

#LRM 060121b

City Clerk



LEGISLATIVE REQUEST MEMORANDUM

Request new legislation, or request staff resources be allocated to issues not included in current budget, City Work Program, or department work plans.

Title: School Resource Officer Civic Engagement Process

Date: May 24, 2021

Requesting

Councilmember: Deputy Mayor Arnold

Department(s)

Assigned: City Manager's Office

REQUEST SUMMARY

A clear, concise description of the issue(s) to be addressed, and why the City should be involved.

The School Resource Officer (SRO) Dashboard, and specifically the SRO Program itself, was among the most widely discussed and prioritized by the Black-centered focus groups conducted during the R-5434 process. The scope of R-5434 was on developing an SRO Dashboard and not evaluating the program, so staff have not acted beyond relaying that feedback to Council. However, staff had intended community engagement on the SRO program after various R-5434 elements began to move on different timelines. The May 18 Council update on R-5434 was the first milestone in this shift. Staff had intended SRO program outreach starting in September of 2021 when school reconvenes, and residents refocus. Many community members are not aware of the SRO discussion and others voted to support additional SROs as part of 2018's Police Proposition 1. Broader outreach results were intended to inform an SRO decision for the fall of 2022.

Staff are proposing three LRM outreach options for Council based on three different timeframes:

- 1) Expedited Civic Engagement Process to Inform Council Before School Convenes in **Fall 2021**;
- 2) Original Civic Engagement Process to Inform Council Before School Convenes in **Fall 2022**;
- 3) Modified Civic Engagement Process to Inform Council Before School Reconvenes in **January 2022**.

BENEFITS

Preliminary potential benefits of the proposal.

Option 1 – Expedited Civic Engagement Process

- Potential Council decision on the program before school starts this Fall, 2021

Option 2 – Original Civic Engagement Process

- Broader and deeper engagement with PTSAs, BIPOC affinity groups, faith-based groups, etc.
- Use data from the SRO Dashboard to help inform decision
- Potential for multiple town halls / listening sessions (early winter and late spring)

Option 3 – Modified Civic Engagement Process

- Some engagement with PTSAs, BIPOC affinity groups, faith-based groups, etc.
- Town hall / listening session in the fall, decision for when school restarts in January

IMPACTS

Preliminary potential impacts of the proposal.

Option 1 – Expedited Civic Engagement Process

- Limited participation expected due to compressed process during peak summer season
- Change of expectations for community, LWSD, SRO personnel and CMO staff work plans

Option 2 – Original Civic Engagement Process

- SRO decision not made until 2022. BIPOC community members see City as not responsive

Option 3 – Modified Civic Engagement Process

- Change of expectations for community, LWSD, SRO personnel, and CMO staff work plans

COUNCIL VISION AND GOALS

Check all that apply.

X	Inclusive and Equitable Community		Attainable Housing
X	Vibrant Neighborhoods		Financial Stability
X	Community Safety		Sustainable Environment
X	Supportive Human Services		Thriving Economy
	Balanced Transportation		Dependable Infrastructure
	Abundant Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreational Services		

EQUITY

Preliminary discussion on how the proposal may impact diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As mentioned previously, SROs were widely discussed during the R-5434 early action focus groups. For those that discussed it, most focus group participants were generally critical of a police officer being in a school environment as it related specifically to the safety and respect of Black students, as well as students of color broadly. For some Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, the presence of law enforcement, regardless of the individual officer's behavior, has a major negative impact on the perception of safety. Other community groups shared concerns about the SRO Program during the broader R-5434 engagement process, voicing similar concerns and the perception of a "school to prison pipeline" as seen in other communities. Kirkland's SRO program incorporates most national best practices, is not involved in discipline, and is intended to prevent negative impacts. The SRO Dashboard purpose is to identify problems and whether the program is working.

STAKEHOLDERS / OUTREACH

Preliminary potential stakeholders impacted and outreach to be considered.

- PTAs formally, as well as parents, teachers, and students not active in the PTAs
- R-5434 focus groups, Right To Breathe Committee, Indivisible Kirkland
- Lake Washington School District, including Board of Directors and staff, other LWSD cities
- Police Guild and KPD Patrol Unit (who might be responding to any police calls to schools in the absence of SROs)

Option 1: Expedited Process: survey (statistically valid and/or online), public hearing

Option 2: Original Process: survey (statistically valid and/or online), 2 town hall / listening sessions, focus groups, community meetings, public hearing

Option 3: Modified Process: survey (statistically valid and/or online), town hall / listening session, public hearing

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

Preliminary potential staff resources needed and whether current staff and budget authority could accommodate the request.

For staff resources, the following program or project impacts are anticipated:

- **Option 1: Expedited Process:** CMO support for the Summer Action Plan will be less, resulting in potentially delayed constituent responses and other impacts; September's City Hall for All event scope might narrow; development of new Civic Accelerator Program would be delayed; broad outreach on Neighborhood Safety Program could be impacted; any community engagement on citywide signage would be delayed.
- **Option 2: Original Process:** no additional staff resource needs anticipated.
- **Option 3: Modified Process:** development of the new Civic Accelerator Program would be delayed; broad outreach on Neighborhood Safety Program could be impacted; any community engagement on citywide signage might be delayed.

There is currently no budget for a consultant to run a statistically valid survey (approx. \$35,000).

OPTIONS

Potential options or alternatives that could be evaluated.

If the Council is interested in Option 1 or Option 3, an alternative would be to provide staff with additional resources to supplement the CMO work so that other projects could remain on their current timeline. Staff could develop a funding request for the necessary resources.

After this initial LRM was drafted, the Kirkland/Lake Washington School District Coordinating Committee met on Wednesday, May 26. The SRO program was discussed at length. The LWSD highlighted that the District also incorporates Redmond, Sammamish and unincorporated King County, and they need to provide consistent levels of service across all cities. The District emphasized that SRO discussions would need to be broadened beyond Kirkland to include the whole District.

One key priority for all participants was the goal that this conversation unites the community behind solutions, rather than be divisive. Therefore, there was a discussion about potentially seeking outside expertise to facilitate the necessary community conversations and develop options given the challenging issues of race and student safety.

Additional options for the Council to consider following the LWSD Coordinating Committee would be to authorize staff to partner with the District on contracting for such outside expertise. The Council could also consider joint meetings with other cities and the District over the summer to discuss options for the SRO program.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Check all that apply.

	Legal analysis required
X	Fiscal analysis required
	Legislative change required
	State or federal change required
	Other (please explain):

■Department Director responsible for acquiring Finance and Legal approval before submitting to City Manager.

APPROVALS	INITIAL	DATE
Finance Department	MO	5/26/21
Legal Department	KR	5/26/21
Department Director		
Submit to City Manager		