



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Mayor Murray, Councilmembers Announce Update to North Precinct Plan

SEATTLE (September 15, 2016) – Today, Mayor Ed Murray and Councilmembers Tim Burgess, Debora Juarez and Lorena González announced that the City will review the proposed new North Precinct facility, citing concerns around equity, cost and community needs. The City will follow a recently-passed Council resolution and conduct a Racial Equity Toolkit review of the proposed precinct, and review key design elements that increased the project cost. While the North Precinct serves 40 percent of the city and building a single precinct would save the city money and allow for a central training and community engagement location, other options for serving the area, including the likely more costly route of building multiple precincts, may be considered.

"The building proposed by my predecessor would address a growing need to replace the North Precinct, but clearly the public continues to have concerns about the estimated costs," said Mayor Murray. "While we have had extensive discussions and planning, it is clear we need to reconsider the plan as proposed and ensure we are meeting the needs of the community with what we build. As I have said, if this project inhibits our ability to continue strengthening the relationship between our community and our police, then we would revisit it.

"I remain committed to replacing the aging precinct in North Seattle and am prepared to consider multiple design options, if it is determined that is the best path for the community."

A resolution, co-sponsored by Councilmembers Burgess, Juarez and González and passed by Council last month, called for the RET analysis, and given the length of time for the review, the City will not move forward with implementing the project at this time. Additionally, the time while the RET process is being completed will be used to review other aspects of the project, including the number of facilities and overall cost.

The City still strongly believes there is a need for a new police facility in North Seattle and remains committed to replacing the current building. The original funding plan for the project included a mix of cash financing and almost \$100 million in bonds. Given that the project will not move forward next year, the 2017 budget will not seek authority for this borrowing. However, approximately \$15 million of the originally identified resources will be set aside in the budget to help address future project costs.

"The current North Precinct police station is a failing facility that needs to be replaced," said Councilmember Juarez. "The nearly 300,000 residents plus students, hospital visitors, local businesses and customers living, working and recreating in the North End deserve a cost-effective proposal that is responsive to the federal

consent decree and guided by the Racial Equity Toolkit. As the representative of District 5, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to slow this down and do it right.”

“We listened. Based on what we have heard from a wide variety of community members, and the Council’s review of the cost projections, we want to take another look at the component parts of the building and even redesign some of them in an effort to lower the cost,” said Councilmember Tim Burgess. “Sometimes it is important to pause and reconsider a decision. That’s what we’re doing here with this project.”

“I continue to believe that the existing North Precinct must be replaced to meet the needs of North Seattle residents and the operational needs of North Precinct officers,” said Councilmember González. However, after reviewing hundreds of pages and hearing from a wide variety of community members, it is clear that we must take a step back from the North Precinct project. This is the only way the City can have a meaningful impact on the design and significantly reduce the cost of a new police precinct. Hitting pause to re-evaluate the costs of this project is the only acceptable path forward if the City is truly committed to using our finite resources responsibly.

“We need to explore establishing an Expert Review Panel that would be charged with fiscal oversight of this project. We also need to explore contracting a project manager with deep experience in delivering complex, public safety facilities and public financing models.

“Since mid-August, I have continued to hear from a variety of community members who continue to express the need for increased police resources in North Seattle but have concerns regarding the cost, design and scope of this proposed precinct. That input, the cost and my growing concerns about the prior lack of project oversight and public process, has lead me to the conclusion that the only responsible next step is to return to the drawing board.”

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