

NEWS RELEASE

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**COMMUNITY POLICE COMMISSION ISSUES REPORT PROPOSING
ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO PUBLIC CONSUMPTION ISSUES LIKELY TO REDUCE
RACIAL DISPARITY IN ENFORCEMENT PATTERNS**

SEATTLE – The Community Police Commission (CPC) today released a report proposing an alternative approach to public consumption of alcohol and drugs, in light of the disproportionate impact of current enforcement patterns on African Americans and Native Americans.

The report was prepared pursuant to the Disparate Impact section of the Seattle Police Department's Bias Free Policing Policy, which was developed by the CPC in partnership with SPD in 2013. This policy, unique in the country, commits SPD to work to find alternative approaches to enforcement areas characterized by a high degree of racial disparity, when alternatives can be identified that do not compromise public safety. The CPC report, on which SPD cooperated as provided in the Bias-Free Policing Policy, does not find any wrongdoing in existing enforcement patterns; that was not the framework in which the work was undertaken. Rather, the joint effort by the CPC and SPD was to identify areas in which alternative approaches might meet community expectations and legitimate public safety and order needs equally well or better than existing enforcement approaches – even if existing approaches are legal and could be justified.

Civil citations for public consumption of alcohol and marijuana were concentrated in the West Precinct (downtown) and to a significant degree on African Americans and Native Americans. The CPC, in cooperation with SPD, interviewed police officers, neighborhood leaders and human services providers, and found significant interest in moving toward a public health paradigm which deals with the legitimate public safety and order concerns about public drug and alcohol use, without stigmatizing and punishing that behavior. The report thus explores options for supervised, regulated public consumption of these substances, in a context where individuals can be connected to health services and other support.

The CPC adopted the report and its recommendations unanimously.

[To read the full report, click here.](http://www.seattle.gov/community-police-commission) To learn more about the Community Police Commission, please visit www.seattle.gov/community-police-commission.

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