

## Questions/Responses from 8/18/2020 SW Precinct Crime Prevention Council

1. Is there an official criteria that distinguishes a protest from a riot? If one person in the crowd throws a water bottle, is it then a riot?

Washington State law (RCW [9A.84.010](#)) defines riot (the statute was renamed from “riot” to “criminal mischief” in 2014) as follows:

A person is guilty of the crime of criminal mischief if, acting with three or more other persons, he or she knowingly and unlawfully uses or threatens to use force, or in any way participates in the use of such force, against any other person or against property.

2. I recently made a 911 call that the dispatcher said would normally warrant a response, but an officer would not be sent and they would not collect any details about the call. Is this appropriate practice, and wouldn't this contribute to under-reporting?

From time to time, due to 911 call loads, insufficient staffing, and/or one or more large incidents requiring a large police response, some parts of the city (or the entire city) may be placed on “Priority Call Status,” where only life safety or in progress crimes are added to the queue to be dispatched when officers are available. Recently, due to the daily/nightly demonstrations, a portion of officers from each precinct who would otherwise be tasked with handling 911 calls have been assigned to the demonstrations. It is likely that when you called 911, we were on priority calls only status. When that occurs, calltakers are supposed to ask that you call back later, so your concern can be addressed. Other options that might be appropriate, depending on the situation, are making an [online police report](#), or calling the non-emergency number (206-625-5011) and asking to speak with an officer in the Telephone Report Unit (TRU) to make a report.

3. Have residential and commercial burglaries been moving in opposite directions?

Burglaries in the Southwest Precinct are down by 20% from last year. From what I can tell from the data, both residential and commercial burglaries are both down. SPD publishes a public-facing crime dashboard online that you can use to see crime rates in the city and in your neighborhood: <http://www.seattle.gov/police/information-and-data/crime-dashboard>.

4. So how much would you defund SPD, if not 50%?

In my opinion, it is a mistake to pick an arbitrary number as the goal for defunding the Seattle Police Department. I'm in favor of an analytical approach, whereby each of the functions of SPD is examined to determine its effectiveness and efficiency—and whether a suitable alternative exists to take over the performance of that function.

5. What do you see as a solution with hostile neighbors that have potential to injure.

Ideally, neighbors should get to know one another so if there is an issue that arises (noise, for example) they are in a position to talk to one another and resolve the issue. However, if you believe that your neighbor may pose a threat to your safety, I recommend speaking with Jennifer Danner—the Southwest

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Precinct's Crime Prevention Coordinator, who may be able to give you advise or refer you to appropriate resources. She can be reached at [Jennifer.danner@seattle.gov](mailto:Jennifer.danner@seattle.gov). Please call 911 if there is an in-progress event taking place.

6. First, thank you so much for serving and appreciate you doing what you do and hope or city can find a way for SPD to serve us better. Would love to see more SPD resources along Alki / Don Armeni / Hamilton Viewpoint / Seacrest Parks especially at night. Lots of cars racing, doing donuts, parties, fireworks, homeless, etc. on many nights. Know that many of my neighbors have these similar issues and would love to help make West Seattle safer and better.

Since arriving at the precinct in July, I have received many emails from residents concerned about the issues you describe on Alki. This has been my response:

In past years, SPD had the budget to have officers work emphasis patrols in certain designated areas--like Alki--on an overtime basis. Unfortunately, our budget no longer permits us to do that, and we must work with the available on duty resources.

I want to be transparent about SPD's current resource situation. It is not unusual to have a total of eight officers working in all of West Seattle at any given time--usually four on the west side and four on the east. And during our most busy times, all of those officers are literally running from 911 call to 911 call, based on priority. In July I had to make the difficult decision to eliminate the full-time bicycle squad in West Seattle and to incorporate the officers back into the 911 call response rotation. To add to the already challenging staffing situation, over half of the officers who work at night are regularly reassigned from their patrol assignments to the now-nightly demonstrations on Capitol Hill.

Recently I spoke with a frustrated resident who called the non-emergency number several times about some issues at the Don Armeni Boat Ramp, seemingly without a response. I did a little research to find that his call held for almost an hour because officers were busy responding to a rape, shots fired, threats to harm with a suspect on scene, a stolen car, and a stolen license plate. Once officers were finally free and able to respond, they arrived within 16 minutes of being dispatched.

Please continue to call 911 for emergencies, or the non-emergency number for all other complaints (206-625-5011), and officers will be dispatched according to priority and availability. I also encourage you to reach out to the Crime Prevention Coordinator assigned to the Southwest Precinct, Jennifer Danner ([jennifer.danner@seattle.gov](mailto:jennifer.danner@seattle.gov)), about crime prevention strategies. I also encourage you to join SPD in working with other city agencies--like SDOT and Parks--on problem-solving approaches (like the creation of Stay Healthy Streets) that may curb vehicle and pedestrian traffic that lead to other problems.

7. I understand this is probably a touchy question but I think an important one: Cpt. Grossman, how is your working relationship with Lisa Herbold? What is she doing to support the precinct?

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Upon my assignment to the Southwest Precinct, Councilmember Herbold reached out to me and requested a meeting; we met just last week and had a very positive and productive conversation about policing in West Seattle. I committed to working with her and to maintaining open lines of communication between us.

8. What is the % of arrest that lead to actual charges vs. just walking out after being arrested?

I do not know the actual percentage of arrests that lead to criminal charges being filed. However, I do know that there are several reasons that an arrest might not result in charges:

- The amount of evidence required for an arrest (“probable cause” to believe that a person committed a crime) is less than that required for a conviction (that a person committed a crime “beyond a reasonable doubt”). It’s not uncommon for a prosecutor to decline to file charges because of a belief that the higher standard cannot be proven in court.
  - A victim declines to participate in the investigation or prosecution; or that they participate in the investigation (e.g., by giving a statement to police) but decline to participate in the prosecution (e.g., by refusing to testify).
  - Here is a link to a site with some other reasons that an arrest may not result in criminal charges: <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/arrests-that-dont-result-criminal-charges.html>
9. The online crime reporting service seems outdated (7mb file limit for photos, no way to attach video or photos to some reports, etc). Also, online crime reporting does not cover lesser crimes like trespassing or general suspicious activity that people might not find worth calling in. Would SPD be open for reworking the online system?

The system that SPD uses for online crime reporting is called “Coplogic,” and it is a software application hosted by LexisNexis. If you have suggestions for how that system might be improved, please send them to SPD’s Chief Operating Officer, Mark Baird, at [mark.baird@seattle.gov](mailto:mark.baird@seattle.gov).