

Seattle  
Community  
Police Commission

Our city. Our safety.  
Our police. Better together.

December 14, 2017

Dear Mayor Durkan,

On behalf of the Community Police Commission (CPC), we congratulate you on your recent election and welcome you to City Hall.

As we enter 2018, we would like an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the new police accountability system and the CPC's role in it. It would be helpful to learn how you believe the CPC can best support you in furthering police accountability and achieving police excellence in Seattle.

In addition, we want to bring to your attention several issues of particular concern right now.

- **Police Chief Search.** We are pleased that you appointed CPC Commissioner Colleen Echohawk as a co-chair of the police chief search committee. However, since she serves in this capacity as Executive Director of the Chief Seattle Club, we believe the search committee would benefit from additional CPC representation. CPC members have unique knowledge that will provide important perspectives on the qualifications and values the community expects of the new Chief.
- **Crisis Intervention Committee.** The Crisis Intervention Committee (CIC), led by the Seattle Police Department (SPD), was established to evaluate and make recommendations on crisis intervention programming and training. The CPC, along with Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, and Downtown Emergency Service Center, believe the CIC would benefit from a more independent structure in which it could proactively work on finding solutions to complex situations involving police interactions with those with mental illness or serious behavioral issues. In the Force Review Board report on the tragic death of Charleena Lyles, SPD pledged "to engage with any willing partner" to explore options. The CIC seems like a reasonable means by which to do so.
- **Accountability Legislation.** We hope that full implementation of the police accountability reform legislation passed last spring will occur soon. We are concerned, however, that without a centralized means of tracking implementation, progress may stall. One solution would be for your office to establish a small interdepartmental team to oversee it. This would ensure that implementation issues are surfaced transparently and resolved in a timely way with all relevant parties at the table.

- **Secondary Employment Office.** When troubling allegations about SPD secondary employment surfaced this fall, Mayor Burgess established a task force to consult with specific stakeholders—among them, the CPC, the City Auditor’s Office, the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission, and Judge Anne Levinson (ret.)—and then issue recommendations. These stakeholders sent [a letter](#) and set of criteria they believed the task force should address in its recommendations, but were disappointed when the preliminary report did not address the [criteria identified](#). In a [November 27 letter](#) to you, they asked that the task force issue a more detailed report addressing the criteria, and, going forward, take advantage of their expertise to inform program planning. We hope you agree with these requests and will direct SPD and the task force to act on them.
- **Cynthia Whitlatch Case.** The CPC reviewed files related to the Cynthia Whitlatch investigation, findings, appeal, and settlement. While we understand that Whitlatch was likely to win an appeal due to a procedural issue, we did identify some gaps in policy and practice that may have led to the unsatisfactory settlement outcome. The CPC asks that you endorse the recommendations we made in our [December 14 letter](#).

In closing, we salute your expertise in and commitment to the work of police accountability, including your involvement in the early years of the Consent Decree and your prior efforts as a member of various “blue ribbon” panels that recommended improvements to Seattle’s police accountability system. We look forward to partnering with you in building on the police reforms that have been achieved thus far.

Sincerely,



Enrique Gonzalez  
Co-Chair  
Community Police Commission



Isaac Ruiz  
Co-Chair  
Community Police Commission



Rev. Harriett Walden  
Co-Chair  
Community Police Commission

Cc: Kathleen O’Toole, Chief of Police  
Ian Warner, Mayor’s Office