

**2020 BLUEPRINT FOR POLICE DIVESTMENT/COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT**  
*Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now*

The 2020 uprising in Defense of Black Lives has created an opening for immediate change to the way cities across the country generate public safety and well-being. While this moment has created the opening for long-overdue change, years of research, work, and lived experience by Black communities and other communities of color informs the detailed vision in this blueprint. A commitment to the urgent call to defend Black lives requires immediate cuts from the Seattle Police Department budget. The City must make a 180 degree turn away from its long-standing pattern of increasing the police budget, and instead immediately cut the budget to generate real public safety and health. Coupled with the reinvestments listed below, these cuts have the capacity to create transformative change in the city of Seattle to increase alignment with the City's stated commitments to racial and social justice.

The work to defund SPD and create true public safety and health will happen in phases. Phase one - the initial cuts and reinvestments listed below - will be facilitated by the 2020 budget rebalancing process the city of Seattle will complete by the first week of August 2020. This phase will be followed by deeper cuts to SPD's budget to come in the 2021 budget cycle, coupled with a participatory budgeting process that will allow the community to determine the direction of deeper investments to generate true public safety and health.

## **BLUEPRINT FOR DIVESTMENT**

To achieve immediate cuts to SPD's remaining 2020 budget, the City must reorganize the department to reduce its size, while reallocating its funds and positions to City departments and community organizations better suited to creating public safety and health. To be clear, these cuts would come from SPD's budget for the last four months of the year, and would be phased in during the last four months of 2020. Some of these cuts would come from fully eliminating SPD functions, some would come from transitioning functions out of SPD that should never have been under police control to begin with, and others will come from hiring freezes and reductions in staffing.

All cuts previously identified by Mayor Durkan (totalling 20 million) should be transferred to the reinvestments named in this blueprint. The divestments named below expand on these cuts.

Cuts could come from many places in SPD's bloated budget, and should include the following actions:

- Freeze hiring. Any planned hiring, including for individuals in the training pipeline, should be cancelled.
- Eliminate funds for recruitment and retention, including bonuses for new hires.
- Remove the Office of Collaborative Policing, including Navigation Team. While some programs of this office, along with their administrative infrastructure, should be eliminated altogether, others could be moved to a civilian-controlled city agency.
  - Eliminate: Navigation Team, Community Outreach Administration
- Transfer out of SPD control: Crisis Intervention Response, Community Service Officers
- Eliminate spending on new equipment
- Eliminate Data-driven policing
- Eliminate spending on North Precinct Capital Project
- Eliminate Professional Services -Including:
  - Photo Enforcement
  - Sworn Hiring in HR
  - Recruitment and Retention
  - Community Outreach
  - Implicit Bias Training
  - Communications
- Cut SPD's spending on Homeland Security (a misnamed unit that is mostly assigned to large events like Bumbershoot)
- Eliminate SWAT Team funding
- End contracts with private firms that defend SPD and the City against police misconduct lawsuits
- Eliminate SPD's travel and training budget
- End overtime pay, including for Emphasis Patrols
- Reduce patrol staffing, with corresponding reduction in administrative staffing
- Transfer 911 dispatch out of Seattle Police Department to civilian control.
- Transfer traffic/parking enforcement out of SPD control.
- Transfer Office of Police Accountability out of SPD control.
- Transfer Office of Emergency Management out of SPD control.

- Reduce administrative costs in line with the above cuts, including corresponding cuts to the office of the Chief of Police, Leadership and Administration, and Administrative Operations.

## **BLUEPRINT FOR PHASE 1 OF COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT**

### **1. Invest in Community-Led Research Process to Generate True Public Safety Informed by Community Needs**

Initial investments, funded by divestments from SPD's budget, should go to funding a 2020 summer/fall participatory research process that will be crucial to the task of reimagining a world built on a community vision for public safety and health. Policing and community safety are fundamentally racial justice issues, so a broad coalition of directly-impacted people of color *must* take the lead in shaping the solutions to creating sustained community safety beyond saturated policing. Seattle residents most directly impacted by police policies and practices have never been given the time and space to imagine responses beyond imperfect, inadequate, and violent police responses, and years of bloated police budgets have reflected consistent disinvestment in Black communities. This disinvestment has exacerbated racial inequities in Seattle. It has created less community safety and more harm for Black residents.

The community-led research process will inform the vision for a world where we shift away from our reliance on policing and move towards addressing root causes and unmet needs. A world where instead of being met with an armed officer who is more likely to kill BIPOC community members, people are instead met with support, services, and care so they can thrive. The community-led research is in itself a community safety measure.

City-wide dialogues about expanded notions of community safety will inform the roadmap City leaders need to move forward with further cuts to SPD's budget. The funding from the City to support the research will allow people who are most directly impacted by police contact and surveillance to systematically produce their *own* solutions to guide the City's next steps. Without community voice and leadership, any proposed solutions are likely to be short-sighted, incomplete, and actively harmful.

A portion of the research will be explicitly focused on defining community safety and offering specific recommendations and support to community organizations as they scale and build capacity. This may include providing analyses or projections that inform staffing or resource allocation as community organizations scale, and in turn will inform the 2021 budgeting process.

The research will also be exploring, testing, and evaluating different strategies to achieve safer communities. One strategy we will be exploring is increasing access to high speed internet and technology. While this was an acute need in our communities before Covid-19, we anticipate addressing this need will be critical to allowing community members to socially distance during a time where more BIPOC community members are becoming sick or dying from COVID-19. With schools, workplaces, and public services moving online, we are hearing strong concerns from our community that many are being left behind (especially for people who speak languages other than English, people with disabilities, and people without access to safe shelter). We are also hearing about the need to explore health that includes COVID-19 alongside other health concerns that disproportionately impact the BIPOC community. Our plan includes a deep exploration of how effective research and outreach can be done in this challenging context. Our recommendations and

evaluations are also anticipated outcomes from the Summer/Fall research. This will inform the 2021 budgeting process.

This community-led research process will transition into a 2021 Participatory Budgeting process for the Public Safety sections of the city budget. We envision most of the funds for these processes would come out of the police budget, though we recognize other City departments may contribute funds as well.

### **Values guiding Participatory Research Process:**

- Process must be community designed and controlled.
  - Trust is essential to collecting good data, and the City has a long track record of misusing this trust. In part because of the City's long track record of supporting harmful policies and procedures, many community members do not trust the City to lead an effective research process. The pattern of collecting data and recommendations and then doing little to nothing with the results must end. By supporting and funding a community-led research process, the City will tangibly address this legacy of using data to justify or ignore the harm done to communities.
- Process must provide tangible support for participants
  - As city officials are paid to plan for public safety, community members should not be expected to come up with solutions on a volunteer basis. Paying community members to be involved in this dialogue will offer income support to the communities most directly impacted by COVID-19 and the economic crisis. Funding should be provided immediately to source the staffing and support for this process to be successful. The scale of this work cannot be met with unpaid labor alone, especially when some community members must prioritize meeting their needs for food, shelter, and other basic needs during a global pandemic.

### **Research activities**

We anticipate the full community-led research process to be about 12% of the total funds received from our proposal, but our blueprint focuses on securing funding for the summer and fall activities immediately. Additional research investments would increase the number of organizations that can participate in this community-led participatory research. Research activities include funds to resolve community issues identified during the research (e.g., a need for more PPE), research analysis, and reporting activities.

Below are the overall research activities we would fund with an initial \$3M investment (see appendix for more details and estimated dollar amounts):

1. Staffing, training, administrative and technical support, and materials
2. COVID-related support
3. Removing institutional barriers
4. Data collection and analysis
5. Data reporting and presentations

### **Criteria for Organizations Receiving Funding:**

The organizations to be funded must not have a financial conflict of interest with police departments. Funded organizations would share some of the following characteristics:

1. BIPOC-leadership, particularly with youth leaders or a youth advisory council
2. Experience with people who have first-hand experience with policing systems
3. Experience with Black youth
4. Experience with centering the experiences of BIPOC people who are LGBTQ+
5. Experience working with BIPOC youth in culturally-responsive ways that promote youth leadership
6. Experience with people who are overrepresented in juvenile justice system, foster care, or people who are experiencing homelessness
7. Experience with people with disabilities

**Timeline:**

July - December 2020:

1. King County Equity Now and community members start preliminary research to test accessible language and expand support for the summer/fall research (on-going)
2. Preliminary work plan and selection of participating organizations, in partnership with community members
3. Participating organizations announced (additional organizations may be added on a rolling basis)
4. Disburse funding
5. Finalize hiring
6. Deliver research skills training workshops for youth researchers, adult research, and support staff
7. Update work plan based on participants' research goals and preliminary needs assessment
8. Implement initial round of research to test participatory budgeting accessibility considerations, as well as community-led research on what health and safety actually means, including (but not limited to) alternatives to policing
9. Complete regular and ongoing community report backs to share preliminary findings as the project continues. Assess community needs and resolve urgent issues.
10. Implement additional round(s) of research to test participatory budgeting accessibility considerations, and equity-centered participatory budgeting process
11. Continue community-led research on what health and safety actually means, including (but not limited to) alternatives to policing
12. Complete regular community report backs, and share additional findings. Assess for community needs and resolve urgent issues. Update reports based on community feedback
13. Share road map for how to engage in an accessible and equity-centered 2021-2022 participatory budgeting process.

## **2. Invest in Scaling Up Community-Led Organizations, with Technical Support and Capacity Building, to Increase Public Safety**

The City should immediately invest 2020 dollars in groups that are already developing community-led alternatives to policing and criminalization. Seattle already has groups involved in non-armed crisis response, violence-interruption and prevention, harm-reduction, and restorative and transformative justice approaches to harm. For decades, Seattle organizations have been undertaking safety-building activities such as: self-defense classes, healthy relationship skills classes for teens and adults, community courses on preventing sexual violence and assault, programs working with perpetrators of domestic violence to help them stop the behavior, bystander training for disrupting violence, programs to support parents in de-escalating conflict in their homes without violence, mediation programs to address conflict within schools, programs aimed at reducing the harms of drug addiction in communities, programs to increase community engagement between neighbors to reduce crime, and more. These efforts have developed and survived despite the over investments in the current policing/criminalization paradigm. It is past time to put real city dollars towards the development and growth of approaches to public safety that do not involve policing. These immediate investments will allow the organizations to scale up their operations in preparation for on-going cuts to SPD's budget and operations.

SPD has had over a century to produce community safety and has failed. Community organizations should not be required to end violence in Seattle in one funding cycle. Investing in these groups will drastically increase the odds of generating true public safety for those communities who have borne the brunt of police presence, surveillance, and violence. Funds will also go towards incubating new projects and organizations in police-impacted communities. These investments must begin in 2020 because we need to build up these organization's capacity in order to be ready for the transition to a drastically reduced police footprint in 2021.

The investments will include growing the capacity of both organizations who would respond to 911 crisis calls, the organizations who are providing long-term support beyond crisis intervention to criminalized populations, and the organizations who are involved in interrupting and preventing violence and harm to begin with.

### **Criteria for Organizations Receiving Funding:**

The organizations to be funded will demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Culturally-relevant expertise rooted in community connections and support
- Well versed in de-escalation skills and mental health support
- Peer-Led models prioritized
- Trauma-informed, gender-affirming, anti-racist praxis
- Connected to resources like housing, food security, and other basic needs with wrap-around services and long-term support
- Committed to retention of social service workers with adequate and equitable pay and benefits, preferably unionized
- Committed to hiring and retaining staff who are from the communities they serve and with lived experience of criminalization
- Demonstrated commitment to a harm-reduction model, including safer consumption practices

**Timeline:**

September - December 2020:

- Criteria and grant-making process established
- Capacity building workshops offered by the city for organizations who will be applying for funds
- Monthly disbursements to organizations for general operating support
- Create work plans for scaling up responses
- Complete recruitment and hiring plans
- Regranting process in 2021 to continue work, with goal of organizations beginning to offer enhanced services by mid-2021

To allow community groups to focus their efforts on their growth and development, the grants will be for general operating funds, with minimal bureaucratic requirements. To reduce the burden of contracting and reporting these funds will allow organizations to determine what data is important and useful for them to collect for improving their work. Funding will include capacity-building support for organizations to apply and receive city funding. This capacity-building support can be used by organizations to increase their infrastructure (space, curricula, financial management systems, staff training programs, and more) so that they are ready to serve far more members of the community than they could when they were under-funded.

### **3. Replace Current 911 Operations with Civilian-Led Dispatch to Increase Public Safety**

The City of Seattle should immediately move to transition 911 call and dispatch under civilian control. The City of Seattle can begin now to create an independent emergency operations system responsible for coordinating first responders, and moving 911 dispatch out of police control.

Additionally, investments in scaling up organizations listed in the previous section will be key for transferring calls involving people in crisis to community-led organizations who are grounded in a harm reduction. The current model often results in people of color in crisis receiving an armed police response and being funnelled into the criminal legal system, while white people in crisis are offered supportive services. Transitioning to a non-armed response grounded in harm reduction principles accessible to all communities will improve public safety.

The combination of civilian control of 911, investments in community organizations who can respond to crisis calls, and investments in fully funding services and housing so that crisis workers can offer appropriate referrals is key for the success of this model. Another key component will be continued efforts to decriminalize misdemeanor charges, so that a police response can be rendered moot. Currently, people of color in Seattle are disproportionately criminalized for low-level crimes including shoplifting, low-level drug charges, trespassing, and disorderly conduct. Enormous expenditures in police and court costs are the result. Decriminalizing misdemeanors would free up resources for meeting real human needs, and would stop one of the main pathways through which Black people and other people of color are targeted for criminalization.

#### **4. Support Immediate Survival Needs by Investing in Housing**

Regardless of sensationalist media narratives, Seattle does not face a crisis of rising crime rates; Seattle faces a housing crisis. This city has failed to provide all its residents access to basic housing needs - i.e., a safe, secure, clean, humane space that provides the bare minimum for human flourishing. Housing is an essential human need and few things are more central to real public safety than a home. It's a place to rest, eat and store possessions without fear of loss. A home provides the critical stability, privacy, safety, and security necessary for individual health and communal public health. To maximize the near and long-term public safety for the greater Seattle area, we must prioritize and maximize housing access and availability.

Importantly, nothing in this proposal is novel or untenable. The current uprising in defense of Black lives has revealed as untenable the City's habit of bending to the will of a police department whose conduct has chronically and systematically been violent and detrimental to the public safety of many communities. The contrast between the makeshift tents and encampment intertwined with a sea of cranes, high-rise towers, and opulent development point to the vast racial and economic chasm that must be closed if we are to transform the City's approach to public safety.

No proposal to increase true public safety by divesting from policing will be complete without a commitment to expanding housing access and availability.

#### **The City should prioritize the following near-term housing solutions:**

- Support the immediate transfer of underutilized public land for BIPOC community ownership, including, where necessary, purchase and activation capital and upfront transaction costs.
- All empty housing stock in the city should be used until any unhoused person who wants a place to live has one. People currently unhoused should be prioritized for receipt of any assistance, with no barriers based on income, criminal records, record of addiction, etc.
- Dissolve the Navigation Team and end sweeps of homeless encampments.
- Fund existing BIPOC-led community-based, housing-service organizations to allow for increased capacity and services, including the facilitation of emergency rent-assistance programs related to COVID.

#### **Considerations for funding would include ensuring organizations receiving funding can meet the following criteria:**

- Provide services to people who are currently and formerly incarcerated
- Commit to offering harm reduction training, programming and infrastructure to provide low barrier substance use/homeless services to Black and Brown people.

#### **City officials must remove barriers to accessing existing services, ensuring that community services providers:**

- Have direct access to low barrier/harm reduction shelters beds without requiring a referral from the City of Seattle Navigation Team or any other city program.
- Have direct access to Crisis Solution Center without requiring a referral from law enforcement or first responders

- Have direct access to permanent supportive housing (King County Coordinated for All-CEA set-a-sides) and independent housing vouchers (King County/Seattle Section 8, Scattered Sites, & Shelter Plus Care)

**Conclusion:**

The 2020 investments are only the beginning of a multi-year process to create real public safety and health in the City of Seattle. The summer/fall 2020 research process will lay the groundwork for the 2021 Participatory Budgeting cycle, which will in turn identify further cuts to be made from the City's "Public Safety" agencies (namely the Seattle Police Department, the City Attorney's Office, and Municipal Court). Further investments to be made and distributed during the 2021-2022 biennium will be identified through the research processes completed in 2020 and the participatory budget process completed in the first quarters of 2021.

The goal of these processes is not only to defund the police, but to create a new paradigm for how the City distributes its funding and invests in community. We have an opportunity to close the door on the era of bloated police budgets that put Black lives at constant risk of violence and death. We invite city leaders to accept the invitation to transform our city.

## **Appendix: Research Funding Detail of Initial \$3M Investment Towards Community Research Process**

The amount of the full investment in the community-led research process will depend on elected leader's willingness to divest from SPD and reinvest in real community safety. We propose funding the research in a staggered approach with **at least** \$3 million for the initial 2020 funding. We welcome additional funds, which would increase the number of organizations that can participate and would add additional funds towards addressing community issues identified during the research (e.g., a need for more PPE), research analysis, and reporting activities. The research described below will be critical for developing a robust roadmap as community and City leaders move forward with further cuts to SPD's budget in 2021- 2022, as part of the participatory budgeting process.

Below are additional details for what this funding would support:

### **Staffing, training, support, and materials.**

These investments set the community-led research process up for success and allow us to fund some of the current 2020 costs for us to do the research. (About \$1.1M)

- About \$700K in youth researcher staffing for Summer and Fall research
- About \$220K in adult researcher staffing for FTE staff for at least 5 community organizations
- About \$164K in administrative and support staff
- About \$25K in materials and research training

### **COVID-related support**

Internet connectivity, masks, computer hardware, sanitation, tents for socially-distanced in-person events, print materials (About \$283K)

- About \$3K in masks, face shields, sanitation, and other PPE supplies for participants, community members, and Seattle residents
- At least \$195K in internet connectivity supports increased access to facilitate access to City and community resources and services during COVID-19.
- About \$85K in computer hardware

### **Removing institutional barriers to participation**

This would also include resources to address barriers: disability, childcare, transportation, interpretation and translations, nutrition, hygiene (\$375K)

- About \$172K in childcare and educational supports
- About \$84K in nutrition and hygiene resources
- About \$60K in transportation resources
- About \$40K in administrative, technical, and material supports to address racialized ableism
- At least \$19K in translation and interpretation in at least 12 languages

### **Data collection and analysis**

Online survey tools, CRM and databases, website, transcriptions services, incentives, focus group facility rental fees, user experience research, ethnographies, statistics and data software. (About \$516K)

- About \$85K in mailing and printing
- About \$80K in phone, SMS, social media data collection

- About \$30K in community outreach
- About \$25k in software
- About \$19K in focus groups and interviews
- About \$25K in survey incentives
- About \$12K in participatory budgeting user experience website testing
- At least \$240K in materials translations in at least 12 written and spoken languages

**Data reporting:**

Visualizations, reports, community sessions, including artistic and culturally responsive materials. (About \$313K)

- About \$13k in visualization, editing, recording, and reporting software
- About \$185K in mailing and printing of reports
- At least \$75K in materials translations in at least 12 written and spoken languages
- About \$40K in hardware, including lighting, sound amplifiers, and appropriate equipment to effectively stream, broadcast, or transmit reports, sound, performances, or videos.

**Cash assistance and direct support for community members**

Address economic and other urgent needs. (\$500K)

- About \$140,000 for youth
- About \$360,000 to adults with families or elders