

Seattle
Community
Police Commission

Our city. Our safety.
Our police. Better together.

VIA EMAIL

May 20, 2019

Re: Community Service Officer (CSO) Program and Next Steps

Dear Chief Carmen Best,

On April 18, 2019, Community Police Commission (CPC) staff received documents related to the new Community Service Officer (CSO) program which included the Seattle Police Department (SPD) Report on CSO Program Development and Implementation. As described in the report, in the 2017-18 Biennial Budget, the Seattle City Council set aside funding for the CSO program development and implementation.

At that time, Council also set aside funds for the CPC to review whether and how the proposed interdepartmental team's purpose, goals, and objectives of the new CSO program help SPD to "build strong community relationships and sustainable dialogue with Seattle's diverse communities to ensure constitutional and bias-free policing, to closely interact with the community to resolve neighborhood problems, and to increase community confidence in the Department." In conversations with Councilmember Mike O'Brien's office, the CPC received clarification that the CPC's role would be to review the proposed CSO program design to assess how well it aligned with vision and desires of the community members that SPD engaged in conjunction with the Office for Civil Rights. In this effort, the CPC assigned a staff person to attend most of SPD's community engagements related to the CSO program during the summer of 2017.

We are very excited to hear that SPD is moving forward with implementing a new Community Service Officer unit. Unfortunately, the CPC was not afforded the opportunity to fulfill its role related to the CSO program revival as defined by Council. Over the last year, the CPC has made multiple attempts to reengage SPD regarding the CSO program design and implementation without success.¹

Notwithstanding the CPC's efforts, although the CSO program design is now complete and implementation of the program has begun, the CPC did not have the opportunity to play a meaningful role in assessing how well the program design fulfills the vision of the diverse communities of the City of Seattle and informing

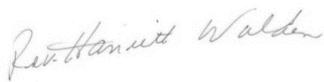
¹ Twice in March 2018, the CPC requested a presentation by SPD on the CSO program. On June 25, 2018, the CPC requested a status update on the project including the status of the program design. The CPC heard back on July 3 that the project was on hold. On November 28, 2018, the CPC contacted SPD inquiring about the CSO program design and implementation and did not receive a response. In early January, we requested that SPD attend a CPC committee meeting to discuss the CSO program. Finally, in April 2019, the CPC received SPD's CSO program report via email from the Mayor's Office.

implementation. In other words, the CPC did not have the opportunity to fulfill its role pursuant to Council Green Sheet No. 405-1-A-1. Going forward, the CPC seeks to reestablish lines of communication between the CPC and SPD. We request: the following:

- Moving forward, the CPC receive regular updates regarding the CSO program including details about program implementation and opportunities to check in around key milestones;
- SPD assign a CSO supervisor to the monthly Community Engagement System Partners meetings held in collaboration among the CPC, SPD, Office of Police Accountability (OPA), and Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at which they can provide updates regarding the CSO program and receive feedback;
- SPD formally collaborate with the CPC in analyzing the CSO program moving forward, including how well the program fulfills community needs, and that the CPC be invited to play a key role in conversations about making adjustments to the program in the future.

We appreciate your consideration and ask that SPD respond to each of our requests above by the end of this month.

Sincerely,



Rev. Harriett Walden, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Isaac Ruiz, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Emma Catague, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission

Cc:

Community Police Commission
Mayor Jenny Durkan
Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez
Councilmember Mike O'Brien
Assistant Chief Lesley Cordner, Seattle Police Department
Mark Baird, Chief Operating Officer, Seattle Police Department