

# Community Safety Contracts Report

Jaylen Antoine

Mayoral Fellow

## Summary

In 2023, Mayor Bruce Harrell released the One Seattle Safety Framework, a comprehensive plan to tackle public safety issues across Seattle. The plan follows six key points that include community engagement, evidence-based enforcement strategies, prioritizing public health, and shifting the power of safety into the hands of residents.

To begin giving power back to community on issues of safety, the City of Seattle and the Department of Neighborhoods have partnered with community-based organizations across Seattle to establish public safety coordinators in different neighborhoods. The role of the public safety coordinators is to act as liaisons between the city and community. Responsibilities include raising awareness about public safety issues, advocating for resources from the city and other organizations, and to implement initiatives developed by the partnering organization, community, and other stakeholders.

The partnering organization is contracted with the Department of Neighborhoods. Included in the contracts are the funding, deliverables, timelines, and reporting requirements. Currently the Department of Neighborhoods are contracted with three organizations to establish public safety coordinators, as well as two other organizations to implement public safety initiatives in other communities.

## Purpose

The purpose of this research is to provide contextual information on community safety efforts across several neighborhoods and provide an analysis of the Department of Neighborhoods' partnerships and collaborations with organizations and public safety coordinators in these neighborhoods. This report will include data collected from the annual Public Safety Report provided by Seattle University, survey data collected from current coordinators, and recommendations on how DON and the city can strengthen relationships with coordinators, community, and the city on issues of community safety.

## Background

### One Seattle Plan

The One Seattle Plan for safety has been ongoing plan to implement different initiatives to reduce gun violence, community education on 9-1-1 calls and diversifying responses to situations, promote active engagement between public safety departments and community, and to

invest in community partners and initiatives to address the root causes of crime and homelessness in neighborhoods across Seattle.

The One Seattle Plan framework lists six key points to address public safety:

1. Reduce gun violence and other violent crime with evidence-based solutions and enforcement strategies.
2. Respond to 9-1-1 calls efficiently and effectively by hiring more officers and diversifying response options.
3. Address the root causes and impacts of violence by investing in community-based solutions and upstream interventions.
4. Prioritize a public health and trauma-informed approach to reduce overdoses, reduce violence, and better support victims and survivors.
5. Coordinate community safety efforts to avoid duplication and inefficiencies by breaking down silos between departments.
6. Build and maintain community trust through strong accountability systems and community engagement on law enforcement priorities

My research will primarily focus on points 3,4, and 5.

Similarly, whenever the Department of Neighborhoods take on new initiatives it is important that the work follows the departments' mission which is to strengthen communities by providing resources and opportunities to help Seattle residents build strong communities, receive equitable access to government, and improve the quality for all residents.

I mention these key points above because I will be using them to guide my analysis and evaluation of these contracts and make recommendations on how the city and DON can negotiate contracts that are efficient, equitable, and accomplish deliverables derived from the One Seattle Plan for safety.

### **Public Safety Coordinators**

The City of Seattle and the Department of Neighborhoods partnered with several community-based organizations to create public safety coordinators in several neighborhoods across Seattle. These public safety coordinators were established to act as liaisons between city and community. Responsibilities of the public safety coordinators include meeting with community members, relaying issues to the City, and implement community safety initiatives in their neighborhoods.

Currently, there are public safety coordinators located in the CID, South Park, and Ballard neighborhoods, with other community safety initiatives taking place in the Little Saigon and Rainer Beach neighborhoods.

These public safety coordinators are contracted with the City through DON, and have specific deliverables outlined in their contracts that must be met and reported. Included in the contracts are reporting requirements that are to be turned in quarterly along with invoices.

Included in these contracts are other organizations who are implementing their own community safety initiatives in Rainier Beach, and Little Saigon, without public safety coordinators. This research will primarily concentrate on public safety coordinators, but relevant data will be used from these other organizations.

## **Analysis & Evaluation**

My analysis and evaluation will strictly focus on the content of the contract such as the budgeting, resources available, timetable, expectations of the role as a public safety coordinator, and the deliverables. I will not be evaluating the performance of the public safety coordinators.

To evaluate these points, I will be using the 2023 Public Safety Report provided by Seattle University, survey answers from the public safety coordinators themselves, and I will be using the contracts themselves.

To start my analysis, I looked at the contracts that DON holds with several different community-based organizations who are doing public safety coordination and engagement across Seattle. These organizations and their respective neighborhoods include Friends of Little Saigon (Chinatown-International District), Chinatown International District Business Improvement Association, Ballard Alliance (Ballard), and Seattle Neighborhood Group (South Park).

Using the 2023 Public Safety Report, I reviewed the neighborhoods that DON has contracted public safety coordinators in, and record the biggest issues brought up by community members to evaluate whether the current deliverables set for that neighborhood's coordinator correspond to the issues. Whether they do or don't match is mutually decided after a conversation with the public safety coordinator.

After my initial meeting with the public safety coordinators, I surveyed them on their involvement in the negotiation of their contracts, familiarity with their roles and responsibilities, as well as how it they fit into the One Seattle Plan for safety and its framework, and their level of communication with DON and other departments in the city.

## **Results**

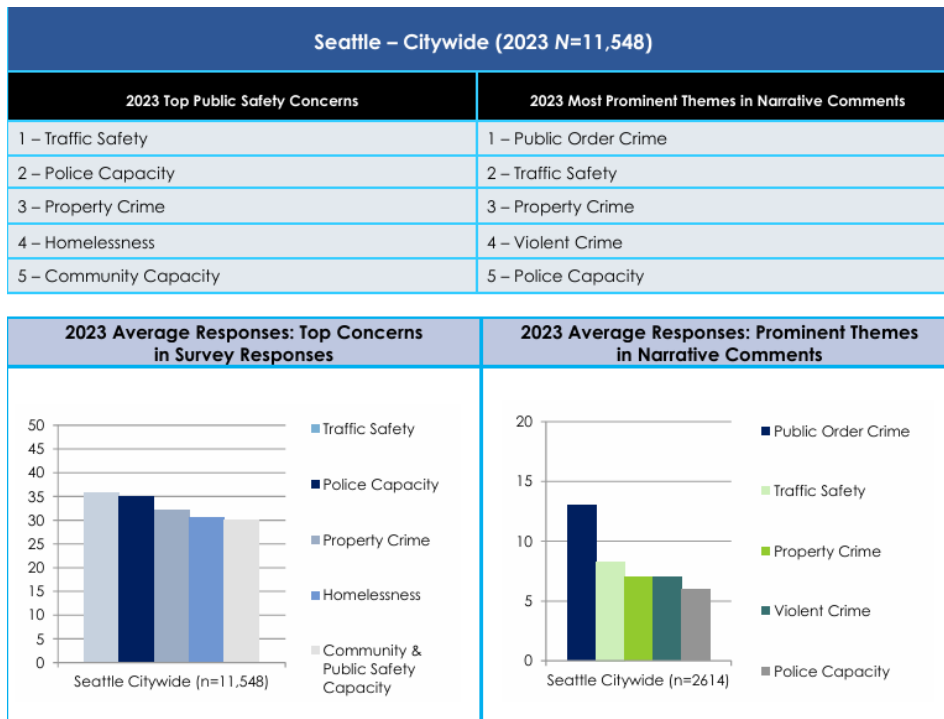
### **Public Safety Report**

The public safety survey provided by Seattle University reveals that communities in Seattle are concerned about resources available to community for crime prevention efforts. The survey categorized 72 public safety concerns into 9 different groups. I focused on the community capacity category which included lack of crime prevention education, lack of resources related to social services, no block watch or safety related neighborhood group, and not enough public safety resources in the neighborhood. This category includes much of the issues that a public

safety coordinator should be responding to according to the contract. To reiterate, the job of the public safety coordinator according to a census of the contracts is to develop and build relationships among members of their community including organizations, residents, businesses, and city departments, with the specific goal of addressing crime and public safety concerns.

In the report, residents concern about community capacity ranked in the top five out of nine categories in almost all the neighborhoods where there is city contracted public safety coordinators, and it's a top five concern among residents citywide:

### 1.) Citywide



### 2.) South Park

Seattle/Southwest – South Park (2023 N=86)	
2023 Top Public Safety Concerns	2023 Most Prominent Themes in Narrative Comments
1 – Police Capacity	1 – Traffic Crime (Tie)
2 – Traffic Safety	1 – Public Order Crime (Tie)
3 – Property Crime	2 – City Politics (Tie)
4 – Community Capacity	2 – Police Capacity (Tie)
5 – Homelessness	3 – Behavioral Crisis (Tie) 3 – Violent Crime (Tie)

### 3.) Rainier Beach

Seattle/South – Rainier Beach (2023 N=167)	
2023 Top Public Safety Concerns	2023 Most Prominent Themes in Narrative Comments
1 – Traffic Safety	1 – Public Order Crime (Tie)
2 – Violent Crime	1 – Traffic Safety (Tie)
3 – Community Capacity	1 – Violent Crime (Tie)
4 – Property Crime	2 – Fear of Crime
5 – Police Capacity	3 – Community Capacity

### 4.) Ballard South

Seattle/North – Ballard South (2023 N=496)	
2023 Top Public Safety Concerns	2023 Most Prominent Themes in Narrative Comments
1 – Homelessness	1 – Public Order Crime
2 – Police Capacity	2 – Property crime
3 – Property Crime	3 – Traffic Safety (Tie)
4 – Traffic Safety	3 – Violent Crime (Tie)
5 – Community Capacity	3 – Police Capacity (Tie)

### 5.) Ballard North

Seattle/North – Ballard North (2023 N=597)	
2023 Top Public Safety Concerns	2023 Most Prominent Themes in Narrative Comments
1 – Police Capacity	1 – Public Order Crime
2 – Homelessness	2 – Fear of Crime
3 – Property Crime	3 – Violent Crime
4 – Traffic Safety	4 – Property Crime
5 – Community Capacity	5 – Traffic Safety

### 6.) Chinatown-International District

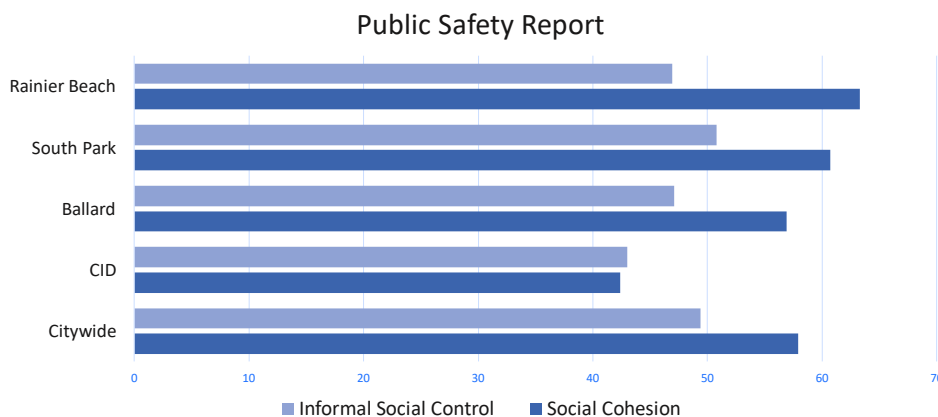
Seattle/West – Chinatown/International District (2023 N=425)	
2023 Top Public Safety Concerns	2023 Most Prominent Themes in Narrative Comments
1 – Drugs & Alcohol	1 – Public Order Crime
2 – Police Capacity	2 – Traffic Safety
3 – Traffic Safety	3 – Property Crime
4 – Homelessness	4 – Community Capacity
5 – Property Crime	5 – SPD Supportive

In narratives provided by survey respondents, the top theme out of 86 themes mentioned residents’ concerns about public order crime such as, disorderly behaviors, illegal sex work,

illegal street vending, graffiti, trespassing, and youth intimidation or criminal activity. This is important to note because these issues are also just a few of the issues that would be addressed with the help of a public safety coordinator.

The report also provides data on how involved residents want to be involved in community safety initiatives, and the availability of opportunities provided to residents. The report labeled the involvement of residents as social cohesion and compared that with the availability of opportunities provided which was labeled as informal social control.

## Data



The graph above is measured on a mean scale based on questions that residents were asked. The social cohesion averaged out the likelihood that residents would get involved in making their neighborhood better, while the informal social control averaged out the likelihood that residents would be a part of opportunities to help enforce social norms such as safety and security in their communities. The gap between the light blue and dark blue bars shows that while residents may want to get involved, there might not be a lot of opportunities to get involved.

While creating opportunities is not the main job of the safety coordinators, if they are actively working in community to implement public safety initiatives this may incentivize residents who were thinking about getting involved. One example of this is the Pho Dep meetings held by partners at Friends of Little Saigon, who are looking to implement a micro-community policing plan.

## Survey Results

Along with the public safety reports, surveys were conducted with our current public safety coordinators to see how connected they are with DON, learn about the scope of their work, and how DON can support them (other than financially).

Surveys were distributed via google forms, and we received answers from 2/3 of our coordinators.

The questions asked were based on the coordinators' perceptions of their role, the impact they feel they are making, and their relationship with DON and the city. Some answers were measured on range scale, while other answers provided narratives.

Highlights from the narratives are:

- 1.) Coordinators are experiencing positive feedback from community.
  - a. Coordinators say that residents appreciate having the bridge to the city, but need to act on solutions
  - b. Example:

*“The feedback for this position has been mostly positive. The position is needed to bridge community and city, especially with city departments that are less community engagement focused. I have heard that people feel the position is limited due to funding and lack of resources. I have also heard from community that they want more than one person designated to safety work in the neighborhood. I think people can see the position as moving slowly to implement change and don't always recognize that a lot of that time comes from how long it takes to coordinate with the city especially when you're in a position that isn't seen as having a lot of authority. I really think people appreciate having someone to hear their concerns, but they also want someone who has the resources to implement strategies to address those concerns.”*

- 2.) Coordinators are involved in multiple initiatives to address safety concerns in their neighborhoods.

- a. Example
  - i. *“Ad-hoc work (narcotics administration, picking up dead animals, removal of poison hemlock on behalf of unresponsive property owner, playing a part in closing a massage parlor offering sex work, removing graffiti from public murals, etc.). Volunteer initiatives like One Seattle Day of Service (Graffiti and litter abatement). Coordinating with others at Ballard Alliance to address issues from creative perspective (e.g. murals to fill blank walls that are tagging hot spots). Participated in a variety of public safety meetings throughout North Precinct. Developed de-escalation training series for community members, began contracting with private security for 24/7 response in Ballard BIA, acquiring information related to break-ins and assisting with connections to SPD, connecting SPD leadership (e.g. Lori Aagard) to stakeholders for interpersonal relationship-building, working with service providers attempting to contact clients or vice versa, serving as point of contact for "heads-ups" from community members about certain individuals, meeting with DCRs regarding decompensating individuals, providing safety-related information to businesses based on neighborhood trends, tracking crime and call data and relaying to stakeholders when appropriate, coordinating Security Assessments (from SPD) for stakeholders, etc.”*

- 3.) DON needs to assign a lead on the community safety work
  - a. Coordinators are impacted when miscommunication and staffing changes affect resources and information being provided to them.
  - b. Example:
    - i. *“More transparency on what is happening internally with DON. I feel like I’m constantly the last to know about staffing changes that impact who is in charge of my contract and reporting requirements. I also no longer have an Executive Director at CIDBIA so I will be more involved with contract negotiations so please keep me informed on the timeline of that process.”*

## **Recommendations**

The goal of my research is analyzing and evaluate DONs current contracts with public safety coordinators to find where improvements can be made to the contracts themselves, internal processes for communication and accountability, and relationship building with community.

These improvements are for the purpose of improving engagement with community around public safety, making sure that community has access to city resources, and finding the deeper-rooted issues in community to create preventative measures to deter crime before it becomes worse.

After my analysis I came up with several recommendations based on my own evaluations, conversations with the public safety coordinators, and conversations with other stakeholders based on issues of public safety.

- 1.) Centralize the community safety work in DON.
  - a. This work should be headed by 2-3 people within DON with clearly defined roles in community safety work.
- 2.) Establish intra-departmental teams to collaborate and coordinate with public safety coordinators.
  - a. This will open a wide range of contacts and resources for all stakeholders involved in community safety efforts across the city.
- 3.) Reach out to impacted communities where coordinators aren’t established
  - a. These communities may not have connections to the city for advocacy or resource support
- 4.) Highlight the work of the coordinators
  - a. Through articles, memos, and email blasts about the work they’re doing and how to support



### **Next Steps (What will this require?)**

To continue the work that was done over the summer, several things will need to happen:

- 1.) Gather and centralize all documents and information on DONs community safety work
- 2.) Reach out and arrange a meeting with the coordinators to reaffirm our support for them.  
Schedule routine meetings/check-ins
- 3.) Define reporting requirements, and gather any past reports whether they were submitted or not