

October 7, 2005

Licton Springs Community Council Report for October

North Precinct Advisory Council Report for October 5, 2005

The meeting did get underway a little late (and ran much later than usual) with the introduction of the “new” acting Precinct Commander, Captain Mike Washburn, and his operations officer, Lieutenant Dick Reed. As many of you already know, Captain Dan Oliver was called upon by Chief Kerlikowske to run a long-term special project. The project will require Captain Oliver’s full-time attention, which prevents him from attending to the needs of the North Precinct. However, Captain Oliver did grace us one more time to give some results from the previous months and make yet another award. This month’s meeting was also well attended by a group from the Carkeek neighborhood.

**Captain Washburn:** I have the extreme honor of being selected as the North Precinct Commander. As the new Precinct Commander, I wanted to send out a short note introducing myself. I am a 19-year veteran of the Seattle Police Department, spending all but three years of that time in uniform. I have worked in patrol at every rank and have also worked in both the Anti-Crime Team, as well as the Community Police Team. In my last assignment, I was the Weed and Seed Task Force Commander, which involved coordinating the efforts of various law enforcement agencies working in the designated Weed and Seed area. In addition to preventing crime and enforcing the law, one of the most rewarding aspects of working in a uniform assignment is the opportunity to interact with community members to solve problems and address neighborhood issues. I value not only the results of the collaborative work, but also the long-term relationships that develop.

In my last assignment as the Southwest Precinct’s Operations Commander, I worked closely with neighborhood groups, community councils, social service providers, and public and private agencies to improve the livability of the area. I believe strongly in the value of neighborhood residents and business owners working in conjunction with law enforcement to achieve extraordinary results. I look forward to continuing this type of work at the North Precinct.

In the short time I have been at the North Precinct, I have been very impressed with how productive and motivated the officers and supervisors are. I am honored to work with them. They handle calls with care and professionalism and don’t allow the quality of response to suffer despite the immense call volume. I see my job as ensuring that the men and women of the North Precinct

get what they need to continue to perform at such a high level in their service to you, the community.

**Featured Speaker:** Moving ahead to the evening's featured speaker, Crime Prevention Coordinator, Diane Horswill, we all got a preview of the SDART ("start") program being implemented in Seattle. "SDART" is Seattle Disaster Aid & Response Teams.

SDART (Seattle Disaster Aid & Response Teams) is a neighborhood-oriented approach to emergency preparedness. It is based on the belief that a cooperative effort between a City and its citizens is the only sure way to prepare for major disasters (a real lesson learned from the mess in the South). Major disasters stretch City resources to their limits. It is estimated that regular emergency services will be unable to respond to most calls during the first 72 hours (at a minimum) following a major disaster, such as a severe earthquake. The number of people who will need help, and the inaccessibility of many neighborhoods due to damage and debris, will prevent immediate aid. If individual residents and their neighborhoods are prepared to mutually assist each other during these critical hours, lives can be saved, property can be spared, and emergency services can be freed to respond to the most devastated areas.

Experience proves that people will naturally assist one another when disasters occur. In order for this assistance to be timely, however, citizens must be organized and know beforehand how they can contribute to the overall disaster response. SDART is designed to promote this neighborhood organization and preparedness. SDART's overall purpose is to enable Seattle neighborhoods to be self-sufficient for a MINIMUM of 72 hours following a major disaster. This is accomplished by: providing the motivation and the materials citizens need to prepare themselves at home for disasters, and helping residents organize their neighborhood into six disaster response teams: communications, damage assessment, first aid, safety and security, light search and rescue, and sheltering and special needs.

Many people are aware of the potential disasters we face in the Northwest, such as earthquakes, wind storms, and winter storms, but awareness is not preparedness. Preparedness begins only when people act. Successfully motivating residents to actively prepare for major disasters will result in significant benefits to themselves and to the City. These benefits include: a reduction of loss of life, number of injuries, and destruction of property, a reduction of secondary hazards, such as fires, a more manageable response environment for professional emergency responders, and an enhanced ability for the community to recover more quickly from the disaster effects.

Citizen Roles and Responsibilities: The City of Seattle's Disaster Readiness and Response Plan delineates citizen responsibilities during times of disaster: (1) citizens have the responsibility to prepare themselves, their families, and their homes for disasters; (2) neighborhoods are urged to plan and form the collective capacity to survive on their own for a MINIMUM of the 72 hours without help from normal public safety and health services; and, (3) citizen teams are to be established, equipped, and trained to perform basic disaster response skills.

To facilitate the accomplishment of these three roles and responsibilities, SDART focuses on helping citizens increase their disaster readiness and response skills first, at home, and second, in their neighborhood.

SDART Facilitates the Accomplishment of Citizen Roles and Responsibilities Increasing Personal Preparedness. While the overall focus of the SDART program is on teaching neighborhoods self-sufficiency during times of disaster, preparedness, efforts must center initially on individuals and families in their homes. A city whose population is prepared at home will see a significant reduction in the need for police, fire, and ambulance support. The consummate challenge for disaster educators is to motivate their audience to move beyond awareness to action. Research has shown that one reason people fail to act is because they feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks they are told they need to do - so they choose to do nothing.

SDART works to change the perception that preparing for disasters requires a lot of time, demands that many things be done, and costs a lot of money. To be effective, disaster preparedness needs to become a lifetime habit. It is not something that is hurriedly completed and then forgotten about - it requires ongoing activity, and an understanding that a little effort spread over time is much better than a one-time flurry of activity. To facilitate this change of attitude and habit, and to enable Seattle citizens to complete the actions that will reduce their likelihood of injury and loss, the SDART Program emphasizes the completion of 12 disaster preparedness activities, one each month, organized as a SDARTboard (simulating a dart board).

Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness Experience shows that prepared or not, neighbors naturally come together to help each other out after a disaster. Unfortunately, unorganized neighborhoods frequently fail to execute a timely response because their first efforts are spent in getting organized. Prepared neighborhoods know what to do - Right Now. They do not waste precious time figuring out who can do what. Their more immediate response saves lives, reduces the severity of injuries, and lessens property damage.

Organized neighborhoods have pre-assigned tasks. They know who will provide first aid, who will take care of children who may be home alone, who

will check on homes to ensure there are no leaking natural gas or broken water lines, and who will rope off hazards such as downed electrical lines.

Prepared neighborhoods enjoy peace of mind. They know they will not be alone after a disaster. They know what they will be doing to support the neighborhood, and what the neighborhood will be doing to support them. Prepared neighborhoods take advantage of the skills, resources, and equipment already in the neighborhood to mount an effective disaster response.

To enable a neighborhood (which is defined as a typical Block Watch group of 25 - 50 homes) to take care of their own needs, citizens are organized into six disaster response teams:

Communications - members of this team monitor emergency radio broadcasts and keep the neighborhood informed of relevant information, external to the neighborhood, about the disaster. They also serve as runners, establishing a communication link between the neighborhood and the City via amateur radio operators. Amateur radio operators play a vital role in the overall disaster response. Communication team members gather vital information about the overall status of their neighborhood and take this information to the pre-identified radio site closest to their neighborhood where amateur radio operators will be waiting to relay it to the City's Emergency Operations Center.

Damage Assessment - members of this team make a preliminary and then a detailed assessment of the damage the neighborhood has sustained. They assist neighbors with the documentation of their belongings before the disaster and of their damage after the disaster.

First Aid - members of this team establish a Neighborhood First Aid Station and to provide basic first aid during the disaster.

Safety & Security - this team provides safety to the neighborhood by immediately checking the neighborhood for fires and putting them out while they are still small, turning off the natural gas and water mains when necessary, roping off hazards such as downed electrical lines, and removing broken glass, uprooted trees, and other debris. They will help provide for the sanitation needs of the neighborhood during long-term recovery. Since it is unlikely that a widespread evacuation of the city would ever be required, widespread looting (as seen in the hurricane areas) is not envisioned.

Light Search & Rescue - members of this team perform light searches of homes and rescues of neighbors who may be trapped in their homes. They also implement the neighborhood internal communication system utilizing OK/Help cards.

Sheltering & Special Needs - this team establishes a child/adult care center for children whose parents may not be home when the disaster strikes, for the elderly or disabled, and for anyone who may be unable to care for himself or herself after the disaster. They also provide care for those whose family members are completing their disaster response tasks.

Block Coordinators(s) - these vital neighbors coordinate the activities of the neighborhood Response Teams both before and during a disaster.

#### Response Team Task Descriptions:

Each of these Response Teams is supported by a simple-to-follow task description which outlines step-by-step what to do before the disaster to prepare for an effective response, and provides a checklist of what to do after the disaster. Experience proves that providing neighbors with these materials alleviates many of the fears and feelings of uncertainty that may preclude them from participating. An extra supply of these task descriptions is kept by the Block Coordinator. On the day of the disaster, they can be distributed to convergent volunteers, those neighbors who did not participate in the organizational activities of the group, but now want very badly to participate in the neighborhood response.

However, the SDART Program does offer training classes to support the development of Teams (see SDART Academy on the city website). Experience proves that this type of training facilitates the development of two components vital to success: an increase in the confidence of the neighborhood to take care of its own needs; and, an increase in the overall enthusiasm for and commitment to the program.

**Important Note:** During times of disaster, neighborhood response teams are expected to act in accordance with all City laws and ordinances. No extraordinary powers or rights will be granted them. (No, you can't shoot first and ask question later!) The sole purpose of these teams is to facilitate an efficient and effective response to the disaster.

Summary: Many traditional public safety approaches take a paternalistic attitude that tells the community to "stand back and let the professionals handle it." SDART recognizes that a well-prepared community actually becomes a resource to the professionals.

SDART is committed to go beyond many conventional community preparedness efforts of raising awareness through education and information; SDART means action.

Seattle citizens and neighborhoods that are prepared, organized, and trained know what to expect during times of disaster, what to do, and how to come together in an organized, timely response. Consequently, lives will be saved and property damage reduced.

All program materials are designed so that no training is required for their use. This allows everyone to participate, even those who have expressed no interest in the program until the moment of the disaster. The materials build upon basic skills the person has and requires no prerequisites.

SDART increases community involvement and facilitates neighbors knowing and helping each other. This brings the neighborhood closer together and helps create a sense of belonging, unity and pride.

SDART encourages leadership to come from the neighborhood, not from the City. SDART staff provides guidance and support, but the ultimate success depends upon the neighborhood's own leadership and collective support in preparing for disasters. Experience shows that most groups assume this responsibility fairly quickly.

Disasters such as earthquakes, floods, wind and snowstorms can't be prevented. But, we can prepare. If we take the time, we may all be able to reduce the horrible consequences a disaster can wreak - like death, injury to people and pets, and damage to property. None of us wants to sit among the destruction and say, "if I had only."

Primarily through the City's Seattle Disaster Aid & Response Teams Program, Seattle Emergency Management educates people about the risks - and provides them with useful tools and practical steps they can take to protect themselves. Individuals, families, neighborhoods, businesses, and public agencies all have a responsibility to be prepared. We hope you'll become informed and do your share (you and your neighbor)!

Seattle has had its share of destructive events. The list that follows ranges from full-scale disasters to wake-up calls, like earthquakes in the mid-1990's. Most events had a direct impact within the City limits. But a few, like the deadly 1972 Vancouver, Washington tornado, were included to illustrate that less common hazards do pose a risk here.

February 2001 Earthquake: The Nisqually Earthquake was a Magnitude 6.8 event. Large deep quake under South Puget Sound. Regionally, it caused one death (stress induced heart attack) and 407 injuries, 4 of which were serious. Estimates place damage over \$200 million in Seattle.

June 1997 Earthquake: Magnitude 4.9. The shallow earthquake was centered under Bremerton. No damage reported in Seattle.

May 1996 Earthquake: A shallow magnitude 5.3 earthquake was centered under Duvall. Some light damage was reported, mainly objects falling from shelves. No damage was reported in Seattle.

January 1993 Wind: 'The Inaugural Day Storm.' Massive outages occurred in Seattle. Debris littered the road and traffic lights failed. Traffic came to a standstill.

November 1991 Wind: 400,000 people lost power in the greater Seattle area.

November 1990 Wind: The Old Mercer Island Bridge sank in a storm. The sinking was caused, in part, by construction waste in the floats under the bridge.

May, 1980 Volcano: Mt. St. Helens erupted, causing only trace ash dustings in Seattle. However, event caused severe disruption in the eastern part of the state.

April 1972 Tornado: Regional: Vancouver, WA. A tornado developed as part of a regional windstorm near Portland, Oregon. It moved across the Columbia River and killed six people, injuring 300 more and causing \$6 million in damage.

April 1965 Earthquake: Magnitude 6.5. The epicenter was closer to the city than in the 1949 earthquake. Many ground failures occurred in the Alki and Harbor Island areas, but they were not as concentrated as in the 1949 quake. Six people were killed, mostly by falling debris. Damage was \$50 million (1984 dollars).

No disaster is totally natural. A natural event causes a disaster when it occurs in an area that is vulnerable to damage. The following are hazards that have historically been problems. As the City develops and prepares itself for them, the severity of the damage rises and falls. Seattle is in the heart of earthquake country. Recent discoveries of activity long faults that run through the heart of the City and off the Washington coast underscore the risk. Nobody knows when the next big earthquake will happen, but when it does, the consequences could be serious. Seattle has an older building stock and infrastructure than most places in Western Washington heightening vulnerability. The City government is working to mitigate the effects of a large earthquake and assisting residents prepare through programs like Seattle Project Impact and Seattle Disaster Aid and Response Teams (SDART).

The flood hazard is relatively minor compared to other parts of King County. Thornton and Longfellow Creeks have backed up in the past. Parts of South

Park are also in the FEMA designated floodplain. Flood control structures have been built along all of these waterways. Most of the flooding has been shallow inundation.

Landslides are a common problem and increasing density has increased exposure. The landslides during the winter of 1996-97 were one of Seattle's most costly disasters. They are often triggered by ground water pressure so they tend to occur during wet winters following a heavy storm. So far they have not caused many casualties, but the slide that killed a Bainbridge Island family reminds us not to forget their danger.

Residents like to joke about the poor skills Seattle drivers show in the snow. Whether it is true is not known, but the City's hilly terrain does explain why snowstorms are so paralyzing. Since snowstorms are not as common as in other northern cities, neither residents nor local authorities have large amounts of snow removal equipment. Snowstorms can be hard on businesses if they occur during the holiday season.

Tornadoes are rare in Western Washington, but do happen. Only one occurred inside the City limits and nobody was injured. Recently, the National Weather Services has been receiving more reports of funnel clouds and actual tornadoes in Western Washington leading to speculation that they may be more common than previously thought.

The eruption of Mt. St. Helens was the most spectacular disaster in the Northwest, but only affected Seattle indirectly. With prevailing winds moving from west to east, most ash from the eruption of a Cascade Volcano would blow towards the east. Were Seattle blanketed with ash, the City would shut down. Mt. St. Helens' ash was more difficult to remove than snow and more damaging to equipment. Debris could wash down the Duwamish into Elliott Bay from a Mt. Rainier eruption, but dangerous mudflows would stop short of Seattle.

Earthquakes, windstorms, landslides, power outages, and other situations can have serious, even life-threatening consequences. But people can do many things to protect themselves. SDART's overriding goal is to provide information and tools that help save lives. Through the program's training of individuals and neighborhood groups citywide, thousands of people are now part of effective emergency response teams.

Do you know how to protect yourself during the ground shaking of an earthquake? What should you do if gas lines are broken or leaking? Or if power and phone lines are down? What about your children or other loved ones who may be home alone during a serious emergency when 911 responders are unavailable? Learn more!



Experience shows that preparing homes in advance of an earthquake goes a long way toward preventing harm. In San Francisco's 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and Southern California's more recent Northridge earthquake, homes that had been structurally retrofit suffered less damage than similar, nearby structures that hadn't been retrofit. And in those homes where nonstructural retrofitting was done, valuable contents inside the homes fared far better than in homes where no nonstructural retrofitting had been done.

What does structural retrofitting mean? Usually, it refers to correctly tying homes to their foundation and reinforcing sheer walls against the stress of lateral movement. Nonstructural retrofitting, on the other hand, means securing the contents of a home from movement. Examples include using special fasteners to keep televisions, stereos and computers from tumbling over and breaking; and making sure that picture frames, ceiling fixtures and other valuable items are secured or stored in a way that minimizes their risk of falling.

Home Retrofit? Seattle Project Impact has a program called Home Retrofit geared toward providing step-by-step information about how older, wood-frame homes built before the mid-1970's can be retrofitted. Over 250,000 wood-frame homes in King County may need to be retrofitted, and many of them fall within the standards Home Retrofit addresses. The overall purpose: to increase your home's structural integrity and ability to withstand earthquake damage. Do you need to retrofit? The best way to find the answer to this question is to attend a Home Retrofit Class for Homeowners. At the end of this two-hour class, you will be able to: (1) complete a home assessment; (2) read and understand the plans/guidelines on how to retrofit; (3) know how getting a permit protects you; (4) use tools properly (if you choose to retrofit your own home); or (5) work with one of the Home Retrofit-trained contractors to complete your retrofit.

To find out about Home Retrofit Classes for Homeowners, the tool-lending library (to save you money), or the next Contractor Training, call (206) 382-2159 - or visit the Seattle Project Impact ["http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/projectimpact/pages/piooverview/homeretrofit/homeretrofit.htm."](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/projectimpact/pages/piooverview/homeretrofit/homeretrofit.htm)

In addition to securing your house, you need to have on hand supplies for yourself and maybe your neighbors.

#### Preparedness Checklist:

1. Water - store a minimum of three gallons of water per person (one gallon per person per day, for three days). Use clean, food-grade plastic containers, such as two-liter soda pop bottles.

2. Food - store at least a 3-day supply of food for people and pets. Choose foods that are nutritious, require minimum preparation, and are items you normally eat.

Alert: Using Food When the Power Goes Off

- First, use perishable foods, including those in the refrigerator.
- Second, use frozen foods from the freezer. To minimize the number of times you open the fridge and freezer doors, post a list of contents on the outside of the door.
- If you have frozen water containers in the freezer, move them into the fridge to help keep the temperature cool.
- Third, use canned and dried foods.

Alert: Cooking Without Electricity

- Never use cooking equipment designed for outdoor use indoors – this could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Before using a fireplace after an earthquake, have your chimney and flue inspected for cracks. Sparks may escape through a small crack and start a fire in the wall or attic.

3. Critical First Aid Supplies - include a 3-day supply of prescription medicines and an extra pair of eyeglasses and contact lenses with your regular first aid supplies.

4. Essential Tools & Supplies:

- AM battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- ABC fire extinguisher
- Manual can opener
- Baby supplies, and supplies for any who have special needs

Alert: Staying Warm Without Electricity

- Plan to have all household members sleep in the same room. Close off rooms that aren't being used to conserve heat.
- Use sleeping bags and blankets, even during daylight hours, for extra warmth.

Alert: Lighting Without Electricity

- Use lightsticks. These provide light from 30 minutes to 12 hours, and can be purchased at camping supply and hardware stores. Store these in the freezer to extend their shelf life.
- Use flashlights. Store extra batteries in the refrigerator to extend their shelf life.

Seattle Emergency Management has spent much of its time preparing individual citizens for disaster. It has also worked hard to prepare City infrastructure, plan for service restoration and exercise City staff. Despite these efforts, many citizens do not know what the City is doing to protect its residents.

Does the City have a program to help citizens prepare for a disaster? Yes, Seattle Disaster Aid and Response Teams and Seattle's "Project Impact" both help citizens. SDART's goal is to enable citizen groups modeled on the Block Watch program to be self-sufficient for three days following a major disaster. (Three days is a little overly optimistic, think "six days.") Seattle Project Impact is helping citizens retrofit their homes to better withstand earthquakes.

The City is preparing to train all City employees in the SDART program and procedures.

For a complete breakdown of the SDART program go to [www.seattle.gov](http://www.seattle.gov) and click on "Personal & Home Disaster Preparedness."

North Precinct Advisory Committee President, Pete Rogerson (just back from Greece and Turkey) reiterated the need to pass along as much of the public safety information from these meetings as possible.

Captain Oliver had the time to relay the following information on the new approach to car thefts. Car thefts have been going down steadily (slow but steady) as well as all the other associated crimes. (That's good news.) Drug sales continue to increase. It was at this point that City Attorney, Ed McKenna, pointed out the recent article in the Seattle PI that was giving the "thumbs-up" to the County Attorney's Office for the program started by Tom Carr of the City (so much for accurate reporting).

Ed McKenna also had this to say: There is an ever growing problem with the issuing of licenses for hard alcohol. It seems the "cap" on the number of licenses might be thrown out. That would mean more money for the State but also more establishments all over town serving hard drinks.

Another question I posed to Mr. McKenna had its origin at a recent meeting with the GAIN group and it went like this: With regard to the motels along Aurora that have been housing sex offenders that have been released back into society, do they (motel - hotel owners) have any obligation to inform the casual traveler whom they will be spending time with? So far it doesn't seem so. YIKES! How would you like to wake up in the morning to find that many of those around you are level three (likely to re-offend) sex offenders?

There was also discussion about the upcoming budget and the desire to have more cops on the street. This got a little "heated" at times. The group of people from Carkeek, as well as the representatives from the GAIN group, left no doubt on how they felt about the shortage of law enforcement officers in Seattle. When the dust settled, it was agreed that the shortfall needs to be addressed and the best way to do that is WRITE THE CITY COUNCIL (no angry phone calls or nasty E-Mail, they just get dumped)!!! Plan to attend budget meetings and make your views known.

Ken Thompson