining an open dialogue with community and the news media before, during and after demonstrations, and balancing

the rights of demonstrators with the rights of the community at large, protecting people first and property second is sound thinking in this regard.

To advance learning around effective strategies for crowd control, de-escalation, and handling protests, I worked with the Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice (“Quattrone Center”) at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School to facilitate a sentinel event review (SER) around the protest events of 2020, which I understand served as the model for the SER conducted by the Office of the Inspector General here. MPD provided the Quattrone Center with more than 1600 pages of MPD documents related to the protests as well as more than 625 hours of closed-circuit television (CCTV) video, more than 30 hours of radio transmissions, and the ability to interview MPD officers who participated in the protests at all levels of the organization, from patrol officers to the event commanders. MPD invited a highly diverse group of community and law enforcement stakeholders to conduct the SER, identify contributing factors and generate specific recommendations for crowd management reform. These individuals came from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences; several of them participated in the protests, and indeed, some of them may have designed or organized protests.

The following are methods and lessons that I subscribe to, most of which, if not all, are already engrained in SPD’s policies and training, but deserve mention here:

1. Police departments should emphasize a “less is more” approach to protest events, particularly when police themselves are the focus of the protest. Police presence in fixed lines, dressed in tactical gear, can serve as a flashpoint for protestors, and should be minimized to the extent possible.
2. Departments must communicate more effectively with the community before, during and after protest events. Building trust and effective lines of communication between the police and diverse segments of the community takes time; it cannot wait until the moments, hours, or even days immediately prior to a protest. Rather, those lines of communication must exist well before protests erupt (“you cannot establish a relationship in the middle of a crisis”).
3. Departments should regularly educate the community about their strategy and tactics for supporting protests.
4. Departments should engage with community leaders before individual protests to facilitate protest objectives. When police officers engage with protest organizers and establish safety guidelines this will allow the protestors to achieve their goals with minimal police engagement, limited only by the

requirement that the community – including protesters – be protected from harm.

5. Departments should provide additional crowd control training to all officers and incident command training to all senior command staff officers. While all officers receive basic crowd control training during their time in the police academy, crowd events have typically been evolving and more complex, particularly in large urban settings. Advanced training will help officers beyond the normal scope of basic crowd management, and joint training allows officers the benefits of understanding command staff decision making processes which aid in quick execution of orders.
6. Departments should work with community leaders to create Community Dialogue Representatives (CDRs) who can improve communication on behalf of protesters while protests are occurring and who can relay necessary context to officers to understand when it might be necessary to intercede and when the crowd could self-regulate and ensure continued calm. This concept is similar to SPD's POET officers but also brings in community members as partners.
7. Departments should focus on proportional reactions to intercede against instigators of violence and determining where action should be taken to decrease the risk of harm to individuals, against instigators of property damage.
8. Departments should continue to refine their tactics for responding to protest events, including emphasizing mobility, proportional reaction focused on instigators only, and real-time, plain language communication with observers explaining the public safety rationale for police actions.
9. Departments should track uses of force carefully and review them promptly. Immediately after protests are over, departments should engage in internal reviews with participating officers to continually reinforce, improve and refine its tactics. These processes and the outcomes they generate should be made public to rebuild trust and legitimacy with the community. (SPD's commitment to quality improvement is evidenced through the Force Review Board reviews specific to crowd management events and by its willing participation in sentinel event reviews conducted by the Inspector General.

The strategies for crowd control, de-escalation, and handling protests listed above or recommendations are generated from my experience as a 25-year career police officer and Chief and my review of academic literature in this area. These recommendations can have great impact on the community, increasing the mutual understanding between the diverse

views held throughout Seattle and our police department which is committed to facilitating the expression of those views in ways that ensure the safety of all.

b. CM Hollingsworth Question c:

What is your leadership approach when it comes to crowd management, de-escalation, while respecting First Amendment rights?

SPD remains steadfast in our commitment to protecting the constitutional rights of all individuals, especially the First Amendment rights to free speech, peaceful assembly, and petitioning the government. These rights are foundational to our democracy and central to the values we uphold as a police department.

As someone who has long believed in the power of respectful discourse and peaceful protest, I am guided by the principles of the “Madison Method,” a philosophy shared with me by one of my mentors, former Madison Police Chief David C. Couper. This approach emphasizes de-escalation, restraint, and the essential duty of law enforcement to protect—not hinder—the exercise of free expression.

As the Chief of police for the Seattle Police Department, I operationalize my leadership approach when it comes to crowd management, de-escalation, while respecting First Amendment rights through six core principles:

1. **Protecting Constitutional Rights:** Our officers are trained and expected to safeguard the rights of individuals to protest peacefully and express their views openly.
2. **Impartiality and Neutrality:** We remain neutral in all demonstrations, regardless of the content or cause, ensuring our actions reflect fairness and professionalism.
3. **Open Dialogue:** Communication is key. We engage with protest organizers, participants, and media before, during, and after events to foster mutual understanding and avoid conflict.
4. **Monitoring and Balancing:** While we monitor protests to ensure public safety, we are also committed to balancing the rights of demonstrators with those of community members and local businesses.
5. **Restraint in the Use of Force:** Our priority is always the safety of people over property. We instruct our officers to use the least amount of force necessary and to avoid escalation whenever possible.
6. **Continuous Improvement:** We continually evaluate and refine our strategies for managing demonstrations to better serve our community and uphold public trust.

c. CM Saka Question c:

The current May Day rallies and counter protests are still fresh and ongoing. To date, what are your reflections on how SPD handled the unrest that ensued and going forth, what are the learnings to ensure the safety of all?

We are still gathering the complete constellation of facts and circumstances around that event for a variety of reviews, but notably this was one of the very few times since 2020 that SPD has used force at any level in the crowd management context. With every incident of this kind, we review the entirety of circumstances and seek to understand if there are improvements that can be made to how we approach future events of this nature.

While I can't speak to the legitimacy of or concerns around individual arrests or incidents of force – not only because I don't yet have all of the facts, but because I am precluded by the Accountability Ordinance from issuing any statements prejudging actions that are under review – I can offer two observations: (1) given the limited notice SPD received about this event, and thus the limited window for planning, I do believe that SPD's operations center and incident command did important work to of design and implement an operations plan, with the additional context that (2) SPD was operating on a paper-thin margin in staffing with competing events at the Seattle Center and Lumen Field already taxing our staffing. With this in mind, I believe that, by and large, officers appropriately met their responsibility of facilitating the First Amendment rights of all involved.

That said, I do not take lightly the concerns that have been raised, and I am certainly well aware that any arrest that calls for team tactics can raise questions, no matter how lawful or how well orchestrated. I also acknowledge that in such a polarized setting, it is easy to perceive police as morally or philosophically aligned with one side or another. I do want to emphasize that – unlike those in non-enforcement positions who may speak freely as to their personal views on the content of expression – SPD, as the enforcement arm of the government – must remain content neutral in its actions, responding to behaviors rather than speech. While others have commented on the complexity of permitting controversial speech in one of the City's LGBTQIA+ neighborhoods, it is our obligation to preserve the first amendment free speech rights of all involved.

The event remains under review of the Crowd Management Force Review Board, which is currently gathering and analyzing reports and videos. I also believe the Office of the Inspector General is planning a Sentinel Event Review to help bridge the mutual understanding of the event between community and the city. We look forward to participating in and learning from those results, once again for continual improvement.

d. CM Rinck Question k:

Regarding the new less lethal weapons legislation, you've said that you think SPD should be able to use blast balls, but that you also want to ensure that in crowd management situations things never reach the point of needing to use them. What is your plan to avoid the use of these kinds of weapons?

The Seattle Crowd Management policies that have been developed over many years, in collaboration with the Inspector General, the Office of Police Accountability, and the Community Police Commission, as well as the Department of Justice and the Federal Monitoring Team, are consistent with my philosophy and experience with crowd management.

Overall, the police approach must be one of flexibility and modulation and ideally members of an event or demonstration would self-regulate without the need for police intervention beyond simple facilitation of traffic control. As discussed above, we instruct our officers to use the least amount of force necessary and to avoid escalation whenever possible. To make this a reality on a continuing basis requires ongoing training and support.

I recognize the deep emotions these moments of civil unrest can bring. We hear our community, and we are committed to showing up with empathy, professionalism, and a dedication to protecting the rights of all.

5. Legitimacy

a. CM Hollingsworth Question a:

Community trust in SPD remains fragile especially among marginalized communities. How do you plan to rebuild trust in the department without asking communities to "do the work" of reconciliation themselves? What specific steps have you taken so far, or what steps do you see necessary, to demonstrate that rebuilding trust that is tied to real outcomes and institutional change?

b. CM Hollingsworth Question d:

How have you established meaningful communication with community members during your time in Seattle so far, especially those with history of marginalization or harmed by policing?

Policing is a public service—one that cannot succeed without trust, cooperation, and engagement from the communities we serve. In particular, our relationships with marginalized and historically disenfranchised communities remain fragile, and I acknowledge that rebuilding trust in the Seattle Police Department (SPD) requires more than good intentions or symbolic gestures. It requires sustained effort, operational changes, and a commitment to showing up consistently, transparently, and with humility.

As someone who comes from a marginalized community myself, I deeply understand the frustration of waiting for institutions, not just the police, but government more broadly, to show up for our neighborhoods in the same way they show up for others. That understanding shapes my leadership. It is why I have made it clear that under my command, this department will rebuild trust one neighborhood, one block, and one person at a time if necessary. There is no single strategic plan or quick fix for this work. If there were, every city in America would be using it. The divide between police and community—particularly among communities of color—has deep historical roots. But I believe there is a path forward.

That path begins with acknowledgment. We must recognize the role that law enforcement—and other public institutions—have played in producing unequal outcomes. The rise in incarceration, disproportionate policing, and economic and social dislocation in certain communities is not an accident of history. It is the result of policies and practices that have too often failed to value the dignity and humanity of every person equally.

Rebuilding trust means we must listen, and we must be proximate, as I discussed above. You cannot understand the needs of a community from behind a desk. Officers need time and space to engage with communities outside of emergency calls. Again, that's why I have authorized a staffing study to explore ways to realign our resources so that our officers have more time for proactive engagement; that's why I'm committed to a community policing model that prioritizes neighborhood-based sector and beat-level connections. These aren't just patrol strategies—they're opportunities to build relationships and deepen understanding. Programs like the Community CompStat discussed above and my commitment to communication and transparency through the hiring of a Chief Communications Officer will help connect SPD to community, and community to SPD.

I often use the analogy of building a bridge to describe trust-building. But what is often forgotten is that a bridge must be built from both sides. That doesn't mean placing the burden of reconciliation on communities. It means police must lead by acknowledging the past, being transparent in the present, and investing in long-term change. Communities are not responsible for repairing the harm done to them. That work begins with us.

Operationally, we are moving forward with this vision in several ways. Each SPD precinct is now required to host regular community meetings—not just within department buildings, but out in the neighborhoods we serve. Our Relational Policing Unit will be dedicated to creating direct, meaningful opportunities for officers, detectives, special teams, and command staff to engage with the public.

This department is adopting what I call a "Policing Forward" mindset—a renewed commitment to collaborative problem-solving and public safety that reflects the complexity of our city and the diversity of its people. We understand that Seattle is not a monolith; communities have different needs, histories, and concerns. That's why our approach must be flexible, inclusive, and focused on partnership.

Ultimately, the goal is to reduce harm and improve lives through sustained, community-driven solutions. These solutions require trust. And trust requires action—not once, not occasionally, but every day. I believe SPD is up to the task. We believe in the power of proximity, the value of engagement, and the promise of rebuilding trust—not just with words, but with meaningful outcomes and institutional change.

Since coming to Seattle in February, I have engaged in many community events and meetings, engaging with and hearing from a wide range of community members. The welcome has been overwhelmingly positive and I will have much work to do in the coming months and years to deepen relationships with individuals and communities in Seattle. I am humbled that so many have shared their stories with me and honored that many have chosen to listen. This relationship building will be continuous throughout my tenure as this job is about people.

6. Crime Prevention

a. CM Hollingsworth Question b:

Gun violence – particularly with youth – and property crime remain at an all-time high. How have you addressed these issues while avoiding over-policing or disparate outcomes (or how do you plan to)? What prevention-oriented public safety strategy ideas do you have that can balance law enforcement with social services?

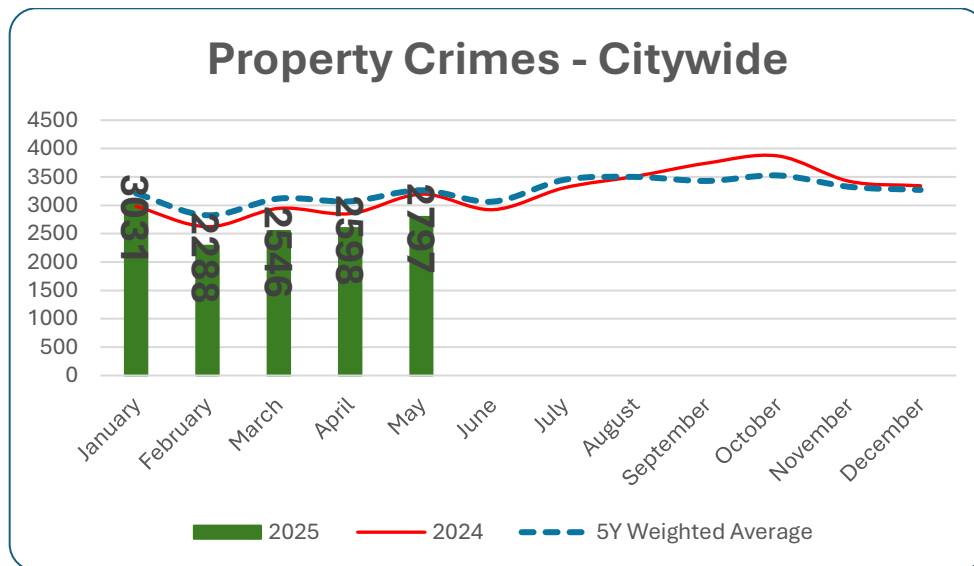
b. CM Saka Question f:

Gun violence continues to pose a serious threat to public safety in Seattle, disproportionately impacting youth and marginalized communities. What specific, measurable actions will you take as Chief to reduce gun violence citywide? How will you collaborate with

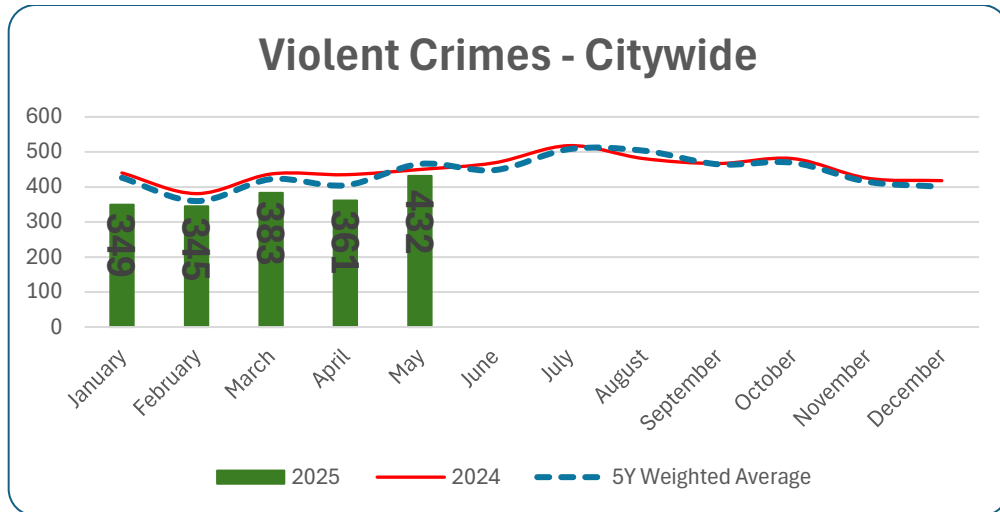
community partners, public health agencies, and other stakeholders to implement a holistic and sustainable approach? Additionally, how would you approach possible uses of emerging technologies and new data-driven tools to further enhance public safety and operational efficiency while safeguarding civil liberties?

Gun violence is a serious problem in Seattle, with too many shots fired in too many neighborhoods. I am also aware that perceptions of crime drive fear and feelings of being safe as much as actual crime – ultimately, we must address both. So, as I provide updates on crime data, I remain cognizant that every violent crime has a victim, for whom the trends and percentages of statistics are inherently meaningless. Within that context, while crime spiked in the post-COVID era and remains high in overall historical context, both property and violent crime rates in 2025 are *declining*.¹⁰

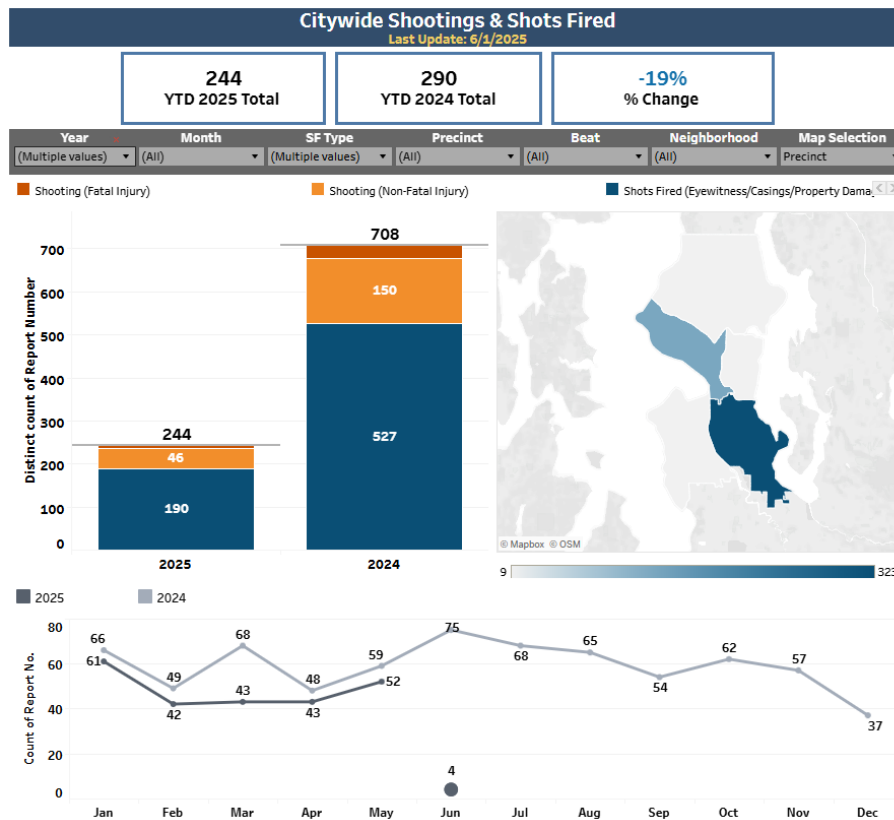
The two charts below show that both 2025 crime rates are lower than 2024 and the five-year weighted average, both for property and violent crime.



¹⁰ [Crime Dashboard - Police | seattle.gov](https://crime.seattle.gov/)



Crime is trending in the right direction. In 2025 by the end of May shootings and shots fired shows a decline of 19%; homicides are down 21% for the same time period.¹¹



¹¹ [Crime Dashboard - Police | seattle.gov](https://crime.seattle.gov/)

To continue the downward trend SPD is implementing a coordinated, evidence-based crime and harm reduction strategy. This strategy is a holistic, view of the factors that contribute to crime, disorder, and quality of life. This is a strategy and actions taken by SPD in partnership with communities and service providers to reduce and deter criminal activities *before* they occur. This approach combines multi-disciplinary proactive measures, community engagement, and strategic planning to create safer environments. Here are some key aspects of police crime prevention:

1. **Community Engagement:** Develop and sustain strong relationships with community members to foster trust and cooperation. SPD's Relational Policing and Community Outreach Bureau is actively building partnerships, including mentoring, victim services, community service officers, and crime prevention education.¹² The Demographic Advisory Councils help ensure no group is underrepresented.¹³ The core premise is every officer is a community policing officer.
2. **Education and Awareness:** Inform the public about crime prevention techniques and encourage them to proactively protect themselves and their property.¹⁴
3. **Community-Oriented Policing (COP):** A strategy that encourages building strong relationships between the police and the community to collaboratively address crime and safety issues.¹⁵
4. **Problem-Oriented Policing (POP):** A strategy that focuses on specific community issues and developing targeted solutions to address them (See Appendix A for an example). This might involve addressing recurring problems at certain locations or dealing with specific individuals who repeatedly cause trouble.¹⁶
5. **Focused deterrence:** A crime prevention strategy also known as "pulling levers," that targets specific high-risk individuals or groups to prevent future criminal behavior, particularly violence.¹⁷ It has shown efficacy for repeat offenders who use firearms or are involved in drug activity.

¹² [Relational Policing/Community Outreach | Seattle Police Foundation](#)

¹³ [Demographic Advisory Councils - Police | seattle.gov](#)

¹⁴ [Crime Prevention - Police | seattle.gov](#)

¹⁵ [Home | COPS OFFICE](#)

¹⁶ [Center for Problem-Oriented Policing | ASU Center for Problem-Oriented Policing](#)

¹⁷ [Home - National Network for Safe Communities \(NNSC\)](#)

6. **Evidence-Based Policing (EBP)** : An approach that emphasizes the use of empirical research and data analysis to guide decision-making, policies, and practices within police departments.¹⁸
7. **SafeGrowth Environmental Design**: Implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, which involve modifying the physical environment to reduce opportunities for crime. This can include better lighting, surveillance, and community spaces designed to deter criminal behavior.¹⁹
8. **Continuous improvement** : The concept of building into policing ongoing efforts to enhance police services, processes, and outcomes through systematic evaluation and incremental changes. Key elements:
 - a) **Regular Assessment**: Continuously evaluating current practices, policies, and outcomes to identify areas for improvement.²⁰
 - b) **Evidence-Based Decisions**: Using evidence to inform changes and measure the effectiveness of new strategies.²¹
 - c) **Employee Engagement**: Involving police officers and staff in the improvement process to leverage their insights and foster a culture of innovation
 - d) **Training and Development**: Providing ongoing training to ensure that officers are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge.
 - e) **Feedback Mechanisms**: Establishing channels for receiving feedback from the community and officers to guide improvements.

This approach to crime and community partnership is part of the Seattle-Centric Policing approach SPD is implementing this month. Seattle-Centric Policing is a comprehensive plan focused on reducing harm and crime while enhancing the quality of life for Seattle residents. It is built on the collaborative efforts of the community, government, services, and non-profit organizations. By fostering integrated partnerships, Seattle-Centric Policing can create a safer and more vibrant city. The plan applies strategies proven effective in reducing crime and harm.

¹⁸ <https://cebcp.org/evidence-based-policing/>

¹⁹ [SAFEGROWTH® - HOME](#)

²⁰ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41887-022-00073-y>

²¹ [Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix \(CI SAM\)](#)

Seattle-Centric Policing centers on sustained community²² involvement and partnership-driven solutions. The Seattle community naturally leads these initiatives, focusing on strategies and incidents that impact the city. Working in coordination reduces greatly the chance of over-policing. In terms of engaging with at risk youth, this really falls to community and service providers. If a youth is arrested, then the appropriate resources should engage to assist the youth towards being successful and not continue to be involved in illegal activity.

In Seattle, the collaboration between community members, city officials, and the police is vital for reducing crime and harm. By fostering strong partnerships and building trust with neighborhoods and working closely with organizations like the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and Community Engagement Coordinators, our capacity increases. These relationships are essential for effective problem-solving, as they enable open communication and mutual understanding. Together, they address local issues, enhance safety, and improve the quality of life for all residents, demonstrating the power of collective effort and shared responsibility.

Seattle-Centric Policing leverages existing programs (Precinct Advisory Councils, Community Micro-Policing Plans, Police Neighborhood Resource Center Pilot, Community Advisory Councils) and in conjunction with city departments – like the Department of Neighborhoods – continuously seek additional community partnerships.

Addressing CM Saka's question on technology, I approach advancements in a crawl-walk-run manner, meaning that Seattle has invested heavily in critical technology to enhance public safety through the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC), which I describe more fully below. I believe the department needs to show mastery of that technology and explore its possibilities responsibly before immediately reaching for more. That being said, I do advocate for crime reporting enhancements in the section immediately below, supported by additional technology.

²² Community inclusive of neighborhoods, informal and formal community associations, and the business community.

c. CM Saka Question d:

This Council has invested in advanced public safety tools such as Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR), Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), and the Real-Time Crime Center, recognizing their value as force multipliers. As Chief, how do you plan to strategically leverage these technologies to prevent and respond to crime? Additionally, what emerging technologies or data-driven tools would you prioritize to further enhance public safety and operational efficiency?

The Real Team Crime Center (RTCC) began operation May 20, 2025, with an operating schedule of 9:00-5:00, and only connects to city purchased cameras, including 15 in the Chinatown International District, 10 cameras on North Aurora (a SOAP area), and nine cameras downtown on Second and Third Avenues. Thirty-four cameras remain to be installed in these three areas. This represents a small section of Seattle streets, with all cameras oriented into public space and digitally masked when the cameras could intrude into private areas, such as residential windows. None of these cameras have license plate reading (ALPR) capability – all ALPR technology is deployed in patrol vehicles. RTCC has a standard operating procedure that ensures ordinance requirements are followed.

These technologies provide real-time video capability for emerging critical events as well as backend support for investigations. SPD has always had the capacity to gather video evidence but the addition of RTCC analysts means that video can be quickly and efficiently reviewed. A prime example of this capability was the investigation into the recent triple homicide, which led to relatively quick arrests of suspects. While there were no city cameras in the area, analysts were able to support detectives by reviewing private camera footage made available to investigators. This support reduced investigative time from weeks to days, providing the leads that led to successful arrests.

Some highlights from the first few weeks of operation: the RTCC provided evidence on a stolen vehicle, which was returned to its owner and the suspect identified and arrested (for both violation of a no-contact order and the vehicle theft); shots fired from a moving vehicle were captured, providing information for follow up; and a pedestrian hit-and-run was recorded with a vehicle description for follow up. These anecdotes are only some of the more than 50 incidents RTCC has been able to materially assist. Additionally, the RTCC has been able to determine that crimes *did not occur* as described by 911 callers, which meant that units could stand down and move on to the next call. This real time ability to “teleport” to the scene and validate or disprove will make patrol response more efficient and directed and will also support the goal of the RTCC to promote “precision policing,”

which ultimately should lead to fewer unnecessary intrusions on members of community. Moving forward, I would like to integrate private cameras with the RTCC to have better situational awareness citywide, which was previously authorized under the Surveillance Impact Report.

In terms of additional technology, both CARE and SPD support investing in an automated phone system for the non-emergency line, supported by a virtual assistant, that can route callers to the help they need. Additionally, if that system would estimate hold wait times and offer the possibility of a call back, customer satisfaction could be greatly increased.

Currently, the non-emergency line is answered by call-takers at CARE. Once screened to ensure it is not an emergency, these calls are routed to SPD's Internet and Telephone Reporting Unit (ITRU), where officers take the report over the phone. Although CARE has been working hard to ensure 24/7 coverage of the non-emergency line and wait times are trending down (to just under seven minutes on average), there are many callers that get frustrated, hang up, or resort to re-calling 911, which creates different inefficiencies.

Similarly, I would support the expansion of the Find-It/Fix-It application for general open air drug use and general disorder. If that were to occur, I would also request that SPD be granted access to the data in that system for planning purposes.

d. CM Rinck Question b:

Given that there is no evidence that CCTV cameras reduce violent crime, why did you recommend camera installation in the three West Seattle neighborhoods that are currently experiencing an uptick in gun violence? What noise detection software and equipment are you considering using in Seattle?

The City's camera deployment strategy is driven by data showing concentrations of violent crime; your question notes that there is an uptick in crime in neighborhoods where cameras are being considered. Additionally, while the placement of cameras is evidence-based, several City Council members have specifically requested the implementation of this technology in their districts.

I am also not actively considering the use of additional noise detection software and equipment although some City Councilmembers have stated that such technologies could be beneficial, primarily for monitoring engine noise in residential areas. Any plan would need to be vetted through the Surveillance Ordinance, as appropriate, which would directly involve Council in the decision-making. Additionally, Executive support would be required.

Lastly, there *is* evidence that CCTV cameras reduce violent crime, as events that lead to continued violence may be interrupted.²³ Additionally, robbery can be reduced with the use of such technology.²⁴ While no single technology is the panacea for improving public safety, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) recently published a technical report evaluating implementation in several large US cities and found efficacy, with qualifications, for reducing crime. Specifically, the report concluded:

Of primary importance is the fact that public surveillance technology is viewed as a potentially useful tool for preventing crimes, aiding in arrests, and supporting investigations and prosecutions. While the technology and its applications are not without limitations, it is noteworthy that stakeholders across a wide array of vested interests were generally supportive of public video surveillance. These views were largely—but not consistently—supported by impact analyses. Analysis results indicate that cameras, when actively monitored, have a cost-beneficial impact on crime with no statistically significant evidence of displacement to neighboring areas.²⁵



²³ Piza, E., Welsh, B., Farrington, D. and Thomas, A. (2019). CCTV Surveillance for Crime Prevention: A 40-Year Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 18(1): 135-159

²⁴ Priks, Mikael. (2015) The Effects of Surveillance Cameras on Crime: Evidence from the Stockholm Subway. *The Economic Journal*, 125 (November), pg. 289–305.

²⁵ Nancy, LaVigne, S. Lowry, J. Markman, A. Dwyer. Evaluating the use of Public Surveillance Cameras for Crime Control and Prevention. Final Technical Report, September 2011. COPS Office, US DOJ.

Overall, the department's approach to surveillance technology (as discussed more comprehensively above) is to continually evaluate the efficacy of each program or system. If it works, the technology will be retained; if not, reinvestments would be considered.

e. CM Rinck Question c:

Are there plans for SPD to change their plans for CCTV cameras and RTCC, as well as eliminating ALPR retention times for non-hits in light of the reporting from media outlets such as 404 Media that the data is being utilized by ICE and the federal government, even when the data is being collected by police departments in Sanctuary Cities?

SPD and I share legitimate concerns about the misuse of surveillance data. Our ethos is written on the wall of the RTCC: "Great power requires greater responsibility." As part of the Surveillance Ordinance process and in collaboration with the Executive and City Council, SPD has made every effort to mitigate the likelihood of inappropriate sharing of our data. While the question did not reference a specific article, circumstances in which data was inappropriately used for immigration purposes or reproductive/gender affirming care seem to be primarily due to direct data sharing by a department with immigration officials, out-of-state agencies, or data sharing with third party aggregators, neither of which occur in Seattle.

Both ALPR and CCTV systems are managed through a single vendor, Axon. SPD negotiated systemic changes to the master services agreement with Axon (which also includes BWC, ICV, and all collected digital evidence), that includes:

- Agreement that all data belongs to the City of Seattle and no data will be shared without express permission. Some vendors share information with national databases; Axon does not and SPD will not.
- Any request for SPD data will be referred to SPD as the owner of the data.
- Agreement that in the event a warrant or other legal mechanism is received by Axon, Axon will take legal measures to avoid providing data. In the event a legal gag order accompanies the warrant (typically such an order would pertain to the target, not the owner of data), Axon will take the same legal measures. In the event they cannot quash the warrant and are compelled to disclose our data, they will inform us of what action they were compelled to take once the gag order is lifted.
- Specific references to the need to protect data in the contexts of immigration, gender-affirming care, and reproductive rights.

SPD does not share data with third party companies and SPD does not respond to federal administrative warrants (per law and policy). Because SPD has taken all the precautions it can to mitigate the risks of inappropriate use and because of the huge value SPD has already seen with the use of the new technologies, SPD intends to hold the current course and continue to evaluate.

When evaluating technology such as ALPR SPD is acutely aware of the concerns around data sharing and standing agreements between agencies and private vendors. SPD is frequently approached by companies offering such services and we take all these concerns into account before ever considering or doing business with these companies.

f. CM Rinck Question d:

Given the millions of dollars that SPD is spending on these pilot surveillance technologies, what is the rationale behind the increase in surveillance technology over addressing root causes of violence and crime such as spending this money on food access, housing, and meeting people's needs which decreases the likelihood of crimes occurring?

While crime is declining, Seattle has experienced continually high levels of gun violence and unusually high homicides, which impact our communities of color disproportionately. Indeed, in 2025, 46% of fatal shootings and 49% of non-fatal shootings are people of color. From a policing perspective, the efficacy of the RTCC and associated technologies should help mitigate violent crime, particularly gun violence. That is our goal – to save lives.

While SPD absolutely supports programs that support and help stabilize our communities in terms of food insecurity, inadequate affordable housing and shelter, and other basic human needs, the funding priorities are determined by Council, not the department, during the budgeting [process](#).

g. CM Rinck Question a:

Seattle has rejected ShotSpotter at least three times now, but last year the City Council approved using CCTV cameras, a new Real Time Crime Center, as well as a big expansion of license plate readers. How do you approach the use of surveillance technology for policing and weigh its pros and cons?

Technology should never replace community centered policing. In any organization, technology is a set of tools. It can augment, automate, and analyze information and data,

freeing up staff to do other activities (e.g. typed reports with carbon copies have been replaced with a records management system). In policing, technology should never replace connecting with community or limit building partnerships with organizations and services that seek to prevent crime and victimization.

The use of surveillance technology in policing is a complex and evolving issue that requires a careful balance between public safety and civil liberties. On one hand, surveillance tools such as body-worn cameras, license plate readers, and predictive analytics can significantly enhance law enforcement capabilities. These technologies can help deter crime, provide critical evidence in investigations, and increase accountability and transparency within police departments. Technology is used for both criminal investigations and to evaluate police practices. For instance, body cameras have been shown to reduce both use-of-force incidents and investigate complaints of misconduct, fostering greater trust and transparency between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

I recognize the deployment of surveillance technology also raises significant ethical, legal, and social concerns. Foremost among these is the potential for infringement on individual privacy rights. Without clear policies and oversight, surveillance tools can be misused or disproportionately targeted at marginalized communities, exacerbating existing inequalities and eroding public trust. In Seattle, more than a decade of work with the US DOJ consent decree, city accountability partners, and city ordinances have developed robust operating procedures to ensure this technology is appropriately used and not misused. This includes transparent policies on data collection, storage, and usage; independent oversight bodies to monitor compliance and investigate misuse; and meaningful community engagement to ensure that the deployment of these tools aligns with public values and expectations. Additionally, law enforcement agencies must be held accountable for how they use surveillance data, and there should be clear avenues for redress when rights are violated.

Ultimately, the goal should be to harness the benefits of surveillance technology while applying it appropriately. This requires a commitment to ethical policing practices, continuous evaluation of technological impacts, and a willingness to adapt policies as new challenges and insights emerge (e.g. the city is researching AI, evaluating appropriate use with associated policies). By doing so, law enforcement can leverage innovation to enhance public safety while upholding the fundamental rights and freedoms that define a democratic society.

h. CM Rinck Question j:

Last year we saw a crackdown on Third Avenue in downtown to deal with public drug use, drug markets, public disorder, etc. We also saw much of that unsavory activity move to Chinatown and the CID, and there was eventually another crackdown there. But often people are just continually moving from neighborhood to neighborhood as different hot spots are targeted. Is there a more durable solution beyond hot spot zones and what do you see as SPD's role in that?

A common concern with place-based approaches such as hot spot policing is that they will not actually reduce crime and disorder, but instead just push or displace the activity to places nearby (so-called spatial displacement). A number of literature reviews, however, suggest that immediate spatial displacement is uncommon in place-based interventions. In the hot spots systematic review, just 1 of the 19 studies found evidence of significant displacement, and there the amount of crime displaced was less than the crime prevented in the target area.²⁶

A separate systematic review of displacement in policing interventions found little evidence of displacement and some evidence of diffusion of crime-control benefits.²⁷ A diffusion of crime-control benefits refers to situations in which areas surrounding a targeted hot spot also show improvement, despite not receiving the intervention.²⁸ These positive spillover effects of hot spot interventions make place-based interventions even more efficient and can be explained, in part, by offenders' overestimating the size of target areas. That is, they think crime prevention strategies are being implemented where they are not. Additionally, the same opportunities for offending may not be present in the areas surrounding the hot spot site, which also decreases the likelihood of immediate spatial displacement.²⁹

The results in Seattle are consistent with the theory and the research. The Seattle Police Department launched the Downtown Activation Team (DAT) initiative on September 9,

²⁶ Braga, Anthony A., Andrew V. Papachristos, and David M. Hureau. 2010. "The Concentration and Stability of Gun Violence at Micro Places in Boston, 1980–2008." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 26(1): 33–53.

²⁷ Bowers, Kate, Shane Johnson, Rob T. Guerette, Lucia Summers, and Suzanne Poynton. 2011. "Spatial Displacement and Diffusion of Benefits among Geographically Focused Policing Interventions." *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 7(3).

²⁸ Clarke, Ronald V., and David L. Weisburd. 1994. "Diffusion of Crime Control Benefits: Observations on the Reverse of Displacement." In Ronald V. Clarke (ed.), *Crime Prevention Studies*, vol. 2 (pp. 165–184). Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.

²⁹ Weisburd, David, Laura A. Wyckoff, Justin Ready, John E. Eck, Joshua C. Hinkle, and Frank Gajewski. 2006. "Does Crime Just Move Around the Corner? A Controlled Study of Spatial Displacement and Diffusion of Crime Control Benefits." *Criminology*, 44(3): 549–592.

2024, in the Pike/Pine and 3rd Avenue areas, expanding to Chinatown/International District (CID) on November 1, 2024. This initiative partners with community agencies and city stakeholders to implement three daily intervention efforts at designated hot spot locations.

As SPD endeavors to do with all its initiatives, the Crime Analysis team within the Performance Analytics and Research division evaluated the initiative's effectiveness using Causal Impact implementation of Bayesian structural time-series to assess changes in violent crime rates and community-generated calls for service.

The result of this research is compelling:

The Downtown Activation Team initiative has demonstrated immediate effectiveness in reducing both violent and property crimes across intervention locations

Analysis of crime data across all intervention areas reveals consistent reductions in both violent and property crimes, with no apparent evidence of displacement effects. The Downtown Activation Team's targeted approach has yielded positive results in Pike/Pine, 3rd Avenue, and Chinatown/International District simultaneously, demonstrating that crime reduction in one area does not lead to increases in neighboring locations. This pattern suggests that the intervention strategy is effectively addressing underlying factors contributing to criminal activity rather than simply shifting illegal behaviors from one location to another. The uniform decrease in community-generated calls for service further supports this conclusion, indicating a genuine improvement in public safety conditions throughout the downtown corridor rather than a geographical redistribution of criminal activity. However, the diminishing impact over time suggests that adaptations to implementation efforts may be necessary to sustain long-term crime reduction benefits.

My conclusion is that for each treatment or intervention we implement, it is important to measure the effectiveness and if changes need to be made, to agilely adapt the treatment. Here, the DAT has been very effective, but the impacts are diminishing. Therefore, we need to change things up, implement, and continue to measure. That is an evidence-based approach and one that will make Seattle safer.

7. Employee Wellness

a. CM Saka Question a:

Changing organizational culture has been an elusive goal for this department. What specific changes do you plan to implement at SPD in your first year and over the course of your tenure to continue changing the culture? What lessons from Madison do you believe are applicable here, and what have you learned about Seattle that requires a different approach?

The issue of workplace culture is a topic that is deeply concerning to me and one that I think must be addressed in order to move forward with enthusiasm and purpose.

Reflecting on my tenure at SPD, four things are evident to me:

1. The overwhelming majority of individuals who have dedicated their careers to SPD, sworn and professional, are dedicated and mission-oriented public servants who are committed to serving the residents of Seattle with dignity and compassion.
2. The emotional strain of the past five years, impacted by shifting public sentiments, leadership turnover, significant loss of staffing, and the accompanying pressures of overtime and workload, are real.
3. Notwithstanding, there is a palpable sense of optimism, aided by the support of City leaders and the relief that comes as we add officers to our ranks at unprecedented levels, and it is time to move on.
4. As we turn the corner on hiring and look to a new day, it is time to reset clear expectations around how each and every member of this department contributes to the success of this organization, ensuring that we not only treat every member of the public with the highest levels of professionalism and courtesy but that these same expectations carry through to how we interact with and support each other.

Workplace culture, I have read, “is like the wind. It is invisible, yet its effect can be seen and felt. When it is blowing in your direction, it makes for smooth sailing. When it is blowing against you, everything is more difficult.”³⁰ Whether it is affirmatively driving a healthy culture by fostering a sense of equity, inclusion, and belonging, or guarding against an unhealthy work environment by allowing exclusion, conflict, inequity, or mistreatment to go unchecked, we are all responsible for ensuring that SPD is a place where all employees are safe, supported, and accountable to each other. Especially as we welcome so many

³⁰ Walker and Soule, Harvard Business Review, June 2017.

new members to our department, as we reconcile generational differences in expectations and norms, and as we recover to a point of staffing relief, committing to a workplace culture grounded in wellness and respect that can be the tailwind behind us will be of paramount importance. This is not only key to our success, we owe it to ourselves and to each other.

With surveys cross-industry showing the extent and impact of toxic work environments, I know this is not an issue unique to SPD or to any particular organization or field, but it is an immediate concern to address. I will do so in an evidence-based manner, rooted in a commitment to wellness, guided by assessment of present state, clear expectations as to employee communications and behaviors, training and mentoring to those standards, continual review, and accountability of us all, to us all.

To effectively address organizational culture within the Seattle Police Department and foster a professional culture, it's crucial to establish a comprehensive code of conduct alongside a strategic plan for cultural change.

Below are lessons learned throughout my time as a police chief and my code of conduct philosophy, followed by an outline for implementing cultural transformation within the Seattle Police Department. While many of the concepts are currently part of SPD Policy, they do not stand together as a united structure.

Code of Conduct for Seattle Police Department

Preamble:

The Seattle Police Department is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and respect. All employees are expected to adhere to the following code of conduct to promote a healthy, inclusive, and safe work environment.

1. Respectful Communication:

- All employees must communicate respectfully and professionally, both verbally and in writing.
- Harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate comments (including jokes) based on gender, race, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic will not be tolerated.

2. Professional Behavior:

- Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects dignity and respect towards colleagues, the public, and the agency.

- Employees should avoid behaviors that promote a toxic work environment, including bullying, harassment of any type, retaliation, and intimidation.

3. Accountability:

- All employees have a duty to intervene and a responsibility to report observed misconduct or violations of the code of conduct at the first available opportunity. Failing to do so may result in disciplinary action.

- Anyone found to violate this code will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

4. Commitment to Equity and Inclusion:

- The department commits to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Every employee should actively work to create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

- Employees are encouraged to participate in cultural diversity training and contribute to diversity initiatives within the department.

5. Professional Development:

- All employees are encouraged to engage in ongoing professional development and training. Attendance and participation in training related to workplace conduct and professionalism are mandatory.

- Supervisors and leaders are held to a high standard and should model appropriate behavior and demand a culture of professionalism.

6. Healthy Work Environment:

- The Seattle Police Department supports work-life balance and mental health. Employees should make use of available resources, such as counseling services and wellness programs.

- Employees should address conflicts immediately and constructively. Employees should seek mediation from direct reports when necessary.

7. Commitment to Ethical Standards:

- All employees must adhere to ethical standards of law enforcement and conduct, ensuring honesty, integrity, and transparency in all actions.

Please also see my response above to the department's priority of Employee Wellness.

8. Retention and Recruitment

a. CM Saka Question e:

Seattle has made strides in rebuilding its police force following the staffing losses during the 2020 pandemic, but challenges remain. What are your top priorities and strategies for strengthening the recruitment pipeline, including both new officer candidates and lateral hires? How will you ensure that these efforts promote diversity, high professional standards, and community trust?

Following the historic levels of attrition experienced in the aftermath of the events of 2020, SPD has been focused on rebuilding staffing levels through an overhauled recruitment plan and a renewed focus on retention. These efforts are now bearing fruit with hiring on a record pace year-to-date and attrition trending down, with 84 hired to date, amounting to 46 net new officers YTD. We are on a course to hire 180 officers, which, for context, is a record number of hires in a single year since 1998, and likely ever in SPD's history.³¹ By demonstrating value, respect, and a sense of mission for SPD's employees, SPD expects this downward trend in attrition to continue; in addition, SPD projects that its new recruit classes will continue to trend more diverse than the city or county as a whole (of note, 58% of SPD's recruits in 2024 identified as BIPOC). Further, as part of its continued participation in the 30x30 Initiative, SPD continues to focus on female recruitment.

SPD has significantly streamlined its hiring pipeline through bold process improvements and technology integration. The Background and Polygraph Team now operates on a biweekly eligibility register cadence, cutting time-to-hire and improving efficiency. By shifting to a largely virtual backgrounding model and implementing eSOPH, an automated case management system, the department has accelerated applicant processing. Additional virtual tools have enhanced communication, transparency, and flexibility across the hiring workflow. These innovations have improved candidate experience and positioned the department to compete more effectively in today's fast-moving hiring landscape.

Importantly, SPD is moving forward with a new recruiting agency that is developing new branding. Epic Recruiting is a leader in the field of law enforcement recruiting, dedicated to enhancing diversity and ushering in the next generation of law enforcement personnel. With a mission to provide comprehensive recruiting solutions, Epic Recruiting leverages a unique four-step process encompassing strategy, production, website design and

³¹ SPD hiring data only goes back to 1998. We are looking at other city records to validate further. The prior record was 117 officers hired in 2008.

management, as well as digital recruiting through online campaigns and social media management. SPD's image is built through the great work done by our officers every day, and through the authentic stories and faces of the sworn employees who serve this community. Epi is striving to showcase these stories and faces to attract new officers to be a part of SPD, as we work toward the goal of being fully staffed. This new push will focus on officers capable of performing the rigors of police work, with a focus on diversity in all its forms, such as racial, ethnic, gender diversity, as well as diversity of thought and experience.

To sustain the department's hiring and retention progress, continued support from policy makers remains essential. Public messaging that affirms officers and promotes a shared sense of purpose directly contributes to morale and long-term retention. Ongoing funding for hiring and marketing initiatives has shown measurable success and is needed to maintain applicant interest and hiring momentum. Timely settlement of labor agreements is also important, as it signals respect for our workforce and helps position the department as a competitive employer. Together, these actions will reinforce the department's efforts to build and retain a strong and stable workforce moving forward.

b. CM Saka Question b:

The 30x30 Initiative aims to increase the percentage of women in policing to 30% by 2030, and this council has made it a priority by funding a dedicated position last year. What specific steps will you take to actively support this initiative and help increase the number of female officers in the department? Given that the gender balance in hiring has not improved, how will you allocate the significantly large, new advertising budget (\$6M) to more effectively recruit women? What lessons from past marketing efforts will you apply to ensure better outcomes?

The 30x30 Initiative is a grassroots coalition founded in 2018, organized through the Policing Project at NYU School of Law, that initially focused on addressing the chronic under-representation of women in policing and the implications for public safety and has since broadened to focus on increasing diversity generally within police departments.

Although SPD's more recent recruit classes reflect the racial and ethnic diversity we strive for (see discussion above, with 58% of recruit classes comprising individuals identifying BIPOC), recruitment of women has continued to remain stubbornly plateaued. That said, it is important to note that the recruitment of women into policing is by no means an SPD-specific challenge – nor, as initiative leadership will emphasize, should the titular aim to see recruit classes comprise 30% women by 2030 be overstated as a “benchmark” for success under the initiative. With recruit classes nationally – as in Washington – holding

steady at around 13-15% female, with market research reflecting generational shifts by Millennials and Gen Z'ers away from the type of shift-based, paramilitary structure of the traditional police department, and as the glass ceilings in areas of higher learning and the private sector continue to fracture (indeed, with women now overrepresented in many fields of higher learning), the Initiative itself acknowledges that while meaningful from the perspective of critical mass in shaping organizational culture, the 30% mark is likely unachievable in current market conditions. This is likely particularly true for large urban departments, which despite offering unique opportunities also come with unique risks and cost of living challenges that may render them less attractive to younger officers.

For these reasons, the 30x30 Initiative is less about meeting raw numbers than it is “mak[ing] law enforcement a profession where qualified women who are drawn to it feel welcomed and supported while ensuring agencies address their unique needs and foster their success.” To that end, while SPD was compliant with all “Immediate Action” recommendations of the initial assessment conducted upon joining the 30x30 Initiative (the Phase I Report), SPD has since broadened its focus to better understand the subjective experience of women at SPD. In August 2023, SPD contracted with researcher Dr. Lois James at Washington State University, who conducted focus groups and interviews with small groups of women employees (the Phase II Report). Several major themes – all consistent with those reported in national studies across sectors – emerged, reflecting the factors that can either “push” or “pull” women from the workplace, including a masculine culture, heightened expectations for women, and double standards; challenges navigating pregnancy and childcare; greater barriers to promotion and positions of leadership; and exclusion and pigeon holing.

To address these concerns, in January 2024 SPD established an employee-led, interest-based, cross-rank/position and position internal 30x30 Workgroup with a designated mission: to advocate for and implement measures to mitigate the documented external challenges that pull women out of the workplace, internal challenges that push women out of the workplace, and to create a healthy, safe, respectful, and equitable environment where all members of the department can grow and thrive. Areas of focused attention over the past year include exploring the feasibility of childcare support, undertaking several women-focused recruitment initiatives to further reach potential candidates, streamlining the application process, and again contracting with Dr. James to further dig into any disparities in promotion or assignment. SPD has twice ([February 2024](#); [May 2024](#)) presented to City Council’s Public Safety Committee on its continuing efforts and, pursuant to Ordinance 127026, reports regularly to Council on its recruitment and retention efforts.

Under my leadership, SPD will continue to work closely with the national 30x30 Initiative, its executive team, and others engaged in the academic and research community to ensure that SPD is on top of emerging market research to guide innovation in recruitment. I have also directed our HR team that before any woman is removed from candidacy in late stages of the hiring process, I or Deputy Chief Yvonne Underwood will review that applicant's file to ensure that we are not unnecessarily or inappropriately disqualifying individuals based upon measures that do not reflect upon one's fitness to serve. As part of my commitment to building and sustaining a healthy workplace culture, we will be focusing on reforming our promotion and assignment practices to ensure consistency, transparency, and procedural justice in how decisions are made.

I also want to highlight the emerging partnership between SPD and the Seattle Police Women's Alliance, modeled after the Seattle Fire Department Women's Alliance, dedicated to supporting, mentoring, and championing women and non-binary members of SPD. Current partnerships include supporting the Alliance in providing all-women defensive tactics training courses, study groups for promotional exams, and mentorship programs by women, for women. It is my commitment to work with this association to build trust and support their work and their membership.