Dear Mayor Murray and Seattle City Councilmembers,

The Seattle Human Services Coalition is a coalition of more than 179 community health and human services agencies and programs working with Seattle residents toward a shared vision of a just and thriving community. We are writing today in concern about the proposed plan to spend $149 million in City of Seattle capital funding on the new North Precinct police station.

We share the concerns raised by a number of community groups including Ending the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC) and Seattle Black Book Club and those discussed at the Council’s Gender Equity, Safe Communities & New Americans Committee about spending significantly more than the initially proposed $89 million when we have so many pressing community needs, and no evidence that this proposed expenditure will make us safer.

We are especially supportive of Council’s resolution requiring a Race and Social Justice analysis of this proposed investment because it seems that investing public funds in the fortification or militarization of a police station is counterproductive to the Department of Justice reforms, as well as community relationships, especially with communities of color. If part of the solution to improving police-community relationships is based on enhancing the “outward-facing” aspects of the SPD, it is counter-productive to invest so much in fortifying the new precinct building. Ultimately it is the weakness of community connections that will make our police officers and communities less safe.

At the same time, building well-being in our communities across Seattle will make our officers and our communities both safer. A more effective investment of additional funding beyond the original $89 million would be real solutions that will actually address the safety of the community. SHSC’s City of Seattle 2017-18 Budget Recommendation Portfolio for a Just and Thriving Community provides a number of specific proposals for investments that will lead to safer, healthier communities. These proposals explicitly address institutionalized racism and other systemic inequities that hold us back from equality of opportunity to reach our full potential.

The way we build our police station is a demonstration of how we intend to police our communities for the next 50 years, and is a concrete symbol of your priorities. Do
we choose to build our legacy as the city with the most expensive police stations or do we choose to invest in actions that evidence shows will make our communities safer? As our elected leaders you have the opportunity to lead the way by example on how to apply these values to this policy decision, and to put your belief that Black Lives Matter into action. Since fund sources have been identified, we urge you to invest half the additional $60 million in human services to support our communities to reach our full potential.

On behalf of SHSC members, we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Member Coalitions

* Advocacy, Organizing & Capacity Building Coalition * Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence *
* Community Health Council of Seattle King County * Disability Services Committee *
  * King County Early Learning Coalition * Meals Partnership Coalition *
  * Non-Profit Anti-Racism Coalition * Seattle Food Committee *
* Seattle Helpline Coalition * Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness *
  * Services for Seniors * Youth Development Executives of King County *

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