

NPAC October 2020 Report

Captain Brian Stampfl – Seattle Police Department – North Precinct

Hello to North Seattle, including our residents, business owners, employees, visitors and the returning UW students. I hope everyone is well as we enter into the Fall season. So much has been happening within the last month. The Seattle Police Department (SPD) has been undergoing some tremendous changes with many more to come. I'll just jump in.

Community Police Team: As you may have heard by now, our new Chief of Police, Chief Adrian Diaz has mandated several changes within the department. The most significant is the elimination and/or reduction of several specialty units within SPD so that they may be returned back to patrol. The following was taken from an email (slight modifications to improve context) I wrote just yesterday explaining how we at the North Precinct will adjust to these changes.

The elimination of the CPT teams was an unexpected change for all five of the SPD precincts. The North CPT officers have done amazing work and have established great relationships with the community. When I first arrived here at the North Precinct at the beginning of August, I had immediately begun making plans with CPT to discuss how we would address some of the complex issues, such as homeless encampments and RVs, the associated criminal and civility issues, and other challenges not well suited for patrol officers who generally respond to 911 calls. These changes come as Chief Diaz has recognized that the majority of our department personnel reductions, with more to come, have come from our patrol division. Simply stated, our ability to answer 911 calls in a timely manner has been greatly reduced. Chief Diaz has directed that personnel from specialized units, such as CPT, return to patrol to bolster those numbers. So now what?

In addition to SPD's upper command staff (Chief, Asst Chiefs, legal team, etc.) coming up with a universally applied response to the complex problems associated with not having such a specialized team, I am working with my commanders at the North Precinct to come up with a response plan as well. For the moment, we are finding ways to route complaints, emails, phone calls, or other notifications to the correct commander overseeing the specific area in North Seattle. We will be directing our officers, of which we will have more, to address the community concerns. This is a return to a traditional police work model in which an officer becomes better acquainted with their district and takes on long term projects. This is our first step.

We are also working on a way to include our city agency partners, including Parks, Department of Transportation, Human Services, etc. in helping us to address these issues. Historically, SPD has been the point of contact for most complaints of which we then reach out to our partner agencies and orchestrate a response. Since SPD is being redirected away from dealing with homelessness, people in crisis, and other non-traditional law enforcement responses, we will be tremendously dependent on our partner city agencies to provide a proactive response. I expect that this transition will take some time. However, moving the responsibility of addressing homelessness to the Department of Human Services is a practical thing to do, and the desire of the Mayor and City Council.

So, until we come up with a more comprehensive approach, I would ask that if you have any immediate concerns in your neighborhood, please call 911. If what you are seeing is more project based, not necessarily something that can be resolved in short order by a responding officer, you are welcome to email my Operations Lieutenant, Lt. Joe Osborne at Joseph.osborne@seattle.gov Lt. Osborne will ensure that your concern is forwarded to the correct Watch Commander for assignment to the district officer. You are always welcome to email me as well brian.stampfl@seattle.gov

I hope to have more information on these new processes in the coming weeks.

Suspicious Activity: I have received a number of inquiries as to when it is appropriate to call 911 to request a police response. Often these questions come after a person observes what may be criminal activity, but the behavior is not so specific as to be able to determine exactly what is happening. This is often that “gut feeling” that something is not right. When in doubt, please call 911. **However**, it is crucial for officers to have as much information as possible ahead of time in order to follow-up. More often than not, suspicious activity calls have very little actionable information. For example, *“Three people are standing on the corner of 1st Avenue and Main Street selling stolen property.”* Descriptions like this are often so vague that the officers may not have the legal authority to detain anyone they see standing on the corner to conduct an investigation. The more detail the better, including: description of the person(s), description of associated vehicle(s), and what behavior is occurring that supports the theory that the person is selling stolen property. The more detail the better.

If you are concerned about calling 911 but still want to report an issue, such as a minor vehicle collision, an illegally parked vehicle, a property crime in which no suspect is present, or any matter to be handled by the police not requiring an immediate response, SPD has a non-emergency number **206-625-5011**. You will still be speaking to our 911 dispatch center, just not utilizing the emergency phone lines.

Lastly, if you simply want to make a police report, SPD has a fantastic online reporting system called **CopLogic** <http://www.seattle.gov/police/need-help/online-reporting>

As stated in on the website,

Crimes that can be filed online usually do not require an in-person police response. To file online, the following criteria must be met:

- **This is not an emergency situation.**
- **The incident occurred within Seattle city limits.**
- **There are no known suspects or information about the crime that can be followed up on.**

Crime Statistics:

Overall, Citywide crime is down about 4% compared to the same time last year. However, North remains nearly unchanged since this time last year. This takes into account all crime categories tracked by SPD.

Motor Vehicle Thefts: Vehicle thefts are up city wide. It's difficult to know what drives increases in vehicles thefts. However, very unofficially, I have noted an increase in reports in which food delivery drivers, such as UberEats, have left their cars running and unattended while jogging up to front doors to deliver food. I suspect that the COVID situation and the increased request for food delivery may in fact play a small role in the increase vehicle theft. Further analysis is needed. We at the North Precinct are fortunate to have a Seattle University Masters student who will be working with us to identify crime trends. I have already spoken to Katelyn Yep about the rise in auto thefts and our need to address them. She will be assisting us in interpreting the crime data and developing plans to address the crime trends. Motor Vehicle Theft is up 5% from this time last year, with a total of 166 cars stolen from the North Precinct jurisdiction.

Robbery: Robberies have seen a big increase since this time last year. We are up 67%, showing 45 incidents compared to 27 last year. We have had a number of robberies occurring at various marijuana dispensaries throughout the city. I have spoken to our lead robbery detective about this very specific group of suspects committing these crimes. This particular detective is tremendously aggressive in solving these types of crimes and has an amazing track record. His success in capturing these suspects will improve our numbers.

Others: Aggravated Assaults (+6%, 53 compared to 50), Rape (Sexual Assault would be a better description in my opinion, down -71%, 2 compared to 7), Homicides (No change, 0 and 0), Arson (up 300% - Percentages with low incidents look really bad. 300% increase sounds like Armageddon, 4 incidents compared to 1 last year, Burglary (up 36%, 296 compared to 217), and Theft is down (-10%, 713 compared to 792).

Last thoughts: The Mayor has submitted her budget proposal for 2021, and now the City Council will go to work to modify the budget as they see fit. Keep in mind that activists in Seattle are still running strong in their attempt to have the Seattle Police Department's budget cut significantly, up to 50%. The DeFund the Police effort is alive and well. We have already lost a number of officers to other police agencies and early retirement due to the threat of layoffs and general lack of support from city leaders. The city council has already forced cuts to the 2020 budget, and without support from the community to change the minds of the city council, the 2021 budget cuts are expected to be huge. This would be a great time to reach out to your city council person and share your views regarding public safety and the role of the Seattle Police Department.

Thank you very much for the NPAC's ongoing support of SPD. Have a great October.

Seattle City Council Contact Info

Alex Pedersen
District 4 // Northeast Seattle
Contact
206-684-8804
alex.pedersen@seattle.gov

Debora Juarez
District 5 // North Seattle

Contact

206-684-8805

deborajuarez@seattle.gov

Dan Strauss

District 6 // Northwest Seattle

Contact

206-684-8806

dan.strauss@seattle.gov