**Seattle
Community
Police Commission**

Our City. Our Safety. Our Police. **Better Together.**

July 31, 2014

VIA EMAIL

Merrick Bobb
Federal Monitor

J. Michael Diaz
U.S. Department of Justice

Peter Holmes
Seattle City Attorney

RE: CPC Assessment of SPD Community Engagement

Dear Monitor and Parties,

In the July 27, 2012 Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and the City of Seattle, the Community Police Commission (CPC) was charged with conducting an assessment of the community's "experiences with and perceptions of the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) community outreach, engagement, and problem-oriented policing."[1] This document serves as an interim report.[2]

In thinking about how to conduct this assessment, the CPC, in partnership with SPD, determined that delivering a usable and realistic end product was of utmost importance. To get there, however, would require the development and implementation of a multi-step process. These steps are summarized below and are followed by more in-depth explanations.[3]

1. Gather input from a variety of communities, including SPD, on the current state of police-community interactions and engagement.
2. Create a shared vision and guiding principles that conceptualize the "ideal" philosophy for SPD community engagement.
3. Develop a list of themes from the information gathered during community outreach and prioritize the themes to determine the focus of a gap analysis.

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[1] Memorandum of Understanding, United States and City of Seattle, July 27, 2012, Section III-C-13 (pages 3-4).
[2] For clarification on how this report defines "community outreach, engagement, and problem-oriented policing," please refer to the vision statement in Step 2.
[3] The CPC is currently in the middle of step 3.

4. Oversee a gap analysis of the chosen areas of focus to determine the differences between the current and the ideal states of the themes as identified in the shared vision and guiding principles.
5. Return to the community to share the gap analysis report and develop strategies for change.
6. Develop an implementation plan listing the strategies for change, action steps for how to achieve the desired changes, deadlines, and a means to continuously assess progress.

Step 1: Gather input from a variety of communities, including SPD, on the current state of police-community interactions and engagement.

Step one was accomplished in three stages. The first stage was a review of information collected from the Seattle community in 2012 and 2013 on ways in which SPD engages with the communities it serves. The CPC's Community Outreach Report and SPD's Safe Communities Report are the most extensive compilations of such feedback. Please see *Exhibit A* for a short explanation of each report and a summary of the key themes extracted from the feedback.

The second stage was to hold meetings with communities where outreach was not previously conducted. This provided perspectives that were not reflected in the CPC's Community Outreach Report or SPD's Safe Communities Report. Please see *Exhibit B* for a list of these meetings, the questions asked, and a summary of the information collected.

The third stage was to meet with SPD precinct leaders and attend a number of police-community outreach and engagement functions to learn about and observe the interactions that regularly occur between SPD and Seattle communities. Please see *Exhibit C* for a list of the meetings/functions that CPC staff attended in this stage.

Step 2: Create a shared vision and guiding principles that conceptualize the "ideal" philosophy for SPD community engagement.

Initial ideas from CPC members for the shared vision were compiled, along with themes that were repeatedly noted in the CPC's Community Outreach Report and SPD's Safe Communities Report. The CPC members reviewed this list and selected what they felt would be the most important components of a shared vision, based on their own experiences and the perspectives of the constituencies they represent. The vision statement that ultimately emerged is as follows:

> *The Seattle Police Department's community engagement philosophy is to build, strengthen and sustain relationships with the community that it serves through open and respectful communication, diverse partnerships, and meaningful interactions and problem solving.*

The guiding principles were derived from the three main components of the vision: open and respectful communication; diverse partnerships; and meaningful interactions and problem solving. Each guiding principle listed below expands upon one of the three components, together creating a set of statements that defines the community values with regard to SPD outreach and engagement.

1. Engaging in broad outreach by communicating directly and regularly with as many communities as possible, using varied means.
2. Interacting with the community in a professional manner that upholds democratic principles and treats everyone with fairness and respect.
3. Building understanding of and relationships with all individuals, including those of a different race, national origin, or sexual-orientation.
4. Cultivating community relationships in good times rather than only in times of crisis.
5. Improving policing and community safety through cooperation with and efficient use of community and business partnerships.
6. Collaborating with Seattle residents to identify and address key community issues.
7. Developing partnerships that focus on vulnerable and historically underrepresented communities.
8. Embedding community engagement in everyday policing and common interactions.
9. Measuring performance and reporting regularly on the effectiveness of engagement strategies and the outcomes of community programs.
10. Sustaining community programs that work by developing mechanisms to continue their support and funding.

Step 3: Develop a list of themes from the information gathered during community outreach; prioritize the themes to determine the focus of the upcoming gap analysis.

Unfortunately, limited time and resources do not allow for an in-depth assessment of all the themes identified through community outreach. As a result, the CPC will prioritize certain themes for the assessment based on their knowledge and understanding of the interests of the constituencies they represent.[4] Please see *Exhibit D* for the list of all themes identified.

Once the themes are prioritized, staff will establish estimates for the first 3-5 themes on the list detailing the anticipated scope of work, staff time, consultants required, and financial resources necessary to carry out a gap analysis on each one. This will allow the CPC to make an informed decision about how extensive the gap analysis will be.

Step 4: Oversee a gap analysis of the chosen areas of focus to determine the differences between the current and the ideal states of the themes as identified in the shared vision and guiding principles.

The gap analysis will be conducted on the areas of focus that the CPC identifies as top priority and that also fit within resource and budget constraints. For those areas, a formal plan will be developed outlining the scope, resources, and timelines of the associated analysis. The plan will be submitted to the Monitor and Parties by September 12, 2014. The analysis will begin shortly thereafter. A report of the findings will be submitted to the Monitor and Parties when the analysis is complete.[5]

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[4] At the time of writing, the CPC has not yet prioritized the list of themes.

[5] The submission date for the gap analysis findings report will be included in the September 12, 2014 planning materials delivered to the Monitor and Parties. The date will be determined based on the themes chosen and the amount of work/time deemed necessary to carry out the proper analyses.

Step 5: Return to the community to share the gap analysis report and develop strategies for change.

This step involves convening community groups previously engaged by the CPC and sharing with them the findings of the gap analysis. It is important for the community to know that feedback they provided in the past is being used to create positive change. It is anticipated that community members will also offer a unique perspective on the gap analysis findings that will help the CPC understand the implications of the results. In addition, the community may have new ideas and strategies for implementing changes in the areas of focus. The CPC will then develop a formal list of strategies, taking into account the community input it receives in this step.

Step 6: Develop an implementation plan listing the strategies for change, action steps for how to achieve the desired changes, interim and final deadlines, and a means to continuously assess progress.
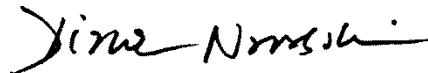
Using the strategies for change, a step-by-step implementation plan will be created in consultation with SPD. This will include a series of deadlines to ensure that strategies are implemented in a timely manner. It will also contain ideas on how to measure the success of implementation going forward.

The CPC would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the SPD community engagement assessment plan. The CPC looks forward to its continued partnership with SPD and the community to complete the remainder of the of the community engagement assessment.

Sincerely,

Lisa Daugaard, Co-Chair   Diane Narasaki, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission   Community Police Commission

Cc:
Mayor Ed Murray
Chief of Police Kathleen O'Toole
Seattle City Council
Community Police Commission

Exhibit A: Feedback from CPC's Community Outreach Report and SPD's Safe Communities Report

Community Police Commission Outreach

The CPC—with the help of many community partners—conducted extensive outreach in October 2013 to obtain feedback related to bias-free policing, stops and detentions, use of force, and in-car video recordings. The CPC also sought community perspectives about the SPD reform process in general, experience with the police, and guidance for future community engagement activities. The CPC made a special effort to learn the views of those in Seattle who have had historically troubled relationships with SPD, or who have been traditionally underrepresented in the policymaking process. More than 150 outreach events were held and over 3,000 survey questionnaires completed, 464 of which were in languages other than English. All in all, the CPC reached 3,400 community members. To read more from CPC's Community Outreach Report, please click here.

The CPC's community outreach in October 2013 identified the following general themes:

- Some police officers in Seattle do not treat people of different races and ethnicities equally
- Some of the formal communication channels that currently exist between the police and the community are ineffective
- Many community members do not know their rights regarding interactions with the police
- Not all areas of Seattle are served equally by SPD
- Some community members do not feel safe when stopped by the police; bullying tactics and verbal abuse are too often used
- SPD sometimes uses force when it is unnecessary
- Some police officers stop people unfairly because of lack of understanding and tolerance of other cultures and customs
- SPD does not employ enough officers from diverse backgrounds

Safe Communities Outreach

The Mayor's Office and SPD worked together in 2012-2013 on outreach with an initiative called Safe Communities, which sought to bring residents and officers together across Seattle to develop a list of priorities to address community concerns related to public safety. Comments and information were gathered during meetings held between September and November 2012 within the five SPD precincts. One meeting was held in each precinct. Each meeting was attended by between 80 to 200 citizens and officers. To read more about the Safe Communities Initiative, please click here.

Discussions at the meetings focused on the following questions:

1. What is your top concern about crime and public safety in your community?
2. What can be done together to create a safer community?
3. What is going well with the relationship between your community and SPD?

4. What needs to improve?
5. What steps can we take to keep you engaged in building and creating a safer community?

When reviewing the comments and information gathered during the meetings, the following themes appeared consistently:

- A desire for increased positive interactions between SPD and the community (particularly with youth and immigrant/refugee communities)
- The need to recruit more bi-lingual officers
- A plea for increased police presence and patrols in neighborhoods with high crime rates
- A request for additional follow up after a crime is committed (especially with victims)
- A request to train officers in cultural competency
- The necessity of educating the community on how to use 9-1-1

Exhibit B: Summary of Feedback from Recent Meetings

After analyzing the feedback previously gathered in the community on SPD reform, the CPC sought the perspectives of three groups in the community that had not been previously contacted: geographically-based community leaders, City agency partners, and SPD patrol officers.

Neighborhood District Coordinators

Neighborhood District Coordinators work to bring city government closer to communities across Seattle. They help to empower all community members to make contributions in their communities, serve as a resource/liaison, and ensure that City programs and services are responsive to and reflect the needs and values of its 13 neighborhood districts.[6]

CPC staff met with the eight Neighborhood District Coordinators on May 29, 2014. The following questions were asked at the meeting. A follow up email containing the same questions and requesting additional comments from the District Coordinators was also sent.

1. In what ways and with what frequency do the police engage with people in the neighborhoods you serve?
2. What do you think are the most successful strategies that SPD is employing (or has employed) to engage people in the neighborhoods you serve?
3. What do you think are the most *unsuccessful* strategies that SPD is employing (or has employed) to engage people in the neighborhoods you serve?
4. How can the SPD proactively engage people in the neighborhoods you serve on a regular basis so that when there is a crisis, the channels for communication are already available?
5. Are you familiar with any community and/or business partnerships, formal or informal, that are underway with SPD in the neighborhoods you serve?
6. What do you think people in the neighborhoods you serve appreciate and respect most about SPD?
7. What do you think the role of the police in a neighborhood should be?
8. How well do people in the neighborhood you serve understand the role of the police?

CPC staff identified the following themes from the information provided by the District Coordinators:

- Precinct leadership turnover is challenging for the community
- Increased foot and bike patrols are well-received
- Officer presence and engagement at community meetings is positive
- Immigrant and refugee populations need training in 9-1-1 use
- Community members are eager to engage with officers if the opportunities exist

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[6] Neighborhood Districts were established in Seattle City Council Resolution 27709 (October, 1987): http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/27709.pdf.

- Joint training by officers and community members on "Race: The Power of Illusion" was well received and considered a big success

Racial and Social Justice Initiative Subcabinet

The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) seeks to end institutional racism in Seattle City government, promote inclusion and full participation of all residents in civic life, and partner with the community to achieve racial equity. An RSJI Subcabinet, consisting of department leaders and Mayor's Office staff, develops proposals to address systemic issues and serves as a forum for sharing RSJI best practices.

CPC staff met with the RSJI Subcabinet on June 2, 2014. The questions below were asked at the meeting. A follow up email containing the same questions and requesting additional comments from members was also sent.

1. How does your department engage with SPD?
2. What has worked and what hasn't?
3. Are there ways your department could add value to the work that SPD does in the community?

CPC staff identified the following themes from the information provided by RSJI Subcabinet members:

- There are many great partnerships/collaborations between SPD and other City agencies
- In partnerships, successful outcomes for both parties require strong, reliable relationships and lots of communication between SPD and the partnering agency
- SPD should utilize other agencies more as resources/partners to accomplish public safety goals
- A few good programs have been cut due to lack of funding; we need to find ways to keep good programs running
- Frequent SPD turnover presents challenges to ongoing partnerships
- Communication and knowledge about SPD programs are not sufficiently shared among City agencies

SPD Patrol Officer Forum

SPD patrol officers are the linchpin of community engagement and their feedback is crucial to obtaining a full picture of police-community engagement. Therefore, CPC staff and several CPC commissioners, together with Assistant Chief Nick Metz and Sergeant Adrian Diaz, conducted a four-hour patrol officer forum on June 10, 2014.[7] The 18 police officer attendees represented all five precincts and each of the three watches.

Attendees were assigned to one of three groups to allow for a robust discussion of the following questions:

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[7] It was specifically noted during the meeting that a follow-up with the same patrol officer group would be conducted during the gap analysis phase. This follow-up would be one of multiple outreach efforts with SPD.

1. Besides being dispatched to a call, in what ways do you engage with the community that you serve?
2. What things hinder your ability to engage the communities that you serve?
3. How would you like the community to engage with you?
4. Has language ever been a barrier to communicating with the community that you serve? If yes, what has assisted you in overcoming that?
5. Are you involved in any community and/or business partnerships/relationships? If so, what has worked? What has not worked?
6. What kind of partnerships do you think would add value to the work SPD does in the community?
7. Do you feel that collaboration with Seattle residents helps you identify and address key public safety issues in an effective manner? If yes, how? If no, why?
8. What do you think are the most successful strategies that SPD is employing (or has employed) to engage people in Seattle? Why do you think they were successful?
9. What do you think are the most unsuccessful strategies that SPD is employing (or has employed) to engage people in Seattle? Why do you think they were unsuccessful?
10. If you were Chief, what kind of community engagement programs would you focus your resources on?
11. Do you think SPD command staff supports community engagement? Why or why not?
12. Has SPD equipped you to interact with all the different communities in Seattle (i.e. LGBTQ, people of color, the homeless, youth, etc.)? If yes, how? If no, explain the deficits.
13. How can SPD proactively engage the community on a regular basis so that when there is a crisis, the channels for communication are already available?

CPC staff identified the following themes from the information provided by forum participants:

- Officers like to engage with the community using casual/informal means
- Competing demands on officers' time make it challenging to proactively engage the community
- Paperwork reduces the amount of time officers have to engage with the community
- The police-community relationship in Seattle could be improved by educating the community about the role of officers
- Language is often a barrier to communication, but officers use a variety of resources to do the best they can
- The Community Police Commission should be utilized as a conduit to the community
- Communication within and between the department, precincts and units is poor
- SPD's external communications, including relationships with the media, needs improvement
- Officers think Night Out, Living Room Conversations, the Community Police Academy, and Jr. Police Badge Stickers are the best community engagement programs
- Patrol officers would like the opportunity (time) to attend advisory council meetings
- SPD should continue with its social media campaign
- Officers do not feel that the department supports a culture of community engagement
- Officers don't think it's SPD's job to equip them to interact with different communities in Seattle; they feel like they treat everyone with fairness and respect
- Patrol, as a function, needs to be prioritized; there are not enough officers on the streets

Exhibit C: List of Additional Meetings/Functions

CPC staff met with SPD precinct leaders and attended a number of other police-community outreach and engagement functions to learn about and observe the interactions that regularly occur between SPD and Seattle communities. These activities included:

- SPD Citywide Advisory Council Meeting (May 14, 2014)
- Meeting with Captain Fowler, West Precinct (May 22, 2014)
- Meeting with Captain Emerick, North Precinct (May 22, 2014)
- Meeting with Captain Davis, East Precinct (May 22, 2014)
- Ride-along in West Precinct (May 23, 2014)
- Meeting with Captain Wilske, Southwest Precinct (May 28, 2014)
- Ride-along in East Precinct (May 31, 2014)
- South Seattle Crime Prevention Council Meeting (June 4, 2014)
- North Precinct Community Police Team Meeting (June 5, 2014)
- Muslim, Sikh and Arab and East African Joint Advisory Council Meeting (June 11, 2014)
- Meeting with Acting Captain Strand and Captain Proudfoot, South Precinct (June 27, 2014)
- African American Community Advisory Council Meeting (July 17, 2014)
- East Precinct Advisory Council Meeting (July 24, 2014)

Exhibit D: SPD Community Engagement Themes

1. Outreach to immigrant and refugee communities (e.g. education on how to use 9-1-1)
2. Staffing, deployment, and resource allocation (e.g. sector boundaries, special units, patrol)
3. Relationships with communities who have historically had troubled relationships with SPD (e.g. open and honest dialogue)
4. Multi-cultural awareness, understanding, and engagement
5. Recruitment of officers from underrepresented populations
6. Officer participation in community meetings (substance and frequency)
7. Strength/success of partnerships with other City agencies
8. External communications (e.g. media, community, individual-level, education, crisis/non-crisis, transparency)
9. Internal communications (e.g. consistency of messaging, training, crisis/non-crisis, transparency)
10. Program effectiveness