A New Philosophy of Policing

Preventing Crime in the City of Seattle

A Policy Essay by Councilmember Tim Burgess
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ABSTRACT

The City of Seattle should embrace a new philosophy of policing to prevent more crime and, thereby, significantly increase the public's trust and confidence in the quality and professionalism of our officers and the legitimacy of their actions. This new philosophy should focus on the policing of those micro-places where crime is concentrated and anchored; focus significant resources on persistent, high frequency offenders; introduce science-driven and evidence-based strategies to prevent crime, especially street crime and disorder; enhance increase crime tracking, data mining and analysis capabilities; restore the value placed on the generalist first-responder police officer; change how officers are selected, trained, managed and supervised to ensure the values and foundational principles of Constitutional policing and restorative justice are practiced; and, implement a problem-oriented policing model throughout the Police Department that views members of the community as valued and strategic partners in preventing crime.

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My tenure as chair of the City Council's public safety committee comes to an end later today. Over the last four years, my colleagues and I have increased the number of officers on our police force, increased civilian oversight of police conduct by giving more authority to the independent civilian auditor of the Police Department's Office of Professional Accountability,[1] created laws to abate chronic nuisance properties where crime flourishes,[2] increased penalties for individuals exploiting young girls and women through coercive prostitution, and recommended 11 specific Police Department reforms designed to increase public trust and confidence in our police officers.[3] Despite these good steps, we can do more to enhance our police services and prevent crime.

I've written this essay to reflect on what I've learned and to suggest additional steps we might take to make our city safer. I believe we can dramatically improve relationships between the police and the public, especially in neighborhoods with high poverty and in communities of color, and increase the Police Department's capabilities to further reduce crime.

What I write here reflects my personal opinions shaped by interactions with police officers and people across Seattle who want to live, work and play in safe neighborhoods and want their police to be present, engaged, professional and effective in their work. I've also reviewed the literature on policing and criminology and gleaned important facts and perspective about new science-driven, evidence-based policing strategies being implemented in other cities.

I hope these suggestions will lead to fundamental and sustainable changes in how we police our city. We all have a stake in the success of our Police Department and our officers.

While the reforms I'm suggesting stand apart from the United States Department of Justice's report on leadership, management and supervision in our Police Department, the changes I'm recommending should be pursued irrespective of that process. After all, improving the Police Department's ability to effectively prevent crime will go a long way in strengthening police-community relationships and restoring the public's trust and confidence.

On a more personal note, I served as a Seattle police officer and detective in the 1970s. I joined the Police Department in 1971; it was a turbulent time. Federal and King County grand juries had investigated corruption in City government; police commanders and officers had been convicted of public corruption offenses; prosecutors identified City Council members as "unindicted co-conspirators" with the cabal that organized and managed the corruption enterprise.

My point in sharing this history is to remind ourselves that successful and sustainable reform is possible. Back then, the citizens of Seattle, newly elected officials, and police officers, detectives, and commanders throughout the Police Department stood up and challenged the pervasive corruption. The reforms introduced then took root and held because of the public's demand for ethical government and because of hundreds of Police Department employees—officers and civilians—who finally caught a glimpse of what was possible when the enablers of corruption were forced out. We have never experienced that kind of systemic public corruption in our City government since those days.

I'm confident that the overwhelming majority of the members of our Police Department serving us today have the same deep and abiding desire for ethical, professional and effective policing. These are the women and men I want to serve, recognize and

reward. They are the ones who can lead today's reform movement. They are the voices we should listen for very carefully.

Facts About Crime Rates

I want to begin with an overview of crime in the United States and Seattle. This detail is important because it is too easy to be lulled into a false sense of accomplishment when it comes to crime statistics.

Many discussions about crime are not productive because we don't rely on the right information when assessing the problem. I've listened to citizens in numerous community meetings complain bitterly about crime, then heard police commanders cite the latest drop in crime statistics and declare that Seattle "is a very safe city." Citizens are left frustrated and confused, even feeling that the police are minimizing their concerns.

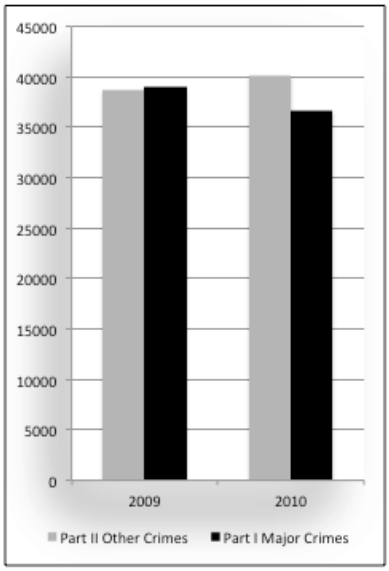
To be clear, the frequency rates of the seven closely watched and publicly reported major crimes—homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny and vehicle theft—have indeed plunged across the United States and in Seattle.[4] At the end of 2010, violent crime had declined nationwide for four consecutive years and property crimes for the eighth straight year; the nationwide decline continued in 2011 through June. This is all good news.

In Seattle, these seven major crimes fell 15% between 2001 and 2010, with violent crimes falling 9% and property crimes down 15%. Through October 2011, major crime is down 5% compared to the same period in 2010, although violent crime increased 3% due to a surge in rape and aggravated assault.[5]

Further, the frequency of major crimes we experience today is substantially lower than what we saw in the 1970s and 1980s, nationally and in Seattle. When it comes to the seven major crimes that are closely tracked and reported, we have experienced many years of good reports.

But, our understanding of crime and its impact on our neighborhoods is seriously incomplete if we rely only on FBI and Seattle Police Department reports about major crimes because there is another category of crime that is rarely publicly reported and rarely discussed. These so-called *less serious crimes* include all drug trafficking and use violations, non-aggravated assault, petty theft, vandalism, property damage, prostitution, liquor violations, graffiti and many others.

In 2010, these *less serious* crimes were reported in Seattle *more frequently* than the seven major crimes. There were 36,703 major crimes and 40,145 lesser crimes reported to Seattle police in 2010, a total of 76,848 criminal offenses.



A complete picture of crime in our city requires examination of both major and less serious crimes *together*, something we don't adequately do.

Why is this important?

City Council offices receive many complaints about crime, including the ostensible lesser crimes. We hear regularly from residents and shop owners in the University District, parts of Rainier Valley, Pioneer Square, the Chinatown/International District, Belltown, and throughout the downtown core about blatant drug trafficking and use, car break-ins, petty theft, graffiti, intoxicated and aggressive persons and other incidents. We also hear deep concerns about shootings and other aggravated assaults and robbery.

Residents and small business owners in these neighborhoods are dismayed that crime seems so persistent and intractable. They are frustrated, angry and pleading for help. Many believe that city officials

have given up and allowed the environment in their neighborhoods to deteriorate to dangerous levels. Their concerns are focused on crimes that are highly visible and disruptive, damage the tranquility of neighborhoods and create an atmosphere of fear—whether the danger is real or perceived.

I don't believe anyone in city government has given up, turned a blind eye, or failed to care about these problems. **Yet, there is hesitancy and a pervasive uncertainty about how to respond, along with a destabilizing lack of clarity about the extremely damaging impact street crime and disorder has in these neighborhoods. This mindset has blocked the kind of strategic, integrated and sustainable responses needed to cure the problem.**

To be sure, persistent street crime and disorder—whether classified as major or less serious—is corrosive on neighborhoods, particularly small business districts struggling in the current economy.

Further, our focus on citywide crime figures, and our failure to closely examine the incidence and pattern of *all* offenses, leads to a failure to recognize and do something about significant spikes in crime in some neighborhoods.

Geographically Concentrated and Anchored Crime

The longest longitudinal study of crime ever done in the United States was focused right here in Seattle. Professor David Weisburd, director of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University, reviewed 16 years of Seattle crime data from 1989 to 2004.[6]

Weisburd found that while crime generally declined citywide during the study period, there were increases in crime that averaged as much as 93% at specific places in the city. In fact, the researchers documented these crime spikes at 1,124 out of 24,023 city street segments.[7]

Weisburd and his team also found that half of all reported crime incidents in Seattle occurred at 4.2% to 6.7% of the city's street segments. Even more telling, the study found that just 1% of Seattle's street segments—247 segments or micro-places—accounted for fully 22% of all crime in the city during this 16-year period.[8]

The researchers also found that, contrary to conventional wisdom, crime doesn't easily move from one place to another; it's anchored at specific places. Weisburd explains:

> *Our finding that crime is not only strongly concentrated at crime hot spots, but that such concentrations are relatively stable over the course of our study, provides strong support for the view that crime is tightly coupled to place . . . [T]here are characteristics of places that make them more or less attractive to crime, or more or less resistant to crime problems . . .[C]rime will not move easily around the city because only certain places are conducive for the emergence or development of crime problems.*

We make a big mistake when we focus only on citywide crime stats, ignoring spikes in major or less serious crime in some neighborhoods. Police officers and their commanders fail, too, when they don't conduct the deep and sophisticated crime analysis needed to connect the dots about crime and its negative impact on neighborhoods. This can lead to lost opportunities to prevent crime, ineffective deployment of officers, failure to hold offenders accountable, and increased public dissatisfaction with police services.

The Weisburd longitudinal study of Seattle crime shows us that—

- **By focusing on citywide or large area (such as police precincts or entire neighborhoods) crime rates and trends, we may miss the fact that significant increases in crime—major or less serious crime—is occurring in some parts of the city even as overall crimes rates fall.**

- **A very high percentage of all crime in Seattle occurs at specific places—so-called "hot spots" or micro-places—and these places don't materially change over time. Crime in Seattle is geographically concentrated and anchored.**

The implications of these findings are significant—

- It's not enough to be satisfied with a falling rate of major crimes. **We must pay attention both to major *and* less serious crimes and their direct and highly visible impact on the quality of life at the places where those crimes are occurring.**

- Citywide crime statistics can be misleading and distract police and policy makers from focusing resources on the places where crime is happening. **Police problem-solving efforts need to be concentrated at the micro-places where most crime occurs and on the offenders committing those crimes.**

The evidence that most crime in Seattle is concentrated, persistent and anchored at specific micro-places requires a reexamination of how we police the city, what resources are required, and the policy directions we give our Police Department. So what should we do?

Recommendations

1 We should adopt a new orientation to policing that focuses on problem places, those micro locations spread across the city where crime is concentrated and anchored. In essence, we should embrace a shift away from the general policing of people to the policing of place and the high frequency offenders operating at those locations.[9]

American policing has traditionally focused on crime suspects, a people-oriented approach that involves identifying and capturing the "bad guys." For police officers, it's a contest of "cops and robbers." For offenders, it's all about avoiding detection.

This "policing of people" approach has pluses and minuses. When successful, offenders are held accountable for their behavior and, at least in theory, the community is made whole. On the flip side, the "policing of people" is less effective than we would like. Most offenders go undetected. Across the country in cities with populations similar to Seattle's, only 39.5% of major violent crimes and 12.8% of major property crimes are "solved" by an arrest.[10]

"Policing of people" is also inefficient because there are thousands of offenders. In fact, there are many more offenders committing crime each year in Seattle than there are micro-places where most crime is concentrated. Remember, about half of all reported crime during this 16-year period occurred at only about 1,500 out of 24,023 citywide street segments. **Crime locations are more stable and more easily identified than are the thousands of individuals committing crime. The policing of place makes sense in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.**

In addition, as I am coming to understand better, the traditional "policing of people" approach sparks resistance—particularly in areas of high poverty and in communities of color—where conflict with the police is deeply rooted after decades of mistrust and weariness over persistent crime, disorder, and police misconduct and corruption. Because of this, the relationship between police and communities of color is often profoundly troubled and understandably so.

Following the Civil War, slavery continued in parts of the American south until World War II through the enforcement of vagrancy and loitering laws that swelled jail populations that could then be exploited by unscrupulous companies seeking cheap labor. The police, in essence, became agents of these companies.[11]

Then, after World War II, the police continued as enforcers of Jim Crow laws and practices designed to keep African Americans "in their place." During the civil rights era from the 1950s through the 1970s, it was the police who "enforced the law" and restored order, often in terribly brutal ways. This history carries deep implications for contemporary views about the legitimacy of police actions. Add more recent instances of police misconduct related to use of force and discriminatory policing, and the mass incarceration of young men of color in this country since the late 1970s,[12] and one can understand why the legitimacy of the police—their presence *and* their actions—is often questioned.

The history I've cited here is specific to the African American community, but ambivalence towards the

police is also present in other communities. Police strategies focused solely on policing people creates an ever-present tension, a potential for conflict that interferes with effective crime prevention.

A shift to the policing of place allows the community and police to come together in common cause. It moves the police worldview from fighting crime (a "catching the bad guys" orientation) to preventing crime. Police strategies move from *reacting* to crime that has already occurred to proactive problem solving in collaboration with the community that keeps neighborhoods safe from crime *before* it happens.

Seattle police have taken some preliminary steps in this direction. The Seattle City Auditor's report "Addressing Crime and Disorder in Seattle's 'Hot Spots': What Works?" tells of the innovative 2010 initiative called "A Safer Union":

> *In October 2010, in a nascent pilot effort in hot spot policing, the Seattle Police Department approached Clean and Green officials about organizing a community cleanup event at an intersection (23rd and East Union Street) that has had a 30-year history of open-air drug dealing . . . With support from the leadership in Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Public Utilities, Clean and Green agreed to take on this effort . . . The Seattle Police Department and Clean and Green then partnered with property owners, neighbors, local non-profits, the Washington State Department of Corrections, and the City's Community Court program in efforts to reduce the physical disorder at the intersection and improve its appearance. The Seattle Police Department requested and participated in the development of a Community Appearance Index for the intersection . . . [E]fforts around community appearance have resulted in better communication and organization among the intersection's property owners, and they have begun to explore options for redevelopment . . . [T]he Seattle Police Department reported that calls for service at that intersection went from an average of 30 per month to just nine in December 2010.*[13]

This initiative demonstrated what can be accomplished when police shift from a "policing people" to a "policing place" orientation. The community was deeply engaged and "bought in" to the effort, multiple city agencies and community members and organizations participated, and crime and disorder was reduced.

In 2009, the Council passed a new Chronic Nuisance Property ordinance designed to give the police a powerful new tool to stop crime at specific addresses. It was a "policing of place" response to properties where crime had flourished for years with devastating consequences for neighbors. The law has been used effectively to shut down infamous Aurora Avenue motels and "drug houses" around the city. It is so effective that property owners quickly take the steps necessary to stop criminal activity, often well before the City enforces formal sanctions.

The policing of place also provides significant benefits beyond crime prevention. It can improve police-community relationships because officers are engaged with the community to uncover the underlying conditions that give rise to crime and allows an array of specific responses that almost always involve non-police interventions, such as physical environment clean ups, new street lighting, small business assistance, economic development and human services, to name a few.

The policing of place has the added benefit of bringing together and invigorating the so-called "natural guardians" who live and work in and around high crime micro-places. These are the residents, shop owners and workers, students and others who are physically present and living with the crime happening around them. Their active partnership with the police is an essential element of successful crime prevention.

If this all sounds so wonderful, why haven't we done it already? Frankly, it's not easy, especially for the police.

According to Weisburd and Harvard criminologist Anthony Braga:

> *. . . the police have not really taken full advantage of this approach in reforming the way they work or the organization of policing.*

The authors go on to counsel:

It will demand radical changes in data collection in policing, in the organization of police activities, and particularly in the overall worldview of the police. It remains true today that police officers see the key work of policing as catching criminals. It is time to change that worldview so that police understand that the key to crime prevention is in ameliorating crime at place.[14]

It is vital that we shift to the "policing of place" in order to effectively prevent crime and to achieve positive community outcomes, especially in a time of limited resources.[15] The empirical evidence in support of such an approach is clear from myriad studies, including Weisburd's extensive study of crime concentration in Seattle.

2 **While shifting to the policing of place, we should also increase the attention paid to persistent, high frequency offenders who commit a hugely disproportionate amount of crime in our city. Focused intervention strategies are necessary to identify, arrest and prosecute these high frequency offenders which gets them off the street and puts a stop to their harmful behavior.**

Last summer, police officers in the Belltown neighborhood compiled the criminal histories of high frequency offenders they regularly encounter. They found 54 individuals with a combined total of over 2,700 lifetime arrests, an average of 50 per person. These individuals had 877 convictions for felonies and misdemeanors, an average of 16.2 per person, for everything from murder, rape and robbery to burglary, child molestation, drugs and theft. These are high frequency offenders, without doubt. The destructive harm they cause our neighborhoods is staggering.

There are specific crimes—both felonies and misdemeanors—involving high frequency offenders that follow identifiable patterns and have predictive characteristics. These crimes and offenders should receive increased special attention from police and prosecutors because of the magnitude of the harm they cause and because proactive and keenly focused policing can prevent them from occurring. These crimes include robbery, street drug trafficking, coercive prostitution, residential burglary, auto theft, elder abuse and domestic violence, to name a few.[16]

Suggesting that high frequency offenders receive focused attention from police and prosecutors sometimes prompts objection, especially if the presenting crimes are misdemeanors or the offender has drug, alcohol or mental health challenges. Such objections may be appropriate in cases where the offender is willing to accept help to address the underlying problems while remaining crime free.

There is clearly a place for alternatives to jail and other criminal justice diversion programs. I've joined my Council colleagues in repeatedly voting to fund such programs because they can benefit those who are eager to change and actively seek help. **However, if offenders reject such services or fail to complete the requirements of a diversion program and continue to commit crimes, they need to be held accountable. To ignore or excuse their damaging behavior allows street crime and disorder to flourish, which is what we are experiencing today in some of our neighborhoods.**

In fact, ignoring or excusing criminal behavior is damaging to many offenders since we now have solid evidence that their criminal behavior can be stopped, to their benefit and our collective benefit. The challenge is to change what the offender believes will occur by creating sanctions that are certain and swiftly applied, but not necessarily severe. In other words, we can effectively help offenders by altering their understanding of behavioral norms.

The state of Hawaii has done exactly this with their highly successful Hawaii Opportunity Probation Enforcement (HOPE) program. The results are impressive—positive drug tests reduced by 86%, missed probation appointments reduced by 80%, revocations of probation reduced by more than 50%, arrests for new crimes reduced by more than 50%. Hawaii's program is based on the certain and swift sanctions model to change behavior. It works, even among difficult populations such as methamphetamine abusers and domestic violence offenders.[17]

An innovative pilot program based on HOPE is underway in Seattle in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Corrections. Early

indications point to success. The lead evaluator of the Seattle pilot presented a preliminary report to the Council on December 17, 2011.[18] Offenders in the Seattle program are so far two-thirds less likely to test positive for drug use compared to a control group. If the preliminary results are sustained over time, Seattle's program will confirm Hawaii's experience that certain and swift sanctions, but not necessarily severe ones, are effective in changing norms of behavior and preventing crime.

The evidence is strong that setting clear expectations of behavior and reinforcing those expectations with swift and certain sanctions leads to modified behavior by crime offenders that, in turn, leads to less crime.[19]

In summary, moving to a new philosophy of policing that focuses on specific places where crime is concentrated and anchored is not easy. It will require fundamental changes in how we manage our police resources, how we select and train our officers, how we reward and promote officers, and the tools and resources we provide to the Police Department.

Focusing on persistent, high frequency offenders is also essential to preventing crime, restoring neighborhoods where crime has been concentrated for years and helping these offenders stop their criminal behaviors and setting them on a new life course.

Inquiry and Innovation

Other cities, in particular New York City, have proven false the widely held belief that a certain level of crime is normal and should be tolerated in large metropolitan cities. Their experience demonstrates that we can reduce crime and street disorder by adopting a combination of smart policing and community-driven responses. But doing so will require changing the practices and culture of our Police Department.

Here are additional reforms that will support these changes and improve our ability to prevent crime, recognize and honor the good work our officers do day in and day out, and restore the public's trust and confidence in Seattle's police services.

3 We must create a culture of inquiry and innovation in the Police Department that is founded on scientific principles of evidence-based crime prevention.

Why? Because we can—if we want to do so—dramatically reduce crime even more than we already have throughout Seattle. New York City has already done it.

The frequency rate of *major* crimes declined a stunning 40% across the country during the 1990s. It was the largest documented crime decline of the 20th century.

What happened in New York City is more stunning. Since 1991 major crime in the Big Apple has dropped nearly 80%—a decline twice as large as the national experience and a decline that has been sustained twice as long.

Criminologist Franklin Zimring has documented New York's phenomenal accomplishment in crime prevention in the book, *The City That Became Safe: New York's Lessons for Urban Crime and Its Control*: "With no major changes in population, culture, or economy, more than four-fifths of homicides, robberies, burglaries, and auto thefts recorded in 1990 were not recorded in 2009 (in New York City)."[20]

The table below shows that Seattle also saw a huge decline, but not as much as New York City. Why? What happened in New York City to create such a huge decline in major crimes? How did New York City achieve a lower per capita rate of both major violent and major property crime than Seattle?

Part I Major Crime Rates per 100,000 Population			
	1991 Violent Crime	2009 Violent Crime	Percent Difference
Seattle	1,356.3	640.8	-52.8%
New York City	2,318.2	551.8	-76.2%
	1991 Property Crime	2009 Property Crime	Percent Difference
Seattle	10,891.3	5,823.8	-46.5%
New York City	6,917.9	1,690.3	-75.6%

Zimring concludes that new policing strategies and tactics caused much of the decline: "There was simply nothing else spread over the four major boroughs . . . in population, incarceration, economics, or education—that would provide the city a big advantage in crime reduction over other major cities."

According to Zimring, New York police adopted five primary strategies to reduce crime: (1) sophisticated analysis of crime data to determine "hot spots" where and when crime was occurring, (2) specific strategies and tactics to prevent crime at these problem places, (3) changes in police management practices that increased accountability for crime reduction down to the precinct and street officer level, (4) harm reduction efforts that focused on open-air drug markets and high-frequency offenders, and (5) an increase in the number of police officers on the street.

Zimring argues that one of the most important lessons of New York City's "march toward safety" is that offenders are "more malleable and criminal events are easier to prevent than the conventional wisdom" recognizes. He rejects the long held belief that crime is a predictable and expected part of urban life. Zimring argues that the great majority of street crimes are "not a necessary part of modern big cities in the United States." Crime is not an "incurable urban disease," he asserts.

Bundle together the research findings of leading criminologists and policing experts like Zimring, Weisburd, Braga, and David Kennedy, the father of the Drug Market Initiative that Seattle used effectively to stop a decades-long drug market along 23rd Avenue in the Central District, and the police have a plethora of strategies and tactics to reduce crime in Seattle. All of their research points to the importance of a science-based approach to policing—evaluating data, applying evidence and pursuing new approaches.

A culture of inquiry and innovation is one that rewards critical thinking, isn't afraid of tough, challenging questions, welcomes new ideas and different approaches, embraces science and best-practice evidence, relies on facts and data-driven analysis, insists on strong performance measurement and accountability, admits failures and errors and celebrates success.

It is also true that the police can't do it alone. It is incumbent on elected officials—the Mayor, City Council members, and the City Attorney—to lend an active and supporting hand by providing leadership, by requiring reform tied directly to crime prevention and increased accountability, and by providing the resources necessary for a fundamental shift in our philosophy of policing.[21]

A first step is insisting on a culture of inquiry and innovation inside our Police Department, then providing the resources necessary to make it happen.

4 **We should increase the Police Department's science-driven capabilities so decisions about officer deployments and crime prevention strategies are based on facts and in-depth analysis, including predictive modeling.** Place-based and high frequency offender policing requires a level of sophisticated data mining and analysis that Seattle doesn't have. Seattle needs to adopt the advanced crime analysis, mapping, targeting and predictive modeling systems and employ the highly skilled statistical analysts that effective police departments around the country have embraced.

Over the past year or so, the City Auditor's staff and my office worked closely with the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy to develop a strategic partnership to bring a stronger focus in Seattle on the science of policing. A promising side benefit of these efforts has been the creation of an informal consortium of cities—**Baltimore, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Seattle**—which are joining together to

collaborate on testing and implementing evidence-based policing. This coordinated, multi-city planning and testing effort will also significantly increase the potential for federal government and private foundation funding for policing innovations.

5 In shifting to the policing of place and an increased focus on high frequency offenders, it is essential that the Police Department fully embrace "problem-oriented policing."

Problem-oriented policing is fundamentally different from traditional American policing that is focused on catching the bad guys, a reactive response to crime.

Braga and Weisburd put it this way:

> *Criminal opportunities attract offenders to crime hot spot locations. The underlying conditions, situations, and dynamics generate an opportunity structure at specific places that produces and sustains an elevated rate of criminal and disorderly behavior. There are numerous ways police can address the problems at crime hot spots. As the Minneapolis Hot Spots Patrol experiment suggests, simply increasing patrol presence in hot spot area can generate modest crime prevention gains. Unfortunately, such one-dimensional strategies do little to change the attributes of a place that cause it to be a hot spot for crime. The presence of a patrol car may deter criminals and disorderly persons in the short run, but the problems of the place still remain when the car moves out of the area. To reduce and better manage problems at crime hot spots, the police need to change the underlying conditions, situations, and dynamics that make them attractive to criminals and disorderly persons.*

Problem-oriented policing is a proactive effort, in partnership with community members, to identify specific problems that contribute to or encourage crime—even those outside the typical scope of police engagement. It's a partnership effort to identify those signals, conditions and people contributing to crime and then crafting appropriate solutions. It requires partnering with the "natural guardians" who live, work, play, study or visit at those places. It also requires broad coordination across various City government departments and services to deliver specific solution-oriented interventions. It requires careful and deep assessment of problems and then careful responses, some of which may be outside of traditional police interventions.

The phrase "problem-oriented policing" correctly suggests to officers that their work is about identifying problems that are contributing to crime and that the police response is one part of the solution, not the only solution. This is an important distinction because one of the most important cultural reforms needed in policing today is how officers perceive their mission and work tasks.

A police officer who understands their role as more than just "catching the bad guys"—as important as that very well might be—is an officer who is willing to engage in community partnerships and embrace a wide array of crime prevention efforts. That is why targeted recruitment, selection and training of officers are crucial to successful reform efforts.[22]

6 We should change how we select, train, motivate, supervise, reward and promote our police officers. Policing today requires extensive knowledge of human psychology and skills in crisis intervention, de-escalation, problem identification and problem solving.

Police officers must also understand and embrace as never before the values that underpin police services, not only values that seek to uphold the Constitution and other laws, but also values that contribute to effective restorative justice and build the legitimacy of policing.

A much greater emphasis needs to be placed on the new skill set—a combination of fundamental values and specific work capabilities—required of today's professional and effective police officers at the time they are hired, as well as in how we manage, reward, and promote them.

Performance evaluations and promotions should be tied to crime prevention or crime solving outcomes and effectiveness in problem-oriented policing, not simply job tenure. Civil Service promotion testing should measure an officer's ability to embrace and use this new skill set, rather than memorization of facts and

procedures. The change in worldview that we need our police to make won't happen unless we challenge and adjust the mechanisms used to select, train, manage, reward and promote them.

7 **Let us re-embrace the concept of the generalist police officer who is supported by specialized units.** Specialized units have proliferated in recent years and this has diminished the central role of the uniformed first-responder officer. Our creation of "community police" officers is one example of this phenomenon. Unfortunately, placing "community policing" responsibilities within a separate unit or with a specific officer signals that this function is not every officer's responsibility. This is wrongheaded. Problem-oriented policing must proactively engage the entire community and must permeate the entire police organization if it is going to be effective. It cannot be delegated to a few.

8 **Civilian employees may be better trained and have better experience to help the Police Department achieve its mission and provide needed services in certain specialized areas.** There are jobs in the Police Department that don't require the authority to arrest. For example, some cities employ highly trained and skilled civilians as forensic evidence technicians. Others hire civilian crime analysts because they have critical statistical and analytical training and experience. Job requirements and qualifications should be tailored to the work needed and we should hire the best qualified candidate—police officer or civilian.

Recognizing the importance of hiring flexibility is critical to implement sustainable reforms in the Police Department, especially as we move toward more science-driven and evidence-based policing.

9 **The unions that represent our police officers should be invited to be active participants in moving these reforms forward.** These reforms, especially the correct implementation of problem-oriented policing and geographically-focused policing, have failed in other cities when officers and their representatives have not been part of the planning and implementation process.

Another common error is the formation of a special unit or team to carry out the reforms, as if the reforms themselves are yet another specialized response to a unique challenge, which, of course, they are not.

I suspect that the police unions, along with officers who have been around for a while, are tired of the recent history of repeated cycle of reform efforts we have been through in Seattle. In 1991, 1999, 2002, and again in 2007 and 2008, the City has attempted reform of accountability rules, procedures and protocols, including two blue ribbon citizen panels in 1999 and 2007. This cyclical pattern demonstrates that we must do more than change a few rules or processes if we are serious about improving police effectiveness and restoring the public's trust and confidence.

Conclusion

It is time we undertook deep, fundamental reform of what the police do and how they do it. Only when we dig deep and turn this soil will we achieve the progress we desire. I believe the officers and civilian employees of the Police Department are ready for this challenge and will rise to the occasion with enthusiasm.

This work will not be easy because it represents a fundamental change in how we approach policing. But, if we are serious about wanting a safer city and we truly want to honor and reward our officers who do very good work, and if we want to restore the public's trust and confidence in our Police Department, these steps are essential.[23]

City government resources are limited and we face additional budget reductions for the next few years. This is precisely the time to reset our philosophy of policing and realign our resources to prevent crime and make our neighborhoods safer, especially in those areas of Seattle that have suffered for decades with persistent and harmful concentrations of crime.

There is no better time to start the reform process than right now. When we do, we will reap huge benefits in crime prevention, enhanced police effectiveness, improved police-community relationships, and restored public trust and confidence in the legitimacy of our policing efforts.

Equally important, the women and men of the Seattle Police Department—officers and civilian employees—will benefit from an end to the continuing cycle of attempted reform that goes back two decades. They will be able to focus on the work we hired them to do in the first place—policing our good city for the benefit of all.

Endnotes

[1] In July 2008, the City Council unanimously amended existing sections of the Seattle Municipal Code to give the independent civilian auditor of the Police Department's Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) enhanced authority to review any and all OPA records and case files, order investigations, review current investigations and direct further investigative work. The Council also gave the Director of the OPA authority to seek additional resources directly from the Council as necessary, effectively bypassing the Chief of Police if extra resources were needed to pursue the mission of OPA.

[2] In November 2009, the City Council unanimously adopted a new Chronic Nuisance Property ordinance giving the City government new authority to abate ongoing criminal activity at specific locations in the city. Property owners or managers are responsible under the terms of the ordinance to assist the police in abating crime. Financial penalties are imposed if owners or managers do not cooperate. The ordinance has been used effectively to stop criminal behavior that in some cases has been ongoing for years. Other jurisdictions have since adopted laws similar to Seattle's.

[3] On February 25, 2011, the Council's Public Safety and Education Committee sent the Mayor and Chief of Police a letter detailing 11 specific recommendations designed to build public trust and confidence in the Police Department.

[4] Officially, these *major crimes* are called Part I, or Index crimes, by the FBI and Department of Justice. Police agencies across the United States, including Seattle, voluntarily report details about these major crimes to the FBI. Review FBI crime reports and analysis here. All other crime offenses, so-called lesser crimes, are referred to as Part II crimes and are *not* routinely reported to the FBI.

[5] Seattle Police Department statistics about major crime are available for review here, including a 10-year trend analysis.

[6] Oxford University Press will publish a book about the longitudinal study of Seattle crime by Weisburd and co-authors Elizabeth R. Goff and Sue-Ming Yang later this year.

[7] The researchers defined "street segments" as both sides of a block between intersections.

[8] The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy has completed several reports on the geographic concentration of Seattle crime. The latest, ***Hot Spots of Juvenile Crime: Findings from Seattle,*** was released by the U. S. Department of Justice in October 2011.

[9] The policing of place, referred to sometimes as "hot spots policing" has some inherent risks and must be carefully implemented. For a discussion of these risks, see ***The Possible "Backfire" Effects of Hot Spots Policing: An Experimental Assessment of Impacts on Legitimacy, Fear and Collective Efficacy***.

[10] Interestingly, we don't know what the "solve" rate is for all of the other crimes—felonies and misdemeanors—being committed, a further reflection that the current assessment of crime and related factors is woefully inadequate for the proper management of police services. Specific details about crime clearance rates and trends is available at this Department of Justice website.

[11] This injustice is well documented in the book *Slavery By Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* by Douglas Blackmon. Doubleday, 2008.

[12] Michelle Alexander. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press, 2009.

[13] _____. *Addressing Crime and Disorder in Seattle's 'Hot Spots': What Works?* City of Seattle Auditor, 2011.

[14] Anthony Braga and David Weisburd. *Policing Problem Places: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention*. Oxford University Press, 2010. Page 31.

[15] Areas where crime is concentrated and anchored often receive *less* police attention than one might suspect. When police attention is paid to these micro-places it is often focused primarily on catching offenders. However, focusing on high frequency *victims* can also produce positive outcomes by understanding the patterns of victimization and developing self-protection strategies that will deter offenders from striking again. It is also true that bias and indifference can influence police deployments and interventions. Some parts of certain neighborhoods in Seattle have had decades of deeply rooted crime and disorder. For a deeper analysis of how the criminal justice system fails high crime neighborhoods, read former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens' review of the book, *Collapse of American Criminal Justice*, in the New York Review of Books.

[16] Elder abuse and domestic violence crimes are increasing in frequency and cause horrific harm. In the case of domestic violence offenders, we know that those with multiple arrests for DV-related crimes also have extensive criminal histories unrelated to domestic violence; focusing on these high frequency offenders can increase protection of DV victims and the general public.

[17] Hawaii's HOPE program has received extensive media attention, including this piece in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*. Angela Hawkin, a research scholar who has completed an evaluation of the HOPE program and is conducting an evaluation of Seattle's pilot program that is based on the HOPE model, prepared this summary of HOPE outcomes.

[18] Read Hawkin's preliminary report on Seattle's pilot project to the City Council's Public Safety and Education Committee on December 17, 2011.

[19] Mark Kleiman. *When Brute Force Fails: How to Have Less Crime and Less Punishment*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

[20] Franklin Zimring. *The City That Became Safe: New York's Lessons for Urban Crime and Its Control*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

[21] Joel B. Plant and Michael S. Scott. *Effective Policing and Crime Prevention: A Problem-Oriented Guide for Mayors, City Managers, and County Executives*. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, United States Department of Justice, 2009.

[22] **_____.** *Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder through Problem-Solving Partnerships, 2nd Edition*. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U. S. Department of Justice, 2011.

[23] As noted, effective reform of policing is difficult work requiring focused attention, dedication of sufficient resources, and strong political leadership. The U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, has published an assessment of what's necessary for a police organization to reform itself: *Making Police Reforms Endure: The Keys for Success.* The introduction of this paper begins with this assertion: "Police reforms seem to follow a pattern: Reforms are implemented; some are evaluated by independent researchers; but even in cases where there is evidence of success; it is not clear that reforms become a sustained departmental effort. Institutionalization of a police reform occurs when the reform becomes a way of regularly conducting police business. More specifically, institutionalization occurs when certain norms, values, and structures are incorporated into an organization."