



Spokane Police Department Two Year Strategic Plan 2018-2019



A Message from the Chief

It is my pleasure to present the Spokane Police Department's (SPD) Two-Year Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan serves as the roadmap that directs the work of SPD over the next two years. It provides the framework for operations, work performance, and focus for every SPD employee, whether commissioned or non-commissioned. It also aligns with the City's Strategic Plan.

SPD's Strategic Plan provides details on the primary goals for the department for 2018 and 2019:

- Focused vehicle theft reduction
- Collaborative approach in helping individuals experiencing behavioral health concerns
- Property crime reduction utilizing new programs involving municipal courts
- Fostering community partnerships and relationships
- Developing and retaining a qualified, diverse workforce
- Strengthening Communication
- Maintaining a progressive approach in best practices revolving around hiring, training, equipment, programs and service to the community and our employees

Police departments across the nation are facing high expectations, multiple competing interests, limited budgets, intense scrutiny and advancing technology. More than ever, we find ourselves wearing multiple hats—law enforcer, counselor, mediator, mental health professional, order maintainer, problem solver, peacekeeper. We proudly accept these tremendous responsibilities, serving our city and each other, working for each and every one of our community members to the best of our abilities and with the highest level of integrity.

Without question, our employees are our most valuable asset. Without them, we would not have enjoyed the strides in training, policy and administrative review and community outreach that we have attained. SPD has dedicated and exceptional staff who are committed to improving every day. I could not be more proud of the men and women of our department who serve Spokane every day in so many different ways. It is a true honor to be a part of this agency and see the evolution we have made and will continue to make as we serve our community.



Chief Craig N. Meidl
Spokane Police Department



MISSION Statement

The Spokane Police Department is committed to providing excellence in policing, enhancing the safety and security of individuals, and building partnerships to better the lives of our community members as a whole.

VISION Statement

Our vision is to serve every member of our community with professionalism, integrity and compassion so that with every interaction we continue to build trust, preserve safety and model ethical policing.

Our VALUES:

- **Integrity:** adherence to ethical principles; soundness of character, honesty
- **Professionalism:** holding to the highest and most effective standards of the law enforcement profession while continually pursuing progressive improvement through education, training and experience.
- **Compassion:** a feeling of concern and understanding for an individual's distress, accompanied by a desire to help.

The following six strategic goals will provide direction for the next two years:

- Focused vehicle theft reduction
- Collaborative community approach in helping individuals experiencing behavioral health concerns get sustained assistance for long term benefit
- Property crime reduction utilizing new and innovative programs
- Foster and strengthen community partnerships and relationships
- Develop and retain qualified, diverse workforce
- Strengthen Communication



Numbers At-A-Glance

215,973

City Population



506,152

County Population



328

Commissioned

96

Civilian Support
Employees

7

Exempt
Commissioned & Civilian

85

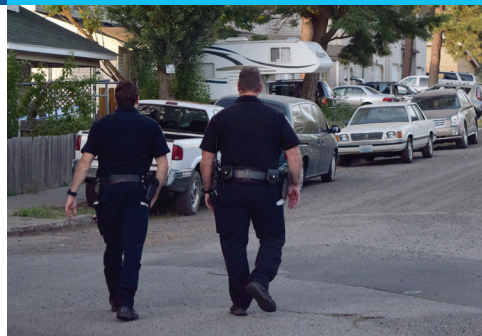
Volunteers

301,429

Total Calls for Service

56,885

Officer Initiated



\$189.3 M

City Budget
(General Fund)

\$58 M

Police Department
Budget



Focused Vehicle Theft Reduction

In 2017, SPD launched a major initiative, the Vehicle Theft Task Force (VTTF). Vehicle thefts across the State of Washington, but more specifically in the Spokane region, have continued to create frustration amongst our community. To formulate this task force, we re-aligned already existing resources. A Police Anti-Crime Team (PACT) worked with the Targeted Crimes Unit (TCU) Detective, as well as the Chronic Offender Unit (COU) officers, to provide specific targeted efforts towards Spokane's vehicle thieves. The PACT unit works as the pro-active arm of this task force using a variety of tactics and strategies to find and arrest these thieves. The TCU detective(s) work as the liaison for PACT and the COU in regards to filing of charges, first appearances, bond hearings and sentencing hearings.

The COU officers contact arrestees while in jail and after being arrested. They seek to determine why the arrestee was stealing cars, seek to develop workable intelligence and offer resources to help the arrestee get their life back on track to being a productive and law-abiding member of the community. They contact those who are arrested for vehicle thefts after they are released to continue efforts to link them with services and ensure they are not returning to their criminal behavior.

In order to obtain useful data and be able to effectively evaluate this initiative, the department will continue the focused efforts of the VTTF for another two years. After that time, we will evaluate the data to determine if the task force efforts should be expanded or shifted to other neighborhood crime issues.

Washington is the only state that does not have supervision for property crimes. Community supervision can add structure for offenders reentering the system and connect them with services including drug treatment, education, housing and job training. Focused, collaborative law enforcement efforts and community supervision can increase public safety. SPD, in conjunction with the Mayor and City Council, will continue working with legislators to modify state law allowing supervision of property crime offenders. We believe the City of Spokane can lead efforts state-wide to reinstitute this supervision.

Beginning in the fall of 2018, SPD will begin a new community initiative to help combat vehicle theft. The program consists of vehicle owners adhering a decal to the rear window of their car and authorizes officers to stop that vehicle during the overnight hours to confirm the driver is the owner or has permission from the owner to drive the vehicle. Many vehicles are stolen overnight, often leaving the crime unreported for hours pending the discovery and subsequent report from the victim when they wake up the next morning. This window of opportunity allows vehicle thieves to drive the unreported stolen vehicle during the overnight hours with little concern of being arrested for the vehicle theft.



Collaborative approach in helping individuals experiencing behavioral health concerns

Providing an integrated community response is key to providing individuals the right care in the right setting. Beginning in the fall of 2018, several Frontier Behavioral Health clinicians will be partnered with an SPD officer assigned to Patrol to manage and connect vulnerable populations with resources to address underlying and chronic behavioral health issues. This effort is grant funded and data will be collected to determine the effectiveness of this program. Part of their mission, in addition to working with those awaiting competency hearings, will be first response to those in the community suffering a behavioral health crisis.

During a 2016 pilot program using a similar model in the downtown corridor, significant efficiencies were gained in diverting individuals needing treatment from emergency rooms to other services within the community. In addition to providing more effective and immediate assistance to the person in need, it relieved pressure on hospital emergency rooms, freed officers from long waits often associated with the patient admittance and provided a more focused and effective level of service individualized to the person in crisis.

Downtown Precinct Neighborhood Resource Officers (NRO) work on a daily basis with a variety of vulnerable citizens, including homeless individuals and others suffering from behavioral health illnesses and/or addiction. NROs collaborate regularly with outreach providers including SNAP, HOC, Hotspotters, VOA, Frontier Behavioral Health and numerous others. The result is an integrated approach to dealing with this portion of our community needing specialized resources. NROs are equipped with reference material containing information regarding the myriad of resources available and they routinely connect citizens to these resources during their daily duties.

One of the key partners in this effort is the Downtown Community Court, which is held in the Downtown library. Their mission is as follows:

The SMCC seeks to reduce and properly address quality-of-life offenses in the downtown area by utilizing a collaborative, problem-solving approach to crime. Via partnership with numerous government, community and faith-based organizations, the SMCC endeavors to hold defendants accountable, address factors impacting defendants' criminal behavior, improve the quality of life in the downtown area, address victim needs, and increase public confidence in the local criminal justice system (p. 6 SMCC policies and procedures).

When Downtown Precinct NROs contact defendants for quality of life offenses, they refer the defendants to community court rather than traditional municipal court. As part of the community court process, defendants are referred to the appropriate services as determined by a needs assessment. To facilitate this process, a large number of service providers are assembled on site for each community court session. Additionally, NROs will often refer citizens they contact downtown to community court specifically to access these services, even in the absence of a criminal violation.

Due to the success of the Downtown Community Court, the Center for Court Innovation was awarded an expansion grant. This expansion occurred in December of 2017 in the northeast part of the city. The Northeast Community Court is held in the NE Community Center. The effectiveness of this NE effort will be monitored and evaluated.



Property crime reduction utilizing new programs

SPD is committed to consistently researching best practices as we tackle various crime, quality of life and nuisance issues. In addition to community court collaboration, we continue to explore other avenues to create a safer and healthier Spokane.

Since Washington is the only state in the nation without property crime supervision upon release of the offender, SPD has collaborated with city leaders to engage Olympia in property crime supervision. Though we have unsuccessfully worked for the last two years to change state laws bringing supervision back to the state, we will continue these focused efforts until we achieve what every other state has. Though property crime supervision can be expensive, the alternative is to pass these costs on to the community through recidivism of offenders. We believe there is too much at stake and will continue our efforts to encourage our legislators to bring property crime supervision back.

Additionally, we continue to work with City leaders to develop a program allowing municipal courts to use tools that District and Federal courts do not otherwise have available. The goal is to choose a group of repeat and chronic offenders that continue to victimize our community with no concern for repercussions and provide focused efforts at changing behavior. These efforts may include increased sentencing, intense supervision or other methods aligning the needs of the offender (be it increased incarceration, increased treatment or supervision, or other needs) with best outcomes for the community. What we know is that some offenders have no desire to change their behavior while others do not have resources available helping them align their behavior with the expectations of the community.

Foster community partnerships and relationships

SPD is committed to continual quality engagement with the community at every level of our Department. One sergeant and two officers are assigned to the Community Outreach Unit. These officers employ long term strategies at a deeper level of community engagement and outreach, helping to maintain our relationships with our partner organizations, minority outreach groups (NAACP, MLK Center, Native Project, World Relief, etc.) and special interest groups. In addition, Community Outreach oversees the Youth and Police Initiative (YPI) and the Police Activities League (PAL). Throughout 2017, the Community Outreach Unit attended a multitude of meetings as well as proactively engaged in ongoing conversations with community leaders across a wide spectrum of interests.

An example of events or meetings attended by the Community Outreach Unit include various Community Forums, Spokane Pride Parade, World Refugee Day, Unity in the Community, Cops and Kids Car Show, Spokane Interstate Fair, Touch a Truck, Youth and the Force (partnership with Juvenile Corrections), monthly refugee provider meetings, refugee orientations, Native Project Open House, Native Project Wellness Nights, Salvation Army's Back to School effort, Shop with a Cop and so many more.

A substantial amount of time is spent by the Community Outreach Unit participating in YPI and PAL. YPI is a weeklong program conducted each month of the school year on a rotational basis at different schools throughout Spokane. Each session lasts five days. YPI provides an opportunity for at-risk youth to engage with officers over the five days and for officers to engage with the youth. The theme of YPI is breaking down barriers and stereotypes to help open lines of communication between at-risk youth and Spokane police officers. The program has grown in popularity at Spokane Public Schools and continues to encourage both youth and officers alike.



PAL is a summer program led by SPD that occurs at three different parks, one day per week per park, over the course of six weeks. The ages of participants vary from elementary to junior high school. Different activities are offered, including basketball, baseball, STEM activities (science, technology, engineering and math), soccer and running. Officers take the role of mentors and coaches while interacting with the youth through the sports or STEM activities. PAL provides youth of Spokane a safe place to enjoy summertime activities while engaging with officers. The Police Department partners with organizations to make PAL possible, including the Spokane School District, Spokane Public Library, community leaders and many others. In addition, participation in PAL from different community groups grows substantially each year. The first PAL After Park program that was conducted in cooperation with the library was in 2017. This partnership with the library allowed many attendees to continue activities at the library for two additional weeks upon the completion of PAL in the parks. In addition to mentoring and connecting with youth, the PAL program also seeks to instill in attendees respect for others, courtesy, patience and good teamsmanship.

Throughout the year the Community Outreach Unit coordinates YPI/PAL sustainability events where youth are taken to baseball games, hockey games, snowshoeing, and many other positive activities. These activities outside the YPI and PAL programs allow the attendees and officers to stay connected and continue the relationships they have forged throughout the programs.

As of 2017, SPD has made attending YPI or PAL mandatory for probationary police officers. Additionally, the Chief of Police and the Community Outreach Unit attend each post academy to talk about the importance of community based policing and connecting with the community during every contact.

To expand the capabilities of the Community Outreach Unit, SPD created a Community Outreach cadre in 2017. This cadre has received specialized training and assists the Community Outreach Unit with attending events throughout the year to represent SPD.

We at SPD believe that community engagement is the responsibility of every employee and volunteer of the Department, every day, during every interaction a community member has with SPD. This is constantly reinforced through public recognition of those officers receiving accolades from the community, statements of expectations with all candidates interested in joining the SPD team, formal Department awards recognizing those officers who engaged in noteworthy efforts, and promotion of those who embody our efforts to connect with community.



Develop and retain qualified, diverse workforce

Employee Wellness: Beginning in 2018, the Department has begun to specifically and intentionally incorporate employee wellness training into its training philosophy, including in-service training for all employees. Additionally, we have updated protocols for officer-involved shootings and critical incidents to ensure we are taking care of the mental health of our employees that are involved in critical, stressful and dangerous encounters.

Safety: All officers when hired receive training in first aid, use of force tactics, firearms and patrol procedures. Throughout the year, the department provides refresher training in each of those areas. Additionally, specialized medical equipment is issued to every patrol officer, including Quik-clot, Narcan and tourniquets. These tools have already been used multiple times to save lives of community members who have been victims of crimes or drug overdoses, prior to more substantial first aid arriving.

Development: The Academy organizes monthly supervisor training to allow briefing of supervisors concerning current topics or trends that impact operations. SPD also holds monthly Senior Staff meetings for all department mid-managers and above with the goal of discussing current issues that directly impact the Department, the community or processes and procedures that need to be revised. This also allows mid-managers to bring forward concerns, rumors or issues at a standing meeting, allowing clear direction to be given.

The Washington State Training Commission mandates every law enforcement officer exercising general police authority in Washington State at the local, county or state level, attend a minimum of 24 hours of training per year. Every commissioned officer attends a minimum of two in-service training days per year; other training occurs at roll calls, meetings, or utilizing on-line tools. In-service trainings allow structured, consistent and mandated refresher training, reality based training, updated certifications (firearms, defensive tactics), emergency vehicle operation, case law updates, and many more topics that employees use throughout their jobs. SPD has re-instituted in-service training for non-commissioned employees surrounding general department updates, policies, procedures, wellness and other topics to improve communication, performance and effectiveness.

Crisis Intervention Training (CIT): Every officer hired by SPD obtains 40 hours of CIT training within their first year of employment, which is above and beyond what is required by the state. Each new employee also does a 4 hour immersion with a behavioral health provider in the Spokane area during their first year to enhance their knowledge of the behavioral health system, resources available, and to improve their skills in addressing individuals with behavioral health concerns. Each employee also must recertify every two years to maintain their certification. The Washington State Training Commission has mandated this training and provides the recertification via an on-line program.

The goal of CIT is to improve officer and citizen safety, as well as to divert appropriate candidates into treatment rather than into the criminal justice system due to their illness-related behavior.



Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training (E-CIT): E-CIT takes CIT to the next level. E-CIT members receive an additional 40 hours of Enhanced CIT training. They also attend quarterly trainings where they receive additional training in motivational interviewing, de-escalation tactics, and scenario based training on resolving crisis situations. The E-CIT members are limited in number and are primarily drawn from Patrol. These officers work closely with mental health providers and help drive the training for the rest of the CIT program.

The Disproportionate Minority Contact Report: The Disproportionate Minority Contact study was released in mid-2017. The department participated in conversations with the public when the report was released. The recommendation from the final report was that the City Council develop a committee to look at the issue further. Although this has yet to occur, the Chief has kept this conversation alive and is looking for ways to bring the recommendations of the report to a conclusion. A committee comprised of community leaders and SPD staff are currently reviewing the report and determining next steps.

Recruiting efforts: Recruiting efforts were ramped up in 2017. Effort was focused to increase the diversity of those taking the Public Safety Test (PST) to become police officers. The Academy conducted eight workshops throughout the city at different community centers at varying hours to present information to interested applicants in regards to the process of becoming a police officer. This was done in coordination with Human Resources and Civil Service. The Academy is also developing relationships and improving communication with local universities and colleges to expand our recruitment efforts outside of the standard Criminal Justice majors to other majors and even athletic teams.

As a result of the efforts, more diverse candidates did take the PST. The goal of diversifying the department will take many years but we have embarked on a focused effort to do so.



Strengthen communication, providing useful and meaningful information to employees and community members.

Open communication between the Spokane Police Department, its community and the media are critical to the success of SPD's policing model.

An informed and involved community is the greatest asset of a police department. Frequent and consistent communication builds support, partnerships and mutual trust. Working as a team, Spokane Police officers and citizens can reduce crime and improve the quality of life in their city. Crime reduction involves community effort and cooperation to be successful. Two-way communication between police and the community is essential to impact crime in Spokane.

Equally important is effective internal communication to ensure every level of the organization is working collectively toward the same goals. Proper communication is also necessary for maintaining good morale among officers and employees.

By establishing regular, open and honest communication, the department will build trust, cooperation and support with the community while protecting the rights of individuals and the integrity of its investigations.

Below are action items that will be implemented leveraging existing resources and capacity:

Internal Communication

- Chief's video blogs – Videotaped messages from the Chief and other officers pertinent to the activities and efforts of SPD to reduce crime and connect with the community. It is vitally important that all SPD employees and officers are working toward the same goals and that they receive timely and accurate information.
- Increase face-to-face communication – The Chief and Command Staff members will visit roll calls, division meetings, in-service training, etc. to answer questions, hear concerns, share ideas and explain the department's efforts to engage the community and reduce crime.
- Create Quarterly Electronic Newsletter – Electronic newsletter that highlights innovative programs, upcoming events as well as professional and personal achievements of SPD employees and officers.

External Communication

- Increase use of social media to provide accurate and timely information for community members helping to reduce speculation and misinformation.
- Create a monthly Chief's video update for the community members.
- Develop a quarterly electronic newsletter for community partners highlighting recent media stories and items of interest.
- Continue the shift-level PIO (Public Information Officer) effort, monitor its effectiveness and evolve to meet the needs of the department and community.



Conclusion

Failure to evolve and grow is dangerous for any organization. The Spokane Police Department will continue to evolve, remain flexible and pursue best practices, both in our police programs, engagement with the community, crime fighting tactics, internal welfare of our employees, training, and policies and procedures. We will continue our efforts to be a progressive police department and maintain flexibility to meet ever-changing demands placed on our community and police department. No police department is successful without the support of its community, and our efforts to strengthen and foster relationships with the community on a daily basis under the umbrella of mutual respect will be the lens we use for every interaction.

