Legislation Details (With Text)

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On agenda:		**Final action:**	2/1/2023
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Title:	A MOTION declaring a policy of the council to establish a neighborhood engagement pilot program led by the department of public safety, and requesting a briefing by the sheriff to discuss implementation of the program.		
Sponsors:	Reagan Dunn		
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/26/2022	1	Metropolitan King County Council	Introduced and Referred	

Clerk 07/15/2022

A MOTION declaring a policy of the council to establish a neighborhood engagement pilot program led by the department of public safety, and requesting a briefing by the sheriff to discuss implementation of the program.

WHEREAS, neighborhood engagement programs (such as neighborhood watch programs) have proven to be effective in reducing crime, with one of the earliest evaluations which showed that neighborhood crime was reduced in Seattle in 1977, and

WHEREAS, reductions were associated with some of the essential features of the neighborhood engagement programs, and might serve to increase community awareness, reduce opportunities, and enhance informal social control, and

WHEREAS, according to a study done by The Crime Prevention Research Review, most areas associated with a neighborhood watch pointed to lower levels of crime, and

WHEREAS, visible community presence might reduce crime because of its deterrent effect on the

perceptions and decision-making of potential offenders. Offenders might notice the spike in community presence and, in turn, decide not to strike or possibly target a different area, and

WHEREAS, a meta-analysis by professors Trevor Bennett, Katy Holloway and David Farrington published in The Campbell Collaboration Reviews of Intervention and Policy Evaluations, found that community watches were associated with a relative reduction in crime of about sixteen percent, and

WHEREAS, by forming a watch or other public safety focused group, neighborhoods make it known that criminal activity will not be tolerated in the community and thereby make the community less attractive for potential criminals, and

WHEREAS, those programs are simple and inexpensive, yet highly effective in the fight against crime. Statistics indicate that communities with active neighborhood watch programs show a decrease in burglaries, car prowls and related crimes, and

WHEREAS, given the increase in crime King County is currently experiencing, with the highest homicide rates in almost thirty years, and a dramatic increase in gun violence, residents should have the resources and support to form their own neighborhood programs should they desire to do so, and

WHEREAS, neighborhood engagement programs allow active residents to initiate their own crime reduction program and partner with law enforcement, which might give these residents a greater sense of personal safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. To address increases in criminal activity at the neighborhood level, it is the policy of the council that a program that empowers communities to establish and join neighborhood safety groups led by the department of public safety is needed.

B. The council requests the executive fund and the sheriff establish a neighborhood engagement pilot program in accordance with the provisions of this motion that identifies up to three communities in which to engage with community leaders and find method of supporting community safety in partnership with citizens.

C. The neighborhood engagement pilot program should consist of a decentralized system of sheriff's office community leads who should serve as a point of contact and provide education and information to unincorporated pilot areas, connecting with residents interested in establishing or joining a neighborhood safety program and a process for unincorporated area residents to acquire neighborhood resources, such as signs, and a process to facilitate crime prevention activities including, but not limited to, neighborhood watch programs, distributing crime prevention information and coordinating neighborhood clean-ups.

D. The sheriff is requested develop findings, and identify barriers and resources, including, state and federal grants to assist in the development of the neighborhood engagement pilot program and to assist unincorporated area residents in acquiring neighborhood safety resources, such as signs and other adornments.

E. The sheriff is requested to brief the law, justice, health and human services committee, or its successor, in the fall of 2022 to discuss implementation of the neighborhood engagement pilot program.

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