

To respond to community concerns about property crime, the Seattle Police Department are forming a dedicated team focused on bringing down property crime rates. The department is now using many of the same strategies that have been effective in addressing chronic crime and drug dealing downtown in other neighborhoods in the city. The department will also improve the efficiency of the City’s 911 response system.

“Although the Seattle Police Department is larger than it has ever been in its history, our police force is still strained,” said Murray. “When I came to this office, I committed to hiring 100 more officers over attrition during my first term. But I recognize that we need more officers for better visibility throughout our city.”

To address the needs of a growing city, the mayor called for a larger police department, with a total of 200 net new officers from 2013 staffing levels. In the last two years, the City has hired 50 additional officers. In 2015, 30 percent of police department hires were people of color.

The mayor cited continued positive feedback from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Monitor for the progress Seattle has made on police reform, including the appropriate use of force by officers. The department has created Crisis Response Teams that pair trained officers with mental health workers. These teams will respond to an estimated 10,000 calls from people experiencing mental-health- or addiction-related crisis in the coming year. Initial data show that as a result of de-escalation training, officers are using force against individuals in crisis less than two percent of the time. And, when officers do use force, 80 percent of the time they use the lowest level of force.

The Seattle Police Department continues to expand its Safe Place program to address violence and intolerance directed at the LGBTQ community. Today the mayor announced that the program will expand in a new partnership to make all Seattle Public Schools available as Safe Places, as well.

To support enjoyable, safe parks in Seattle’s urban core, the mayor will expand the Urban Parks Activation Partnership. The partnership has made a dramatic difference in the experience in Occidental and Westlake parks. In addition to maintaining the current partnership for another five years, the City will expand the initiative, partnering with other community organizations in up to ten additional urban parks.

In his address, Mayor Murray also announced a major expansion of the City’s Utility Discount Program, which reduces utility costs for low-income families by 50 percent. By auto-enrolling more than 10,000 tenants in Seattle Housing Authority properties, the City will reach the mayor’s goal to double enrollment in the discount program to 28,000 households two years early.

The mayor also heralded the success of Vision Zero, Seattle’s strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. In just one year, through education, engineering and enforcement, the City has reduced traffic fatalities by 25 percent, reaching an all-time low.

Performance Seattle, the accountability tool to allow the public to measure the success of City government, continues to chart accountability measures for each department. Currently departments are meeting or exceeding their targets on 71 percent of goals and are close on another 13 percent. For 16 percent of goals, the City has more work to do to meet performance measures. The Seattle Department of Transportation also charts the progress of major construction projects at capitalprojects.seattle.gov.

The mayor will issue a new Executive Order that establishes an Open Data policy that was developed by the Seattle Department of Information Technology in partnership with the University of Washington, the Sunlight Foundation, and Seattle’s civic technology community. The policy will prioritize data transparency for all City programs, while reinforcing the City’s Privacy Program.



STEVE LAEVASTU’S MARKET UPDATE

House#	Address	Year Built	List/Sell \$	Beds	Baths	SF	Sold Date
4021	NE 75th St	1947	\$450,000	2	1	860	02/11/2016
5113	40th Ave NE	2994	\$545,000	2	2.25	1,200	01/29/2016
6320	54th Ave NE	1969	\$650,000	3	2.75	2,620	02/01/2016
6825	42nd Ave NE	1944	\$671,700	2	1	1,060	02/02/2016
4707	NE 55th St	1935	\$675,000	3	1	1,200	02/05/2016
7320	45th Ave NE	1954	\$986,000	4	2.75	2,720	02/22/2016

MARCH 2016

- Steve Laevastu’s Market Update
- News In Brief
- NE Seattle Neighborhood Sales Prices
- Mayor Murray’s State of the City 2016 Address

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NEWS IN BRIEF

- **The average size of a new home rose to about 2,720 square feet in 2015, up from 2,660 square feet in 2014, the National Association of Home Builders reported.** Nearly half of the homes constructed last year had four or more bedrooms. A quarter of homes also had garages that would hold three or more vehicles. In 2015, the average price of a new-home rose to \$351,000 - up \$100,000 from 2009, accord to the NAHB. The average new-home size was 2,360 square feet during the 2008 financial crisis. It then started climbing sharply, leveling out in 2014, and now back on the rise again in 2015. Some of the increase is due to builders catering more to the luxury market and moving away from building homes for first-time buyers.
- **Realtor.com released “Top Tips for Home Buyers and Sellers in 2016” to help guide house-hunters and home sellers on what’s most important for buying and selling a home this year.** While Seattle-area sellers have had little problem in finding buyers, the Internet site offered a national perspective. “The 2016 housing market is forecasted to be mainly a seller’s market, filled with increasing home prices, relatively low inventory and fierce competition between buyers,” said Jonathan Smoke, chief economist for realtor.com. “Buyers looking to close this year need to keep an open mind and be prepared to

move quickly when they find a home that meets their needs. For sellers, it’s about understanding the ins and outs of their local market so they can optimize the price of their home and close quickly.”

Top Tips for Sellers in 2016

1. List during prime-buying season. Data shows that the prime home buying season usually begins in April and reaches a peak in June. “Sellers who list their home during the prime spring and summer months benefit from a larger population of buyers and potential bidding wars, which often result in higher prices and faster closings,” according to realtor.com report.
 2. Price to sell. Home prices nationwide are expected to rise 3 percent year-over-year, with a few markets expected to see a 10 percent increase this year alone. Home sellers would be wise to price their home adequately for the market and based on comparables.
- **For the third year in a row, the percent of first-time homebuyers in the pool of all 2015 buyers decreased to a historical low number, according to The National Association of REALTORS®.** In 2012, the percent of first-time homebuyers was 39 percent of all buyers and in 2015 it was down again to just 32 percent. In the western region of the United States, it was as low as 26 percent and highest in the Northeast region at 46 percent. The median age has held steady at 31 years for five years in a row since 2011. Millennials aged 25-34 years have made up the largest share of first-timers at approximately 50-60 percent in the last decade. In 2015, Millennials accounted for 58 percent of first-time homebuyers compared to 50 percent ten years earlier in 2005. Repeat buyers were spread evenly at 20 percent in most age groups. Buyer demographics also saw huge differences between household compositions for first-time buyers. Unmarried couples made up the largest first-timers at 57 percent compared to married couples who accounted for only 27 percent. Both single males and single females accounted for 39 percent of first-time homebuyers as well, well above the 31 percent of all buyers.

NE Seattle Average Neighborhood Sales Prices

Neighborhood	Avg Sales Price	# of Sales
Windermere	\$1,610,790	23
Laurelhurst	\$1,485,617	61
Inverness	\$1,279,500	5
Hawthorne Hills	\$984,842	31
View Ridge	\$958,769	55

Bryant	\$741,119	116
Matthews Beach	\$711,258	46
Ravenna	\$680,203	129
Wedgwood	\$629,922	126
Roosevelt	\$586,757	23
Maple Leaf	\$566,821	162
Meadowbrook	\$536,782	79
Victory Heights	\$528,057	38
Northgate	\$423,855	29
Olympic Hills	\$419,953	60
Lake City	\$387,501	25

MAYOR MURRAY’S STATE OF THE CITY 2016 ADDRESS

In his State of the City address before the Seattle City Council on February 16th Mayor Ed Murray expanded the City’s commitment to support education, job opportunities and success for all of Seattle’s youth. He also pledged to hire an additional 100 police officers above the 100 net new officers he has already budgeted, and offered new initiatives to support small businesses, foster the arts, and activate urban parks.

The mayor cited Seattle’s current successes, including 63,000 new jobs in the city in the last five years, an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent and median income at an all-time high.

But the mayor noted that some communities are not fully benefiting from the current growth, especially African American and East African male youth between the ages 14 to 24. Seattle is one of 14 cities to receive a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Innovation Teams program, which aims to enhance the capacity of City Halls to solve intractable urban problems and improve the lives of residents. The team’s first charge is to assess and address disparities facing young black men.

“The health of black men is essential to the health of society,” said Murray. “I believe that when our young black men are at their best, Seattle is at its best. My vision is that in 10 years, all of Seattle’s young people will have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits that come with a growing city and a growing economy.”

Murray challenged Seattle’s employers to help double the number of available positions in the Mayor’s Youth Employment Initiative to 4,000. The City will partner with the Center for Children & Youth Justice to train outreach workers to engage young men and link them to school, jobs, training and other services.

The City will also create a first-in-the-nation program to respond to the 40 percent of youth-violence cases that involve violence against a family member, reducing the need for youth detention. Seattle will also provide an additional \$200,000 for Career Bridge, a proven program that puts individuals with criminal records on a path to success through job training, education and other supports. Seattle will also partner with Seattle Colleges to create a new College for Working Adults to help lower-wage workers increase their earnings or change careers.

To address the opportunity gap and the persistent disparities in our public schools impacting children of color, Murray will build on last year’s launch of the Seattle Preschool Program with a the first citywide Education Summit in more than 25 years.

As part of the City’s efforts to ensure that neighborhoods remain affordable and livable, the mayor today announced new initiatives to support small businesses and nurture art and culture as Seattle grows. The Commercial Affordability Advisory Committee will identify issues that lead to displacement of small businesses in growing Urban Villages and recommend actions that support affordable commercial spaces. And to support Seattle’s vibrant arts and cultural community, another major employment sector, the mayor announced that a significant portions of King Street Station will be permanently rededicated with 15,000 square feet of public arts space and new affordable spaces for small businesses.

In his address to the Council, Mayor Murray noted that “public safety is an area where we have made significant progress, yet still have significant challenges. Even with the progress we have made in the past year, much more needs to be done to address property crime.”

Under the leadership of Police Chief Kathleen O’Toole, crime overall fell 7 percent citywide in 2015, including a 30 percent drop in auto thefts and a 20 percent drop in crime in Southeast Seattle.

