



City of Seattle

Seattle Renters' Commission

Dinah Braccio & Jessica Westgren, Co-Chairs

June 11, 2020

Re: *SPD Actions*

Dear Honorable Mayor Jenny A. Durkan and Members of the Seattle City Council:

The Seattle Renters' Commission (the "SRC") stands in strong support of Black lives and all those protesting for structural changes to how policing is done in our society. We are appalled by the Seattle Police Department's use of tear gas and flashbang grenades on peaceful protesters. Their actions have been inexcusable. The Mayor's office is routinely minimizing and ignoring the harm the police continue to inflict upon the residents of this city. The lack of leadership from City Council is dangerous, at a time we need them to lead they have only passed a non-binding letter.

Police aggression is targeted at Black people and other communities of color and police presence is outsized in poorer neighborhoods. As such, police violence and aggression will always be directed more at renters than homeowners.

In addition, the police response to these protests highlight how government is designed to help property and property owners over the needs of others. Mayor Durkan lamented the "property damage" that occurs at some protests but not the protesters who are hurt by police brutality. The City deploys over \$360 million every year to fund the police, yet only \$79 million to address homelessness, or \$24 million for rental housing inspections, or \$69 million for affordable housing. Because renters own less than 3% the amount of property that homeowners do, policies that benefit property owners almost exclusively benefit homeowners. These policies represent huge amounts of public spending that go largely unchallenged in our society.

We call for shrinking the scope of police responsibility and reallocating significant funds to community and health programs who are better equipped to do this work. We must continue the Police Consent Decree, and call for an immediate and continuing civilian investigation into any and all reports of police violence in response to these important protests. Until violence is ended in our city and the public has a seat at the table, we demand that the Mayor and City Council halt all negotiations with the Seattle Police Union. Our police force is supposed to protect our residents, not silence and harm our people.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Seattle Renters' Commission

CC: Andres Mantilla, Director, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, 600 4th Ave, 4th Floor; PO Box 94649 Seattle, WA 98124-4649
Shaquan Smith, Staff Liaison: (206) 256-5944 or Shaquan.Smith@seattle.gov
Vera Njuguna, Staff Liaison: (206) 727-8683 or Vera.Njuguna@seattle.gov
seattle.gov/neighborhoods/seattle-renters-commission