



To: City Councilmembers: Sally Bagshaw, M. Lorena Gonzalez, Bruce Harrell, Lisa Herbold, Rob Johnson, Debora Juarez, Mike O'Brien, Kshama Sawant, Kirsten Harris-Talley

November 11, 2017

### **Fund LEAD expansion into Highland Park and South Delridge in 2018**

Dear Councilmembers:

As representatives of Highland Park Action Committee we are writing to request that funding for LEAD expansion specifically for Highland Park and the neighborhoods in South Delridge, including Riverview, Westwood, Arbor Heights, Roxhill, and South Delridge, is present in the final 2018 City of Seattle budget. LEAD is a proven method to effectively address community safety and public health concerns while minimizing unnecessary and ineffective use of the justice system, and our community is ready for expansion of this proven model. Since March of 2015 HPAC has been advocating for LEAD and in our 2016 micro-policing plan, LEAD is also suggested as part of Highland Park's micro policing plan.

Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC) is Highland Park and Riverview's Neighborhood Group which represents over 10,000 residents. We are an all volunteer & not for profit neighborhood organization and our role is to be an advocate for Highland Park area and to affect positive change in our neighborhood. For the last several years, we have advocated for infrastructure including crosswalks, sidewalks, trails, safety enhancements, zoning changes for affordable housing, and additional resources so we can continue to build a thriving interconnected community.

As you know, Highland Park is a mixed race/mixed income community that has faced historic redlining, has a lower median income as compared to Seattle overall (22% lower than Seattle overall), with 81% of students at Highland Park Elementary on Free or Reduced lunch (May 2016), higher percentage of single parent families (13% as compared to 8% in Seattle overall), and higher percentage of those who speak little to no English (10% vs. 5% for Seattle over all) and 28% of our neighbors are immigrants as compared to 18% for Seattle over all.

This is not to generalize that all those dealing with poverty are in need of services like LEAD, but factors of **chronic environmental stress** such as under-performing schools, gang violence, street crime, deteriorating public spaces, under resourced infrastructure, concentrated poverty, little to no community based services, a lack of opportunities, and other structural conditions that neighbors are living under, can undermine both individual and community resilience in a neighborhood. Social disorganization, crime, and signs of physical deterioration (e.g. vacant housing, litter, graffiti) in a neighborhood can then signal to residents that their immediate environment is unsafe.

Bringing LEAD to Highland Park and South Delridge, which is designed to improve individual and community well-being by allowing officers to redirect individuals engaged in drug related crime and/or sex work to community-based services instead of jail and prosecution, will help to reduce chronic environmental stress in our area.

Since 2008, Highland Park has hosted three large homeless encampments and has been a staging area for those living in their RVs or cars starting in 2016. The first Nickelsville encampment started 2008 in Highland Park at the Glass Yard site. It was eventually moved until it returned in 2011 until 2015. In June of 2016, Camp Second Chance arrived at Myers Way as an unsanctioned encampment and it was then sanctioned in December of 2016. That area of Myers Way and the Glass Yard site continues to have unsanctioned encampments along with RVs and car campers on various neighborhood streets and the Westcrest and Riverview Park parking lots.

The LEAD expansion into Highland Park and South Delridge would also help to mitigate the impact of the additional **environmental stress** hosting these encampments has had on Highland Park and the neighborhoods that surround Myers Way Parcel.

This is also in line with the request we made to the City Council and Mayor on December of 2016 for the City to develop an encompassing *Neighborhood Protocols for Sanctioned Encampments* plan, which was for the City to provide additional resources, including LEAD, to mitigate the impact an encampment would have on the neighborhood.

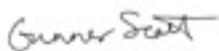
King County has committed to bringing LEAD to White Center, which borders Highland Park, Westwood, Arbor Heights, Roxhill, and South Delridge. There are already complications of jurisdiction lines between Seattle Police and King County Sheriff's office when dealing with issues of crime and safety in this area and not having programs that cross these borders can make the strategies and tactics less effective.

We are grateful for Council Members Juarez, Sawant, Bagshaw, Harris-Talley, O'Brien and Johnson and their responsiveness to community requests thus far regarding the inclusion of LEAD expansion in the budget. We are aware that Council supporters of LEAD are presently advocating for different revenue strategies to support this investment and others. Because LEAD reliably generates criminal justice system cost savings while decreasing participants' criminal involvement, including expansion of the program makes sense under any budgeting approach.

Despite the growing demand for LEAD in Seattle we know there still no funding in place to make it available to individuals, communities and police officers outside of Seattle's West and East Precincts. Introducing LEAD as an option would provide neighborhoods and police officers an alternative to jail while effectively addressing real public order issues. LEAD is a Seattle-made, nationally-replicated, model that all community members in Seattle should benefit from.

Please ensure that LEAD expansion is included the final City of Seattle Budget, no matter which revenue sources are ultimately chosen by the Council to support critical programs. If you have any questions, please contact us at [hpacchair@gmail.com](mailto:hpacchair@gmail.com).

Thank you,



Gunner Scott  
Co-Chair



Michele Witzki  
Co-Chair