

Alliance for Pioneer Square – Belltown Business Association – Broadway Business Improvement Area – Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce – Chinatown-ID Business Improvement Area – Downtown Seattle Association – Greater University Chamber of Commerce – Rainier Chamber of Commerce – Seattle Chinatown-ID Preservation & Development Authority – SODO Business Association – White Center Community Development Association

October 3, 2011

Seattle City Council
600 4th Avenue, Floor 2
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124

Dear Seattle City Councilmembers,

Seattle is a city of great neighborhoods, each boasting its own unique character and appeal. Business districts cluster at the center of each neighborhood and help define the local community and character. Our city's neighborhoods may vary greatly, yet we all struggle with some of the same ongoing issues of persistent public safety challenges. While major crime is down citywide, street disorder persists and continues to negatively impact our neighborhoods. Neighborhood businesses are closing and our neighbors feel unsafe on their own streets, citing open air drug dealing, public intoxication, graffiti and vandalism as chronic problems.

Communities and business districts are forming new partnerships, developing block-watches and clean-up programs, finding creative ways to activate vacant spaces and strengthening neighbor awareness around how best to report non-violent crimes. But this work simply cannot – and should not – replace smart public safety policy and sufficient police patrols.

The 2012 budget adoption is fast approaching, and while we are acutely aware of fiscal constraints brought about by this recession and necessary cost-cutting, we believe that the primary responsibility of municipal government is to ensure the safety and quality of life of residents citywide. This means an acknowledgement that moderate-level street crime is unacceptable in any neighborhood, that families shouldn't have to navigate through a crowd of inebriated loiterers on the sidewalk or pretend not to notice the exchange of drugs for money out in the open.

Seattle's population is expected to nearly double in the next 25 years, meaning greater densification of people and businesses. City policies must draw a line in the sand now about baseline public safety expectations for civic behavior and controlling crime in public, and decisions must be made by city leaders to distribute the resources needed to execute those policies. We cannot allow quality of life to continue to slip, particularly in difficult economic times. To that end, we believe the city must prioritize continued emphasis on the following public safety areas and we urge you to consider these issues as you review the 2012 City Budget:

- **Increase police foot and bike patrols and dedicated anti-crime teams.** Police hiring was suspended in 2010 and the number of officers in service is on the decline according to the most recent SPD staffing report. We urge you to resume police hiring and/or increase the number of officers in patrol by reallocating existing SPD resources.

- **Implement a pilot 'Hot Spots' program.** Last year, a study of police and crime data in Seattle showed most crime occurs in just a few locations. The study encourages location-based policing as a more effective strategy to fighting crime. Seattle should pilot this program, and expand pilots to new neighborhoods.
- **Officer Distribution.** Current distribution is largely based upon overall volume of calls to 911 operators, as well as length of call time. And, while response time is important, it doesn't capture the dynamic nature of much of the crime facing our neighborhood business districts. This methodology warrants review.
- **Legislative Tools for Arrest/Diversion.** Many of us hear that officers feel as though they do not have the legal tools to enforce uncivil behavior and other quality-of-life crimes. While the City Attorney has openly declared drug prosecution to be a very low priority, open-air drug markets flourish. Creative legislative policy is needed here; it is an unfair burden on businesses and residents to be forced to co-habit with blatant criminal activity.

Thank you for hearing our concerns, and we looking forward to working closely with you through this budget process and beyond to ensure that the city is meeting the needs of neighborhoods with sufficient public safety resources.

Sincerely,

Aileen Balahadia
Executive Director, White Center Community
Development Association

Don Blakeney
Executive Director, Chinatown-ID Business
Improvement Area

John Coney
Co-President, Uptown Alliance

Susan Davis
Director, Rainier Chamber of Commerce

Tim Gaydos
President, Belltown Business Association

Kate Joncas
President, Downtown Seattle Association

Teresa Lord Hugel
Executive Director, Greater University Chamber
of Commerce

Patti Mullen
CEO, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce

Mike Peringer
Executive Director, SODO Business Association

Leslie Smith
Executive Director, Alliance for Pioneer Square

Michael Wells
Executive Director, Capitol Hill Chamber of
Commerce & Broadway Business Improvement
Area

Maiko Winkler-Chin
Executive Director, Seattle Chinatown-ID
Preservation & Development Authority

CC: Mayor Michael McGinn