



# King County

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 20, 2011

TO: Metropolitan King County Councilmembers

FROM: Cheryle A. Broom, County Auditor *CB*

SUBJECT: King County Sheriff's Office Performance Audit

The Council requested this audit in the summer of 2010 when it was considering placing a sales tax increase to fund criminal justice services on the ballot. The purpose of the audit was to review the operations of the Sheriff's Office with an emphasis on identifying efficiencies and cost savings.

### Major Audit Findings and Recommendations

The audit focused in four areas. These areas, and major findings in each area, are outlined below.

1. **Patrol and Criminal Investigations Divisions Staffing and Workload:**
  - Patrol FTE staffing was reduced proportionate to workload reductions from annexations and incorporations, but patrol posts were not reduced as much.
  - Patrol and Criminal Investigations Division staffing are not tied to workload.
2. **Unincorporated Area Staffing and Cost Comparisons:**
  - KCSO staffing level is higher than most other large sheriff's departments in Washington; KCSO has the highest level of staff compensation and highest cost per unincorporated area resident.
3. **Growth of Staffing Costs Over Time**
  - The 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement has accelerated staffing cost growth.
4. **Criteria for determining whether to charge for countywide services:**
  - Criteria are informal and, in some cases, inadequate to explain why some services are chargeable and some are provided free-of-charge.

The report includes seven recommendations to address these findings. Five of the recommendations were directed to the Sheriff's Office, and two of the recommendations were directed to the Executive.

The Sheriff concurred or partially concurred with four of the five recommendations directed to the Sheriff's Office and plans to implement those four recommendations. The report includes our comments on the Sheriff's response. The Executive concurred with the two recommendations directed to the Executive branch, and plans to implement them.

Metropolitan King County Councilmembers

Page 2

September 20, 2011

The King County Auditor's Office sincerely appreciates the cooperation received from the management and staff of the King County Sheriff's Office, the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, and the Human Resources Division.

CB:LB:jl

# **KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

## **PERFORMANCE AUDIT**



**King County**

Presented to  
the Metropolitan King County Council  
Government Accountability and Oversight Committee  
by the  
County Auditor's Office

Cheryle A. Broom, King County Auditor  
Larry Brubaker, Senior Principal Management Auditor  
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Report No. 2011-05  
September 20, 2011

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## Table of Contents

	<u>PAGE</u>
Executive Summary	3
<b>Introduction</b>	6
Section 1                      Questions Relating to Workload and Staffing	9
Section 2                      Questions Relating to How King County Compares to Other Jurisdictions in Staffing, Compensation, and Costs Relating to Services Provided in the Unincorporated Area	21
Section 3                      Questions Relating to the Impact of the 2008 Collective Bargaining Agreement on KCSO Staffing Costs	30
Section 4                      Questions Relating to Mandated vs. Non-Mandated and Regional vs. Local Services	40
<b>Exhibits</b>	
Exhibit 1                      King County Sheriff Expenditures by Source of Revenue	6
Exhibit 2                      King County Unincorporated Area Population and Crime Rates	7
Exhibit 3                      KCSO Compensation (Salary, Extra Pay, and Benefits) per Deputy	8
Exhibit 4                      Calls for Service Priorities	9
Exhibit 5                      Unincorporated Area Calls for Service by Geographic Area, 2000-2003, 2008-2010	11
Exhibit 6                      Unincorporated Patrol Staffing by Geographic Area, 2000-January 2010	12
Exhibit 7                      Percent Change in Patrol FTEs and Minimum Staffing Levels, 2000 - 2011	12
Exhibit 8                      Changes in Calls for Service and Patrol Staffing Total Calls and Calls per Deputy, 2000 - 2010	13
Exhibit 9                      High Priority Calls per Deputy 2000 - 2010	14
Exhibit 10                      KCSO Response Times – All Call Priorities Average Minutes to Respond, 2000-2003, 2008-2010	17
Exhibit 11                      Response Times – Higher Priority Calls Average Minutes to Respond, 2000-2003, 2008-2010	17
Exhibit 12                      Property Crimes Cases Percent with Follow-up Investigations, 2008-2011 To-Date	20
Exhibit 13                      Sheriff Department Officers per 1,000 Unincorporated Area Residents Including Overtime (OT) Equivalent	22
Exhibit 14                      Total Officers & Unincorporated Patrol Officers (Including OT Equivalent) per 1,000 Unincorporated Area Residents	23

## Table of Contents

Exhibit 15	Percentage of Officers Serving the Unincorporated Area Allocated to Patrol	23
Exhibit 16	Sheriff Department Span of Control	24
Exhibit 17	Unincorporated Area Crime Rates per 1,000 Population	25
Exhibit 18	2010 Unincorporated Area Crimes per Officer Serving the Unincorporated Area	26
Exhibit 19	Average County Sheriff Department Deputy Salary & Benefits	27
Exhibit 20	2010 Unincorporated Area Sheriff Cost per Unincorporated Resident	28
Exhibit 21	2010 Sheriff's Office Unincorporated Area Expenditures per Crime	28
Exhibit 22	Comparison of Sheriff's Offices Compensation Provisions for 2010	31
Exhibit 23	KCSO Deputy Compensation, 2005-2010	33
Exhibit 24	Projected Wages for KCSO Deputies and Sergeants	34
Exhibit 25	Provisions of Patrol Longevity Pay & Regular Longevity Pay in the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement	35
Exhibit 26	Cost Impact of Basing KCSO Premium Pays in Individual Officer Steps	36
Exhibit 27	Cost Impact of Changes in the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement	37
Exhibit 28	Change in Health Insurance Costs - Police Guild Versus Other County Employees	38
Exhibit 29	Annual Incremental vs. Annual Cumulative Fiscal Impact	39
Exhibit 30	King County Sheriff's Office Services and Mandates	41
<b>Appendices</b>		
Appendix 1	List of Recommendations & Implementation Schedule	44
Appendix 2	Sheriff Response	45
Appendix 3	Executive Response	50
Appendix 4	Auditor's Comments on Sheriff's Response	53

## Executive Summary

The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) provides local law enforcement service in the unincorporated area and for cities and other entities which contract with the King County for service. It also provides certain services countywide. Over time, annexations and incorporations have resulted in a higher proportion of King County residents living in cities, and fewer residents living in the unincorporated area. In recent years, the Sheriff's budget to serve the unincorporated area has been reduced both by the reduction in the unincorporated service area due to annexations and incorporations and by county revenue shortfalls. This has resulted in a greater proportion of the Sheriff's budget being supported by contract revenue; as of 2011, contract revenue represents over half of the Sheriff's budget. The County Council requested this audit in the summer of 2010 as it was considering putting a proposal on the ballot to increase the sales tax in order to provide additional funding for criminal justice services. The scope of the audit was to review the operations of the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) with an emphasis on identifying potential cost savings and efficiencies.

The audit focused on the following areas:

- How does the KCSO measure workload and identify staffing needs, and how has staffing changed due to changes in workload resulting from annexations and incorporations?
- How does KCSO staffing, compensation, and costs compare to other jurisdictions?
- How have KCSO staffing costs changed over time?
- How does KCSO determine whether services provided on a countywide basis be provided free-of-charge (regional services) or provided for a fee (specialty services)?

## Key Audit Findings and Recommendations

### Workload and Staffing Level Findings

- The number of calls for service responded to by patrol has declined substantially, likely as a result of annexations. Response times have improved countywide.
- FTE staffing levels for patrol have been reduced by relatively the same amount as workload declines attributable to annexations. However, patrol *minimum staffing levels* by patrol district have not been reduced to the same degree. With FTEs having been reduced more than minimum staffing levels, the use of overtime to cover patrol staffing posts has increased.
- The KCSO has not yet developed monitoring and reporting systems that would enable it to report on other aspects of workload and performance, such as the results of its proactive, community policing efforts.
- The KCSO has streamlined its operations by consolidating precincts and reducing command staff, and is currently exploring further operational changes which are expected to improve patrol efficiency by combining patrol districts.
- Criminal Investigations Division staffing has been reduced, but the KCSO has limited workload information and measures with which to assess historical workload and related staffing needs.

### Workload and Staffing Level Recommendations

- Develop a patrol staffing plan tied to workload and performance.
- Develop a plan that identifies its patrol operations goals, activities, measures of success and workload, and including community- and problem-oriented policing activities.
- Pursue economies of scale by continuing to explore merging precincts and patrol districts.
- Develop workload measurements for the Criminal Investigations Division.

### **Staffing, Compensation and Cost Comparisons**

- The audit compared KCSO staffing, compensation, and costs to six other large county sheriff departments in Washington. For both the KCSO and other county sheriff departments, the comparisons of staffing levels and costs include only those staff and costs for serving the unincorporated population. Staffing and costs relating to the provision of police services under contract to cities are not included in the comparison.
- We found that KCSO is above average in unincorporated area staffing levels per thousand unincorporated area residents. KCSO's compensation per officer (salary, extra pay, overtime, and benefits) was highest among the comparison group. While KCSO's base salary was comparable to other jurisdictions, KCSO has higher extra pay, overtime, and benefit costs. With higher than average staffing along with the highest amount of compensation per officer, KCSO ranked highest among the comparison group in costs per unincorporated area resident.

### **Staffing Cost Growth Findings**

- The adoption of the 2008 collective bargaining agreement (CBA) has accelerated the growth of staffing costs. In addition to the 5% annual salary increases, the 2008 CBA included several other provisions that have increased compensation costs. These include changes to longevity pay provisions, changes to how premium pay rates are calculated, changes to overtime provisions, and changes to the health benefit program.
- In our discussions with staff from the Office of Labor Relations within the Human Resources Division, which negotiates compensation issues with the Police Officers Guild, it was not clear whether the process of comparing compensation levels with comparable jurisdictions during the bargaining process takes into account all forms of compensation (e.g., salaries, overtime, extra pay, and benefits). Our comparison of deputy compensation costs among large county sheriff departments in Washington found that while the base salary at KCSO was comparable to other jurisdictions, KCSO had the highest level of total compensation per officer.
- Though the fiscal note transmitted with the 2008 CBA was reasonably accurate in its estimate of the fiscal impact of many of the changes made by the CBA, it underestimated the fiscal impact of certain changes relating to patrol longevity pay, changes in how premium pay levels are calculated, and the changes to the employee health benefit program. Also, the fiscal note portrayed the fiscal impact of the CBA by showing the annual incremental impact rather than the annual cumulative impact. While both numbers are accurate, we believe that portraying the annual cumulative impact would be more illustrative of the ongoing impact of a CBA.

### **Staffing Cost Growth Recommendations**

- The Human Resources Division should take into account all forms of compensation when comparing compensation levels with comparable jurisdictions.
- The Human Resources Division should portray the estimated fiscal impacts of proposed CBA's as a cumulative annual impact.

### **Regional vs. Local Services Finding**

- As mentioned above, the KCSO provides local police service in unincorporated King County and also in cities who choose to contract for these services. It also provides some services countywide. Some of the services provided countywide are provided by the county without charge to the jurisdiction in which the service is provided (regional services), and some services are provided for a fee (specialty services). While the county is mandated to provide some of the

regional services by state law, there is no requirement that the county provide some of the regional services. While there are some criteria for why some services are provided countywide without charge while the cost of other services are charged to other jurisdictions, the criteria are general, not formalized in writing.

#### **Regional vs. Local Services Recommendation**

- We recommend that the KCSO develop and document formal criteria for classifying services as local, regional, or specialty.

#### **Responses from the Sheriff and the Executive**

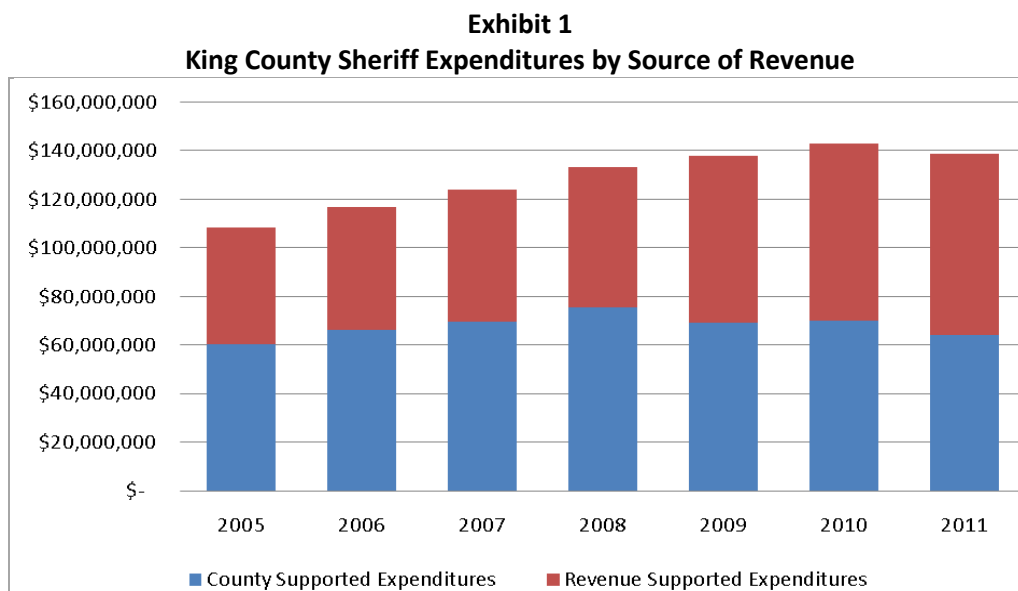
- The Sheriff concurs or partially concurs with Recommendations 1-4. The Sheriff does not concur with Recommendation 7.
- The Executive concurs with Recommendations 5 and 6 directed to the Human Resources Division of the Department of Executive Services.

#### **Acknowledgments**

We sincerely appreciate the efforts and cooperation of the Sheriff's Office, the Human Resources Division, and the Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget in providing the audit team with information, data, and helpful suggestions.

## Introduction

The King County Sheriff's Office provides local law enforcement service in the unincorporated area of King County and also by contract in 12 cities and other jurisdictions including transit agencies and the King County Airport. In addition, it provides certain services countywide. Over the past several years, the King County Sheriff's Office has faced a great deal of change. Annexations and incorporations have reduced the unincorporated service area. Ongoing budget cuts, attributable to both annexations and incorporations and to the County's revenue shortfalls, have reduced the amount of resources available for services to the unincorporated area. However, until 2011, the total budget was still increasing because the cuts in county funds were offset by increases in revenue from contract cities. Exhibit 1 shows that the share of the Sheriff's budget supported by contract revenue has increased significantly since 2005.



Source: Actual and budgeted (2011) revenues and expenditures from ARMS.

Because of the impending budget cuts to the Sheriff's Office and other criminal justice agencies, in the summer of 2010 the County Council voted to put a proposal to voters on the November 2010 ballot to authorize an increase in the sales tax of 0.2 percent to provide increased funding for criminal justice services, and to help pay for a new Youth Services Center. At the same time the Council was considering the sales tax proposal, it requested this performance audit of the Sheriff's Office be conducted by the King County Auditor's Office. The overall goal of the audit is to assess whether the Sheriff's Office is operating efficiently, and whether opportunities for cost savings exist.

The audit scope and objectives are outlined below.

### Scope

This audit will review the operations of the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) with an emphasis on identifying potential cost savings and efficiencies.

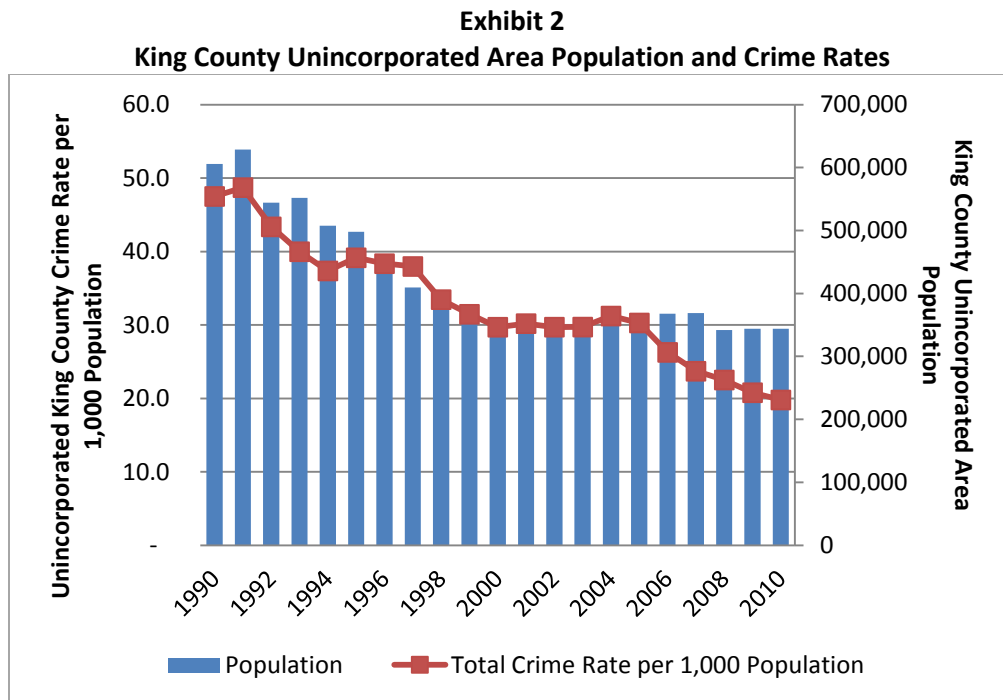
### Objectives

1. Identify how the KCSO measures workload and identifies staffing needs for selected major units (e.g., patrol, criminal investigations).

2. Within selected major units (e.g., patrol, criminal investigations), evaluate whether the KCSO is efficiently managing its resources and responding appropriately to changes in workload (e.g., annexations).
3. Evaluate how KCSO staffing costs have changed over time, and identify the main drivers of these costs.
4. Compare KCSO workload, staffing, and costs to other jurisdictions.
5. Identify KCSO services that are not mandated and the costs of non-mandated services, and evaluate to what extent non-mandated services are achieving their goals.
6. Evaluate whether there are opportunities to recover or share the costs of regional services provided by the KCSO.

Because the scope of the audit was broad and the resources available to conduct the audit were limited, some objectives were reviewed in more detail than others. One area where the report goes into greater depth is that of how the KCSO monitors its workload and determines what its respective staffing needs are, and how the agency has responded to significant changes in its workload and service areas as a result of recent annexations, and changes resulting from budget cuts.

This report considers how the KCSO has adjusted its staffing and operations to these environmental changes and assesses whether its response has been reasonable and efficient. Over the past several years, the King County area has experienced substantial decreases in its crime rates, and several large city annexations have occurred that have reduced the unincorporated service area for which the KCSO is responsible. Exhibit 2 illustrates the trends in King County’s unincorporated area population and crime rates over time. Patrol Operations, the agency’s largest and most resource-intensive division is covered in detail, and the KCSO’s second largest division, Criminal Investigations, is covered to a lesser degree.



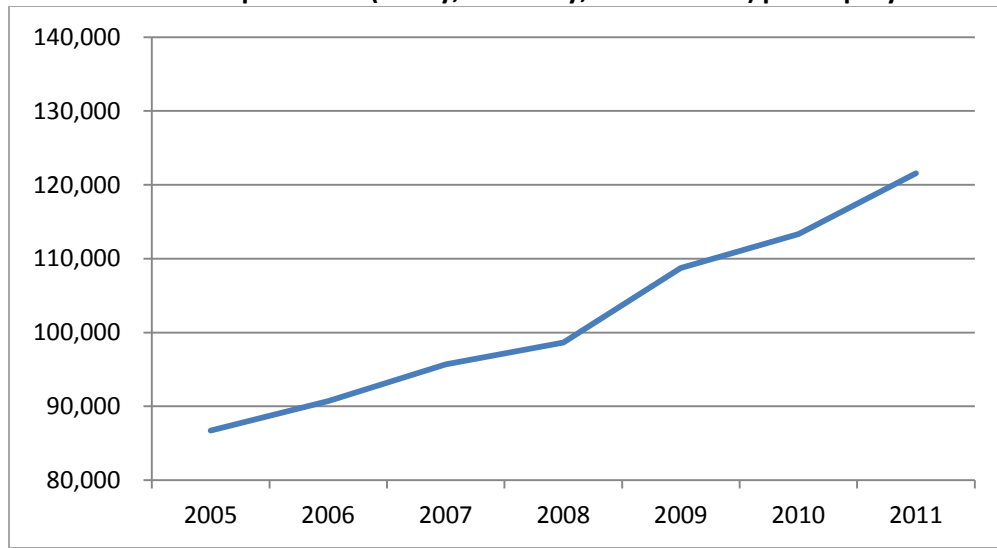
Source: Data from Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC).

Another area that we reviewed in more detail was the growth in deputy compensation costs, as this is a significant driver of the budget.<sup>1</sup> In response to annexations and budget limitations, the department is

<sup>1</sup> In this report, “compensation” includes all forms of salaries/wages, extra pay, and benefits.

restructuring its operations and is becoming more operationally efficient. However, the growth in compensation costs counteracts the effort to become more efficient, because higher compensation raises costs. With the approval of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which took effect in 2008, compensation began to grow more quickly, as illustrated in Exhibit 3 below. Compensation costs represent 80 percent of the KCSO budget, and thus, growth in compensation costs has a substantial impact on the budget. Therefore, our review went into greater depth in this area.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibit 3**  
**KCSO Compensation (Salary, Extra Pay, and Benefits) per Deputy**



Source: Data from KCSO

The growth in compensation costs is a concern for two reasons. With compensation costs growing rapidly during a period where revenue is limited, the growth in compensation costs could result in the need to reduce staffing levels, which may reduce the amount of police services in the unincorporated area. According to KCSO staff, growth in compensation costs is also a concern to the cities which contract with King County for police services. A major reason why cities choose to contract with King County for police services is the economies of scale expected from a large sheriff department. However, if these economies of scale are offset by increasing compensation costs, cities may choose to provide their own police services. Because cities share in the cost of KCSO and King County overhead, the loss of city police contracts would further exacerbate the budget difficulties King County faces in providing police services in the unincorporated area.

**Format of This Report**

This report uses a question and answer format, with groups of questions aligned with the objectives of the audit set forth above.

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<sup>2</sup> The Executive, not the Sheriff, negotiates with the union over compensation issues. Therefore, findings in this report relating to the collective bargaining process pertain to the Executive branch, not the KCSO, and the report includes a response from the County Executive as well as the Sheriff.

## SECTION 1: Questions Relating to Workload and Staffing (Objectives 1 & 2)

**Question: How has the KCSO adjusted patrol staffing in response to budget cuts and workload changes such as annexations?**

**Answer: Reductions in Patrol FTEs have been proportional to workload changes in most parts of the county. However, scheduled hours have not been reduced at the same rate as calls for service, and changes in other aspects of workload have not been documented with performance data.**

To answer this question, the audit team considered a primary driver of workload for Patrol Operations: Dispatched Calls for Service (calls for service). A call for service occurs when the County's 911 Communication Center sends one or more patrol deputies to respond to a 911 call. Dispatched calls are assigned a priority code according to the nature of the emergency, which determines the type of response required, per Exhibit 4 below:

**Exhibit 4  
Calls for Service Priorities**

Call Priority	Type of Response
<b>X</b>	<b>Critical.</b> In-progress life-safety danger to individual or officer.
<b>1</b>	<b>Immediate.</b> Silent alarms, injury accidents, disturbances with weapons, in progress burglaries, incidents where suspect may still be in area.
<b>2</b>	<b>Prompt.</b> Verbal disturbances, blocking accidents, separated domestic violence situations, mental or physical trauma situations.
<b>3</b>	<b>Routine.</b> Where time is not a critical factor. Burglaries or larcenies not in progress, cold vehicle thefts, audible alarms, noise complaints.
<b>4</b>	<b>As available.</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>911</b> Send deputy to check on welfare of caller in case of difficulty communicating or call hang-up.

Source: KCSO General Orders Manual, Policy 13.00.035.

The audit team analyzed the change in the number of calls for service to which unincorporated patrol deputies responded between 2000 and 2010. To better understand the impact of workload changes on county-funded staff, we limited our analysis to unincorporated patrol and excluded the workload and staffing of the suburban cities for which the KCSO provided contracted service. The measures analyzed included total calls for service, calls per deputy, and calls by geographic location and priority.

In addition to the volume of calls for service, the travel time required to respond to calls, for both the primary deputy and any needed back up deputies, is an important factor in assessing staffing needs. This travel time is directly related to the size and geographic characteristics of the area to be covered, such as mountains, lakes, road access, etc. However, aside from average response time, these factors have not been quantified by the KCSO and are not considered in our analysis.

### **Other Elements of Patrol Workload**

Current best practices recommend that law enforcement monitor other factors in addition to calls for service and response time when setting goals and planning its resources. The King County Auditor's Office 2004 performance audit of the Sheriff's Office discussed these best practices and assessed the Sheriff's Office adoption of them. Some of these key practices include:

- Shifting from a “reactive” approach in which responding to 911 calls and measuring response time is the focus, to a “problem solving” approach in which law enforcement is engaged with the community and crime data is used to strategically target resources according to established crime reduction priorities. Research has shown this approach to be more effective at reducing crime than providing a law enforcement presence through random patrolling.
- Allocating a specific portion of patrol deputy time to proactive, problem-solving policing, rather than only responding to calls for service.
- Implementing Alternative Call Handling, a method by which lower priority, non-emergent calls are handled by non-uniformed personnel, thus freeing up time for patrol deputies to spend on problem-solving activities.

The 2004 audit report found that the KCSO had implemented some of these practices, such as Alternative Call Handling, and a problem-solving approach was being used by some managers in patrol operations. However, the KCSO had not developed an organization-wide strategic approach to implement this new approach to policing, and its patrol staffing plan was still based on geographic coverage and officer back-up requirements, rather than performance or policy objectives and variations in workload.

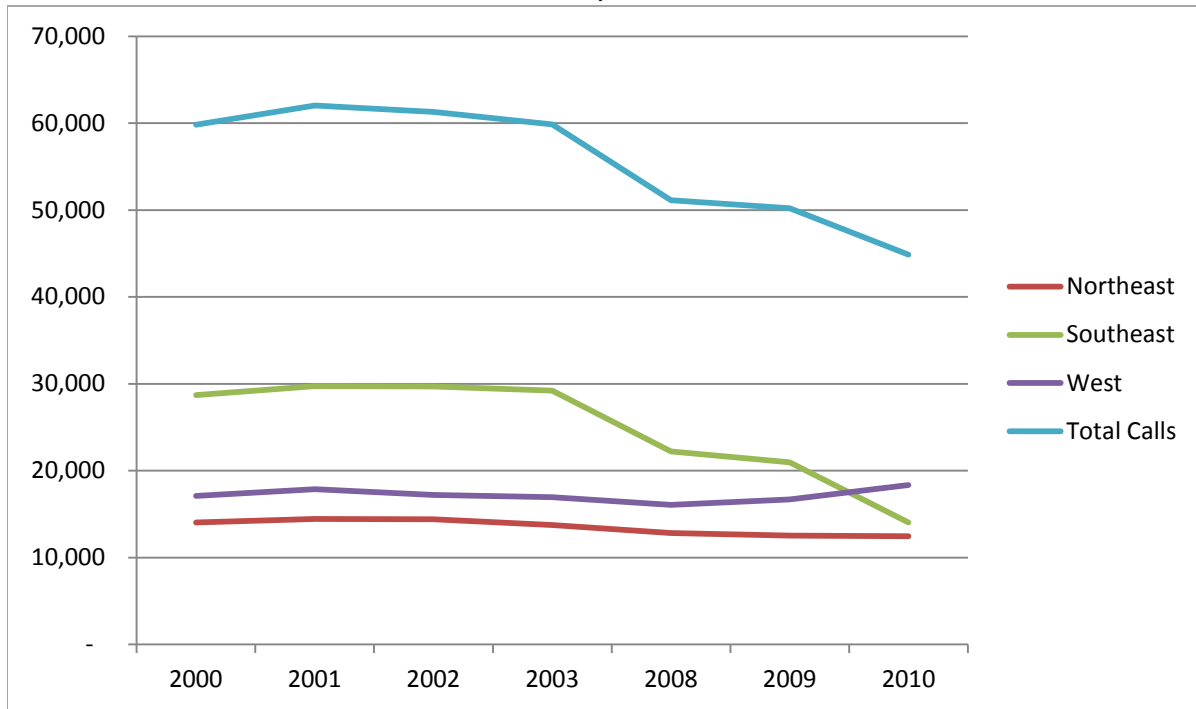
This audit followed up on the KCSO’s implementation of these best practices, including its efforts to free up more patrol time, set strategic goals, and monitor the results of problem-solving, community-oriented activities. We found that these community- and problem-oriented policing efforts continue to be implemented. However, organization-wide planning and reporting on the KCSO’s proactive efforts remains a work in progress. Activities are continuing, but systems are not in place that would enable KCSO leadership to monitor and report on the activities and their results. As a result, the majority of this section of the report focuses on the traditional indicators of workload and performance: calls for service and response times, because this information is still the primary information available from the KCSO.

### **Overall Calls for Service**

The audit team analyzed patrol workload and staffing, to determine if changes in staffing were made to match changes in calls for service. The results of our analysis show that workload in unincorporated areas has declined substantially over the past 10 years, across all areas of the county. In addition, substantial reductions in patrol deputies have been made at approximately the same rate that workload has declined.

Overall, the number of calls for service declined by 25 percent between 2000 and 2010. Declines occurred across most regions of the county, as shown in Exhibit 5 below.

**Exhibit 5  
Unincorporated Area Calls for Service  
by Geographic Area  
2000-2003, 2008-2010**



Note: KCSO call for service data was not available for years 2005-2007.

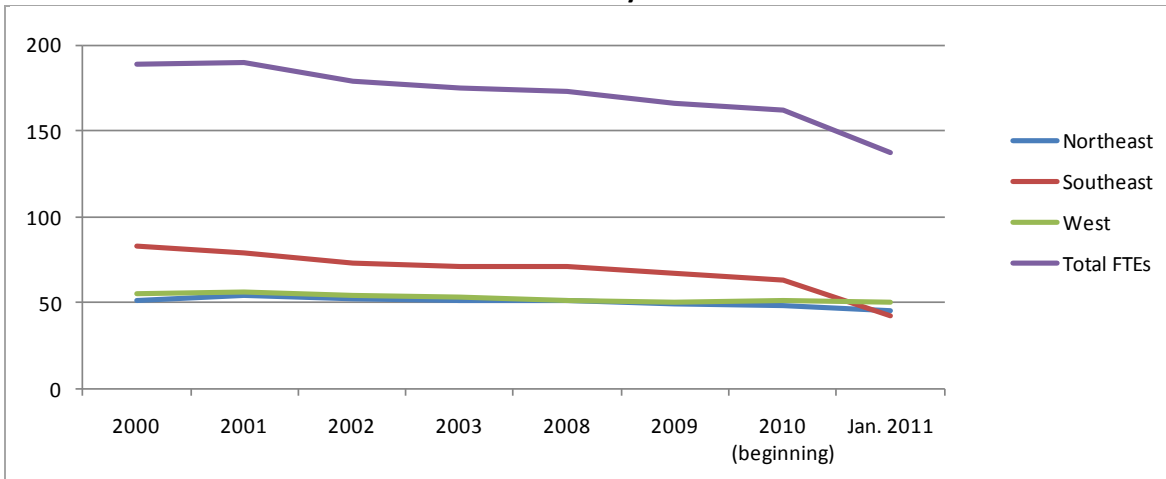
Source: KCAO analysis of IRIS data from KCSO Crime Analysis/Research, Planning and Information Services

The largest decline in calls for service was experienced in the Southeast region, largely as a result of large annexations that occurred in 2008. While the decline in calls for service may be partially due to lower crime, most of the decline is likely a direct result of multiple annexations that have occurred in these areas over the several years, including Auburn’s 2008 annexation of Lea Hill and West Hill, Renton’s 2008 annexation of a portion of the Benson Hill area, Kent’s 2009 annexation of the Panther Lake area, and Burien’s 2010 annexation of a portion of North Highline (White Center). The KCSO also made an operational change in 2010, shifting management of the unincorporated areas near Federal Way from the Southeast to the West precinct. This explains part of the decline in calls for Southeast and the increase in calls for West. The changes in calls for service were more modest in the Northeast precinct.<sup>3</sup>

In response to these changes, county supported patrol staffing for unincorporated areas has also been reduced substantially since 2000, with most of the reductions made within the last three years. Between 2000 and January 2011, the number of patrol Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions supporting the unincorporated areas dropped 27 percent, a slightly higher rate than the 25-percent decline in workload. Exhibit 6 below illustrates this reduction.

<sup>3</sup> Northeast includes the unincorporated areas East of Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, and North of I-90. The Southeast region includes the unincorporated areas on the Eastside that run South of I-90 from Bellevue to Enumclaw, and near Federal Way (up until September 2010). The West region includes Skyway, White Center, Vashon Island, and the Federal Way areas (beginning 2009).

**Exhibit 6  
Unincorporated Patrol Staffing  
by Geographic Area  
2000-January 2010**



Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of KCSO minimum staffing levels.

As can also be seen in the chart, most of the staff reductions were made in the Southeast areas of the County where the largest city annexations have occurred. Smaller reductions were made in the Northeast and West regions.

However, while the number of staff has decreased at a similar rate as workload, the KCSO's minimum staffing posts have not been reduced to the same extent. The number of minimum staffing posts, and thus the minimum number of hours required for deputies to work, decreased 12 percent between 2000 and 2010, compared to the 27-percent decrease in FTEs during the same period. In one precinct, the Northeast, scheduled staffing increased by eight percent in 2001, and was only recently reduced following the Kirkland annexation of Juanita and Kingsgate. The Southeast experienced a large reduction in scheduled staffing, and the West increased slightly.<sup>4</sup> Exhibit 7 below illustrates these changes.

**Exhibit 7  
Percent Change in Patrol FTEs and Minimum Staffing Levels  
2000 - 2011**

	2000	January 2011	Percent Change
<b>Unincorporated Patrol FTEs</b>	189	137	-28%
<b>Minimum Staffing Levels</b>	76	67	-12%

Source: Patrol FTEs from adopted cost book organizational charts.  
Minimum staffing from KCSO precinct staffing documents.

The fact that minimum staffing levels were not reduced at the same rate as the number of staff means that the KCSO has had to use other resources such as more overtime to cover its patrol posts. This can be seen in the substantial increase in Backfill Overtime hours for unincorporated area patrol, which increased by over 75 percent over the past 10 years. From a cost perspective, the increase in overtime is not necessarily a concern, because overtime currently costs approximately 15 percent less per hour

<sup>4</sup> The slight increase in staffing levels in the West, and part of the staffing decrease in the Southeast, is a result of the transfer of the unincorporated geographical areas near Federal Way from the Southeast to the West precinct.

than the cost of a full time deputy. The KCSO is therefore providing patrol services more efficiently than it was before. However, it does mean that the total resources (staff and overtime) required to provide unincorporated patrol services have not been reduced commensurate with declines in the number of calls for service, and have not been reduced evenly across all geographic precincts. While the size of geographic characteristics of different regions of the county should be a factor in determining staffing needs, it is not clear how the KCSO is making this determination.

### Calls per Deputy

To assess how these changes in workload and staffing impacted workload per deputy, the audit team also analyzed the number of calls handled per deputy in 2000 and compared it to the number of calls handled in 2010. Our results show that overall calls handled per deputy have increased by approximately 3.5 percent.

While substantial staff reductions have been made, those staff reductions did not match the workload declines within each geographic region. Exhibit 8 below demonstrates that while workload and staffing were adjusted roughly commensurately in the Northeast and West, the Southeast precinct experienced a larger decrease in staff than it did in calls for service. The result is a 16.5-percent increase in the number of calls handled per deputy in the Southeast region.<sup>5</sup>

**Exhibit 8**  
**Changes in Calls for Service and Patrol Staffing**  
**Total Calls and Calls per Deputy**  
**2000 - 2010**

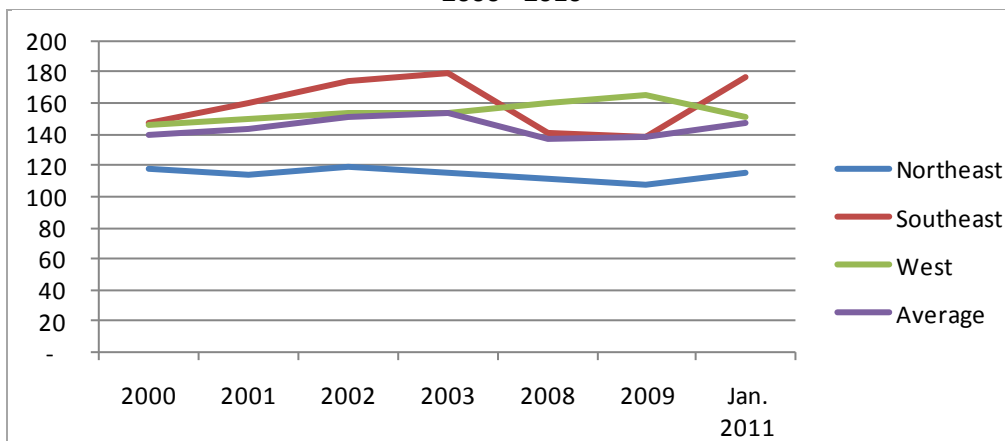
All Calls for Service 2000-2010	Change in Number of Calls for Service	% Change Staff	% Change Calls/Deputy
<b>Northeast</b>	-11.2%	-11.8%	-0.7%
<b>Southeast</b>	-41.1%	-49.4%	16.5%
<b>West</b>	-9.3%	-9.1%	-0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>-25.0%</b>	<b>-27.5%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

Source: KCAO analysis of IRIS data for priority 0, X, 1, 2 and 3 calls. From KCSO Crime Analysis/Research, Planning and Information Services

It is important to note that types of crimes and the demand for law enforcement assistance vary among different parts of the county. According to the data we analyzed, the West and Southeast areas of the county receive a higher volume of high priority calls in which a critical or immediate police response is required (in which an individual is in imminent danger of harm or a situation is in danger of escalating) than does the Northeast region. These high priority calls also comprise a larger percentage of the workload in the West and Southeast. These higher priority calls typically require more than one deputy to respond. When only higher priority calls are considered, calls per deputy in the Southeast region increased by slightly over 20 percent, and by slightly over three percent in the West. Exhibit 9 illustrates the variation in high priority calls across regions of the county.

<sup>5</sup> The "G Sector" area near Federal Way was shifted from the Southeast to the West precinct in September 2010. For purposes of this analysis, the 2010 calls for service for the G Sector are split between the Southeast (2/3 – Jan-Aug) and West (1/3 – Sept-Dec).

**Exhibit 9  
High Priority Calls per Deputy  
2000 - 2010**



Source: KCSO analysis of IRIS data from KCSO Crime Analysis/Research, Planning and Information Services

In terms of distribution of workload, the number of calls per deputy is also substantially higher in the Southeast and West regions than in the Northeast. The KCSO maintains that staffing is higher in the Northeast area because of the large geographic area, and therefore has deputy coverage even though the number of calls for service is lower.

The Northeast region experienced a large annexation effective July 2011, in which the city of Kirkland annexed the Juanita and Kingsgate areas. We compared the reduction in calls for service and compared it to the staff reductions made by KCSO. Our results show that the loss of the area annexed will reduce the Northeast region's workload by approximately 25 percent. However, the KCSO reduced the number of staff by 16 percent. The minimum staffing levels for this area have also only received a slight reduction. As noted above, the KCSO maintains that the Northeast region is larger than the others, and therefore staffing levels will not necessarily correspond precisely with changes in workload. However, the KCSO also states that workload and staffing for this area are currently being reevaluated as part of the merger of the Northeast and Southeast precincts, as we will discuss later in this report.

**Evaluation of Patrol Staffing Management**

As part of this audit, the team followed up on recommendations from this office's 2004 performance audit for the Sheriff to reassess its patrol staffing needs and patrol deployment plan, and develop a more systematic, results-based staffing plan tied to workload and performance objectives rather than fixed geographic areas. The 2007 follow-up audit noted that, while some progress had been made, it had not been sustained, and that the KCSO was still operating with the same patrol staffing plan and approach to determining staff needs. A recommendation was made to dedicate a centralized staff resource to help the KCSO plan and manage the technical aspects of its staffing plans.

**Some Recommendations Not Implemented**

We found mixed results when following up on these recommendations. On one hand, the KCSO has not implemented our recommendations to develop a more results-based patrol staffing plan and to dedicate a central resource to improve management of this plan. Management requested additional staffing to implement this recommendation in 2008; however, the request was denied, and the KCSO did not allocate other staff for this purpose. Consolidated information on precinct staffing levels has not been maintained, and information on the amount of vacation and sick leave used by deputies, which is crucial to estimating staffing availability and overtime expenditures, has not been updated since our last

audit in 2004. Additionally, the KCSO is essentially using the same unincorporated area staffing plan as in 2004, although staffing levels have been reduced to some extent.

As discussed earlier in this report, the number of calls for service has dropped substantially more than the reductions in scheduled patrol staffing time. This means that patrol deputies are now carrying a lighter workload in terms of number of calls, and may have more time available for proactive, problem-solving policing, as has been a goal for the KCSO since 1999. As part of its Alternative Call Handling (ACH) effort to reduce the calls for service workload of patrol deputies, the KCSO also implemented an on-line reporting system in the spring of 2011. ACH, which began in 1999, allows members of the public to file reports for minor crimes such as thefts, on the phone with the Communication Center, and now electronically online, rather than requiring the response of a Sheriff Deputy to a 911 call as was the practice in the past.

However, the KCSO is not yet systematically monitoring and reporting on the community- and problem-oriented policing activities of precinct management and patrol deputies. While analysis shows that additional time has been made available, it is unknown to what extent KCSO patrol deputies have been able to devote more time to proactive work. Because of budget reductions, the KCSO has cut other staff dedicated to community policing, such as community storefronts and school resource officers.

We recognize that these proactive, community-oriented activities are less quantifiable and may be more difficult to track than calls for service. However, an example of such monitoring is already occurring within the agency, in the form of the workload and performance reports developed to monitor the work of the contract Metro Transit Police. Other suggested performance measures do exist, as discussed in our 2004 report, such as tracking the efforts to target “hot spots,” identification of high priority problems within each precinct and the efforts and results related to addressing them, “top-10” offenders identified and apprehended, selecting a few performance benchmarks for assessing progress towards reducing local crime and disorder, etc. It would be beneficial for the KCSO to develop a plan that specifies its goals for community- and problem-oriented policing, the related activities, and information that will be used to monitor progress.

### **Progress Is Being Made on Other Recommendations**

The KCSO has, however, recently begun a significant reorganization of its Eastside precincts and is making changes to its staffing approach that is consistent with our recommendations. As part of the merger of these precincts, the KCSO is planning to reevaluate the staffing requirements of the entire area, taking into account workload, crime rates, response times, availability of deputies to provide additional back-up officers, geographic coverage, and public safety goals. The goal is to provide more flexibility so that patrol deputy resources can be deployed across the Eastside to meet changes in needs, rather than being fixed geographically. As discussed earlier in this report, consolidating and sharing staff in this manner is more efficient, and if implemented as planned should result in lower backfill overtime costs, as well as a more effective use of resources.

Additionally, the KCSO is in the process of purchasing a new staff scheduling software package that will consolidate and automate their staffing practices. The software is expected to help them manage and automate activities related to precinct staff planning, identifying and meeting minimum staffing levels, and managing leave requests and overtime needs. These processes are currently performed manually, via phone and email, with multiple data and tracking systems that vary from one precinct to another, and duplicative processes. The system is expected to streamline these processes and provide management with an effective staff planning tool. As this is implemented, it will be important for the KCSO to designate specific personnel at headquarters with knowledge of staffing analysis who will be

responsible for maintaining the information and ensuring that field captains and sergeants are using the tool and interpreting the information appropriately.

Both of these efforts represent important progress for the KCSO, and should help the agency develop a more strategic approach to its patrol staffing.

### **Changes by Call Priority**

The KCSO has experienced some changes in the priorities of calls deputies respond to, but the overall the types of calls have declined by similar amounts. For example, while there has been an overall decrease of 25 percent in calls for service, the higher priority calls (X, 1 and 2) have declined somewhat less, by 23 percent. Lower priority calls declined by 26 percent.

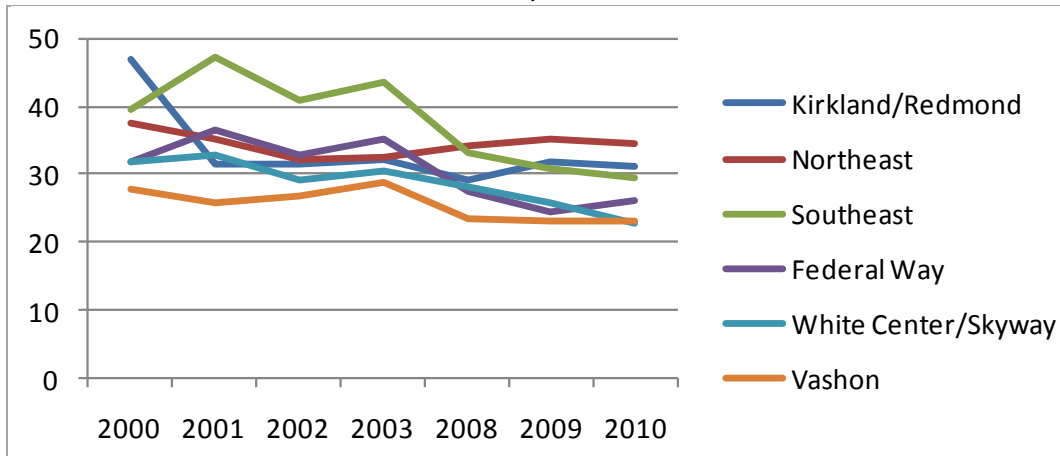
**Question: How has patrol performance compared in light of the staffing and workload changes patrol has experienced?**

**Answer: Response times have improved substantially over the past 10 years in most areas of the county. Other elements of performance are not be reported by the KCSO.**

The audit team was asked to analyze the impact of these staffing and workload changes on the performance of the KCSO Patrol Division. While the KCSO currently does not track performance measures on the quality of service provided by patrol deputies, or on the impacts of its community- and problem-oriented policing efforts, it does collect information on response times. Response times are an important measure of performance for the highest priority calls where the presence of an officer is immediately required to prevent personal harm to an individual or officer, or to apprehend suspects still in the area. However, its utility as a performance measure is more limited for lower priority calls where time is not of the essence.

This information is tracked by the priority of the call for service. Our analysis shows that despite the reduction in staffing and increases in calls per deputy, the average response time for calls of all priorities improved by approximately 25 percent between 2000 and 2010, the equivalent of 11 minutes faster per call, on average. Response times for most of the higher priority calls improved as well, by about 2.5 minutes overall. For the very highest priority calls, response time actually worsened slightly by about 20 seconds; however, this slight decline is within the range of variations seen in prior years. Exhibit 10 below illustrates the overall response time improvement across all geographic areas of the county.

**Exhibit 10**  
**KCSO Response Times – All Call Priorities**  
**Average Minutes to Respond**  
**2000-2003, 2008-2010**

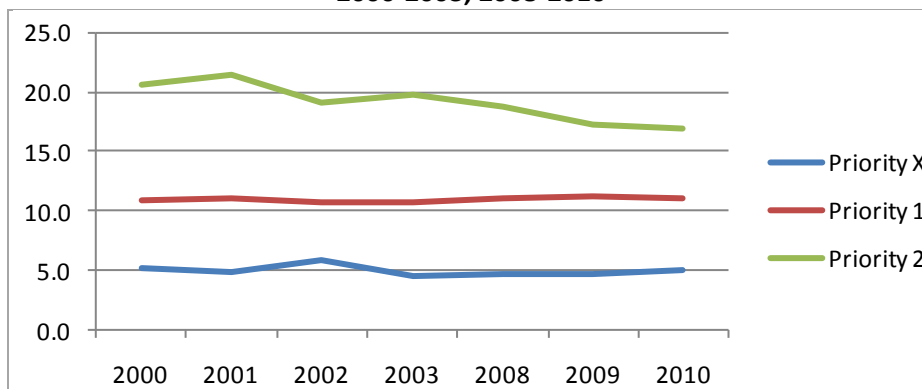


Source: KCSO analysis of IRIS data from KCSO Crime Analysis/Research, Planning and Information Services

As illustrated in the chart above, the average number of minutes required to respond to calls has decreased across all areas of the county fairly consistently since 2000.

Exhibit 11 below shows how response times have changed by priority of call between 2000 and 2010. Most of the improvement has occurred among Priority 2 calls, those where one or more deputies are needed “promptly” and which make up the largest proportion of deputy calls for service. Response times for these calls improved by about four minutes, from an average of 21 to 17 minutes. The highest priority calls are Priority X and 1, in which an incident is in-progress or there is an immediate threat of personal harm to an individual or officer. Response times for Priority X and Priority 1 calls have remained fairly stable over the past 10 years, at approximately five minutes and 11 minutes, respectively.

**Exhibit 11**  
**Response Times – Higher Priority Calls**  
**Average Minutes to Respond**  
**2000-2003, 2008-2010**



Source: KCSO analysis of IRIS data from KCSO Crime Analysis/Research, Planning, and Information Services

**Question: How has staffing in the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) been affected by changes in workload?**

**Answer: CID staffing has been reduced, but the Sheriff's Office is not actively monitoring measures of CID workload with which to compare to staffing levels.**

This audit also looked at another large division within the KCSO, the Criminal Investigations Division (CID). This division consists of detectives who investigate crimes, but also includes several other units such as Criminal Intelligence, Criminal Warrants, Fire Marshal, and Courthouse Security.

Audit staff interviews with CID indicate that some of their units have been impacted by the annexations described above and the related loss of service area, and have experienced a decline in the number of cases they receive. The workload of other units, however, is not directly driven by the population of unincorporated King County, so the workload impacts have been less direct. In response to annexations and revenue limitations, the staffing for CID has been substantially reduced in recent years. Between 2008 and 2010, the number of detectives and sergeants in CID has been reduced by 42 full-time positions, with an additional reduction of 10 non-uniformed staff.

According to interviews with CID management, it is difficult to measure CID workload because the types of cases and their time requirements vary widely. A brief review of national best practices in this area indicated that it is indeed challenging to manage detective workload because of the variation in cases. However, the best practices recommend the use of a case management system that closely monitors cases and assesses the amount of time different cases require, to facilitate planning and effective management of staff resources. The KCSO does not currently use specific measures to manage detective workload, and does not track and report caseload per detective. In addition, internal audits performed by the KCSO found that documentation of workload by units within CID was limited. To address this issue, CID management recently began tracking the time requirements of its cases to better understand case workload demands and the staffing resources needed to support them. The workload information they are tracking is useful and indicates CID is making progress. The information could be strengthened, and would be more useful as a performance management tool, if specific workload and result indicators were selected for each unit and monitored over time.

**Question: What organizational changes has the KCSO made in response to changes in its environment?**

**Answer: The KCSO is making changes to streamline and create efficiencies within its Patrol Division.**

In response to annexations and related workload declines described above, the KCSO is reconfiguring the way it deploys its patrol resources. The KCSO has historically divided the county into three geographic areas, managed by three Precinct Majors, for purposes of organizing and managing its patrol operations. Because of the large annexations and reductions in service area and population that have occurred in East King County, the KCSO has consolidated management and operations of its two Eastside precincts into one precinct. As part of this change, it has eliminated one Chief and one Captain. It is also closing its northeast and southeast precinct offices, and consolidating management in a centralized location in leased space in Sammamish.

The KCSO has reduced staffing levels and readjusted its service boundaries in East King County following several annexations over the past couple of years. However, it has not significantly changed the staffing plan for the remaining areas. Management is currently evaluating options that would change the way it

has historically allocated deputies geographically. Instead of being assigned to small “districts” within the two large precincts, deputies would be assigned to larger geographic areas based on a combination of workload geographic coverage factors. With the consolidation of the precincts, deputies could be assigned to work across multiple areas, including across the previous precinct boundary. An advantage of this approach is that it expands the number of deputies who are available to fill in if another is absent, reducing the need for overtime and providing for a more efficient use of staff.

To estimate the potential cost savings associated with combining deputies into a large group, the audit team analyzed the KCSO’s staffing plan and applied statistical staffing analysis. The results show that the KCSO could save up to \$220,000 annually if it is able to share deputies across the whole Eastside areas. This savings results from the ability to draw from a larger pool of staff when someone is unable to come to work because of sick leave or other unscheduled absences such as military leave, disability, jury duty, etc. The larger the group, the more likely it is that someone will be available without requiring someone to work an overtime shift. The amount of estimated savings is a maximum because it will not always be feasible to locate a deputy within a close enough driving distance to fill in for one who is absent.

**Question: What has been the impact of the 2010 reductions to property crime detectives? Does KCSO still investigate property crimes?**

**Answer: Property crimes are still being investigated, but staffing reductions have resulted in changes to how property crimes are investigated.**

Property crimes, also called “burglary and larceny” crimes, are generally defined as those in which property of a lesser value has been stolen, without harm or threat of harm to another individual. The County Prosecutor’s Office sets standards for filing charges for such crimes. Detectives assigned to a property crimes unit within the KCSO’s Field Operations Division have historically been responsible for investigating these crimes.

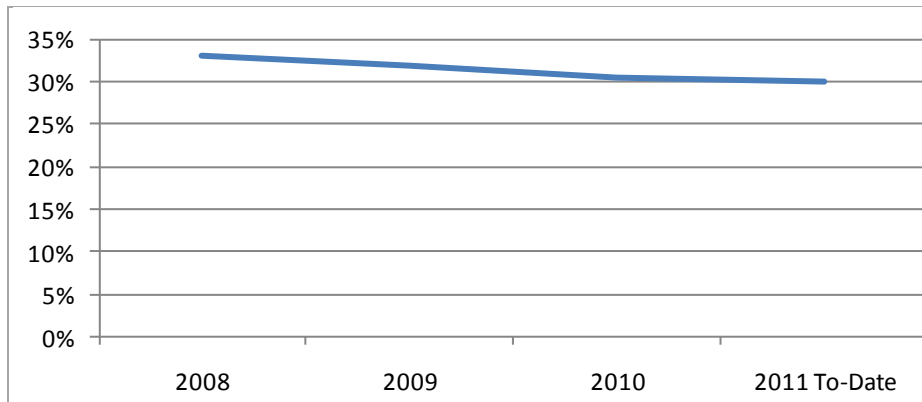
As part of the budget reductions made for the 2011 fiscal year, the KCSO eliminated the precinct-based property crime units and reduced the number of detectives who investigate property crime cases. The audit team followed up on this issue as part of our objective to assess the impacts of workload and staffing reductions on the KCSO.

The KCSO is still investigating property crimes, although it has changed the way it conducts this work. Prior to 2011, the KCSO had a property crime unit within the Field Operations Division. In January 2011, this unit was dissolved and a number of detective positions were eliminated. The remaining seven detectives were assigned to patrol precincts around the county. In anticipation that the reduced number of detectives will not be able to fully manage the workload, patrol deputies now receive on the job training, when possible, on how to perform preliminary investigations of property crimes and how to file paperwork with the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. The KCSO is still using the same criteria, quality of evidence and “solvability” indicators, to determine whether a property crime case warrants further follow-up investigation. Detectives are still assigned the more serious property crime cases that relate to felonies, chronic offenders, and systemic/regional problems, whereas less serious cases are assigned to patrol deputies.

It is still relatively early to determine whether this change has impacted the number and quality of property crime investigations, since it has been in place for only five months as of this writing. The audit team requested data from the KCSO on the number of property crime cases filed and the number of

cases assigned to detectives or deputies for follow-up over the past few years. The number of cases assigned for follow-up as a percentage of total incoming cases is a rough indicator of the capacity of detectives and deputies to handle property crime caseload. The data for the first five months of 2011 show a three-percent decline in the percentage of cases assigned for follow-up since 2008, as illustrated in Exhibit 12 below.

**Exhibit 12**  
**Property Crimes Cases**  
**Percent with Follow-up Investigations**  
**2008-2011 To-Date**



Source: KCSO data from IRIS.

It is not possible to determine from this information if this decline is due to the reorganization of how property crimes are handled or other factors. As can be seen in the chart, the percent of property crime cases being investigated was decreasing even before the property crimes detective staffing was reduced. Other factors impact this rate, such as the types of cases being reported, the solvability of the crime, and the Prosecuting Attorney’s policies with regard to the types of property crime cases it will prosecute.

**Recommendation 1:** The KCSO should continue its efforts to develop a systematic patrol staffing plan that is tied to workload, operational, and performance goals, including those for community- and problem-oriented policing, and flexible to address changing department needs and priorities.

**Recommendation 2:** The KCSO should continue pursuing economies of scale in delivering its patrol services by merging precincts and pooling staff resources when feasible.

**Recommendation 3:** The KCSO should develop a plan that explains its patrol operations goals, activities, measures of success, and workload; and should establish a monitoring system for its community- and problem-oriented policing activities.

**Recommendation 4:** The Criminal Investigations Division should develop a more systematic case management system and strengthen its approach to monitoring workload for detectives.

## **SECTION 2: Questions Relating to How King County Compares to Other Jurisdictions in Staffing, Compensation, and Costs Relating to Services Provided in the Unincorporated Area (Objective 4)**

*Note: The comparisons in this section relate to staffing and costs of services in the unincorporated area of King County with the staffing and costs of services in the unincorporated area of other counties. Costs and staffing for services provided to cities, transit agencies, and airports are excluded from the comparison for both King County and the other counties. We did not compare the costs or staffing levels for unincorporated services provided by the King County Sheriff's Office to cities, because cities have a broader taxing authority which allows for a higher level of service. We also did not compare the cost of services provided by the KCSO to cities that contract with KCSO for police services to the cost of services in cities which operate their own police department.*

**Question: How does the staffing level of the King County Sheriff's Office compare to other jurisdictions?**

**Answer: Compared to other large sheriff departments in Washington state, King County has a higher than average level of staffing serving the unincorporated area relative to the unincorporated population served.**

Comparisons between staffing levels at the King County Sheriff's Office and other jurisdictions became a point of contention during the County Council's deliberations of the 2011 budget. The King County Sheriff's Office published numbers indicating King County's uniformed staffing level is lower than average in comparison to other jurisdictions while the Council staff produced numbers indicating King County's uniformed staffing level is higher than average. Both the Sheriff's and the Council staff's comparisons relied on staffing information for other jurisdictions that is collected by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC).

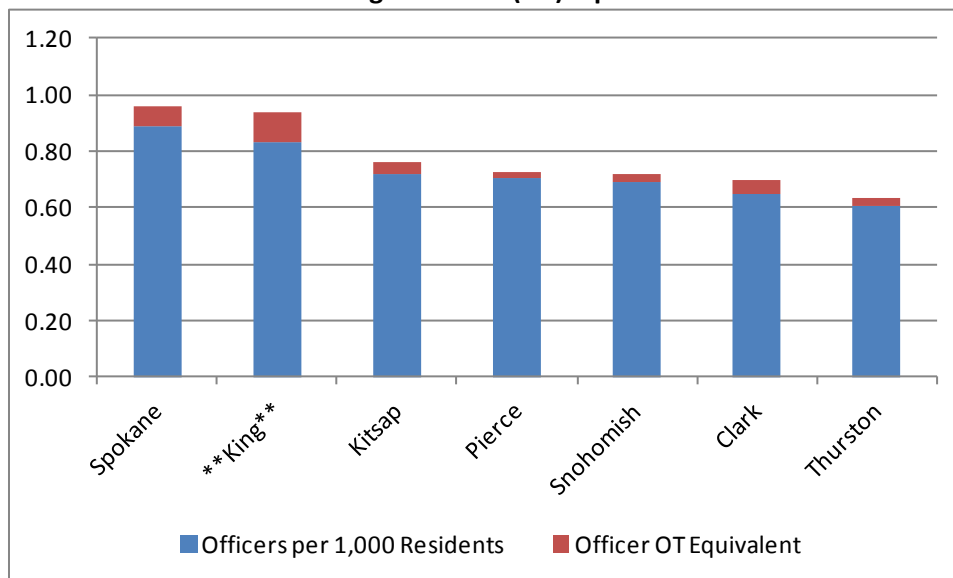
The major reason for the difference between the Sheriff's numbers and the Council staff's numbers relates to which staff are included in the comparison. When counting its own staff, the Sheriff's comparison excluded two-thirds of its staff before comparing its staffing to other jurisdictions. For example, the Sheriff's comparison excluded staff performing contractual services to other jurisdictions, staff supported by other revenue services such as grants or the County road fund, and staff providing "regional services" in both incorporated areas and the unincorporated area. The Council staff's comparison was more inclusive.

Regardless of which staff are included or excluded from King County's officer count for comparison with other jurisdictions, in order for the analysis to be fair, the same types of staff should be included or excluded from the staffing count for other jurisdictions. Both comparisons relied on staffing data collected by WASPC to determine staffing levels of other jurisdictions.

We found, based on discussions with WASPC staff and staff from other sheriff departments in Washington, that there are inconsistencies in how different jurisdictions report staffing levels to WASPC. To address these inconsistencies and in order to provide a fair comparison of staffing levels, we surveyed and collected data from the six largest sheriff departments in Washington after King County. When we had questions about the data provided by these departments, we followed up via telephone calls and email. The results of our comparison are described below.

Exhibit 13 below shows that the officer staffing level at the King County Sheriff’s Offices, per 1,000 residents in the unincorporated area, is higher than all the other jurisdictions in the comparison except Spokane County.<sup>6</sup>

**Exhibit 13**  
**Sheriff Department Officers per 1,000 Unincorporated Area Residents**  
**Including Overtime (OT) Equivalent**



Source: King County Auditor’s Office analysis of data provided by the King County Sheriff’s Office, and data provided by other jurisdictions.

**Question: How does the level of patrol staffing in unincorporated King County compare with other jurisdictions?**

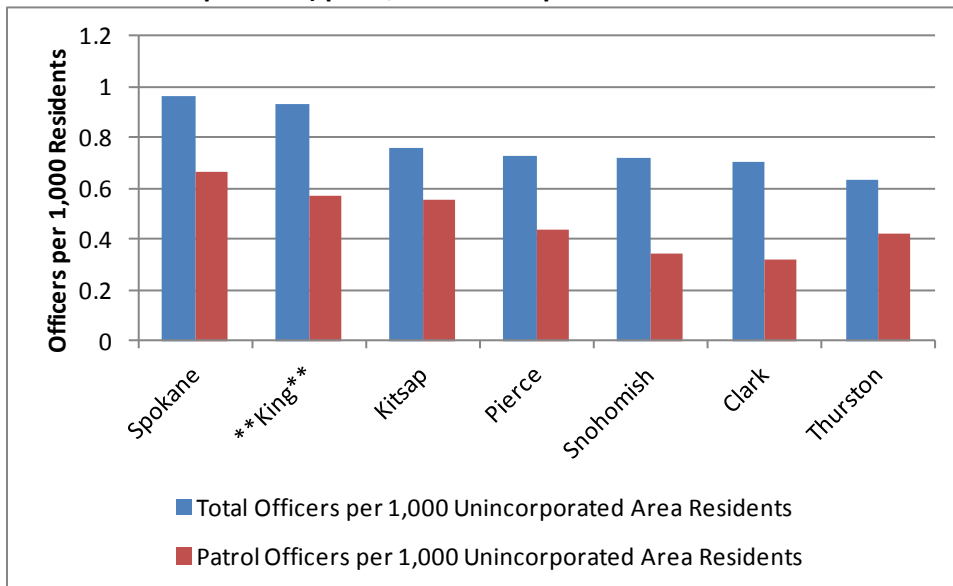
**Answer: Compared to other large jurisdictions in Washington State, King County has a higher than average level of unincorporated area patrol staffing relative to the population served.**

Following is a comparison of officers available to respond to calls for service in the unincorporated area (patrol officers). Exhibit 14 shows that King County is second to Spokane County in the number of unincorporated patrol officers per 1,000 unincorporated area residents.

<sup>6</sup> These comparisons include a calculation of the number of officers represented by the amount of overtime worked by officers. Overtime worked by officers provides additional staff resources available over the authorized FTE level.

The comparisons of total unincorporated area staffing (Exhibit 13) include officers performing regional services which benefit the entire county (e.g., officers who serve civil and criminal warrants, provide court protection, etc.). Ideally, a comparison of unincorporated area staffing levels would exclude staff performing regional services since these services benefit incorporated and unincorporated areas. However, we did not ask the other jurisdictions to identify how many staff are dedicated to performing regional services. Since all county sheriff departments are mandated to provide such services countywide, we believe the inclusion of staff performing regional services in the comparisons is reasonable. The comparison of unincorporated *patrol* staffing in Exhibit 14 addresses this issue of comparability by including only those staff who provide patrol service in the unincorporated area. The results of the more narrow comparison of unincorporated patrol staffing in Exhibit 14 were similar to the broader staffing comparison from Exhibit 13.

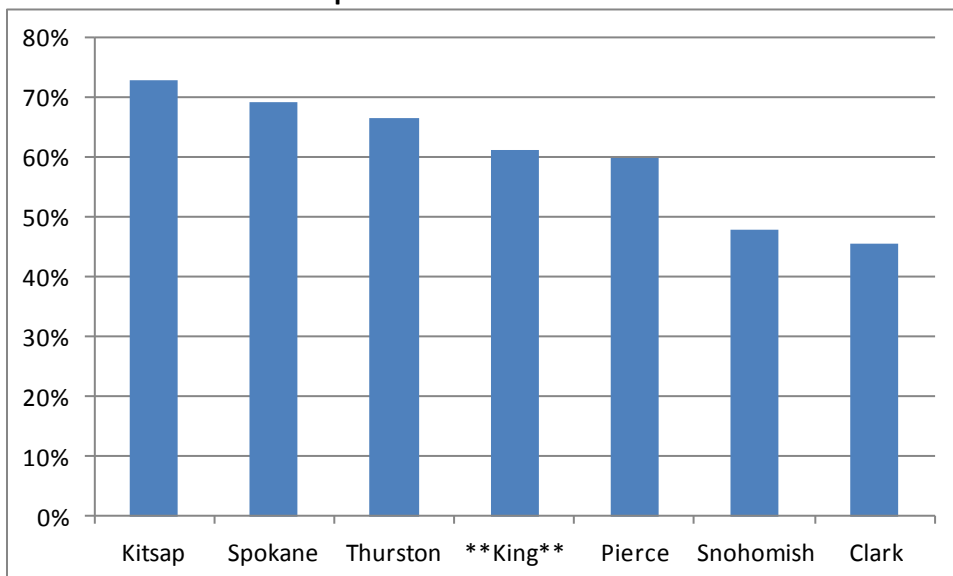
**Exhibit 14**  
**Total Officers & Unincorporated Patrol Officers (Including OT Equivalent) per 1,000 Unincorporated Area Residents**



Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of data provided by the King County Sheriff's Office and other jurisdictions.

Exhibit 15 provides information on the ratio of unincorporated area patrol officers to total officers serving the unincorporated area. The data indicates that King County is about average in the percentage of officers allocated to unincorporated area patrol.

**Exhibit 15**  
**Percentage of Officers Serving the Unincorporated Area Allocated to Patrol**



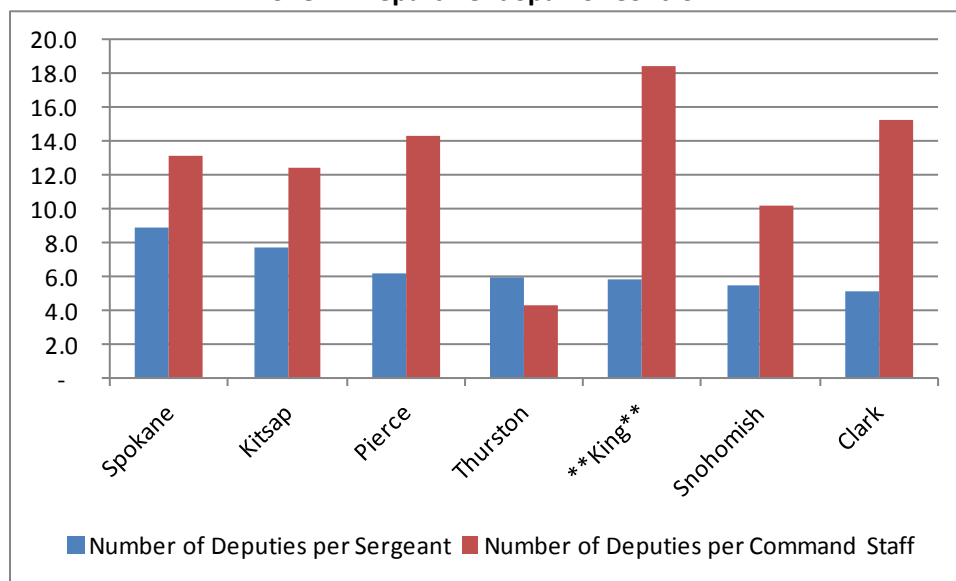
Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of data provided by the King County Sheriff's Office and other jurisdictions.

**Question: How does the level of supervision (span of control) in the King County Sheriff's Office compare to other large county sheriff departments?**

**Answer: The amount of deputies per sergeant is less than average, but the amount of deputies per command staff is higher than average.**

Exhibit 16 illustrates that the number of deputies per sergeant is about average while the number of deputies per command staff is the highest among large county sheriff departments in Washington. With budget cuts, the King County Sheriff's Office has reorganized and reduced the number of command staff. While the level of deputies per sergeant is lower than some other jurisdictions, the level is consistent with the recommendations of the Operational Master Plan.<sup>7</sup>

**Exhibit 16  
Sheriff Department Span of Control**



Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of data provided by the King County Sheriff's Office and other jurisdictions.

<sup>7</sup> The Operational Master Plan indicated that the ratio of deputies to sergeants should be no greater than 6:1 to promote effective supervision. The span of control calculation for KCSO includes all uninformed staff including those who provide services under contract to cities and other entities. KCSO has indicated that the span of control varies between unincorporated service and contractual service to cities with fewer deputies per sergeant in contract services to cities and more deputies per sergeant in unincorporated area services.

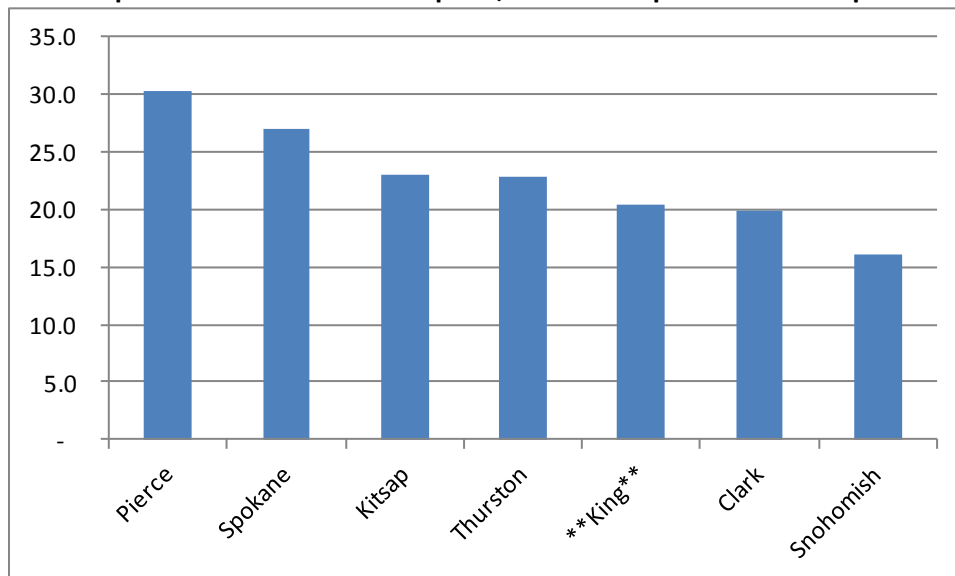
**Question: How does the level of uniformed police staffing for the unincorporated area relative to the crime rate in King County compare with other jurisdictions?**

**Answer: King County’s level of staffing relative to the crime rate exceeds that in other jurisdictions.**

Staffing level per 1,000 residents is only one way of comparing staffing levels among jurisdictions, and arguably, is not a particularly good way of comparing the relative need for police services. For example, crime rates vary among jurisdictions, and presumably, the need for police service is related to the amount of crime. Geographies vary also. To the extent that a department’s geographic service area is dispersed, or the degree to which “islands” of the unincorporated area exist within a broader area of incorporated cities, could affect the need for police staffing within a jurisdiction. While measuring the impact of geographic factors was outside the scope of this audit, we compared staffing levels with crime rates among jurisdictions. Following are the results of these comparisons.

Exhibit 17 illustrates that the crime rate per 1,000 residents in the unincorporated area is lower than average in King County compared with other large counties in Washington.

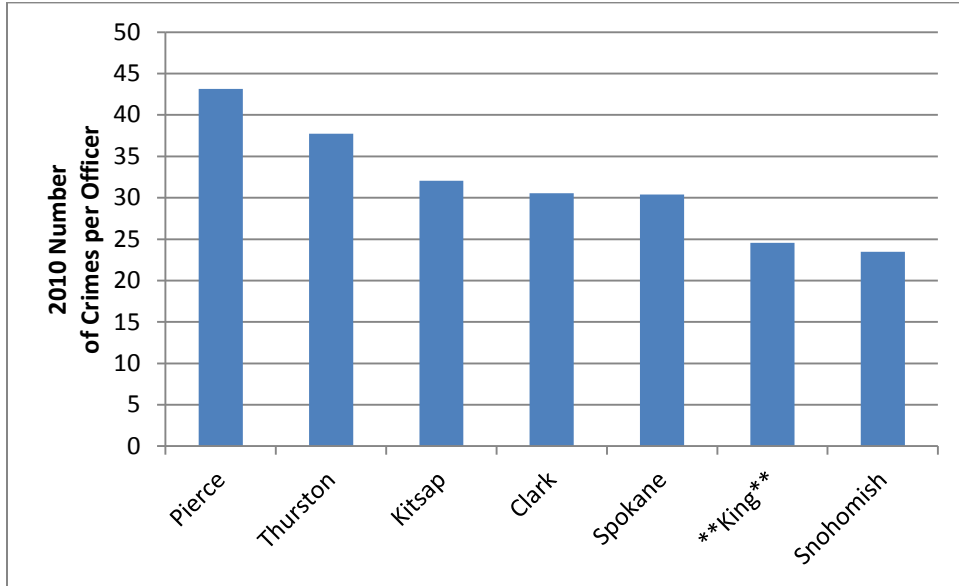
**Exhibit 17**  
**Unincorporated Area Crime Rates per 1,000 Unincorporated Area Population**



Source: WASPC compilation of FBI Uniform Crime data by jurisdiction, and Washington Office of Financial Management State Data Book information on unincorporated area population.

Combining the crime rate data with staffing data, Exhibit 18 illustrates that the number of crimes per officer is lower than average in unincorporated King County compared with the other large jurisdictions.

**Exhibit 18**  
**2010 Unincorporated Area Crimes per Officer**  
**Serving the Unincorporated Area**



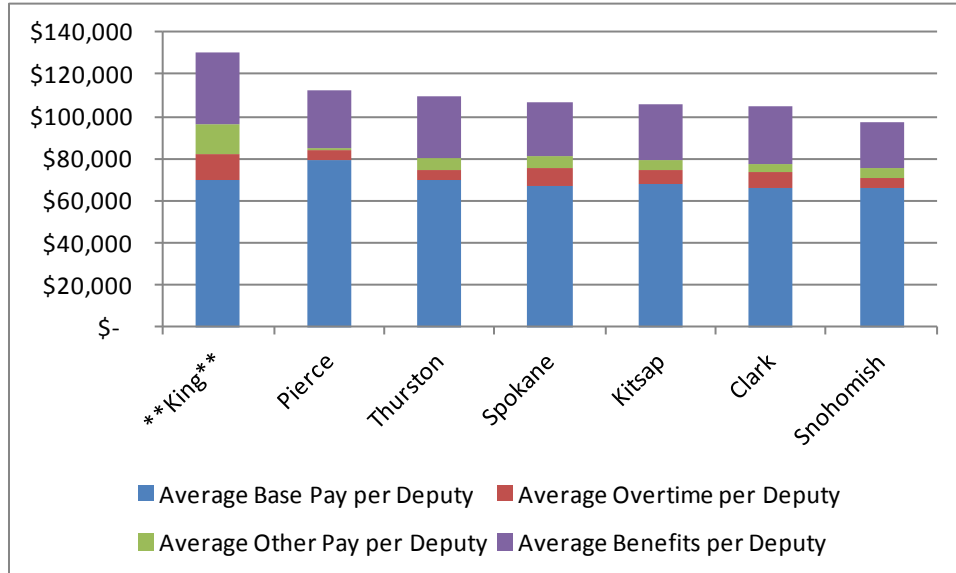
Source: KCAO analysis of FBI Uniform Crime data and staffing data provided by jurisdictions.

**Question: How does the cost of deputy compensation in King County compare with other large sheriff departments in Washington?**

**Answer: Deputy compensation costs in King County are the highest among large sheriff departments in Washington.**

Exhibit 19 shows that while the base salary of King County deputies is comparable to other jurisdictions, when all compensation costs are counted including extra pay, overtime, and benefits, compensation costs per deputy are the highest in King County.

**Exhibit 19  
Average County Sheriff Department Deputy Salary & Benefits**



Source: KCAO analysis of King County payroll data, and compensation data provided by other jurisdictions. Note: the KCSO has suggested that the amount of overtime per deputy portrayed in Exhibit 19 is skewed by higher amounts of overtime earned by King County deputies who work for contract cities and transit agencies. They have provided information indicating that if overtime earned by contract officers is eliminated from the comparison, and if overtime that is reimbursed by other entities (e.g. overtime for parks security reimbursed by the Parks Division) is eliminated from the comparison, the amount of overtime per deputy would decrease from \$12,747 as represented in Exhibit 19 to \$10,120 per deputy. While we acknowledge the KCSO’s point, we did not have information from other jurisdictions to exclude overtime earned by deputies working under contract, or to exclude overtime reimbursed by other entities from the numbers for the other jurisdictions. However, we note that even if these categories of overtime were excluded from King County’s numbers and included for the other jurisdictions, the average overtime per deputy would still be highest in King County, and the average total compensation per deputy would also still be the highest in King County.

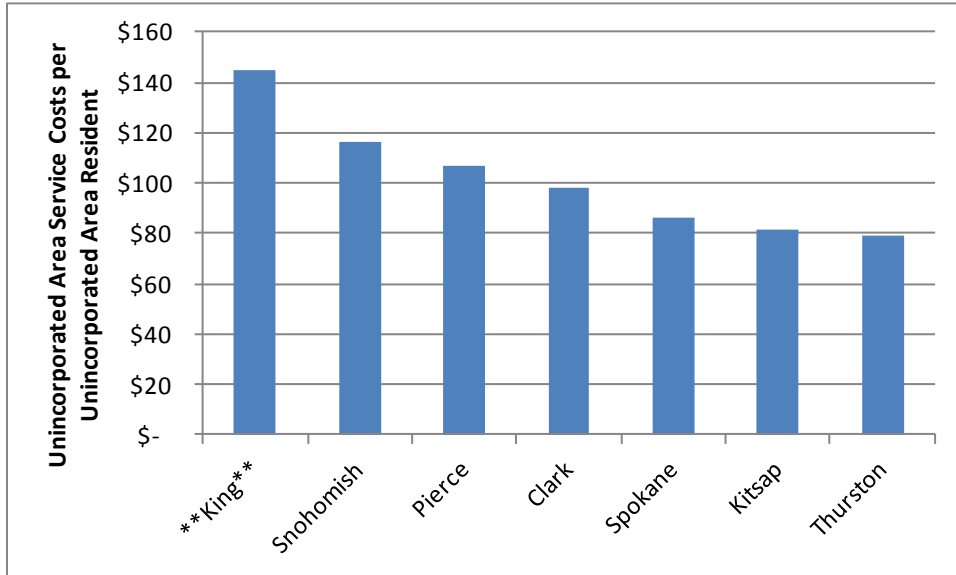
**Question: How does the cost of services in the unincorporated area provided by the King County Sheriff’s Office compare to the cost of unincorporated area services provided by other large county sheriff departments in Washington?**

**Answer: The cost per resident of unincorporated area services provided by the King County Sheriff’s Office is higher than the cost of other large county sheriff departments relative to the population served or the crime rate.**

Exhibit 20 indicates that the KCSO cost per unincorporated area resident is higher than that in other jurisdictions. This is largely attributable to the combination of relatively high staffing and compensation costs.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For the comparison of unincorporated area cost per resident, the costs of both contract services and regional services are excluded from KCSO and from the other jurisdictions. We did not have the cost of regional services for the other jurisdictions, so we assumed that the percentage of total costs (excluding contract services) represented by regional services was the same as for the KCSO and reduced the costs for each jurisdiction by this percentage.

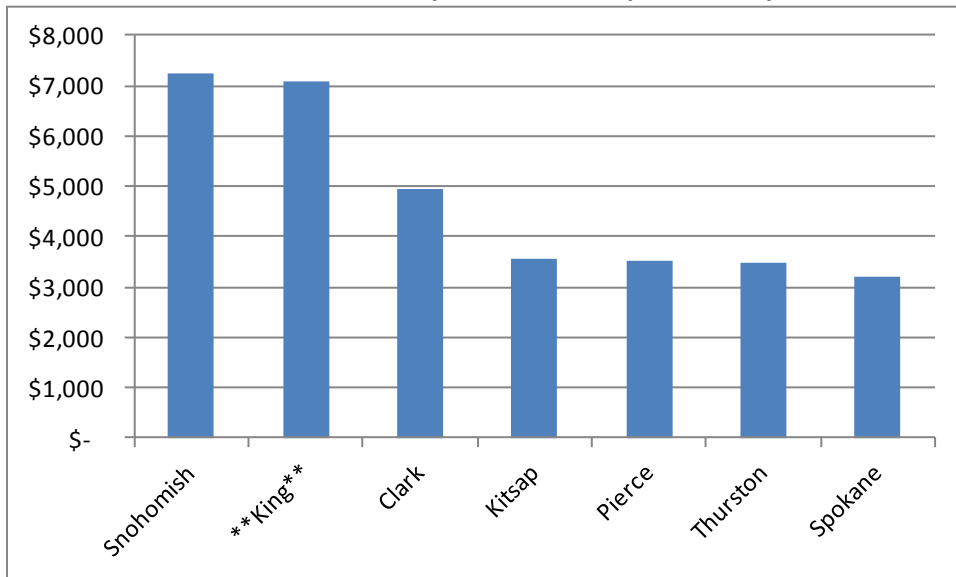
**Exhibit 20**  
**2010 Unincorporated Area Sheriff Cost per Unincorporated Resident**



Source: KCAO analysis of budget data from King County and other jurisdictions and population data from the Washington Office of Financial Management.

Exhibit 21 illustrates that relative to the number of crimes, the cost of unincorporated area services provided by the King County Sheriff’s Office is among the highest among large sheriff departments in Washington.

**Exhibit 21**  
**2010 Sheriff’s Office Unincorporated Area Expenditures per Crime**



Source: KCAO analysis of budget data from King County and other jurisdictions, and FBI crime data compiled by WASPC.

### **Conclusions Regarding Comparisons of KCSO Staffing, Compensation, and Costs with Other Jurisdictions**

While budget cuts at the KCSO have resulted in staffing reductions, the number of deputies per 1,000 unincorporated area residents is higher at KCSO than the average from other large sheriff departments in Washington and among the highest relative to the number of crimes in the unincorporated area. These comparisons do not mean that the KCSO is overstaffed. There are other factors that drive staffing requirements besides the size of the population and the number of crimes. This information is provided for the County Council's information in light of the controversy over similar comparisons during the Council's deliberation of the 2011 budget.

Compensation per deputy at the KCSO is the highest among large sheriff departments in Washington, and the growth in compensation costs has increased since the adoption of the last Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between King County and the Police Officers Guild. The accelerating growth in compensation costs is problematic for two reasons. First, given that resources available to the KCSO are limited, growth in compensation costs becomes a driver for staff layoffs. Second, if growing compensation costs convince contract cities to provide their own police services, the loss of city contribution to the KCSO and countywide overhead will exacerbate King County's budget problems.

Because of the KCSO's relatively high unincorporated area staffing level and compensation costs, KCSO's cost per unincorporated area resident and cost per crime in the unincorporated area are among the highest of large sheriff departments in Washington.

### **SECTION 3: Questions Relating to the Impact of the 2008 Collective Bargaining Agreement on KCSO Staffing Costs (Objective 3)**

**Question: How do compensation provisions in King County’s Collective Bargaining Agreement for deputies compare with those of other jurisdictions in the region?**

**Answer: The types of compensation and base salaries paid to King County deputies are similar to those in other large jurisdictions. However, King County deputies receive higher pay for some categories of work and can earn more overtime for callouts, off-duty telephone calls, and court duty.**

We compared compensation provisions in the Collective Bargaining Agreement for King County’s sheriff deputies with those for deputies in Pierce County, Snohomish County, Bellevue, and Seattle. We compared King County with these jurisdictions because we wanted to see how compensation varied among police departments in the Puget Sound area. This is a somewhat different comparison than the comparisons in the previous section of this report in which we compared the KCSO to other large sheriff departments in Washington state. Our comparison of Collective Bargaining Agreements includes both cities and nearby counties. While counties have a more limited taxing authority than cities, the KCSO may compete with nearby cities when recruiting staff. Exhibit 22 illustrates the results of our comparisons related to base salaries, premium pays, and overtime provisions in 2010. Premium pays are earned by officers working in a specialized area, such as bomb disposal, SWAT team, or patrol, and premium pays are earned as a percentage of base pay.

**Exhibit 22**  
**Comparison of Sheriff's Offices Compensation Provisions for 2010**

Type of Pay	King County	Pierce County	Snohomish County	Bellevue	Seattle
<b>Base Salaries</b>					
Starting Salary	\$54,671	\$55,266	\$50,553	\$54,851	\$62,492
Salary for Deputies after 4 yrs	\$72,748	\$73,091	\$66,195	\$75,999	\$76,372
<b>Premium Pays</b>					
Bomb Disposal Squad Premium	10%	3%	-	4%	9%
Patrol Premium	1%	-	-	-	1.5% after 5 years
SWAT Team Premium	10%	3%	3%	-	3%
Detective Premium	6%	-	-	4%	4-6%
Longevity Premium at 10 yrs	Patrol: 8% Non-Patrol: 6%	-	3.5%	No premium until 18 yrs	Patrol: 6% Non-Patrol: 4%
Education Premium for BA Degree after 10 yrs	4% Can earn <b>both</b> educ & longevity	-	7% Can earn <b>either</b> educ or longevity	8% Can earn <b>either</b> educ or longevity	-
<b>Overtime Provisions</b>					
Minimum Overtime per Callout	4 hrs OT	3 hrs OT	3 hrs OT	3 hrs OT	3 hrs OT
Minimum Overtime per Off-Duty Phone Call	1 hr for calls over 8 min	Earned in 6 min increments	Earned for actual call length	Earned in 15 min increments	1 hr for calls over 8 min
Minimum per Off-Duty Court Appearance	4 hrs OT	2 hrs OT	3 hrs OT	3 hrs OT	3 hrs OT

Source: Collective Bargaining Agreements from each jurisdiction.

As can be seen in Exhibit 22, King County's base salaries are similar to those in Pierce County and Bellevue, are somewhat higher than those in Snohomish County, and are somewhat lower than those in Seattle. However, when comparing premium pays for officers who perform specific duties (e.g., bomb squad or SWAT team), King County is consistently higher than its peers.

Additionally, King County offers a premium to patrol officers—no other jurisdiction surveyed offers this except Seattle, which offers a patrol premium to officers with five years of experience. King County also offers both longevity and education premiums, offers patrol deputies a higher longevity premium than other deputies, and increases its longevity payments more quickly than any of the other jurisdictions.

Finally, as illustrated in Exhibit 22, King County's overtime provisions allow officers to earn overtime at a higher rate for callouts, off-duty telephone calls, and court duty.

**Question: How have compensation provisions in King County’s Collective Bargaining Agreement changed over time?**

**Answer: Between 2000 and 2008, compensation provisions for deputies remained consistent, with regular wage increases of 3 to 3.6 percent annually. However, the agreement signed in 2008 included annual five-percent wage increases, more generous overtime provisions, a new patrol longevity premium, and a more generous health care plan.**

The five-year Collective Bargaining Agreement signed in 2008 and fully implemented in 2009 included several increases to deputy and sergeant compensation, including the following:

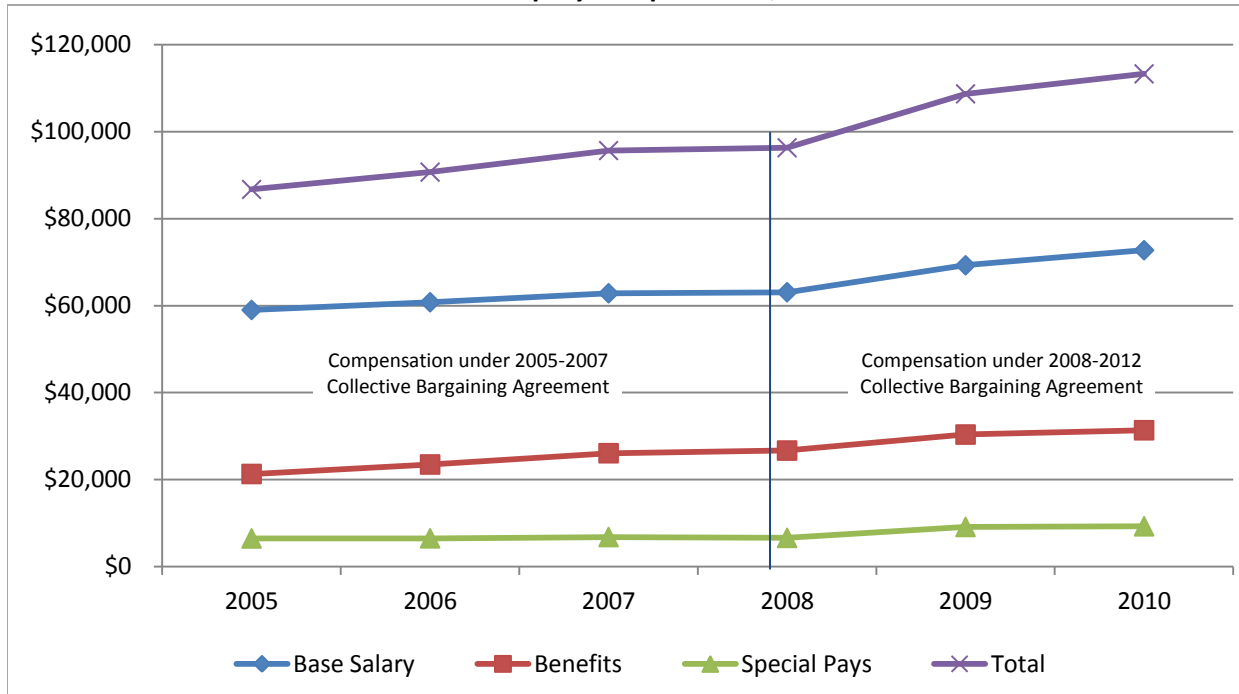
- Base salaries are scheduled to increase five percent annually.
- Premium pays are calculated using each officer’s individual pay rate, thus increasing pay for most officers.
- The number of wage steps for sergeants was reduced from five to three. Additionally, sergeants start at a higher rate and reach the highest pay rate after 18 months. Under the previous contract, sergeants worked up to the highest pay step over eight years.
- Patrol officers earn longevity pay at a higher rate than other officers. Longevity pay is a premium officers earn in addition to their base salary, and it is based on years of service.<sup>9</sup>
- Officers receive a minimum of one hour of overtime for all off-duty phone calls over eight minutes.
- Officers receive a minimum of four hours of overtime for each callout, even if the callout is cancelled before the officer reaches the scene. In the prior contract, officers received a minimum of two hours of overtime for all callouts.
- Deputies and sergeants have a health care plan with lower deductibles, lower co-insurance requirements, and higher lifetime maximums than the plan offered in the previous contract.

The impact of the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement is illustrated in Exhibit 23, below. All categories of compensation increased, but base salary and health benefits increased the most.

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<sup>9</sup> Officers qualify for longevity pay after five years of service, and the premium increases with each additional year. Patrol deputies and sergeants now begin earning six percent after five years of service and earn 16 percent after 25 years. Other officers earn five percent longevity pay after five years of service and can earn a maximum of 10 percent after 14 years.

**Exhibit 23  
KCSO Deputy Compensation, 2005-2010**



Source: KCAO analysis of King County Sheriff's Office Cost Book data.

**Question: How have changes to compensation provisions in the Collective Bargaining Agreement driven Sheriff's Office staffing costs?**

**Answer: Changes to compensation provisions in the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement have led to increased staffing costs since the agreement was implemented in 2009. We estimated the combined impact of changes to be about \$11.8 million in 2010.**

Several changes to compensation provisions in the 2008-2012 bargaining agreement have led to increased staffing costs. However, not all changes have impacted costs to the same degree. For example, the creation of a Patrol Longevity Program led to an increase in costs of about \$0.74 million per year, while more liberal overtime provisions led to comparatively smaller increases in costs.

We analyzed 2010 payroll and overtime data to estimate the increased cost of the following provisions in the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement:

- Establishment of an annual wage increase of five percent
- Creation of the Patrol Longevity Program
- Basing premium pays on individual officer's pay rates
- Increase of minimum overtime earned per callout
- Reducing the number of pay steps for sergeants from five to three

For each category, we compared actual 2010 costs with what those costs would have been under the provisions of the 2005-2007 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

### 5-Percent Annual Wage Increases

One of the most significant provisions in the 2008-2012 agreement is the establishment of an annual five-percent increase to the prior year's wage rates. The previous two contracts had set annual wage increases at three percent. The impact of the wage increase can be seen in Exhibit 24.

**Exhibit 24**  
**Projected Wages for KCSO Deputies and Sergeants**

	<b>2010 Wages</b>	<b>Difference</b>
2010 Actual Wages including Premiums and Overtime with 5% Increase	\$72,649,557	
Estimate of 2010 Wages without 5% Annual Increases	\$62,757,419	\$9,892,138
Estimate of 2010 Wages if Annual Increases Had Matched Seattle CPI-Urban	\$65,969,264	\$6,680,293

Source: Auditor analysis of King County payroll data

As Exhibit 24 illustrates, the cost of increasing wage rates by five percent was almost \$9.9 million for 2010. The cost of increasing wage rates by five percent rather than the local rate of inflation was almost \$6.7 million in 2010.<sup>10</sup>

### Patrol Longevity

The 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement created a new category of special pay for patrol deputies and sergeants. Patrol deputies and sergeants now earn Patrol Longevity Pay, rather than regular Longevity Pay. Patrol Longevity begins after five years of service also; however, officers who qualify for Patrol Longevity earn a higher percentage of their base pay than other officers. Additionally, Patrol Longevity grows more quickly than regular Longevity, and the cap is at 16 percent rather than 10 percent. The difference between the two longevity programs is illustrated in Exhibit 25 below.

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<sup>10</sup> The Seattle CPI-Urban increased by 4% in 2008, and by less than 1% in both 2009 and 2010.

**Exhibit 25**  
**Provisions of Patrol Longevity Pay & Regular Longevity Pay**  
**in the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Years of Service	Longevity Pay	Patrol Longevity
5	1%	2%
6	2%	3%
7	3%	4%
8	4%	5%
9	5%	6%
10	6%	8%
11	7%	9%
12	8%	10%
13	9%	11%
14	10%	12%
15-19	10%	14%
20-24	10%	15%
25	10%	16%

Source: Agreement Between King County and King County Police Officers Guild, 2008-2012

We calculated the impact of creating the Patrol Longevity Program to be \$0.74 million in 2010.

**Premium Pays Based on Individual Officers' Steps**

Under the current Collective Bargaining Agreement, King County police officers who work in specialized or hazardous areas of law enforcement (e.g., detectives or members of the bomb disposal squad) are eligible for premium payments in addition to their base salaries. These payments are calculated as a percentage of the officer's salary, and the percentage varies by type of work. For example, patrol officers earn an additional one percent of their base salary while SWAT team members earn an additional 10 percent of their base salary.

Under previous contracts, premium payments were calculated as a percentage of a single step on the Deputy pay scale. All officers' premiums were based on Deputy Step 4. The 2008-2012 contract changed the basis for premiums to be each officer's individual pay step. Because over 80 percent of police officers were above Deputy Step 4 in 2010, this change in the calculation of premium pays led to an increase in pay for most officers and an increase in staffing costs for the Sheriff's Office.

As illustrated in Exhibit 26, the combined cost to the King County Sheriff's Office of this change was over \$0.98 million for 2010.

**Exhibit 26**

**Cost Impact of Basing KCSO Premium Pays in Individual Officer Steps**

Premium Type	Impact on 2010 Costs of CBA Change
Patrol	\$25,986
Detective	102,426
Bomb Disposal Squad	3,656
Flight Team	5,379
Clandestine Drug Lab Team	14,734
K-9 Unit	6,173
Skin Divers	7,414
SWAT Team	16,926
Motorcycle Patrol	2,883
Dual Certification	3,628
Plain Clothes Detective	8,562
Education Incentive*	208,724
Longevity Pay (non patrol)	256,876
Patrol Longevity Pay	317,397
<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>\$980,857</b>
*In past contracts, education incentives were based on Deputy Step 2.	

Source: King County Auditor’s Office analysis of King County payroll data and agreements between King County and King County Police Officers Guild

**Minimum of Four Hours of Overtime per Callout**

The 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement also increased the minimum overtime earned by officers responding to a callout. A callout occurs when an officer is called back to work while off duty. Under the 2008-2012 contract, an officer earns a minimum of four hours of overtime for each callout, even if the callout is canceled or if the actual time worked is less than four hours. Under previous contracts, officers earned a minimum of two hours of overtime for each callout. We calculated the cost of increasing the overtime minimum from two to four hours for callouts in 2010 to be approximately \$37,700.

**Reducing the Number of Steps for Sergeants**

The final provision of the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement that we analyzed in detail was the reduction in number of pay steps for sergeants from five to three. The 2008-2012 contract eliminated the initial sergeant step, thus starting sergeants at a higher rate, and reduced the time it takes for sergeants to reach the highest pay step. Under previous contracts, sergeants worked for eight years to obtain the highest pay step; sergeants can now reach that step after 18 months of service. Using payroll data from 2007, we estimated the impact of these combined changes on total staffing costs in 2010 to be approximately \$142,250.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For the other estimates in this section, we used 2010 payroll or overtime data to calculate the impact of changes in compensation. Using 2010 data gave us the most accurate result, because we were working with actual employee and overtime data. For our estimate related to changes in the sergeants’ pay scale, we had to use 2007 data to compare previous and current pay steps. As a result, our estimate is limited by the assumption that the sergeants who worked in 2007 were the same sergeants who worked in 2010.

## Conclusion

In Exhibit 27, we summarize the total financial impact of the five changes to compensation provisions described in this section. In sum, these changes increased the staffing costs of the King County Sheriff's Office by approximately \$11.8 million in 2010. The 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement also included a more generous health care plan for officers, but we did not attempt to calculate the increased cost to the Sheriff's Office of this change.

**Exhibit 27**  
**Cost Impact of Changes in the 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Change in Compensation	Impact on 2010 Costs
Annual wage increase of 5% annually	\$9,892,138
Creation of Patrol Longevity Program	740,546
Basing Premium Pays on Individual Pay Rates	980,857
Increase of Minimum Overtime Earned per Callout	37,673
Reducing Number of Sergeant Pay Steps	142,245
<b>Total Impact:</b>	<b>\$11,793,459</b>

Source: King County Auditor's Office analysis of King County payroll data and agreements between King County and King County Police Officers Guild

**Question: How accurate or thorough was the fiscal note submitted with the ordinance adopting the CBA?**

**Answer: The fiscal note transmitted with the CBA was reasonably accurate in estimating the fiscal impact of many of the provisions of the CBA. However, it underestimated the cost of basing premium pay amounts on individual pay rates, patrol longevity pay, and changes to the health benefit plan.**

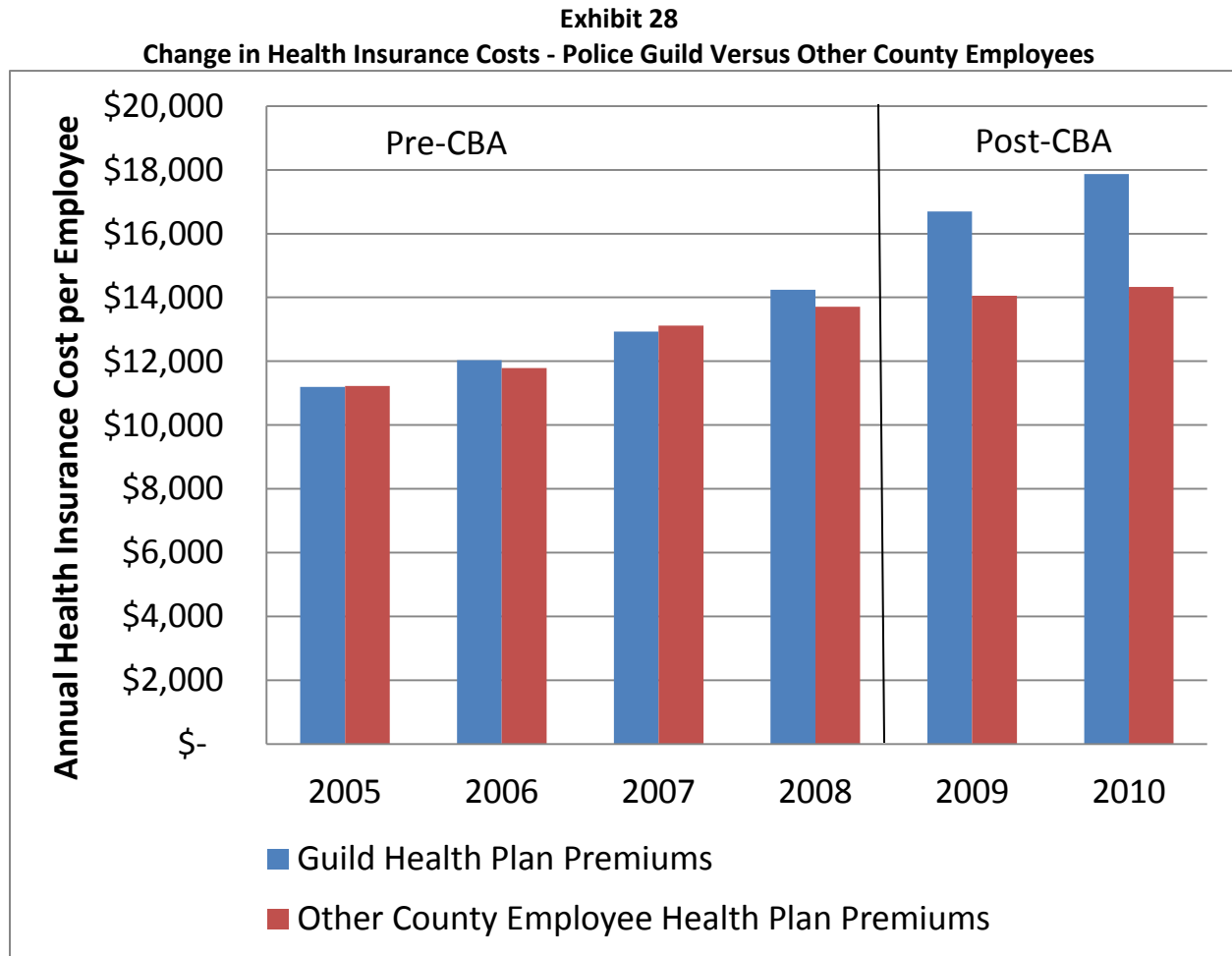
Because of the significant fiscal impact of the 2008 CBA, we reviewed the fiscal note that was transmitted to the County Council with the proposed CBA. We found that while the fiscal note was reasonably accurate in estimating the fiscal impact of many of the provisions of the CBA, it underestimated the cost of certain other provisions including basing premium pay amounts on individual pay rates, patrol longevity pay, and changes to the health benefits plan.

For example, as mentioned above, the 2008 CBA provided that premium pays are based on an officer's actual pay step, rather than Deputy Step 4, as was the case in previous contracts. The methodology used in calculating the fiscal impact of the CBA did not take this change into account. Additionally, when calculating the fiscal impact of the provision of patrol longevity pay, the fiscal note did not calculate the effect of an officer's movement up the salary grid.

Another area where the fiscal note understated the fiscal impact of the CBA pertains to health benefit costs. The CBA resulted in three significant changes to the health care program for deputies: (1) it moved deputies from health plans managed by 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurers to county self-insured plans; (2) it brought deputies into the County's Healthy Incentives Program; and (3) under the Healthy Incentives Gold level of benefits, deputy co-pays, co-insurance, and out-of-pocket maximums became more generous than those under previous CBA's (and more generous than those for other county employees).

The fiscal note projected that these changes would result in additional costs of \$244,000 and \$93,000 in 2009 and 2010, and then annual savings of \$220,000 and \$583,000 in 2011 and 2012. No supporting calculations or assumptions were provided for how these estimates were derived. Actual experience since the implementation of the CBA suggests that the changes to health care programs has resulted in

additional costs to the County. Exhibit 28 illustrates the trend in deputy and other county employee health benefit costs before and after adoption of the 2008 CBA.



Source: Data from Performance, Strategy and Budget.

**Question: Are there any changes to the collective bargaining/fiscal note process that are warranted based on the findings of this audit?**

**Answer: Better information about comparables, and more thorough analysis and clearer presentation of fiscal impacts are needed.**

The process of preparing a fiscal note estimating the impact of a collective bargaining agreement involves several checks and balances. Human Resources Division (HRD) staff prepare the fiscal note, and the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget and the Sheriff's Office sign off on the fiscal note. Despite these checks and balances, the fiscal note submitted with the 2008 CBA underestimated the cost of some of the provisions of the CBA. Some county employees who were involved with reviewing the fiscal note indicated that the timing of the submittal of the CBA to the Council (during the 2009 budget process) and the need to adopt it by the end of 2008 may have limited their review of the fiscal note. Staff from the Sheriff's Office further indicated that KCSO had limited involvement during the negotiating process, and were not asked for input on the estimated fiscal impact.

In our discussions with Sheriff's Office and HRD staff, we were advised that coordination between the Sheriff's Office and the HRD has improved significantly. This is partially attributed to the new role that King County Sheriff's Office Performance Audit

the Sheriff will have in negotiating future collective bargaining agreements as a result of a recent amendment to the King County Charter authorizing the Sheriff to negotiate with the guild over working conditions. Greater involvement by the Sheriff in the negotiating process may help improve the quality of the fiscal estimates by providing more timely feedback from the agency affected by the negotiations.

We discussed with HRD staff how they select and analyze agencies for comparison of salary levels during the negotiating process. We learned that the analysis of comparables may include a comparison of contractual provisions of base salaries and other pays (e.g., longevity pay) but may not include a comparison of the amount officers are actually paid, as we provided in this report (see Exhibit 19). Our comparison showed that while base salaries for deputies are comparable between King County and other sheriff departments, total compensation to King County deputies, including extra pay and benefits, is higher in King County than in other jurisdictions. Such information would be useful when conducting comparisons during the negotiating process.

We also think improvements could be made in the way fiscal information is presented to the County Council in fiscal notes. The fiscal note transmitted with the 2008 CBA portrayed the fiscal impact for each year as the annual incremental impact versus the cumulative impact. Exhibit 29 below illustrates the difference between presenting the annual incremental impact and the cumulative impact of the CBA. In our opinion, presenting the annual cumulative fiscal impact is more instructive concerning the ongoing impact of the changes made as a result of adoption of the CBA. For example, we think it would have been more instructive for the County Council to know when considering the 2008 CBA that by 2012, labor costs will be \$20 million per year higher than in 2007 as a result of adopting the CBA rather than knowing that in 2012, labor costs will be \$4 million higher than in 2011.

**Exhibit 29**  
**Annual Incremental vs. Annual Cumulative Fiscal Impact**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Annual Incremental Fiscal Impact	\$4,851,377	\$3,690,737	\$3,600,692	\$3,780,727	\$3,969,763
Annual Cumulative Fiscal Impact	\$4,851,377	\$8,542,114	\$12,142,806	\$15,923,533	\$19,893,297

Source: KCAO calculations using the numbers from the fiscal note.

**Recommendation 5:** When comparing compensation rates to comparable jurisdictions, the Human Resources Division should include all forms of compensation, including extra pay, overtime policies, and benefits, in addition to base salaries.

**Recommendation 6:** When transmitting fiscal notes of the estimated impact of labor agreements to the County Council, the Human Resources Division should present both the annual incremental and annual cumulative impacts.

## SECTION 4: Questions Relating to Mandated vs. Non-Mandated and Regional vs. Local Services (Objectives 5 & 6)

**Question: What mandates govern the services provided by KCSO? Does KCSO provide services in excess of these mandates?**

**Answer: Both state and county statutes mandate that the King County Sheriff's Office provide certain services. Key areas of responsibility include preserving public safety, investigating crimes, conducting search and rescue services, and executing court orders. However, neither state nor local mandates specify the level of service that must be provided.**

Washington State Law, in RCW 36.28.010, specifies that the sheriff is the chief executive officer and conservator of the peace of the county. According to the state law, the sheriff shall:

- Arrest and commit to prison all persons who break the peace, or attempt to break it, and all persons guilty of public offenses.
- Defend the county against those who, by riot or otherwise, endanger the public peace or safety.
- Execute the process and orders of the courts of justice or judicial officers, when delivered for that purpose, according to law.
- Execute all warrants delivered for that purpose by other public officers, according to the provisions of particular statutes.
- Attend the sessions of the courts of record held within the county, and obey their lawful orders or directions.
- Keep and preserve the peace, and quiet and suppress all affrays, riots, unlawful assemblies and insurrections, for which purpose, and for the service of process in civil or criminal cases, and in apprehending or securing any person for felony or breach of the peace, they may call to their aid such persons, or power of their county as they may deem necessary.

King County Code 2.16.060 also requires the Sheriff's Office to keep and preserve the public peace, and it adds the following additional functions to the department:

- Oversee a crime prevention program, investigate crimes against persons and property, and arrest alleged offenders.
- In coordination with the office of emergency management, plan and coordinate resources for the public safety and welfare in the event of a major emergency or disaster.
- Provide service and administrative functions which support but do not duplicate other governmental activities, and which have the potential to be fiscally self-supportive.
- Investigate the origin, cause, circumstances and extent of loss of all fires.

Exhibit 30 summarizes the key services provided by the King County Sheriff's Office, organized by division. In this exhibit, we have also attempted to identify those services that are mandated by either state or county law. In some cases, it can be complicated to determine whether a particular function is mandated. For example, the marine unit provides both search and rescue and patrol services. The search and rescue component is mandated, but the patrol component is not. Additionally, the mandates do not specify a level of service. For example, the Sheriff's Office is required to arrest all individuals who are guilty of public offenses, and KCSO meets this mandate through its work in all three departmental divisions. However, many units, such as special assault or major crimes investigations, are not specifically mandated.

Therefore, in Exhibit 30, we have identified as "mandated" only those services for which there is a specific state or county mandate.

**Exhibit 30**  
**King County Sheriff’s Office Services and Mandates**  
*Mandated services are included in italics.*

<b>Patrol Operations Division – 429.8 FTE (Contracts fund 225.5 of these FTE)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Patrol</li> <li>▪ Precinct-Based Detectives</li> <li>▪ <i>Community Crime Prevention (mandated by KCC)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Resource Officers</li> <li>▪ Storefront Offices</li> <li>▪ Evidence Specialists</li> <li>▪ Canine Officers</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Investigations Division – 155 FTE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Major Accidents and Response Reconstruction</li> <li>▪ Narcotics</li> <li>▪ Special Assault (e.g., child abuse)</li> <li>▪ <i>Registered Sex Offenders (mandated by RCW)</i></li> <li>▪ Major Crimes (e.g., homicide, robbery)</li> <li>▪ <i>Domestic Violence Intervention Unit (mandated by RCW)</i></li> <li>▪ SWAT Team</li> <li>▪ <i>Criminal Intelligence (Investigation of criminal profiteering mandated by RCW)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Criminal Warrants (mandated by RCW)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Marine Support (search and rescue component mandated by RCW)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Air Support (search and rescue component mandated by RCW)</i></li> <li>▪ Bomb Disposal Squad</li> <li>▪ <i>Traffic Safety (mandated by Roads Levy)</i></li> <li>▪ Shooting Range</li> <li>▪ <i>Fire Marshall (mandated by RCW)</i></li> <li>▪ Mental Illness and Drug Dependency</li> <li>▪ Advanced Training</li> </ul>
<b>Support Services – 376 FTE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Court Security</li> <li>▪ <i>Civil Warrants (mandated by KCC)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Records Management (mandated by RCW)</i></li> <li>▪ Property and Evidence Management</li> <li>▪ <i>AFIS (fingerprinting mandated by RCW)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Communication Center (mandated by KCC)</i></li> <li>▪ Information Services and Support</li> <li>▪ Department Administration</li> <li>▪ Photo Lab</li> </ul>

Source: Operational Master Plan and discussions with KCSO

**Question: What services does the KCSO provide throughout all jurisdictions in the County? Which of these does the KCSO charge for? How does King County determine which regional services are chargeable to cities and which are not?**

**Answer: KCSO provides some services, identified as “regional services,” throughout all jurisdictions of the County without charge. Regional services include homicide investigations, search and rescue, and sex offender registration, among others. The set of services provided as regional has evolved over time and includes many services that are mandated by state law or require a degree of expertise not currently available in many city police departments.**

Currently, each service provided by the Sheriff’s Office falls into one of three categories: Local, Regional, or Specialty. The Sheriff’s Office describes the categories as follows:<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This list is intended to clarify the types of services that are offered by KCSO and it may not include every service provided.

**Local Services:** Local services include precinct-based police services that are provided by King County in the unincorporated areas and by cities (or King County under contract to cities) in incorporated areas. These services include:

- Precinct-Based Patrol
- Precinct-Based Detectives

When provided in the unincorporated areas of King County, local services are funded by County revenues. KCSO provides local services for a charge to cities and other entities that contract for them.

**Regional Services:** KCSO provides regional services countywide. They include:

- Homicide Investigations
- Search and Rescue
- Bomb Disposal
- Child Find
- Centralized Drug Enforcement
- Homeland Security, Criminal Intelligence, and Critical Incident Preparedness
- Fire Marshall and Arson Investigation
- Sex Offender Registration
- Criminal and Civil Warrants
- Court Security
- Concealed Weapons Permits
- Dignitary Protection
- Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)

Regional services are funded solely through county revenues and, for some services, dedicated levies. KCSO provides these services countywide without charge, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

**Specialty Services:** KCSO provides specialty services on a fee-for-service or shared-cost basis to all cities throughout the county. These services include:

- Major Crimes and Special Assault
- SWAT Team
- Marine Patrol (not search and rescue)
- Air Support (not search and rescue)
- Domestic Violence Intervention Unit
- Canine Unit with Search, Drug Detection, and Explosive Detection Capabilities
- Evidence and Property Management
- Major Accident Response and Reconstruction Unit
- Communications Center
- Internal Investigations
- Hostage Negotiations
- Driving Under the Influence Enforcement
- Tactical and General Training
- Coordination of Demonstrations and Events
- Traffic Safety
- Photo Lab

In unincorporated areas, specialty services are funded with County revenues. In cities, KCSO charges for specialty services, although KCSO provides some of these services (e.g., SWAT Team or Air Support) as mutual aid when responding to a critical incident or request for emergency assistance from a nearby jurisdiction.

KCSO management reported to us that the determination of which services should be provided as regional services have been influenced by three general criteria:

- Services that have traditionally been provided exclusively by the County are generally provided as regional services. Examples include search and rescue and dignitary protection.
- Services for which the County has developed a high level of expertise and serves as an area resource are generally categorized as regional services. Examples include bomb disposal and homicide investigations.
- Services that the County is mandated to provide and for which there is no other local provider are categorized as regional. Examples include sex offender registration and arson investigation.

Although these criteria can be helpful in understanding why some KCSO services are offered without charge, they are general and are not sufficient to explain the categorization of all KCSO services. For example, KCSO's SWAT Team is composed of highly trained officers who provide a service that is beyond the scope of regular police work. However, the SWAT Team is offered as a specialty service rather than regional. Additionally, KCSO management reported to us that these criteria are not documented and that the current categories have been established over time and reflect the input of past sheriffs and county policy-makers.

In 2007, KCSO completed an Operational Master Plan (OMP) that included a recommendation that KCSO develop formal criteria to clarify which KCSO services are regional and which are chargeable under a local policing contract or as a specialty service. The OMP suggested definitions of chargeable and non-chargeable services that could serve as a starting point for developing this kind of formal criteria: chargeable would include proactive and reactive patrol; non-chargeable would include services not routinely used in most cities. KCSO management reported to us that implementation of the OMP's recommendations has not yet occurred, and the KCSO has not yet developed formal criteria for determining which services should be offered without charge.

The OMP's recommendation was intended to define KCSO's role as a provider of regional law enforcement services and to initiate a discussion of whether other local entities could partner with King County to provide necessary services. Further, formal criteria regarding which services are chargeable would clarify KCSO's cost model and KCSO's relationship with contract and non-contract entities.

**Recommendation 7:** KCSO should develop and document its criteria for determining which services are local, regional, and specialty.

## **Appendix 1**

### **List of Recommendations & Implementation Schedule**

**Recommendation 1:** The KCSO should continue its efforts to develop a systematic patrol staffing plan that is tied to workload, operational, and performance goals, including those for community- and problem-oriented policing, and flexible to address changing department needs and priorities.

Implementation Schedule: 2012 business planning process

Estimate of Impact: Better understanding of patrol resource needs and impacts

**Recommendation 2:** The KCSO should continue pursuing economies of scale in delivering its patrol services by merging precincts and pooling staff resources when feasible.

Implementation Schedule: Already in progress and ongoing

Estimate of Impact: Efficiencies and cost savings in patrol staffing

**Recommendation 3:** The KCSO should develop a plan that explains its patrol operations goals, activities, measures of success, and workload; and should establish a monitoring system for its community- and problem-oriented policing activities.

Implementation Schedule: 2012 business planning process

Estimate of Impact: Better understanding of patrol resource needs and impacts

**Recommendation 4:** The Criminal Investigations Division should develop a more systematic case management system and strengthen its approach to monitoring workload for detectives.

Implementation Schedule: In progress

Estimate of Impact: Better management of CID resources

**Recommendation 5:** When comparing compensation rates to comparable jurisdictions, the Human Resources Division should include all forms of compensation, including extra pay, overtime policies, and benefits, in addition to base salaries.

Implementation Schedule: Next CBA process beginning in 2012

Estimate of Impact: More complete information on compensation in comparable jurisdictions

**Recommendation 6:** When transmitting fiscal notes of the estimated impact of labor agreements to the County Council, the Human Resources Division should present both the annual incremental and annual cumulative impacts.

Implementation Schedule: Immediately

Estimate of Impact: Better information on fiscal impacts of collective bargaining agreements

**Recommendation 7:** KCSO should develop and document its criteria for determining which services are local, regional, and specialty.

Implementation Schedule: end of 2012

Estimate of Impact: Clarity over how services are deemed chargeable or non-chargeable.

## Appendix 2 Sheriff Response



KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
516 Third Avenue, W-116  
Seattle, WA 98104-2312  
Tel: 206-296-4155 • Fax: 206-296-0168

Susan L. Rahr  
Sheriff

KING COUNTY AUDITOR

SEP 14 2011

RECEIVED

September 14, 2011

Cheryle A. Broom, County Auditor  
Metropolitan King County Council  
King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue, Room 1033  
Seattle, WA 98104-3272

RE: Proposed Final Report – King County Sheriff's Office Performance Audit

Dear Ms. Broom:

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to your proposed final audit report of the Sheriff's Office. It is our understanding that the Executive is addressing the two items in the audit related to the 2008-2012 collective bargaining agreement for deputies. Specifically, the Executive will be addressing your recommendations related to compensation analysis and the fiscal note as a matter of the budget process. You will find our responses to the other recommendations attached with this letter.

As you may be aware, the Sheriff's Office has been through an audit process in the past 10-plus years that has included 2000, 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2010/11. We have reviewed those efforts in relation to the current audit, and recognize there are some recurring themes as well as areas of both concurrence and significant disagreement. It is worth noting in such a review that plans for improvements in response to the auditor's recommendations in the past few years have in some cases given way to the reality of the economic environment faced by the county. Not only have we not been funded for positions we had hoped to develop for specific improvements, the KCSO has cut a total of 172 positions across the past 4 years alone. This hampered our ability to execute more ambitious plans for improving policing operations and public safety, but it has also forced us to adjust our policing strategies and operations as we have cut entire units of service on an annual and ongoing basis.

In spite of the many challenges that all of county government has faced, it is important to point out that we have made significant operational and organizational improvements that contribute directly to our core mission of keeping the public safe while also making tangible economic improvements for the benefit of the county, our contract partners, and the general fund. We have

- successfully achieved national CALEA accreditation- a national standard for police operations, management, and measurement

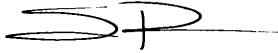
## Appendix 2 (Continued)

- successfully executed the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Police Accountability
- significantly reorganized our policing operational model across the entire organization (command structures, unit alignment, and reporting)
- successfully reorganized and consolidated the entire east side physical operation, achieving a projected \$8.6 million dollar general fund savings over the next 20 years through downsizing and contract city space partnering
- successfully developed systems to better track, identify trends, and manage citizen complaints and uses of force
- developed and implemented a Crime Trends program at the precinct level to focus our patrol and investigative efforts on available crime data specific to geographic regions
- successfully completed a Policing Services Review Team (PSRT) exercise with the finance directors and managers of our contract cities and the Executive's Budget Office (PSB) - a process that reaffirmed the economic viability and mutual benefit of our contracting services model

These are significant and measurable steps forward for the Sheriff's Office in our effort to both apply our resources to their best use as well as measure and manage the outcomes in a more open and transparent manner.

We look forward to further discussion of the issues and thank you for your work. Please call Chief Deputy Steve Strachan if you have any questions about our response.

Sincerely,



Sue Rahr  
Sheriff

CC: Dow Constantine, King County Executive  
Fred Jarrett, Deputy County Executive  
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
Steve Strachan, Chief Deputy, KCSO  
Scott Sotebeer, Chief of Staff, KCSO  
DeWayne Pitts, Chief Financial Officer, KCSO

## Appendix 2 (Continued)

### Final Draft of 2011 Performance Audit of KCSO - List of Recommendations & Implementation Schedule:

<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The KCSO should continue its efforts to develop a systematic patrol staffing plan that is tied to workload, operational, and performance goals, including those for community- and problem-oriented policing, and flexible to address changing department needs and priorities.</p>	<p>Partially Concur</p>	<p>Given the recent reorganization, realignment, and consolidation of several major operations within the Sheriff's Office, plus the in-progress relocation of the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) and the Patrol Operations Division (POD), the KCSO plans to include a discussion of patrol operations in its 2012 Business Plan that will address the specific recommendations outlined here. In addition, the Sheriff's Office will be conducting a process improvement plan with an outside facilitator during the 4th Quarter of 2011 to focus on identifying strategies to improve sharing of patrol resources between Precincts to improve efficiencies. Lastly, the Sheriff's Office appears to have the necessary external support to develop a scheduling software program <b>Time, Attendance and Scheduling (TAS)</b> during the next 36-48 months. This software program will utilize information technology to support electronic scheduling of patrol personnel and the sharing of resources between sectors for improved efficiency and cost effective service delivery. These types of software programs</p>	<p>The KCSO plans to: outline the intended deliverables in the 2012 business plan; establish benchmarks through 2012/2013; and collect appropriate data related to the implementation of business plan goals and objectives related to patrol operations and community policing.</p>

## Appendix 2 (Continued)

		typically contribute to savings in backfill overtime and the efficient scheduling of large groups of personnel across areas where 24/7 operations are necessary. The scheduling support will assist our sergeants with increased opportunities to supervise their personnel.	
<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The KCSO should continue pursuing economies of scale in delivering its patrol services by merging precincts and pooling staff resources when feasible.	concur	Currently in progress and ongoing.	Over the past two years, the KCSO has already significantly reorganized our policing operational model across the entire organization (command structures, unit alignment, and reporting). We are currently relocating the entire east side physical operation, achieving a projected \$8.6 million dollar general fund savings over the next 20 years through downsizing and contract city space partnering. This process is continuing through CID consolidation due to the MRJC reorganization for courts and we are in the process of looking at a reorganization and relocation of Precinct #4 as well as Vashon Island and potentially other storefronts and substations.
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The KCSO should develop a plan that explains its patrol operations goals, activities, measures of success, and workload; and should establish a monitoring system for its community- and problem-oriented policing activities.	Partially concur	Given the recent reorganization, realignment, and consolidation of several operations, plus the in-progress relocation of CID and Patrol Operations, the KCSO plans to include a discussion of patrol operations in its 2012 business plan that will address the specific recommendations outlined here.	Since the auditor did not provide any best practices or established quantitative measures for patrol operations or for the qualitative or quantitative monitoring of community policing for a comparable Sheriff's Office operation, the KCSO plans to: outline the intended deliverables in the 2012 business plan; establish benchmarks through 2012/2013; and collect appropriate data related to the implementation of business plan goals and objectives related to patrol ops and community policing.
<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Criminal Investigations Division should develop a more systematic case management system and strengthen its approach to monitoring workload for detectives.	Partially concur	On-going. Data currently being gathered will continually be assessed to adjust either workload per detective or staffing based on workload.	As noted on page 18 of the audit report, recently implemented case time requirement tracking methods have been instituted for each unit and those results will be studied to help determine future staffing. Cases are currently assigned using a 'Triage' style, with the most egregious and/or highest solvability factored ones assigned first regardless of the time requirement to successfully conclude

## Appendix 2 (Continued)

			them. Staffing requirements will continue to be assessed based upon both these factors.
<b>Recommendation 5:</b> When comparing compensation rates to comparable jurisdictions, the Human Resources Division should include all forms of compensation, including extra pay, overtime policies, and benefits, in addition to base salaries.			<b>ANSWERED BY EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>Recommendation 6:</b> When transmitting fiscal notes of the estimated impact of labor agreements to the County Council, the Human Resources Division should present both the annual incremental and annual cumulative impacts.			<b>ANSWERED BY EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>Recommendation 7:</b> KCSO should develop and document its criteria for determining which services are local, regional, and specialty.	Do not concur	N/A	The OMP recommendation was to define chargeable and non-chargeable services. These services have been defined and are categorized as such in the annual Contract Cost Book. In addition, a KCSO service matrix is sent to all cities in King County annually informing them as to which specialty services are available on a reimbursement basis or available regionally at no charge. Units that were eliminated in recent budget cuts have been removed. In the spirit of the OMP recommendations, the KCSO continues to seek new regional partnerships that will provide more efficient and effective police services to residents of King County.

## Appendix 3 Executive Response



### King County

**Dow Constantine**  
King County Executive  
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800  
Seattle, WA 98104-1818  
**206-263-9600** Fax 206-296-0194  
TTY Relay: 711  
www.kingcounty.gov

September 9, 2011

Cheryle A. Broom  
King County Auditor  
Room 1033  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Ms. Broom:

We are in receipt of your August 31<sup>st</sup> letter and the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed final report of the King County Sheriff's Office Performance Audit. The audit objectives were to address specific questions related to the staffing, compensation and costs of the King County Sheriff's Office, compared to other similar jurisdictions, impacts on staffing of annexations and incorporations, and how services are determined to be provided on a free-of-charge or fee basis. The audit also analyzed the impacts of the 2008-2012 collective bargaining agreement on staffing costs and how these impacts were compiled and presented in the County's budget process. At your request, my response will address the two recommendations related to compensation analysis and development and transmission of the associated fiscal note in the budget process.

We concur that the two recommendations are reasonable and feasible and once implemented will improve the current compensation cost analysis and the budget documentation and proposal process. We will implement the recommendation for comparison of compensation rates as part of the next contract with the King County Police Officers Guild. Bargaining for this contract likely will begin in early 2012. We also will immediately expand the fiscal notes presented for proposed labor agreements to include the annual incremental and annual cumulative impacts.

Attachment A identifies the high-level timelines and products connected with our response to the recommendations. The Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget and the Office of Labor Relations, and the Human Resources Division in the Department of Executive Services will begin work on these recommendations immediately.

KING COUNTY AUDITOR

SEP 09 2011

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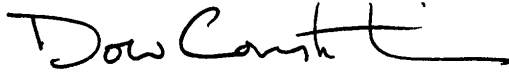
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and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act*

## Appendix 3 (Continued)

Cheryle A. Broom  
September 9, 2011  
Page 2

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Patti Cole-Tindall, Director  
Office of Labor Relations, at 206-296-4273.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: Larry Brubacker, Senior Principal Management Auditor, King County Council  
Cindy Drake, Principal Management Auditor, King County Council  
Elizabeth Dubois, Principal Management Auditor, King County Council  
Fred Jarrett, Deputy County Executive, King County Executive Office (KCEO)  
Rhonda Berry, Assistant Deputy County Executive, KCEO  
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
Patti Cole-Tindall, Director, Office of Labor Relations  
Caroline Whalen, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive  
Services (DES)  
Nancy Buonanno Grennan, Director, Human Resources Division, DES  
Caroline McShane, Deputy Director, Finance and Business Operations Division, DES

## Appendix 3 (Continued)

### Attachment A

Recommendation	Agency Position	Schedule for Implementation	Comments
<p>5. When comparing compensation rates to comparable jurisdictions, the Human Resources Division should include all forms of compensation, including extra pay, overtime policies and benefits, in addition to base salaries.</p>	<p>concur</p>	<p>The Office of Labor Relations (OLR) will implement this recommendation as part of preparation for the next contract negotiations with the King County Police Officers Guild. Bargaining for this contract likely will begin in early 2012.</p>	
<p>6. When transmitting fiscal notes of the estimated impact of labor agreements to the County Council, the Human Resources Division should present both the annual incremental and annual cumulative impacts.</p>	<p>concur</p>	<p>OLR will immediately begin to add the estimated annual incremental and cumulative impacts of labor agreements in the fiscal notes submitted.</p>	

## Appendix 4

### Auditor's Comments on Sheriff's Response

The Sheriff concurred with Recommendation 2, partially concurred with Recommendations 1, 3, and 4, and did not concur with Recommendation 7 (recommendations 5 and 6 were directed to the Executive, who concurred with them). The text of the Sheriff's response indicated that KCSO intends to implement Recommendations 1, 3, and 4 (the recommendations with which they partially concurred) and Recommendation 2, with which they concurred. We appreciate the Sheriff's willingness to implement these recommendations.

Recommendation 7 states: **KCSO should develop and document its criteria for determining which services are local, regional, and specialty.** The finding which led to this recommendation was that the *criteria* for classifying services as local, regional, or specialty are informal and in some cases, inadequate. For example, there are some services that are designated as specialty (countywide service provided on a fee-for-service basis in cities) that meet the informal definition of a regional service (countywide service provided free of charge in cities).

The Sheriff's response indicates that chargeable and non-chargeable services have been defined and designated as such in the Contract Cost Book and provided in a matrix sent to contract cities. We acknowledge this point but reiterate that the issue raised by the finding and addressed by the recommendation is that while services have been designated as chargeable or non-chargeable, the criteria for how these designations have been made are informal and in some cases, inadequate to explain why some services are chargeable and others are not.