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dropping nationwide.

There is a unique feature of Multnomah County's Neighborhood Unit not replicated in any other community prosecution program, as far as Street Roots could determine from speaking with multiple experts.

Two of the prosecutors' salaries are paid by sources other than publicly funded grants and the office's county-approved budget of \$1.4 million.

Lloyd District business owners and TriMet each pay for their own prosecutor.

TriMet paid \$206,633 for a full time prosecutor in 2016, and Lloyd paid \$75,000 for a prosecutor it shares with the North-quadrant neighborhood.

Additionally, Portland Business Alliance provides support staff for the downtown neighborhood prosecutor.

These three prosecutors use their knowledge of the law and cooperation from the police in the precincts where they work to solve the crime-related issues that are of importance to TriMet, Portland Business Alliance and the Lloyd business district.

Together, they filed nearly 70 percent of all quality-of-life charges issued by the Neighborhood Unit from mid 2014 to mid 2015, with the TriMet and Downtown DDAs filing the vast majority.

At the time, there were seven neighborhoods, with Southeast, East, North and Gresham also represented. Their prosecutors filed the other 30 percent of quality-of-life charges.

Lloyd district mainly filed shoplifting charges, which were excluded from Street Roots analysis. However the Lloyd DDA has focused on removing gang members in the past by using tactics such as issuing exclusions and trespassing charges. This DDA was instrumental in pushing criminals out of Holladay Park.

In the Neighborhood Unit's contract with Lloyd District businesses, the prosecutor's job description includes reviewing and screening all offenses made known to him or her by business owners in the district and, "Assisting the District in the development of new City ordinances that will provide useful tools to law enforcement in an effort to establish and consistently maintain a behavior code for the district's streets, sidewalks and parks."

While no contract exists between the Portland Business Alliance and district attorney's office, Deputy District Attorney Adam Gibbs supplied Street Roots with a partnership agreement dating back to 1994 that lays out the verbal agreement between Association for Portland Progress, which later merged with the Portland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce to form Portland Business Alliance, and the district attorney's office.

It states the association, whose budget was made possible by contributions from downtown property owners, would supply the district attorney's office with a legal assistant and would assist with the installation and expense of a computer modem link for the DA's network. It's a partnership that's continued under the Portland Business Alliance.

After conferring with several attorneys, Street Roots determined there aren't any state statutes that explicitly forbid groups or organizations from funding their own

prosecutors.

Both Lloyd and a portion of downtown are "enhanced services districts," meaning that business owners and condominium property managers in those areas are assessed a fee that goes to pay for extra public services in their district, such as security, police, public transportation and prosecution.

Today there are eight prosecutors representing eight neighborhoods, with DDAs recently

being added to represent Rockwood and Albina, both paid for with public funds. In Rockwood, the DDA focuses on livability issues, high-end property crimes and gangs, and in Albina, the DDA works in partnership with community pastors, police and the city's Office of Youth Violence Prevention, also to combat gang violence.

While the Neighborhood Unit continues to expand, it began with just one

prosecutor, paid for by the business owners in the Lloyd district.

As reported by Jim Redden at the time ("Hired Gun," Willamette Week, 1990), government and civic leaders were concerned crime in the area could reduce benefits from recent investments, such as the addition of the Oregon Convention Center, a new office tower, additional Max infrastructure and the Lloyd Center shopping mall remodel.

A group of private business and property owners, known back then as the Holladay District Association, started paying the county to dedicate a prosecutor to focus solely on the area around their business and property interests.

This arrangement drew criticism at the program's outset. Several defense attorneys and Gary Perlstein, an administration of justice professor at Portland State University, voiced their concerns to Willamette Week.

"It raises the question of who the (deputy) district attorney is working for, and whether he will do his job differently to meet the special needs of the people paying his salary," Perlstein was quoted as saying.

Deputy District Attorney James Hayden, champion of Portland's former drug-free zones, is the Neighborhood Unit supervisor and serves as the downtown DDA. He said these days, every neighborhood has a district attorney assigned to it, giving all county residents that "extra set of eyes" in the district attorney's office.

But not all neighborhoods are created equal.

The East Precinct's district attorney, for example, has a much larger geographical area to cover, and in the time-frame analyzed, wasn't always staffed. Only 38 quality-of-life charges were from that

position during the time frame Street Roots examined, compared to the downtown DDA's 662, and TriMet's 632.

Gresham's DDA also covers an expansive area, working with police precincts in Troutdale, Portland and Fairview, as well as Gresham.

"Yeah, it's spread out - no question," said Hayden, when asked about the disproportionate sizes of the DDA's

neighborhoods.

"It's not a perfect model," he said, but added that all areas of the county have a representative prosecutor.

Street Roots asked if any group, a neighborhood association for example, could hire its own district attorney to solve hyper-local crime issues. Hayden said he wasn't sure because no one has ever asked, but it's not something a neighborhood association could afford.

"Do you know what neighborhood association budgets are? They have a few hundred dollars,

so no - it's not going to happen. It's going to be these improvement districts that can self tax and want extra eyes on something," said Hayden.

Street Roots asked Hayden if he thought police are more apt to arrest people for quality of life crimes when they know a prosecutor is going to back them up by pressing charges.

"I don't think the police respond differently. They have a situation to deal with; they're just going to deal with it as best they can."

Wash, rinse, repeat

Working in tandem with Multnomah County's community prosecution program, is Community Court. It's where many quality-of-life cases end up.

But dwindling court resources forced the closure of courts located out in the communities, according to Hayden. Now Community Court is run out of the Justice Center in downtown Portland.

"When the court retreated from the neighborhoods," said Hayden, "to me the soul of community court - I hate to say it - it went with it."

Jane Fox, a Metropolitan Public Defender assigned to Community Court, agrees.

"It became something that was expedient, and a way of unclogging dockets as opposed to a way of helping people and providing them contact with the community," she said.

Two-thirds of first time offenses are eligible to be dismissed if the accused successfully completes court-ordered community service or mandated mental health or addictions treatment.

"If you sign up for treatment, it can be a very involved treatment that the social worker recommends. You go to jail if you fail

your treatment," said Fox. "And if they do have mental health issues or addiction issues - treatment's not an easy thing."

According to the district attorney's office, between 52 and 68 percent of Community Court defendants failed to complete either their assigned community service or treatment program each month over the past six months, although the office is unable to determine how many defendants completed a treatment program, specifically. Most get community service.

Deputy District Attorney Adam Gibbs said he's looked into treatment completion in the past because there was a desire to know if what the office was doing was effective, however the information just isn't tracked that way.

Borg, of Metropolitan Public Defenders, said there are better options, such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion in Seattle's King County, where low-level drug and prostitution offenders are diverted into community-based treatment and support services such as housing, health care, job training, treatment and mental health support, instead of being booked into jail and prosecuted.

He said King County has seen positive results by requiring offenders to complete simple tasks, such as taking one class on harm reduction - like learning about a syringe exchange - rather than requiring compliance with a strictly regimented treatment program.

Fox said if the effectiveness of Multnomah County's Community Court is based on whether or not there are repeat offenders, then that's a goal that's not being met.

"There's a lot of people that repeat community court," she said.

The data from cases issued by Multnomah County's Neighborhood Unit showed many defendants were repeatedly charged with minor offenses over the course of a one-year period alone.

A theme emerged from an examination of the most frequent offenders - those who had been arrested five or more times.

One offender was a 28-year-old homeless man who's been arrested for quality-of-life crimes 12 times since October 2013. Most of his arrests were for interfering with public transit, including the time he was drinking a beer in a bus shelter while he was excluded from TriMet property.

Each time he was arrested, booked into jail, sent through the criminal court system only to be re-arrested a month or two later.

Another repeat offender was arrested seven times and charged repeatedly with disorderly conduct and interfering with public transit. According to his court evaluation, he is also homeless and is self-reportedly schizophrenic.

In another case, a homeless man who is schizophrenic, a drug user, and who suffers from depression and PTSD was arrested six times. He was charged with crimes such as disorderly conduct, offensive littering and harassment.

Stopping the revolving door

In an effort to cut down on the revolving door to its jail, Clackamas County this spring launched its Transition Center in Oregon City.

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