



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 7

COUNCILMEMBER ROBERT KETTLE

The most consequential moment of Mayor Bruce Harrell's recent public safety forum was at the beginning. As moderator Enrique Cerna started his conversation with Mayor Harrell, he mentioned how he was struck while watching a news report on two recent shootings in the Central District. A resident in the report said, "I hate to say this but it's just another day here in the Central District." Cerna said the comment implied, "This is going to happen, and there's nothing we can do about it."

We can do something about it, we must and are doing something about it, and we will continue to do something about it. We cannot allow resignation or acceptance of our public safety challenges.

The comment reflects the fact that a normalized permissive environment has been built over time, aided at times by the previous city council, and still enabled by various factors. Further, the permissive environment has enabled people involved in crime to operate without fear of accountability and has allowed random acts of violence to strike our neighborhoods, suddenly and tragically. We cannot allow this to stand.

Our mandate from the voters at the Seattle City Council, especially within the Public Safety Committee, is to help keep Seattle safe. We envision a future where families feel safe sending their children on the bus to school, businesses can operate without paying for private security, and the city can respond in a timely and appropriate manner to people experiencing acute crises.

Our action plan is to use our Strategic Framework to accomplish that vision. This framework is the lens through which we make decisions to better enhance Seattle's public safety posture, whether it be through leadership, legislation, or innovative ideas. It will also provide us with a path towards the future, so that we can help ensure that each of us is doing our best to make Seattle's future a safe one. The Strategic Framework is our plan to address and strengthen SPD staffing, specifically recruiting and retention; create or amend city ordinances to aid all elements of public safety; tackle the impacts of dangerous and unsecured vacant buildings and lots; abate graffiti and develop new ways to stomp it out; build public health capacities particularly in behavioral health and addiction arenas; and engage as One Seattle with the County and State in regards to their areas of responsibility for public safety and public health.

We have already begun our pursuit of that vision. Yet importantly, this is not just about our police, fire, and CARE departments, but also the criminal justice system, our police

accountability partners, our emergency preparedness office, and our county government partners.

In the end, we cannot do this by ourselves – this endeavor to make our city a safe place to live, work, and play, cannot just be a government focused undertaking. We need an all-hands-on-deck approach and effort including non-profit organizations, businesses, neighbors, and our families. Each of us plays a key role. Whether it's volunteering on your local Block Watch, actively getting to know members of your community, calling 9-1-1 or filing a report with a first responder agency or with Find It, Fix It, with your help, we can turn the tide and no longer be by-standers, resigned to current circumstances.

The opportunity in front of all of us is a great one. We must change, yet we can only do so by working together as a One Seattle community team. This is a call to action. With our Strategic Framework as a guide, and a safer One Seattle as our destination, we can clean up our streets, decrease violence, and tackle the challenges that we are facing. It starts with confronting the permissive environment and making the choice that we don't have to be resigned to or accept the public safety challenges facing us.

Seattle City Councilmember Bob Kettle