

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION 32167

A RESOLUTION acknowledging that Seattle residents, workers, students, and visitors deserve to be safe and feel safe; recognizing and appreciating first responders from the Seattle Police Department, Seattle Fire Department, and the Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department; affirming the City’s obligations to fully support, train, and equip first responders; committing to a diversified public safety response system; acknowledging the City’s actions to reform the Police Department under the federal Consent Decree; committing to resolve the remaining issues of the Consent Decree; and affirming the essential services provided by the Police Department.

WHEREAS, professional and dedicated Seattle Police Department officers, Seattle Fire Department firefighters, Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department 911 call takers, dispatchers, and crisis responders, along with their many other professional colleagues in these departments, work every day to protect the community; are tasked with upholding the rule of law and protecting life and property; and often put themselves in harm’s way to fulfill their obligation to serve and protect Seattle residents, workers, students, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, The City of Seattle and the U.S. Department of Justice entered into a settlement agreement, or “Consent Decree,” requiring the City government to implement reforms “with the goal of ensuring that police services are delivered to the people of Seattle in a manner that fully complies with the Constitution and laws of the United States, effectively ensures officer and public safety, and promotes public confidence...”¹; and

WHEREAS, the case of *United States v. the City of Seattle* is adjudicated by The Honorable James L. Robart of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington; and

¹ See Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States and the City of Seattle (July 27, 2012), https://seattlepolicemonitor.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/spd_mou_7-27-12.pdf; see also Joint Motion and [Proposed] Order for Approval of Settlement Agreement and Stipulated [Proposed] Order of Resolution and Entry of Judgment, *United States of America v. City of Seattle*, Case No. 2:12-cv-01282-JLR, Dkt. No. 3-1 (July 27, 2012).

1 WHEREAS, Merrick Bobb served as the original Seattle Monitor from 2013 through 2020 and
2 was succeeded by Dr. Antonio Oftelie in 2020; and

3 WHEREAS, in the summer of 2020, the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer
4 and the subsequent protests caused local governments to acknowledge the history of
5 institutional racism within their criminal justice and law enforcement systems;

6 NOW, THEREFORE,

7 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE**
8 **MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:**

9 Section 1. The City finds and declares that:

10 A. Seattle residents, workers, students, and visitors deserve to be safe, feel safe, and
11 receive respectful and effective services from the City's first responders, who play a critical role
12 in guarding against loss of life and property and ensuring that the public has confidence that its
13 government will create and maintain safe and thriving neighborhoods.

14 B. The Seattle Fire Department (SFD) has expanded its services to provide specialized
15 care to some of the City's most vulnerable members through its Mobile Integrated Health
16 Program. As part of this program, Health One dispatches units that are staffed by a team of
17 firefighters and a civilian social worker to help with non-emergency calls, including transport,
18 provider referrals, and behavioral health support. In addition, SFD launched the Health 99
19 program in 2023 to tackle the public health and safety impacts of the opioid and fentanyl crisis,
20 specifically by dispatching emergency medical responders quickly to respond to overdose calls
21 and provide follow-up outreach services.

22 C. SFD firefighters continue to provide the core services the City's fire service is known
23 for, including responding to 112,320 fire and medical emergency events in 2024, a slight

1 increase over the 111,319 responses in 2023, but a 23.2 percent increase over the pre-pandemic
2 year of 2019.

3 D. In 2024, 59 percent of all SFD responses were classified as “Basic Life Support,” 27
4 percent were fire response, 13 percent were for “Advanced Life Support,” and 0.4 percent were
5 “mutual aid and special operation” responses.²

6 E. Firefighters responded to 459 events in 2024 that were classified as “scenes of
7 violence,” a slight decrease from the 494 in 2023, but a 35.8 percent increase over the pre-
8 pandemic year of 2019. In 2024, firefighters had to request an expedited police response to 150
9 events, including “help the firefighter” responses. The synthetic opioid crisis has contributed to
10 increased risk for the City’s firefighters.

11 F. The Consent Decree has established a foundation for constitutional policing in Seattle
12 and has spurred the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to implement significant reforms over the
13 past 12 years.

14 G. As recognized by the Court-appointed Monitor, SPD has gone above and beyond the
15 Consent Decree in many areas, embracing a vision for the department centered on service-
16 oriented and equitable policing, supported by rigorous internal systems of critical analysis.³ This
17 commitment is evidenced by a notable decrease in the use of force,⁴ the expansion of transparent

² Advanced Life Support events involve circumstances with imminent risk to life. Basic Life Support events include all other emergency medical responses. Fire responses include fires and automated fire alarms. Mutual Aid responses are SFD units assisting other fire departments outside of Seattle. Special Operation responses include wildfire and national emergencies where Seattle units respond.

³ Seattle Police Monitor Crisis Intervention Assessment of the Seattle Police Department (Feb 2016), p. 12 (Dkt. 272); Seattle Police Monitor Sixth Annual Report (December 2015), p. 3-4 (Dkt. 251); Seattle Police Monitor Fourth Semiannual Report (December 2014), p. 2-3 (Dkt. 187).

⁴ According to the October 2024 Seattle Police Department Crisis Assessment Report issued by the Office of Inspector General, fewer than two percent of crisis contacts between 2021 and 2023 included any reportable use of force. Office of Inspector General, Seattle Police Department Crisis Assessment Report, p. 25 (Oct. 16, 2024). The

1 and leading-edge data analytics, adoption of new accountability systems and processes, and the
2 growing national recognition of SPD's achievements.

3 H. Between 2013 and 2015, SPD developed new policies and training relating to the use
4 of force, force investigation and review, crisis intervention, bias-free policing, supervision, and
5 stops and detentions. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the Monitor, and the Court
6 approved each of these policies and trainings and by 2017, SPD had successfully passed all ten
7 assessments conducted by the Monitoring Team.

8 I. The Court's January 10, 2018 order recognized the significant decrease in SPD
9 officers' use of force and finding that "SPD has achieved full and effective compliance with the
10 Consent Decree such that Phase I of the Consent Decree is now complete and the Phase II
11 sustainment period should commence."⁵

12 J. Between 2018 and 2020, SPD continued to demonstrate additional progress, such as
13 expanding its internationally recognized data analytics program, including a research consortium
14 comprising researchers from over 80 universities around the world, that is focused on driving
15 best practices and advancements in the public safety sector. Along with these improvements,
16 SPD continued to sustain the reduction in the use of serious force and continues today to review
17 every use of force under SPD policy, which is a higher standard than constitutionally required.⁶

report also states that SPD's "reforms resulted in substantially decreased uses of force against subjects in crisis since 2016." *Id.*

⁵ Order Finding Initial Compliance with the Consent Decree, *United States of America v. City of Seattle*, Case No. 2:12-cv-01282-JLR, Dkt. No. 439 (Jan. 10, 2018), <https://www.justice.gov/crt/case-document/file/1296921/dl>.

⁶ Seattle Police Monitor Comprehensive Assessment of the Seattle Police Department (May 2022), p. 12-13, 33, 36, 54, 68, 80 *Seattle_Police_Monitor_Comprehensive_Assessment.pdf*; City of Seattle's Memorandum in Support of Parties' Joint, Stipulated Motion to Terminate Consent Decree Sustainment Plan Provisions, *United States of America v. City of Seattle*, Case No. 2:12-cv-01282-JLR, Dkt. No. 612 (May 7, 2020).

1 K. As the 2020 protests unfolded, SPD faced significant criticism from the Monitor,
2 accountability partners, and the public for its use of less lethal devices, including chemical
3 irritants. In response to this criticism, including assessments from within the department, SPD
4 revised its crowd management policy to reflect lessons learned from the protests. The Court
5 approved the revised crowd management policy in February 2021.⁷

6 L. In May 2022, the Monitor submitted a Comprehensive Assessment of SPD,
7 recognizing that “Seattle has accomplished a great deal under the Consent Decree.”⁸ The
8 Monitor found that force was used in only 1.5 percent of crisis interventions in 2021, a 48
9 percent decline since 2015.⁹ The Monitor concluded that SPD had “sustained full and effective
10 compliance with areas relating to crisis intervention, stops and detentions, and bias-free
11 policing,” as well as with the use of force, except during the 2020 protests.¹⁰ The Monitor made
12 recommendations for improvement in the following four areas: crowd management,
13 accountability, assessing disparities, and data governance.¹¹

14 M. In March 2023, the City and DOJ filed a joint motion to terminate a majority of the
15 requirements of the Consent Decree on the basis that they had been met.¹²

⁷ Order Approving City of Seattle’s Unopposed Motion for Court Approval of Crowd Management Policies, *United States of America v. City of Seattle*, Case 2:12-cv-01282-JLR, Dkt. No. 662 (Feb. 26, 2021).

⁸ Seattle Police Monitor Comprehensive Assessment of the Seattle Police Department (May 2022), p. 3
[Seattle_Police_Monitor_Comprehensive_Assessment.pdf](#).

⁹ *Id.* at 3-4. In 2024, SPD officers handled 8,273 crisis incidents. Force of any type was used in only 1.25 percent of these incidents. (Source: SPD public data dashboard accessed January 7, 2025 at <https://seattle.gov/police/information-and-data/data/crisis-contacts/crisis-contact-dashboard>.)

¹⁰ *Id.* at 8.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Joint Motion to Approve Compliance Agreement, *United States of America v. City of Seattle*, Case 2:12-cv-01282-JLR, Dkt. No. 727 (Mar. 28, 2023).

1 N. In September 2023, the Court granted this motion in part, ruling that SPD had
2 “achieved sustained compliance with the majority of the core commitments...”¹³ The order
3 terminated the Consent Decree obligations regarding “crisis intervention, stops and detentions,
4 bias-free policing, supervision, and the Office of Police Accountability” while holding open the
5 following two areas: (1) “use of force in crowd settings” and (2) “ensuring a sustainable system
6 of review and accountability regarding the conduct of officers and the policies and principles of
7 SPD.”¹⁴ The Court stated it “is immensely proud of the efforts SPD has undertaken since this
8 matter began in 2012. In particular, SPD has made tremendous improvements in its policies,
9 methods of operation, and leadership with respect to the areas of use of force, stops and
10 detentions, and crisis intervention. SPD’s efforts with respect to data collection and analysis, too,
11 are like night-and-day when compared to the status of data collection and analysis before the
12 implementation of the changes required under the Consent Decree. The court is also extremely
13 proud of the constructive approaches to policing that have resulted from the efforts of the
14 accountability triad of the Office of Police Accountability (‘OPA’), the Office of the Inspector
15 General (‘OIG’), and the Community Police Commission (‘CPC’).”¹⁵

16 O. In October 2024, OIG issued its Seattle Police Department Crisis Assessment report,
17 concluding that SPD has continued to improve in its use of force and response to individuals in
18 crisis.¹⁶ The report found that fewer than two percent of crisis contacts between 2021 and 2023

¹³ Order Granting in Part and Denying in Part Joint Motion to Approve Proposed Agreement on Sustained Compliance, Case 2:12-cv-01282-JLR, Dkt. No. 769, p. 2 (Sept. 7, 2023).

¹⁴ *Id.* at 2-3.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 4.

¹⁶ OIG, Seattle Police Department Crisis Assessment Report, p. 25 (Oct. 16, 2024).

1 included any reportable use of force.¹⁷ It also noted that in its observations, officers
2 “communicat[ed] effectively with subjects and attempt[ed] to de-escalate incidents before
3 resorting to force. When uses of force did occur, OIG consistently found them necessary,
4 reasonable, and proportional to circumstances.”¹⁸

5 P. The City Council and Mayor acknowledge and are proud of the significant reforms
6 made by the officers and professional staff of SPD.

7 Section 2. With the passage of Ordinance 127182 on February 11, 2025, and the Mayor’s
8 signing of the ordinance on February 14, 2025, the City is now positioned to address its
9 outstanding crowd management obligations under the Consent Decree. Once SPD has updated its
10 crowd management policies to comply with Ordinance 127182, the City Council and Mayor
11 request that the City Attorney submit the updated policies to the Monitor and DOJ and
12 eventually to the Court for review.

13 Section 3. The City commits to continuing to enhance the police accountability system,
14 including supporting and maintaining a robust, effective, and civilian-led accountability system.
15 Working in collaboration with SPD leaders, the City’s accountability entities set the highest
16 standards of professionalism and excellence and hold officers accountable for policy violations
17 that erode community trust.

18 Section 4. In recognition of the outstanding work of the City’s first responders, the City
19 commits to the fair treatment of its first responders and affirms its obligations to:

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.* at 24.

1 A. Empower SPD, SFD, and Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE)
2 Department personnel to carry out their public safety mandate effectively and provide these vital
3 City departments with the necessary tools, training, and resources to perform their critical work.


4 B. Recruit, hire, train, and retain police officers to enable SPD to be adequately staffed,
5 meet response time goals, maintain the peace of the City, and hold offenders accountable.¹⁹

6 Section 5. The City reaffirms its commitment to a diversified public safety response
7 system, including the CARE Department. Following the successful launch of a dual dispatch
8 pilot, which responds to wellness checks and person-down 911 calls with civilian first responders
9 alongside SPD officers, the City is in the process of expanding the pilot citywide, seven days a
10 week, and is committed to continuing to invest in community-focused, trauma-informed
11 response options.

12 Section 6. The City recognizes that an effective, professional, and community-trusted
13 police service that upholds the dignity and value of every person and holds offenders accountable
14 is an essential function of city government. Through the adoption of this resolution, the City
15 reverses any prior commitments or pledges to defund or abolish SPD services or personnel which
16 led to the resignation of hundreds of police officers.

¹⁹ In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, SPD had 1,467 police officer funded positions. There were 1,497 funded positions in 2020, 1,343 in 2021, 1,200 in 2022, 1,113 in 2023, and 1,074 in 2024. There are 1,041 funded positions in 2025 and 1,057 in 2026.

1 Adopted by the City Council the 1st day of April, 2025,
2 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 1st day of
3 April, 2025.

4 

5 President _____ of the City Council

6 The Mayor concurred the 3rd day of April, 2025.

7 

8 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

9 Filed by me this 3rd day of April, 2025.

10 

11 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

12 (Seal)