

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**CPC RENEWS REQUEST THAT CITY NOT IMPLEMENT A
BODY-WORN CAMERA PROGRAM UNTIL STATE LAWS ARE
MODIFIED TO PROTECT THE SAFETY & DIGNITY OF
COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

(Seattle) – While many members of the Community Police Commission generally agree that body cameras can be a useful tool in enhancing police accountability, the CPC unanimously believes it is premature to implement a police body camera program in Seattle until and unless state public disclosure laws are modified to address complex privacy and safety concerns. We do not believe there has yet been sufficient public engagement in these issues to inform the necessary legislative modifications, which implicate important and competing values of public transparency, safety, and officer and civilian privacy. Specifically, our concerns include that the dignity and privacy of witnesses, victims and suspects will be invaded; that individuals who are recorded providing information to officers may be viewed as “snitches” and endangered; that willingness to provide information to the police may be chilled in some communities by concern about being caught “snitching;” and that willingness to ask for police assistance through 911 or otherwise may be chilled in communities with undocumented immigrants. All of these concerns are potentially resolved by changes in public disclosure law, but it is important to understand that at present, almost all video captured by police cameras will be subject to public disclosure without redaction.

The CPC therefore reiterates its request that the City of Seattle push pause and approach this topic after further deliberation and community dialogue, and only implement a camera program after state public disclosure law has been modified. The CPC offers to lead the effort to coordinate City advocacy in the legislature on this point in the 2016 legislative session

To learn more about the Community Police Commission, please visit www.seattle.gov/community-police-commission.

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