

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PDA STATEMENT ON LEAD ROLE WITH SPD EFFORT AT 3RD AND YESLER

Seattle, WA, August 27, 2018 – Conditions at 3rd and Yesler are the result of complex factors intersecting. One is that many who live in shelters or homeless housing have no “living room” during the day because those facilities do not have the wherewithal to design such spaces when they were set up. Another factor is that due to city funding choices, a day center in the immediate area significantly reduced its accessibility to the general public. An additional cause is addiction and the drug economy. Also in play for some who spend time at that intersection, is trauma history and mental illness.

Almost everyone can agree that the situation at that intersection includes problematic conditions and sometimes problematic behavior. We appreciate that the Seattle Police Department and Pioneer Square leaders fully recognize that arrest and prosecution of struggling people for low level offenses is not a real solution, and indeed can drive people further away from healing and stabilization.

Yet, if we are not going to use arrest and prosecution for law violations, there must be a real, robust alternative response to problematic conditions. We are making every attempt to join with SPD and neighborhood leaders to implement a serious sustained response using evidence based public health practices to engage individuals and make a plan to address their actual circumstances. The intended outcome is a noticeable improvement in these individuals’ situations and in the dynamics at 3rd and Yesler. We are committed to staying the course on this effort until we see the changes that both the individuals and the neighborhood deserve.

Public Defender Association, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion

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