

The City Can Do More to Tackle Organized Retail Crime in Seattle

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL,

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

JULY 25, 2023



RETAIL BUSINESSES

Small local businesses and large retailers are affected by ORC.



BOOSTERS

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



FENCING OPERATIONS

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



“...law enforcement, while essential, is only one part of the City’s response to organized retail crime...(we) look forward to working with the City to implement these recommendations.” - Adrian Z. Diaz, Chief of Police, SPD

“We look forward to working with the Council and Mayor to implement the ‘seven steps’ for improving the City’s approach to ORC...” - Renee Sunde, President and CEO, Washington Retail Association





Image Source: Washington Organized Retail Crime Association

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



Operation Boiling Point takes on Organized Theft Groups



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Step 2:
Leverage federal
and state crime
analysis
resources.

Image Source: Homeland Security Investigations





Image Source: Seattle Police Department

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



Image Source: San Antonio Fire Department

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



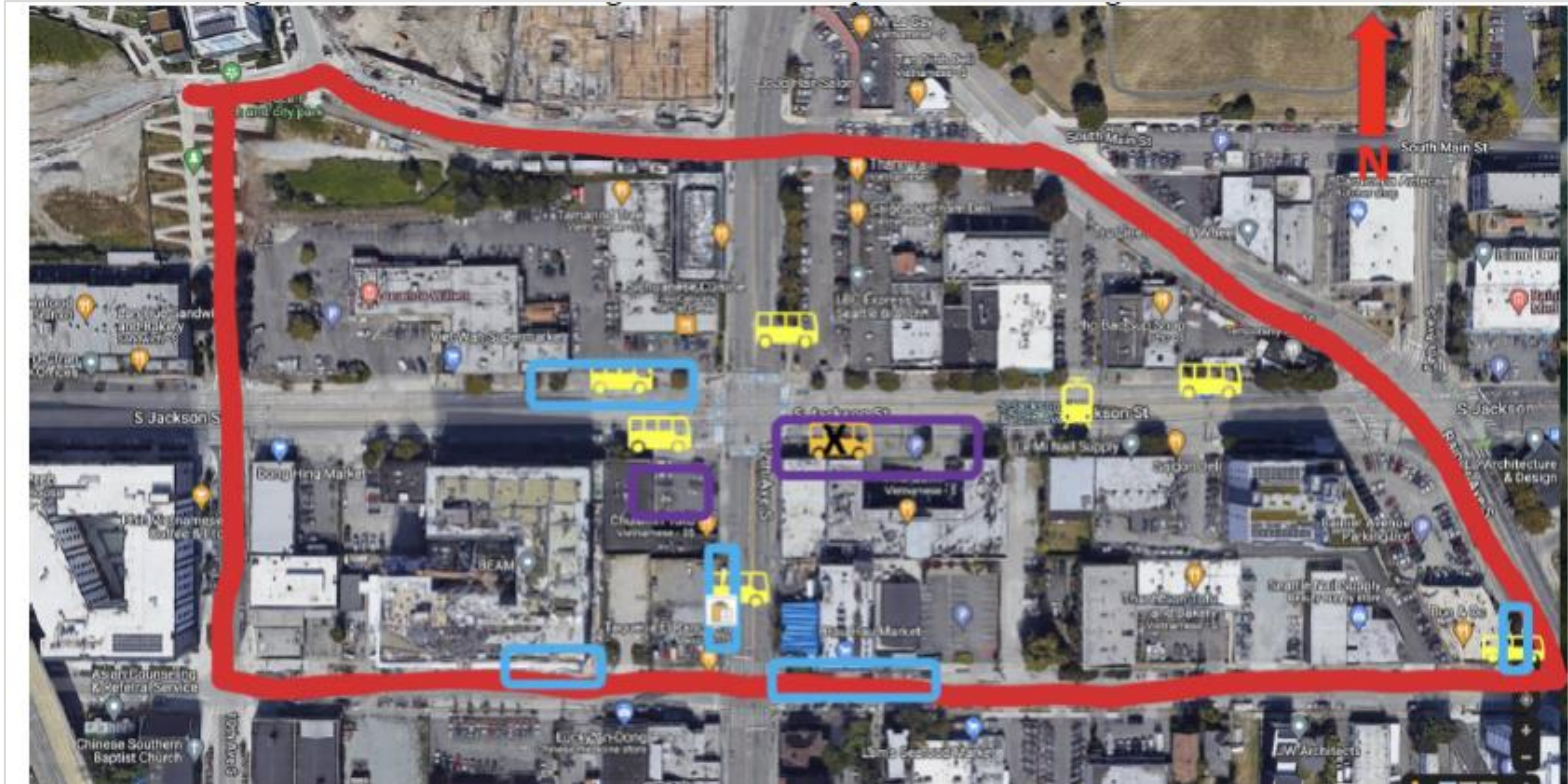


Image Source: Seattle Police Department

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



WHAT PROSECUTORS MUST PROVE IN RETAIL CRIMES CASES

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

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

Image Source: King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

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



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SB 5259 - 2023-24

Ensuring commerce and workplaces are safe from product theft.

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

Bill Status-at-a-Glance

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

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

Current Version:	Current Status:
SB 5259	S Ways & Means

Where is it in the process?

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

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

Image Source: Washington State Legislature



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

Acknowledgements:

Dr. Cynthia Lum, Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy

Dr. Cory Lowe, Loss Prevention Research Council

Report Reviewed by:

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

