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### Justice Department Announces Agreement with City of Seattle to Implement Reforms of Seattle Police Department

The United States has entered into a comprehensive, cooperative agreement with the city of Seattle to implement sustainable reforms within the Seattle Police Department (SPD), the Justice Department announced today. The agreement seeks to resolve issues raised by the Justice Department's investigation into SPD through federal court oversight of reform efforts to ensure effective and constitutional policing in Seattle. The agreement includes a settlement agreement and stipulated order of resolution (settlement agreement), filed in federal court in Seattle today, that is subject to an independent monitor and court oversight, and separately a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be enforced by the parties with community oversight and the assistance of the monitor.

The settlement agreement will require SPD to revise its use of force policies and enhance its training, reporting, investigations and supervision of uses of force. It also requires revisions to policies, training and supervision relating to both bias-free policing and stops and detentions; improves supervision and accountability mechanisms to ensure implementation of the reforms on the ground; and creates the Community Police Commission, a civilian oversight board with responsibilities regarding particular areas of reform detailed in the settlement agreement and MOU. The settlement agreement is subject to approval of a federal judge and must be court-ordered.

The MOU is an agreement that will be enforced by the parties with community oversight. The MOU specifically provides for the Community Police Commission to assess SPD's outreach efforts and initiatives; provide input regarding data collection around stops and detention; and ensure transparency and public reporting. As part of the MOU, the Community Police Commission also will lead a review of the structure of the city's police accountability system.

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“This agreement provides a blueprint for reform with innovative methods for ensuring community engagement and sustainability,” said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “We look forward to continuing our partnership with the city, Mayor McGinn, the Seattle Police Department and the community to ensure that effective and constitutional policing takes place in Seattle.”

A court-appointed monitor, to be selected jointly by the city and the Justice Department, will oversee the implementation of the settlement agreement and provide expert assistance to the Community Police Commission in the MOU.

“Today begins a new chapter for policing in Seattle. All of us depend upon the critical bond between the community and police officers who risk their lives to protect public safety. This agreement advances meaningful and measurable reforms that ensure effective policing and build community trust. We must get this right. We owe it to every officer who serves and every resident of this great city,” said U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington Jenny A. Durkan.

The department’s investigation of SPD was announced on March 31, 2011, and conducted by the Civil Rights Division’s Special Litigation Section and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Washington. The investigation focused on whether SPD engages in a pattern or practice of unconstitutional or unlawful policing through the use of excessive force or discriminatory policing. On December 16, 2011, the department issued a written report of its findings. The department found reasonable cause to believe that SPD engages in a pattern or practice of excessive force, in violation of the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The department did not make a finding that SPD engages in a pattern or practice of discriminatory policing, but raised concerns about some of SPD’s policies and practices, particularly those related to pedestrian encounters.

The Justice Department’s investigation, conducted in collaboration with and with the full and open cooperation of the city and SPD, involved an in-depth review of thousands of pages of SPD documents and materials, including written policies and procedures, training materials, and internal reports, data, video footage and investigative files. Justice Department attorneys and investigators also conducted interviews with SPD officers, supervisors and command staff, and city officials, in addition to conducting hundreds of interviews with community members and local advocates.

Following the release of the findings in December, the Justice Department received input from a wide range of stakeholders, including city officials and elected leaders, SPD commanders and police officers, police unions, and a broad range of community members and service providers.

#### **Related Materials:**

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