Executive Summary

In May 2020, a civil rights reckoning began in America, ignited by the murder of George Floyd and strengthened by the subsequent protests against the unjust murders of Black Americans at the hands of police officers. Seattle, like most major cities across the United States, had ongoing protests stemming for Floyd's murder and community demands for systemic changes to policing.

In response, Mayor Jenny Durkan issued an Executive Order to Reimagine Policing and Community Safety in Seattle. The Order established a Community Safety Work Group (CSWG) led by the Department of Neighborhoods, Human Services Department, Seattle Police Department, and the Office for Civil Rights to integrate community input into policy changes and operationalize community priorities to reshape community safety and policing in Seattle. The Order also established an SPD Functional Analysis Interdepartmental Team (IDT) to advise the CSWG and Mayor on operational and functional aspects of SPD as it pertains to reimagining community safety.

The IDT took immediate action to address some of the community requests surfaced during the protests including:

1. Transforming 9-1-1, by laying the foundation for an independent emergency dispatch and communications center, the Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC);
2. Transferring functions from SPD: The Office of Emergency Management, Victim Advocacy Team, 9-1-1 Communications Center, Parking Enforcement Officers;
3. Completing robust analysis on SPD 9-1-1 Calls, sworn officer functions, and personnel and staffing.

The IDT conducted significant community outreach to guide recommendations and policy options including meetings with 11 city-wide boards, commissions, and advisory councils; roundtables and neighborhood tours; and, compilation of thousands of constituent emails, phone calls, and letters. We understand that "Community" is not a monolith - recommendations and priorities were different with different constituent groups. There was, however, a broad coalition of people calling for a more visible patrol presences, with officers doing specific tasks. Residents shared a desire for SPD to return to "foot beats" and build opportunities for neighborhoods to develop deeper relationships with the officers that serve them. This recommendation became more prevalent when staffing shortages required that Community Police Team officers be redeployed to patrol operations. We also frequently heard that public safety extends beyond policing. Stakeholders strongly supported expanded or new funding opportunities for youth violence prevention, youth employment, homeless outreach services, affordable housing, and mental health resources. SPD patrol officers often have not been equipped to help residents make connections to these resources.
Recognizing the need for community-led solutions to strengthen and support the public safety system, Mayor Jenny Durkan invested $10.4 million through a Public Safety Request for Proposal. Additionally, we are expanding proven public safety strategies such as Health One and Community Service Officers. However, these investments mostly work on upstream prevention and restoration efforts and it is unlikely that these investments will become emergency response options in the near term.

The landscape of available resources is different than when we began this work in 2020. SPD experienced a 13% budget reduction from 2020 to 2021 including direct cuts of $34 million and $22 million in functional transfers. SPD has lost over 250 sworn officers since June 2020, equating to a loss of over 300,000 service hours in the past 17 months. Even with a reduction in tasks, patrol staffing would only be brought back up to minimum levels necessary to meet the target of a seven-minute response time for Priority 1 calls. SPD cannot continue with business as usual. There is an immediate need -- both from community and from an operations perspective -- to better align work with response models and increase administrative alternatives so SPD can remain focused on community patrolling and responding to calls where a sworn officer response is required.

SPD contracted with the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) to begin to identify which calls could reasonably be offloaded from Patrol. NICJR’s high-level analysis – based on call type, alignment with the criminal code, and frequency of arrests, proposed that up to 49 percent of call types currently responded to by patrol could, at some point in the future, be responded to via an alternative non-sworn response, without SPD involvement. NICJR specifically proposed a four-tier response model where non-SPD, SPD & community teams, and only SPD respond to calls. SPD agrees that this is the correct conceptualization of how to plan for future alternative response models, but that there is additional review required before commitments should be made to community and community groups about what work is appropriate and safe for a non-SPD response.

NICJR’s analysis, given its initial level of review, did not consider the frequency with which calls resulted in potentially problematic outcomes. Realizing that a significant portion of these events are far more complex than their name and whether an arrest occurred suggest, the City asked Dr. Geoffrey P. Alpert, a recognized expert on high-risk police encounters and frequent Department of Justice subject matter expert, to analyze NICJR’s recommendations. Dr. Alpert agreed that the tiered response model was appropriate, but advised the City to use both a management of demand and likelihood of harm analysis to determine the statistical likelihood of a significant event – arrest, subject injury, use of force, officer injury – occurring and using this statistical likelihood to construct “cut-off levels” for the different tiers of responses. The City of Seattle has the responsibility to limit the likelihood that it is sending individuals into unsafe situations and ensure that there is no reason to anticipate potential harm – for both responder and subject.

Based on an initial cooperative analysis with SFD and CSCC, SPD agrees that 12 percent of calls, can and should be explored for alternative responses starting now. These are calls where we know the risk of harm is very low. This reduction does not equate to – and is not reflective of – the percent of service hours SPD currently spends on calls that could ostensibly be offloaded. These calls include person-down calls and priority three welfare checks which accounted for over 23,000 service hours between 2017 and 2019.

To meet the immediate need for alternative responses, SPD, SFD, and CSCC are proposing a new pilot aimed at helping 9-1-1 triage non-criminal calls with no imminent health concerns. These triage teams will be a civilian forward alternative to fire or police, housed within the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program. Triage teams will respond directly to wellness check calls as identified by 9-1-1 dispatchers through collaboration with SFD and SPD. We will
work with community organizations to hire people who bring not only expertise in outreach and behavioral health, but also lived experience and a tangible connection to the communities they will serve. They will be equipped with radios to request a police or EMS response as needed. It is expected that SPD will be requested only for criminal situations or to assist with potential violence or active suicidality. On the back end, the teams will be provided with a case manager able to follow up on client referrals and service connections and reduce the chance that they are called in the future.

This triage response team pilot is the first step of many to truly reimagine public safety in Seattle. SPD and The Mayor’s Office are committed to continuing this work to increase the number of available alternative responses and reduce the number and types of calls that are unnecessarily responded to by SPD patrol officers - those with no immediate safety or health risk.
Reimagining Police Response in Seattle

Immediate Steps to Address Public Cries for Public Safety Reform

The IDT took immediate action to address some of the community requests surfaced during the protests through the 2021 re-budgeting process. The 2021 Proposed Budget outlined meaningful first steps to reimagine policing and community safety by transferring the following functions, amounting to approximately $22 Million in transfers from SPD:

- **The Office of Emergency Management**: OEM, which coordinates the City's efforts to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergencies, will become an independent office. Functionally OEM has been a distinct office for many years, with the director reporting to the Executive at the cabinet-level. This transfer from SPD was relatively seamless.
- **Victim Advocacy Team**: The 2021 budget made permanent the transfer of the SPD Victim Advocacy Team to the new Safe and Thriving Communities Division in HSD. This transfer was initially made by the City Council in the 2020 rebalanced budget. This transfer has been completed.
- **Development of civilian-led 9-1-1 Communications Center**: The existing police 9-1-1 Center is in the process of being transferred from SPD to create an independent Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC). As capacity in community-based and alternative services are developed, the CSCC will be crucial in developing protocols and operationalizing the dispatching of those responses.
- **Parking Enforcement Unit**: The Parking Enforcement unit and its 120 employees will be transferred from SPD. Council legislated the PEO transfer to CSCC, while the Mayor’s budget had transferred them to the Seattle Department of Transportation. The transfer has been postponed for several more months to finalize where this until will ultimately land through conversations with labor and other stakeholders.

Public Engagement

The IDT conducted significant community outreach to guide any recommendations or policy options. The community outreach included meetings with 11 city-wide boards, commissions, and advisory councils; roundtables and neighborhood tours; and, compilation of thousands of constituent emails, phone calls, and letters. One important finding is that "Community" is not a monolith. Recommendations and priorities were different with different constituent groups. However, there was a broad coalition of people calling for **a more visible patrol presences, with officers doing specific tasks**. Residents shared a desire for SPD to return to "foot beats" and build opportunities for neighborhoods to develop deeper relationships with the officers that serve them. This recommendation became more prevalent when staffing shortages required that Community Police Team officers be redeployed to patrol operations.

Finally, we heard that **public safety extends beyond policing**. Stakeholders strongly supported expanded or new funding opportunities for youth violence prevention, youth employment, homeless outreach services, affordable housing (particularly tiny house villages), and mental health resources. SPD patrol officers are often ill-equipped to help residents make connections to these resources.
Responding to Community

To meet the community requests to invest in upstream violence prevention services and recognizing the need to scale up community-led solutions to strengthen and enhance the public safety system, the Human Services Department (HSD) released the 2021 Community Safety Capacity Building Request for Proposals (RFP). This RFP provided $10.4 million in one-time funding for 18 months for 33 organizations working toward community-led solutions to end violence and increase safety in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. These investments will support organizations providing an array of programs, services, and upstream investments meant to improve outcomes and contribute to overall community safety and wellbeing.

Most applicants and awardees self-reported in their applications that their agencies work in spaces dedicated to interrupting the cycle of community violence, expanding trauma-informed practices, and youth, family, or community engagement. Community organizations primarily submitted proposals for prevention and restoration efforts rather than creating alternatives to 9-1-1 calls and policing. Although these may become resources for 9-1-1 dispatch in the future, no applicant indicated they are ready to be dispatched as alternative responses in the near-term.

In response to what we heard during our community outreach sessions, SPD will be adding another Community Service Unit. This expansion will increase the capacity of the Community Service Officer (CSO) program allowing for more comprehensive services to be deployed across the city. CSOs are civilian employees who help residents and businesses involved in non-criminal calls navigate services, engage with communities and neighborhoods, and support programming for at-risk youth. With the expansion SPD would be able to increase the number of hours that CSOs are available as well as provide more support to patrol officers with increased coverage and availability.

Additionally, we will be expanding Health One, a proven strategy to address low-acuity mental health emergency situations without an armed officer.

Analysis in Response to Executive Order: SPD Staffing and Budget

SPD experienced a 13% budget reduction from 2020 to 2021. This includes a total of $34 million in cuts (including cuts to the personnel budget for both sworn police officers and civilian employees and overtime reductions) and $22 million in functional transfers. Beyond these cuts, record attrition has significantly changed staffing and structure at SPD. SPD has lost 286 sworn officers since June 2020, equating to a loss of over 300,000 service hours in the past 17 months. The bottom line at this juncture is that even with a significant reduction in tasks, patrol staffing would only be brought back up to minimum levels necessary for maintaining adequate response times.

The Seattle Police Department’s staffing and deployment decisions begin with 9-1-1 calls for service, and flow from there. SPD’s target staffing levels are established with the goal of ensuring officers can respond to in-progress crimes and emergencies within the stated goal of 7 minutes.
In anticipation of ongoing staffing challenges, to allow SPD patrol officers to engage in true neighborhood, problem-solving policing, and to meet the mental and physical wellness needs of the officers in the department, SPD is pursuing a new 10-hour shift model. This model will both allow there to be both shift hours each day, and certain days in each precinct, where officers will "overlap" for small "bursts" of extra staffing. This means officers can spend time on engagement and problem solving, along with additional training without additional costs. This approach also will help ensure that the highest number of available officers are on duty during peak call volume hours and days for the city and for each precinct.

Research indicates this model supports overall wellness and job satisfaction. Given the extreme loss of officers in 2020, SPD must implement strategies to support officers. We anticipate this new shift model will both help retain officers and attract new ones, as well as partially mitigate some of the massive loss of officers.

SPD staffs Patrol to try and achieve the Priority 1 response time of 7 minutes, which it currently does not achieve, on average. Patrol also is staffed to ensure officers have 40% of their time on duty not working a 9-1-1 Call for help from the community. This is the goal to ensure officers can engage in proactive work and problem solving, including meeting with community members and business leaders. This is in aligning with what we heard during our community outreach. Currently, as the city and region have re-opened following COVID restrictions, two of the three SPD watches (or shifts) have less than 40% of their time available to do this non-response work. Calls for service had consistently been down 20-30% since the COVID-19 pandemic began, but in recent weeks community calls are up over 15%.

The Patrol Operations Bureau, responsible for answering 9-1-1 Calls for Help and responding to incidents in progress, is the largest component of the department's staffing. Although staffing shortages have been felt department-wide, perhaps the most visible impact is to the Patrol Bureau. There is an immediate and urgent need to stand up alternate response models so that patrol can shift away from some lower priority calls and focus on responding to Priority 1 calls. This will help increase the frequency patrol officers are responding to emergency calls within seven minutes.

Chart 1. SPD Adopted Budget with Sworn FTE, 2010-2021
**Analysis in Response to the Executive Order: 9-1-1 Call Analysis**

In its initial in-house analyses of 9-1-1 call types, SPD had identified, based on the initial call classification alone, that approximately 20% of 9-1-1 calls could be eligible for an alternative response. This analysis, however, did not include the more detailed work of looking at the outcome of initial call types, the number and type of officer units assigned, and the final nature of the call.

The SPD contracted with the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) to conduct an analysis of three years of 9-1-1 Computer-Aided Dispatch Data (CAD). The NICJR has engaged in similar 9-1-1 analysis in other major West Coast cities, all with the intended goal of classifying call types into those that can be addressed by unarmed resources. In their prior work, the NICJR has created a tiered response system to group the calls into resource type classifications:

- **Tier 1** – Most likely can be handled by an unarmed/community response.
- **Tier 2** – Can be handled by an unarmed/community response, with police resources co-dispatched nearby for safety.
- **Tier 3** – Police resources are primary dispatch tasked with quickly ensuring the safety of the scene and then turning the response over to a community/unarmed co-responder.
- **Tier 4** – Police are the primary responder.

Based on this grouping, the NICJR offered high-level recommendations on how many calls and service hours could be re-allocated to alternative response models – if those resources and statutory/labor rules allowed. They also identified the type of service providers that would be necessary to meet the demand of the identified calls.

The Executive and SPD anticipate utilizing these recommendations to pilot a tiered-response model in a neighborhood, sector, or possibly precinct. This would allow the scaling up of community-based resources, and the testing of dispatch assumptions for call outcome types to confirm how often the tiered model, based on what is known at the time of dispatch, was correct. It will be important to analyze how often SPD resources needed to respond to calls where the tier model did not indicate an initial need, just as it will be important to understand the calls where the tier model called for SPD resources, but they were not truly needed.

This 9-1-1 call analysis will allow SPD and others to calculate if there is any possible reduction in the number of resources assigned to patrol, follow-up units, or other specialty units. This subsequent work would therefore, logically, inform any personnel/staffing analysis.

The Seattle Police Department does not agree with every aspect of this approach to the analysis – it is important to note the concern is not the methodology, but a logical result of NICJR not having intimate awareness of how SPD uses every call type or the current legal and labor restrictions on who can perform certain duties. While on face value, the work included in some of these calls appears that it does not technically require a sworn police officer (i.e., a premise check), these proactive/administrative codes often are the result of officers being directed specifically to an area to be visible and present – including in areas where there have been increases in shots fired and other violent crime. The nearby staging of the officers, as well as their visible presence, is part of a deployment strategy grounded in research. It would not make sense to have resources other than SPD engage in some of this work.

Additionally, NICJR created broad groupings of calls, sometimes including calls where there is a possibility of harm to responders. At the recommendation of Dr. Alpert (see Attachment 4) SPD will continue to refine NICJR’s recommendations in consideration of the likelihood of harm both to the responder and the subject.
Summary of National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform 'Seattle Calls for Service Analysis'

The NICJR assessed over 1.2 million calls for service logged to the Seattle Police Department's 9-1-1/CAD system between 2017 and 2019. NICJR mapped each of the over 350 different Final Call Type descriptions to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and categorized every call type as a Non-Criminal, Misdemeanor, Felony, or Serious Violent Felony. In this analysis, NICJR did make the decision to include administrative and proactive officer initiated on-views as "calls."

Based on their approach to the analysis, NICJR coded about 80% of SPD calls as responses to non-criminal events. If the on-view/administrative items are excluded, this decreases to about 75% of all dispatch events as not clearly linked to a criminal code event based on the final call type description entered into the 9-1-1/CAD system. Here, it is important to note that just because a call did not end up closed clearly as a response to a criminal code violation, does not mean there was no criminal behavior. Officers often end calls, based on their discretion, as not involving criminal behavior, even when it did. Additionally, this is why NICJR then takes their initial coding scheme and blends it into their Tiered Response model. This results in some Non-Criminal call types, based on the call type and how resolved, still requiring a sworn officer response, or at a minimum a co-responder response.

The NICJR team recommended 174 Final call types (49% of 347 call types) as Tier 1 call types. These 174 call types represent over 685,000 dispatch events and just over 850,000 officer service hours. In 45 (26%) of these call types, NICJR recognized that an officer would still be needed in the response (266,046 events (39%) and 278,957 officer service hours (33%)).

In many of the remaining 129 call types where NICJR suggests that an SPD officer is not necessary, there are local legal and labor requirements that may limit what calls can be offloaded to an alternative response, and require further review.

- For the calls where legal requirements (e.g., who can take possession of lost property, how to respond to a deceased individual without compromising a potential homicide scene, the powers and responsibilities to enforce maritime rules and safety, etc.) currently directly or indirectly require a sworn officer response, a more detailed legal analysis must be completed. This does not mean this work cannot be assigned to an alternative response model, but in addition to the work needed to build that capacity, legislative changes may also need to take place.
- Many of the calls are responded to by SPD because patrol officers can respond more quickly than medical/fire services or potential alternative response models, due to the SPD deployment model (i.e., constant patrol instead of dispatch from base) and the ability to "run code" and exceed the speed limit and traffic control devices. There would be decided tradeoffs in response times assuming SPD would never respond to these medical/hazard/down calls.
- NICJR specifically calls out the assignment of officers to special events, including sporting events. This ignores that the city has contracts with many of these companies and the agreements include having officers, with access to full equipment for security purposes, which would be available to non-sworn or even off-duty resources. Additionally, some of these calls are the logging of off-duty work, which does not pull from on-duty resources, but must be logged for officer safety and deconfliction.
- SPD also, at this time, does not agree with the logic that an unarmed individual could respond to alarm calls, especially including non-passive Bank and panic alarms. It is true that many passive "burglar" alarms are false
alarms – and the city has a program to address these, but these actively activated alarms where a hold-up could be occurring, seem to call for the dispatch of an officer, not an unarmed person to confirm if it is real or not. There are some 4,700 alarm calls (3,566 service hours) in this category.

- The obligations agreed to by the city throughout the consent decree require the SPD to adequately staff several units to ensure the work can be done in an efficient and effective way, these include the Force Investigation Team, the Force Review Unit, the Education and Training unit, sergeants in the Office of Police Accountability, and the Audit, Policy, and Research unit. Together, these units account for a need of 90 sworn members. It is highly unlikely that off-loading of call responsibilities will result in a decreased need for these sworn resources; rather, continued increased calls for oversight and better training may require additional staffing in some of these units.

- Per Dr. Alpert’s recommendation, SPD will conduct both a management of demand and likelihood of harm analysis to determine the statistical likelihood of a significant event – arrest, subject injury, use of force, officer injury – occurring and using this statistical likelihood to construct "cut-off levels" for the different tiers of responses. The City of Seattle has the responsibility to limit the likelihood that it is sending individuals into unsafe situations and ensure that there is no reason to anticipate potential harm – for both responder and subject.

Ultimately, a critical review of the Tier 1, non-sworn recommendations sketch out short- and long-term paths for the future of alternative response models. SPD agrees that some portion of the calls identified by NICJR could be appropriate for alternative responses on a longer time horizon – given that both statutory and labor issues will need to be addressed. Additionally, some groupings of calls – specifically traffic stops – are already being reviewed in collaboration with the Office of the Inspector General, and SPD believe this broader, Seattle-specific work should inform any redesign of the approach to these call types.

In the near term, SPD agrees that there are approximately 30 incident types where it is apparent SPD does not need to be the primary responder if other resources are consistently available. This represents 12% of total calls and 6% of total officer service hours. These calls include person down calls and some low priority welfare checks.

From 2017-2019, the majority of person down and priority 3 welfare checks (60%) resulted in "assistance rendered" with less than ten percent resulting in a final disposition that indicates an officer was needed. Only six percent resulted in a police report written and even fewer (two percent) resulted in any type of arrest. Simply put, many of these calls do not require an armed officer response.

As noted by NICJR, given current staffing shortages and the trust/legitimacy-building value of improving other SPD services through more appropriate staffing, this level of call diversion does not represent additional overall SPD staffing savings. Transferring these responsibilities either would help ensure they receive a response or remove them from an already stretched SPD work queue.
Developing an alternative response to emergency calls – Triage Pilot

Based on our community outreach, the 9-1-1 call analysis, and extensive research into community response models, the IDT is proposing another option for 9-1-1 response, moving some low-risk, non-criminal calls away from a sworn uniformed response and toward a new team of specialized responders. These new teams will respond to the thousands of 9-1-1 calls each year for situations that are not crimes in progress, fires, or medical emergencies to allow eyes-on and a firsthand assessment of what secondary response or services are the best fit for the situation. This removes a significant burden from our 9-1-1 dispatchers, who frequently must make instantaneous decisions based on second-hand information from callers in the community and SPD usually ends up as the default response. This pilot will be housed within the Seattle Fire Department Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program and will respond directly to types of wellness check calls that do not require an armed response or medical aid. These calls will be identified by 9-1-1 at the CSCC through collaboration with SPD and SFD. Utilizing a new 9-1-1 call-taking protocol system, dispatchers will be furnished with a new alternative response that will allow for on-scene situation triage and decision making.

Other similar models are already being implemented successfully in cities nationwide. The CAHOOTS program in Eugene, the STAR program in Denver, the Mobile Crisis Team in Baltimore and the Crisis Response Unit in Olympia all point the way to alternatives to address thousands of 9-1-1 calls typically handled by police officers. These programs have been designed collaboratively with community partners and first responders alike. Crucially, each response begins with trained specialists who recognize that most of these calls arise from poverty, mental illness, or ill health—not criminal intent.

A specialized triage response offers benefits for clients and City alike. For those in need, responders will have expertise in system navigation, behavioral health, trauma-informed care, and homeless outreach to help them achieve better outcomes in their moment of crisis. Studies such as one conducted by Portland State University show clearly that individuals in crisis or experiencing homelessness overwhelmingly prefer non-police responders: mental health professionals, peer support specialists, social workers, EMTs, and conflict resolution counselors. For the City, removing these responses from SPD’s purview increases their availability to respond to more pressing emergencies.

We anticipate that this triage model will become the primary responders for low-risk calls without a public safety, medical emergency, or criminal element. They will act as an extension of CSCC dispatch and conserve scarce patrol resources for responding to true public safety threats. These call types represent over 4,300 calls each year to CSCC. The triage response will operate out of SFD in close connection with the CSCC. SFD already operates an alternative response program – Health One – out of its Mobile Integrated Health program; location of the new team within MIH will avoid creating new silos or program gaps.

The city will work with labor partners, SFD and SPD to further develop the staffing model for response and will work with community and partner organizations to identify staff who bring not only expertise in outreach and behavioral health, but also lived experience and a tangible connection to the communities they will serve. It is expected that SPD will be requested only for criminal situations or to assist with potential violence and active suicidality. On the back end, the triage pilot will be provided with a case manager able to follow up on client referrals and service connections.

Key to these efforts is ensuring individuals responding are equipped with the training, skills, and resources to help people successfully navigate the social support system including access to housing, clinical support, transportation, case management, and other stabilizing services. The teams will be able to provide a warm handoff to community-
based organizations and follow-up to help ensure that individuals’ needs are met and to reduce the likelihood that they are called for assistance in the future.

At launch, the specialized triage response will operate during daytime and early evening hours. This is when the preponderance of calls is made and when partners such as social workers or clinics are open. Most calls will arrive through CSCC dispatch, but the response will have lines of communications to SPD Patrol and Crisis Response, Health One, and Community Service Officers. There will be close coordination with a wide swath of partners including the Safe and Thriving Communities Division of the Human Services Department, Mobile Crisis Team, Emergency Services Patrol, and others.

As the specialized triage response grows and scales it will realize opportunities for robust community integration. Future iterations of the program could include community or neighborhood-specific responders and dovetail with other organizations, nonprofits, and local groups.
Attachments

1. Executive Order 2020-10: Reimagining Policing and Community Safety in Seattle
2. Seattle University 2020 Public Safety Survey
3. NICJR Report
4. Letter from Dr. Geoffrey P. Alpert
5. Outreach and Community Engagement Summary
6. SPD Functional Assessment
7. Community Safety Resource Inventory