



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 24, 2020

Seattle City Council Moves Forward With Plan To Gut Police Department

On Tuesday, the Seattle City Council voted to override Mayor Jenny Durkan's veto of proposed drastic cuts to the city's police department by a 7-2 vote. The cuts to police funding are said to be a "down payment" on the council's pledge to cut the department's budget by a full 50 percent over the next few years.



The cuts were originally proposed in early August, causing the city's first black female police chief, Carmen Best, to resign. Durkan vetoed that budget, saying at the time that the city needed to "make changes in a more thoughtful, deliberate way."

The cuts include the elimination of 100 sworn officers (32 patrol officers) through layoffs and attrition, beginning in November. Police salaries will be capped at \$150,000, with the chief's salary reduced to \$275,000. They also include an end to the Navigation Team — the police department's outreach to the homeless in the city. In total, this round of cuts amounts to \$3 million — a tiny portion of the department's more than \$400 million annual budget.

It is doubtful that the layoffs will begin in November, however, since the proposal calls for giving affected officers and staff a three-month notice.

Council members Alex Pedersen and Debora Juarez were the two dissenting votes.

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"Countless videos of black and brown lives lost here in Seattle and across the country shows us that not everyone feels safe in our community, and not everyone is safe," said Council President Lorena Gonzalez, who voted to override the veto.

"We cannot look away from this and we can no longer accept the status quo if we truly believe that black lives matter," Gonzalez continued.

Socialist council member Kshama Sawant credited the Marxist group Black Lives Matter for exerting "ferocious" pressure on the council to override the mayor's veto. Sawant and Durkan have been at odds since the mayor accused Sawant of [leaking her home address](#) to agitators who showed up to protest at the gated home, despite the fact that the mayor had been receiving death threats during the summertime occupation of the city's Capitol Hill neighborhood.

Both Durkan and Sawant are battling recall efforts at this time.

In a statement, Durkan blasted the council's vote, saying that the city was ill-prepared to act so quickly and that there was a complete lack of a plan for moving forward. Durkan also claimed that she would not allow the Navigation Team to be eliminated.



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“[There’s] a lack of plan on addressing [homeless] encampments across the city if we eliminate the Navigation Team, a lack of plan regarding the specific source to repay a loan, and a lack of plan to legally reduce our force while not jeopardizing a 9-1-1 response. While Council may not be concerned about the details, I am. And they actually do matter,” Durkan’s statement read.

In Seattle, the city council is in charge of allocating funds, but the mayor has discretion in spending.

While Durkan is fighting the proposed budget cuts, she has tried to ingratiate herself with movement to defund the police, recently pledging more than \$100 million in grants to organizations that participated in the Capitol Hill occupation this summer. In addition, Durkan has even hired a former [sex trafficker](#) to be a “street czar” at a salary of \$150,000 to help in the deescalation of violence in the city.

A Black Lives Matter splinter group, [Decriminalize Seattle](#), issued a statement about the veto override, which read, “Today, we are encouraged to see the City Council, emboldened by the support of tens of thousands of BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] community members, resist Mayor Durkan’s bullying tactics and anti-black obstructionism.”

“As we head into the 2021 budget cycle, we expect council members to maintain their conviction, elevate Black lives, and uphold their commitments to divest from policing and reinvest in Black communities,” the group added.

Community business leaders were less enthused with the council’s actions. The Downtown Seattle Association, which represents some 2,000 corporate, non-profit, and residential members, argued that the council’s actions “won’t result in real police reform” and might result in a more dangerous city.

“The Council needs to listen to constituents from across the city, not just those who choose to gather outside their front doors,” the association said.

The Seattle City Council, and to a lesser extent, the mayor, are capitulating to the Black Live Matter mob to the detriment of their citizens. With government like this, is it any wonder that on Monday the U.S. Justice Department labeled Seattle as an [“anarchy”](#) jurisdiction?

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