

Public Safety Platform

Mike McGinn for Mayor

As mayor, I will be committed to making our neighborhoods better places to live, work, and play by funding policies that work and importing ideas that have worked in places that have suffered from the same problems we are facing today.

Seattle has to take a comprehensive approach to issues of public safety. That means not just treating the symptoms, but also the causes of crime.

1. Enforcement. While we have a responsibility to focus on prevention and root causes of crime, we also have a responsibility to prosecute those that commit crimes. As mayor, I will work with law enforcement and prosecutors to send an unmistakable message that if you use a gun to commit a crime or carry an illegal gun, you will be prosecuted fully.

2. Engagement. Police cannot solve the crime problem alone. We need people in neighborhoods to be an active partner in public safety. To accomplish this, we need to give neighborhood leaders a real seat at the table on public safety issues and policies. We need to fully listen to them and help them design policies and play a role in carrying them out.

3. Prevention. We must get better at identifying people in our society who are the highest risk of committing crime and stage multi-level interventions with them. We need to apply the full resources of the city and the community to give those at risk alternative pathways to education and jobs.

We have serious public safety issues facing many neighborhoods in Seattle, but one of the most pressing is the rise in gang-related crimes, especially those involving firearms. We need to focus on the problem of gun violence. While there are no easy answers here, I will approach these problems from every possible angle using all of the resources at the City's disposal.

Moreover, when programs work, we can't let our guard down. Too often in the past, we have seen programs work – and work so well – that we assume they aren't needed any more. Funding is cut and the problem comes back, and we are playing defense once again. We need to stay ahead of this cycle.

Specifically, the following are some of the programs and initiatives that I support and begin to represent a comprehensive approach to enforcement, engagement and prevention.

Increased Prosecution of Gun Crimes

There needs to be a clear and well-understood rule in our community: If a person commits a crime involving a firearm, they will be fully prosecuted. I will work with the US Attorney, Seattle Police Department, City Attorney, County Prosecutor, King County Sheriff's Department, State Patrol, State Attorney General, FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to develop a coordinated strategy to bring more gun crimes to federal court, where such crimes can be prosecuted to their fullest possible extent. Similar strategies have proven very successful in other jurisdictions.

Increased Penalties for Juveniles with Firearms

I support KC Prosecutor Dan Satterberg's approach to prosecuting juveniles as adults when they commit violent crimes with a firearm. I will also support the efforts of Satterberg and Attorney General Rob McKenna to work with the State Legislature to increase penalties for teens illegally possessing handguns. As Satterberg has pointed out, teens in possession of handguns are eligible for no detention time at all. This needs to be accompanied by a strong public information campaign that sends a clear message to juveniles that if they are carrying a gun and get picked up, they will face very serious penalties. It also acts as an excellent intervention point to intercede with kids before they get in much more serious trouble.

Continue Mayor Nickels' Efforts to Ban Guns in Parks and Public Places

I support Mayor Nickels' efforts to ban firearms from parks and public places. There is no reason for people to carry guns in our parks, and tragedies like the Folklife shootings cannot be allowed to occur.

Restore the Gang Unit

The gang unit is an essential part of a complete strategy to reduce gang violence. We need to bring it back to full strength, and most importantly, realize that should a reduction in gang related crime occur, we should not let our guard down and cut back the unit.

Support Youth Violence Prevention Initiative

I support Seattle's renewed effort to focus on the approximately 800 children in our community who are at the highest risk of committing a violent crime or being a victim of violent crime. This program focuses on repeat offenders, middle school truants, youth arrested for minor crimes that don't automatically require detention and victims of violence and their friends and relatives.

Fully Support the Community Policing Plan

I will make sure that the Seattle Police Department has the resources it needs to develop stronger relationships with the community. Today, our police spend too much time responding to emergencies because we don't have enough officers on the street. The current plan calls for officers to spend a third of their time proactively fighting

crime by being present in the community. By hiring more officers, we will enable the department to do the crucial work that can't be done when so much time is devoted to emergency response.

Make Crime Reporting Easier and Crime Data More Available

Implement Gov 2.0 information technology that will streamline citizen reporting of crime and provide easier and more comprehensive access to crime statistics. Work to upgrade current 9-1-1 system to allow it to take 9-1-1 calls via text message modeled after the successful program in Waterloo, Iowa.

New Police Chief

Mayor Nickels has assembled a strong search committee of 24 respected people from community and law enforcement. I believe that we should have that committee continue that search process. The new mayor will ultimately make the final decision, but we can't let a political transition delay this important process.

Drug and Mental Health Courts

I will support Drug and Mental Health courts, which provide access to needed treatment and avoid the senseless incarceration of nonviolent offenders.

Continue the Drug Market Initiative

The Drug Market Initiative (DMI) is an innovative new program that combines a strong police effort with a coordinated social services outreach for known repeat drug offenders. While it is still too early to call DMI a success, we must strive to develop more pre-arrest diversion programs that target the root of the problem, rather than repeatedly sending non-violent offenders through the revolving door of the criminal justice system.

Expand Clean Dreams/CURB

Fund a permanent pre-arrest diversion / community re-entry program, modeled after the Clean Dreams pilot program, which assisted recently released felons with finding stable accommodation, education and work.

Jobs

I will aggressively seek funding from programs like "Green For All", which provides living wage jobs and vital opportunities for professional development. Integrating green jobs into existing job resources and increasing outreach to at-risk members of the community will provide opportunities that not only keep them on the right track, but give them the means to contribute to the local community and economy.

Better Prioritization of Police Resources

We need to stay away from distractions like "Operation Sobering Thought" that used an inappropriate amount of police resources and netted zero convictions.