

# REPORT OF THE KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL



King County



KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2006

# KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL MEMBERS

Randy Revelle, Chair

Faith Ireland, Vice Chair

Anthony Anderson

David Boerner

Michael O'Mahony

Wilson Edward Reed

Jennifer Shaw

Richard K. Smith

Patricia H. Stell

David Eugene Wilson

*"The police are the public and the public are the police."*

- Sir Robert Peel, upon establishment of the Metropolitan London Police, 1829

**For more information or copies of the report, visit the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel website:**

<http://www.metrokc.gov/sheriff/sheriff/blueribbon/>

# REPORT OF THE KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL



**King County**

KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2006



**September 11, 2006**

**To:** King County Executive Ron Sims  
Metropolitan King County Councilmembers  
King County Prosecuting Attorney Norm Maleng  
King County Sheriff Sue Rahr

**From:** Members, King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel

**RE: Report of the Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel**

Enclosed for your consideration and action is the report of the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel. Our charge was to review and research management systems for addressing employee misconduct and discipline in the Sheriff's Office; to gain an understanding of best management practices in other police departments and their applicability to the office; and to make recommendations for improvements to the accountability system for misconduct and discipline. The panel's efforts complement other Sheriff's Office reforms already underway.

The Blue Ribbon Panel members approached the charge with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives. Our report was adopted unanimously after much research and constructive discussion. We received information and advice from a variety of sources, including public presentations to the panel, public comment at three community meetings, numerous police departments and national organizations, and confidential interviews with 18 former and current employees of the Sheriff's Office.

The report presents 43 findings, six major recommendations, and 36 implementing actions that address accountability of the King County Sheriff's Office. Our recommendations specify improvements to the internal management and organization systems for addressing employee misconduct and discipline. The implementation of these recommendations will take considerable cooperation and resources from the Sheriff's Office and King County government.

With these recommendations, our charge has been fulfilled. We are ready to provide any assistance we can in support of your efforts to understand and take timely action on our recommendations. We also respectfully urge you to reconvene our panel in December 2007 to review and evaluate your progress in implementing our recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the people of King County.

**KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL**



**Randy Revelle, Chair**



**Faith Ireland, Vice Chair**



**Anthony Anderson**



**David Boerner**



**Michael O'Mahony**



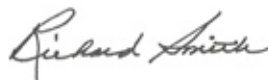
**Wilson Edward Reed**



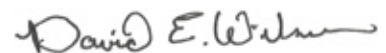
**Jennifer Shaw**



**Patricia H. Stell**



**Richard K. Smith**



**David Eugene Wilson**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report presents the findings and recommendations of the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel, charged with making recommendations to the Metropolitan King County Council, Executive, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff on needed improvements to the misconduct/discipline policies, procedures, and practices of the King County Sheriff's Office. The ten-member Blue Ribbon Panel met ten times over six months, held three public hearings, interviewed 18 current and retired Sheriff employees, performed research into police "best practices," and engaged in many hours of thoughtful discussion about the current condition of the Sheriff's Office, its many challenges and opportunities, and how it might be improved.

The Blue Ribbon Panel's examination of the Sheriff's Office reveals no evidence of corruption, excessive use of force, systemic racial profiling, or widespread misbehavior by deputies. The panel believes the large majority of Sheriff's Office employees act ethically and with integrity, and they are motivated by a genuine desire to serve the public and uphold the law.

The problems described in this report emanate from long-standing organizational challenges, including inadequate attention to individual employee performance by leaders and managers within the Sheriff's Office. The Blue Ribbon Panel's review of the office identified the following problems:

- The Sheriff's Office leadership has inconsistently held managers, supervisors, and other employees accountable for their performance and conduct;
- Front-line supervision of employees is inadequate in both quantity and quality;
- Performance expectations are unclear, and systematic evaluations of job performance have not been conducted for most employees for more than seven years;
- An insufficient number of staff are assigned to the Internal Investigations Unit, and there is a lack of clear guidelines for taking, processing, classifying, investigating, tracking, and resolving citizen and employee complaints;
- The Sheriff's Office is structured so the supervision of employees and oversight of policies and procedures governing conduct, discipline, and accountability cannot be adequately addressed;
- There is inadequate internal and external oversight of policies, procedures, performance, and misconduct investigations; and
- Ongoing efforts should be continued to maintain and improve public confidence in the integrity and professionalism of Sheriff's Office employees.

The panel identified nine major factors influencing the quality and effectiveness of the misconduct and discipline processes of the Sheriff's Office. These influential factors provide the framework for the panel's findings and recommendations: department leadership and culture, management and supervision, human resource systems, the labor environment, the complaint processes, internal oversight, external oversight, transparency, and external factors.

The Blue Ribbon Panel's report presents 43 findings, six major recommendations, and 36 implementing actions that address accountability in the Sheriff's Office. The recommendations specify improvements to the internal management and organizational systems for addressing employee misconduct and discipline. The implementation of these recommendations will take considerable cooperation and resources from the Sheriff's Office and King County government.

By October 2006, the Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel requests that the King County Sheriff respond in detail to the panel regarding all findings, recommendations, and implementing actions issued in this report. Additionally, the panel requests the King County Executive, Council, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff reconvene the panel no later than December 2007 for a progress report on implementation of the panel's recommendations.

The following is a summary of the Blue Ribbon Panel's six recommendations and 36 implementing actions described in more detail in this report.

***1 Executive leadership of the Sheriff's Office should take primary responsibility for creating, implementing, modeling, and sustaining reforms that improve accountability.***

**Implementing Actions:**

- Articulate clear expectations that all employees are to be held accountable for job performance and conduct, and how that will occur.
- State clearly that poor performance and behavior will no longer be tolerated.
- Create and prominently post a code of values, ethics, and conduct that all employees are expected to follow.
- Establish a professional and collaborative relationship with the labor organizations that represent Sheriff's Office employees.
- Retain qualified professionals to perform an institutional audit of the office's culture and its influence on employee behavior.



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## **2** *The Sheriff's Office should examine and implement methods for increasing the level of public trust and transparency of the office.*

### **Implementing Actions:**

- Create a robust culture of valuing citizen complaints, including a mandate that all employees be trained to take, file, and courteously process all complaints.
- Make the Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual available on its website and in other public spaces such as libraries, county offices, and police precincts.
- Create precinct-level citizen advisory committees that would meet regularly to discuss current community problems and issues related to policing and public safety.
- With the help of the citizen advisory committees, hold regular public meetings throughout the county to provide information and receive advice about policies, procedures, and citizens' rights with respect to the Sheriff's Office.

## **3** *The Sheriff's Office management and supervision systems should be improved to support supervisors in making the office more accountable.*

### **Implementing Actions:**

- Provide meaningful performance evaluations for all employees once adequate span of control ratios and supervisory training are in place.
- Create a clear and consistent approach to the discipline of misconduct and other performance issues.
- Improve the variety, amount, consistency, and quality of training available for all employees, including recruits, sworn personnel, civilian personnel, and executive leadership.
- Create an Early Intervention System. The system should aid the Sheriff's Office in collecting and analyzing data on employee performance and identifying interventions as appropriate.
- Evaluate the Car Per Officer program for its impact on overall department performance and public safety.
- Create a program to assist employees in their professional development and attainment of career goals.

- Assess the demographic distribution of officers relative to the communities they serve. The Sheriff's Office should continue and strengthen its efforts to recruit, hire, train, and promote qualified employees that reflect the ethnic, racial, and gender diversity of its service area.
- Examine the Field Training Officer program to identify any systemic problems that contribute to the low retention rate of academy recruits.

#### **4** *The Sheriff's Office should improve the processes and guidelines for taking, classifying, investigating, and responding to all citizen and employee complaints.*

##### **Implementing Actions:**

- Develop a tracking system for all levels of the complaint process.
- Increase public accessibility to and understanding of the complaint process.
- Develop policies that allow for receiving and processing all complaints.
- Develop clear and publicly accessible guidelines for complaint screening and classification.

#### **5** *The Sheriff's Office should create and strengthen organizational structures that support leadership, management, supervision, and accountability.*

##### **Implementing Actions:**

- Create an Inspectional Services Unit to evaluate and oversee policies, procedures, practices, and performance.
- Pursue the Sheriff's Office's goal of accreditation at a future time when it has successfully implemented the major recommendations of this report.
- Attain an acceptable ratio of field supervisors (sergeants) to employees (deputies) to achieve effective supervision.
- Provide commanders on duty at all the precincts at least 18-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week.
- Increase the number of staff in the Internal Investigations Unit to levels that ensure the thorough and timely completion of investigations and the timely publishing of relevant internal management and public reports.
- Move the Internal Investigations Unit to another facility or area in the King County Courthouse that does not have other Sheriff's Office functions.

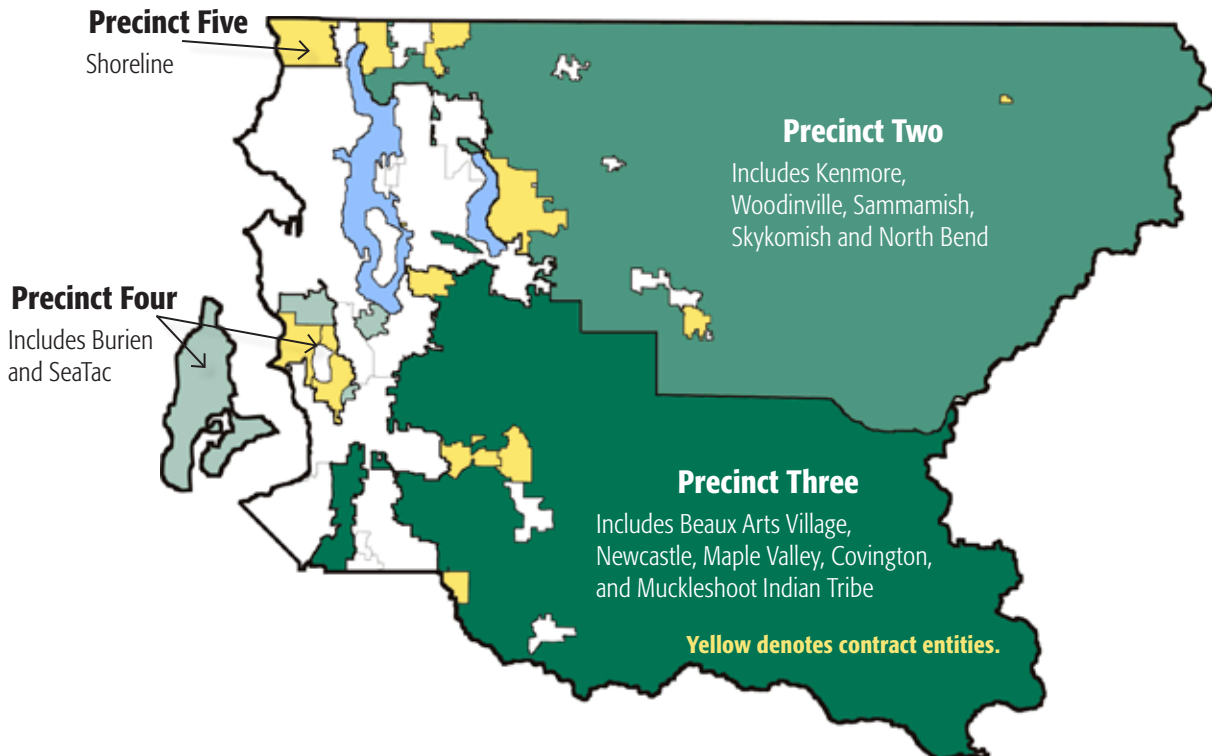
## **6** *The King County Executive and the King County Council should create and fund an Office of Independent Oversight.*

### **Implementing Actions:**

- Create an Office of Independent Oversight with four full-time staff: a director, an investigator, and two support staff.
- Give the director of the Office of Independent Oversight authority and independence through nomination by the King County Executive and confirmation by the King County Council.
- The King County Executive should conduct a professional search for the director.
- The Office of Independent Oversight should have:
  - The authority and responsibility to monitor, check for completeness, and require additional investigation as necessary of all formal Internal Investigations Unit activities;
  - The discretionary authority to monitor, check for completeness, and require additional investigation as necessary of all other complaints assigned to supervisors; and
  - The discretionary authority to review and make recommendations to the Internal Investigations Unit about the screening and classification of complaints, as well as to make recommendations to the Sheriff about screening/classification policies and procedures.
- In addition, the Office of Independent Oversight should have the following authorities and responsibilities:
  - Unimpeded and real-time access to unredacted case information and all information related to ongoing investigation files, treating all documents and information regarding specific investigations or officers as confidential;
  - The ability to respond to the scene of certain critical incidents;
  - Approve formal complaint investigations for completeness before a finding can be issued;
  - The option to consult with command staff as to their own review and recommendations regarding a particular investigation;
  - The option to submit recommendations regarding findings and discipline directly to the Sheriff prior to a final decision on misconduct cases;
  - Monitor the investigation and resolution of all complaints to ensure they are handled in a timely fashion and complainants are notified of the final disposition of their complaint;

- Coordinate with the Sheriff's Office to select an appropriate technology application for tracking and information sharing;
  - Publish annual reports available to the public that provide a statistical analysis of complaints, investigative findings, and final discipline for sustained complaints;
  - Make recommendations for action by the Sheriff on needed improvements in trainings, policies, procedures, and practices; and
  - In collaboration with the Sheriff's Office, explore the establishment and administration of a voluntary officer-citizen mediation program.
- The King County Executive should appoint, subject to King County Council confirmation, a citizens' committee to advise the director of the Office of Independent Oversight on policies, procedures, and practices relating to officer misconduct, discipline, and other responsibilities of the director.
  - The King County Office of Citizen Complaints-Ombudsman should no longer have oversight responsibilities of the King County Sheriff's Office.

## JURISDICTION OF THE KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE





# REPORT OF THE KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL

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# INTRODUCTION

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This report presents the findings and recommendations of the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel, charged with making recommendations to the Metropolitan King County Council, County Executive, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff on needed improvements to the King County Sheriff's Office. The panel's charge encompassed a wide range of issues leading to recommendations covering the office's management systems for addressing employee misconduct and discipline, as well as other organizational systems that will improve the office's accountability to the citizens of King County.

The ten-member Blue Ribbon Panel met ten times over six months, held three public hearings, interviewed current and retired Sheriff's Office employees, conducted research into police "best practices," and engaged in many hours of thoughtful discussion about the current condition of the Sheriff's Office, its many challenges and opportunities, and how it might be improved. The Panel's Charge, Operating Guidelines, Staff Support, and Work Program is in Appendix B to this report.

*"Reform efforts have focused too much on the notorious incidents and misbehaving individuals and not enough on the dysfunctional aspects of police organizations that sustain serious misconduct."*

- Samuel Walker,  
The New World of Police Accountability, 2005

Panel members brought a rich and diverse mix of perspectives, expertise, and experience to their charge, including 96 years of experience in law enforcement and public safety, 152 years of experience in the law and the justice system, 50 years of experience in King County government, and 65 years of experience in labor issues. A full description of the panel's credentials is in Appendix A.

The Blue Ribbon Panel's Report contains six sections: the first section introduces the panel and its charge; the second section presents the panel's assessment of the challenges and opportunities facing the Sheriff's Office; the third section contains the panel's key findings; the fourth section presents recommendations and implementing actions; the fifth section summarizes the panel's major budget priorities; and the last section summarizes two recommendations for implementing the report.

# PROBLEM STATEMENT

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The King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel was convened at the Sheriff's request to examine the Sheriff's Office and recommend improvements to restore public trust, shaken by the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer's* profiles of 17 King County Sheriff Office employees related to their conduct over a span of 22 years. These highly publicized misconduct cases focused public attention and inquiry into the efficacy of the management, supervision, disciplinary, and public accountability processes of the Sheriff's Office.

Reforms or reviews implemented in other police departments have often been prompted by widespread corruption, a disproportionate number of use of force complaints, or systemic racial profiling. The Blue Ribbon Panel's examination of the Sheriff's Office reveals no evidence of corruption, excessive use of force, systemic racial profiling, or widespread misbehavior by deputies. The panel believes the large majority of Sheriff's Office employees act ethically and with integrity, and they are motivated by a genuine desire to serve the public and uphold the law.

*"A law enforcement agency must maintain a high level of personal and official conduct if it is to command and deserve the respect and confidence of the public it serves."*

- King County Sheriff's Office,  
General Orders Manual, Policy Statement

The problems described in this report emanate from long-standing organizational challenges, including inadequate attention to individual employee performance by leaders and managers within the Sheriff's Office. These problems are exacerbated by: (1) the scale of the Sheriff's Office's responsibilities (732 commissioned officers providing direct public safety services to almost 600,000 people in unincorporated King County, 12 contract cities, the Muckleshoot Tribe, and Metro Transit); and (2) the need to adapt to a new service environment that includes urban contract cities and rapidly urbanizing unincorporated areas, while still providing service to rural areas of the county.

The Blue Ribbon Panel's thorough review of the Sheriff's Office identified the following problems:

- **Leadership** – Sheriff's Office leadership has inconsistently held managers, supervisors, and other employees accountable for their performance and conduct.
- **Supervision** – Front-line supervision of employees is inadequate in both quantity and quality.
- **Performance reviews** – Performance expectations are unclear and systematic evaluations of job performance have not been conducted for most employees for more than seven years.



- **Complaint handling** – An insufficient number of staff are assigned to the Internal Investigations Unit and there is a lack of clear guidelines for taking, processing, classifying, investigating, tracking, and resolving citizen and employee complaints.
- **Organizational structure** – The Sheriff’s Office is structured so the supervision of employees and oversight of policies and procedures governing conduct, discipline, and accountability cannot be adequately addressed.
- **Internal and external oversight** – There is inadequate internal and external oversight of policies, procedures, performance, and misconduct investigations.
- **Public trust** – Ongoing efforts should be configured to maintain and improve public confidence in the integrity and professionalism of Sheriff’s Office employees.

These problems present significant challenges and opportunities for the King County Sheriff’s Office. The office is faced with a wave of retirements in the coming decade and now has a newly elected Sheriff who has demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing needed reforms in her first term. This is an opportune time to define the need for improved operations within the Sheriff’s Office and to increase the level of public trust in the conduct of its employees. Visionary and consistent leadership, coupled with accountability and new policies and procedures, will strengthen and improve the services provided by the office.

# KEY FINDINGS

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Members of the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel asked the following questions: "What is an effective system to investigate misconduct and determine appropriate discipline?" and "What are the characteristics of a strong and effective police accountability system?" In response, the panel identified nine major factors influencing the quality and effectiveness of the misconduct and discipline processes of the Sheriff's Office (see Appendix C).



These influential factors provide the framework for the panel's findings and recommendations: department leadership and culture, management and supervision, human resource systems, the labor environment, the complaint processes, internal oversight, external oversight, transparency, and external factors. External factors – such as elections and politics, media coverage, and public opinion – reside mostly outside the purview of the panel, and are therefore acknowledged but not discussed in the report. The following is a description of the remaining eight factors and the panel's 43 key findings:

**1. Department Leadership and Culture** refers to the core customs, values, informal standards of conduct, leadership, and professionalism expected and modeled by departmental commanders and supervisors.

**A. *There are inadequate standards to measure and model the performance of officers and supervisors.*** The Sheriff's Office does not conduct performance evaluations for union-represented employees except during the probationary period. Non-represented employees have yearly performance reviews to determine step and merit pay increases only. Although the office is now testing a draft performance evaluation tool in selected sites and plans to begin yearly evaluations, currently there is not an overall, consistent approach to measuring performance within the office. The Sheriff reported to the panel that she is developing performance standards for employees and each job description to improve the office's ability to set clear expectations for employees.

**B. *Executive leadership has not established a clear and coherent approach to discipline.*** Guidance from Sheriff's Office leadership on employee conduct and the consequences for not carrying out office policies and procedures has been weak and inconsistent. In some instances, discipline has been too little, too late; in others, discipline has been overly harsh. Through her statements and actions, Sheriff Rahr has communicated to her employees that she will not tolerate actions that undermine the public's trust in the office.

**C. *Culture is a critical and ongoing influence on the performance and efficient operation of the Sheriff's Office.*** As noted in the introduction to this report, there is no evidence that the office culture includes systemic elements of corruption, excessive

use of force, significant racial profiling, or widespread misbehavior of deputies. Nevertheless, interviews with current and former employees indicate other elements of the office's culture that may unfavorably impact employee performance:

- Several interviewees asserted the Sheriff's Office culture lacks accountability at all rank levels.
- Findings from other interviews suggest the office lags behind current police management and operation standards; it operates as if it were still an agency of "100 officers rather than 700 officers."
- One interviewee expressed the view that the office has been a "closed agency" with a history of promoting from within and is in "dire need for outside review." Still another interviewee believes the office has suffered a "long, slow creep toward ineffectual management and discipline;" the office's policies and procedures are not aligned with its mission; and this discrepancy needs evaluation.
- Interviewees noted that many studies have concluded that the majority of a police department's performance flows directly from the way the department treats those at the top of the performance ranks and those at the bottom. If those at the top are not rewarded and those at the bottom are not subjected to corrective action, the performance of the mass in the middle inevitably deteriorates.
- Male and female interviewees remarked on the office's gender imbalance, implying supervision and police practices are dominated by a male perspective.

*"If unwritten policy conflicts with written policy, the resulting confusion undermines an agency's overall integrity-enhancing efforts."*

- U.S. Department of Justice,  
Enhancing Police Integrity, 2005

**2. Management and Supervision** are key factors in preventing and addressing misconduct and unsatisfactory performance of officers. Appropriate management and effective supervision allow for timely intervention when misconduct or mistakes occur, and encourage the proper changes in behavior through correction, coaching, or discipline, when warranted. Good managers set clear performance expectations and follow up to ensure they are carried out.



**A. Unacceptable deputy-to-sergeant span of control ratios do not allow for effective supervision and management.** Current span of control ratios vary widely across the Sheriff's Office, but generally result in unacceptable ratios for effective supervision. Data related to supervision by rank, precinct, unit, and contract city show a wide variation by precinct and function. A three-month review of data provided by the Sheriff's Office shows that the average span of control is high, and at times, very high. At certain locations and times of day, supervisors have far too many employees to supervise, particularly in the patrol division, making it difficult for supervisors to monitor the activities of subordinates in the field or even to leave their offices for field supervision. More frequent contact would increase professional development and provide productive feedback to employees. The best practice for span of control in police units is about one supervisor for every six to ten officers, depending on the unit's functions and geographic coverage.

*"Supervisors are a police department's most important asset for continually reinforcing the department's evolving policies, procedures, goals, and objectives and ensuring that they are carried out properly."*

- International Association of Chiefs of Police, Investigation of Employee Misconduct, 2001

**B. A commander above the rank of sergeant is not on duty at each precinct 24 hours a day, seven days a week.** The Sheriff's Office often has an insufficient number of commanders given the amount of job discretion required by deputies and sergeants in the field. The office's current goal is to have two patrol sergeants available at each precinct 24 hours day. Captains, who are the next rank above sergeant, only work during weekdays. As a result, during evenings and weekends a sergeant is the highest ranking employee working. The span of control situation coupled with the lack of an intermediate supervisory rank, such as a lieutenant, places high demands for administrative and operational duties on the sergeants. This requires them to spend a significant amount time in the precinct office, rather than out in the field observing, interacting, and supporting the deputies they supervise.

**C. No system is in place to track officers' performance or potential for targeted, proactive supervision and support.** The Sheriff's Office does not have a systematic, consistently applied way to help supervisors spot problem behaviors and give employees the training and support they need to change problem behavior. A review of other police departments shows the increasing use of Early Intervention Systems. Some are comprehensive personnel assessment systems that collect a wide range of data, while others seek to identify a limited number of performance problems. An Early Intervention System relies on the systematic collection and analysis of data on officer performance. Findings are used to address specific individual issues and to identify problems throughout the organization. The focus of these systems is on organizational

change. Los Angeles County, Pittsburgh, and Minneapolis have systems that have demonstrated a positive impact on officers' performance. Interviews with other police agencies reveal systems are in place in Boise, Los Angeles, San Jose, and the Washington State Patrol. Seattle and Portland have systems in development. The sophistication of these systems varies widely.

***D. There are inconsistent guidelines and inconsistent tracking of misconduct investigations and discipline.*** Consistent guidelines or standards do not exist for minor complaints referred to first line supervisors (sergeants) by the Internal Investigations Unit. There are no requirements to report or record how minor complaints are resolved at that level. In addition, first line supervisors are not trained or monitored in their handling of minor complaints.

***E. There is not enough consistency in the administration of discipline for misconduct in the Sheriff's Office.*** Interviews with current employees revealed a perception that supervisors and commanders do not mete out discipline in a fair and consistent fashion. Police departments using a "matrix" or "grid" to determine appropriate ranges of discipline for a finding of misconduct show mixed success in addressing consistency and fairness concerns.

***F. The Car Per Officer program may contribute to inadequate contact and interaction between deputies and their immediate supervisors.*** Interviews with current and former Sheriff's Office employees indicate that the Car Per Officer program may contribute to personal and professional isolation, and does not allow adequate oversight of performance or adequate modeling and mentoring. Currently, deputies take their vehicles home with them at the end of their shift. At the beginning of their next shift, they drive directly to their assigned geographical district without first convening at their precinct. In most other police jurisdictions, officers start their shifts with daily roll calls at their precincts. These roll calls ensure attendance and allow for brief training, updates on policies and procedures, problem identification, discussion of enforcement priorities, and team building. Information gathered for the panel indicates most patrol deputies are required to experience only one contact per week with their sergeant at a mandatory roll call in the precincts.

### 3. Human Resource Systems focus on the career and personal development of each employee and play a pivotal role in preventing misconduct and unsatisfactory performance. These systems support the recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, and recognition policies of the Sheriff's Office that are crucial to the selection, retention, and advancement of high performing, accountable employees.

**A. *There are no internal individual assessments of performance.*** Evaluations were suspended seven years ago because the process was no longer producing meaningful information. There were disagreements between the King County Police Officers Guild and management about how the information generated by performance evaluations could be used. Several interviewees also noted the absence of any evaluation of employee productivity, either by performance reviews or by any other means. As one interviewee noted, "A patrol car should be producing something other than exhaust gases and some effort should be made to determine the product(s)." The Sheriff's Office is currently testing a draft performance evaluation tool in selected sites. A review of the draft performance evaluation rating criteria reveals rating categories that could reduce the level of meaningful information. The office is currently re-evaluating those rating categories.



**B. *Inadequate training of executives and supervisors contributes to the problems in accountability.*** There has been no organized plan in the Sheriff's Office to train employees to be effective supervisors and managers. Recent training offered to all supervisors focused on methods of investigation to ensure appropriate regard for due process and just cause in disciplinary issues, as well as assistance for supervisors about how to handle allegations of misconduct. The high level of interest shown by supervisors in these subjects indicates an awareness of the need for greater attention to supervision and a desire for improvement over past practices.

Interviews with deputies who had been promoted to sergeant revealed they had to assume supervisory responsibilities with minimal management training, which has led to wide gaps in management capability within the Sheriff's Office. There is also no structured leadership and management training for upper command staff. Currently, the office is seeking to improve the promotions process by encouraging good applicants to apply, determining the characteristics of a good supervisor and leader, and conducting a meaningful assessment of their skills. A review of approaches in other police departments shows they provide ongoing training and education as an incentive for professional development of supervisors and managers.

**C. Hiring the “right” people leads to fewer misconduct problems in the future.** In the past, the Sheriff’s Office and the King County Department of Executive Services have inconsistently tested and screened for characteristics and values (such as integrity and ethical behavior) during recruitment and initial hiring. The office is now examining every aspect of the selection process, including the design of an oral and written testing process that identifies qualified employees. Through a community policing grant called “Hiring in the Spirit of Service,” the office is now working rigorously to examine and improve recruiting, screening, and hiring processes, with the intent of identifying candidates with the desired characteristics.



- D. The Field Training Officer program has great impact on the future conduct of officers.** Interviews with other police departments confirmed that the initial recruitment and field training period is a critical time for new police officers, when strong values of honesty, integrity, and high standards of conduct should be modeled and reinforced. Interviews with Sheriff’s Office employees suggest there may be a need to provide ongoing training or periodic reassessment of long-term assignments as a field training officer instructor to ensure these values are modeled and reinforced in the office.
- E. The attrition rate during the Field Training Officer program is cause for concern. The Sheriff’s Office is working to reduce the probationary deputy failure rate.** The office is analyzing information to determine which factors may contribute most to successful completion of the Field Training Officer program. Ideally, those who are unsuited for police work should be identified earlier in the probationary period. The office is examining test scores, civil service ranking, psychological ratings, background history, trainers, and precinct assignments to determine which factors influence the dropout rate.
- F. A demographic analysis of the Sheriff’s Office indicates that the racial and ethnic composition of the commissioned work force reflects the communities served by the office, but the gender composition does not.** While women are well represented in upper management, males constitute 86 percent of commissioned officers. This is not an unusual gender balance for a large urban police department.

In keeping with our region's history and practice, proportionately more women are in leadership positions than comparable departments elsewhere in the country. This demographic distribution influences the culture and style of policing.

- G. *After participation in the Field Training Officer program, deputies do not have structured access to professional coaches and mentors for on-the-job support, learning, and career development throughout their careers.*** An interviewee observed that the office has no formal career development and counseling program. Whether deputies' career desires and potential are recognized can be influenced by where the deputies are serving and who supervises them. The interviewee believes the office has a duty to itself and to the deputies to recognize and nurture the career goals and potential of each employee. While mentoring is not a substitute for supervision, mentoring generally has the effect of reducing isolation, giving employees an avenue to find someone with answers, and offering a structure for guidance by employees. An example of this would be the voluntary mentoring program for employees of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department who are charged with serious offenses and are partnered with high performing employees.



- 4. Labor Environment** includes the body of labor law governing the negotiation and administration of collective bargaining agreements, as well as labor-management relations.

**A. *Ambiguity exists in the laws determining what must be bargained related to changes in wages, hours, and working conditions.*** Ambiguity in labor law is common and is likely to continue regardless of the recommendations the Blue Ribbon Panel makes in this report. Recent changes in the management of the Sheriff's Office signal a longer-term approach to labor-management relations. Going forward, labor unions and managers will continue this debate about what constitutes a change in the effects of wages, hours, or working conditions.

**B. *The content and administration of the collective bargaining agreement has changed little over time and has not been actively "tended" by management.*** There has been no significant erosion of management rights in the text of the collective bargaining agreements between the Sheriff's Office and the King County Police Officers Guild; the Service Employees International Union (Public Safety Employees, Local 519); the King County Court Protection Guild; and Teamsters Local 117. All labor



negotiations for the Sheriff's Office are conducted by the King County Executive's Office. Conversations with labor unions and discussions with King County's labor relations team revealed that the collective bargaining agreements have changed very little in the last decade. Individual memoranda of understanding have been the mechanism for making any adjustments to the labor contracts. It is unusual to have no change in an agreement over so many years when changes in law, society, budget, and leadership should compel examination and adjustment in labor contracts. The Sheriff's Office has recently taken proactive steps to work collaboratively with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, include executive and external legal advisors to review and prepare for contract negotiations, and make clear the Sheriff's position regarding management rights. Additional efforts are being carried out to ensure proactive and independent legal and labor advice regarding personnel decisions and pending discipline cases.

**C. *There has been an inconsistent and unsatisfactory labor-management philosophy.*** At times, arbitration is a necessary tool to resolve labor disputes. In the past, management has been reluctant to go to arbitration to resolve disciplinary grievances because the labor unions were better prepared and had more resources for those cases. This has led to the perception that management has not exercised its responsibility in seeking appropriate discipline for employees.

**D. *A supervisory approach focused on effective correction and discipline is in development.*** The Sheriff has asserted that up to the point of imposing discipline, managers have the disciplinary tools needed to correct problem behavior through training and documented informal discussions or counseling. The structure and support for effective approaches to labor-management issues, particularly in misconduct and discipline cases, is now in place through better training and legal consultation.

**5. Complaint Processes** are the systems citizens and employees use to report concerns and allegations of employee misconduct. The efficacy of these systems depends upon a rigorous structure and process for intake, investigation, discipline, remedies, and feedback to complainants.

**A. *There is a lack of organizational emphasis on the importance of the complaint process.*** The complaint process should do a better job of identifying employee misconduct and providing feedback to help the Sheriff's Office improve services. The office keeps limited records of patterns of problems and complaint resolutions related to employees or the entire office.

*"Individual officer misconduct depends on what police departments do to define and enforce standards of conduct."*

- Samuel Walker,  
The New World of Police Accountability, 2005

- B. *There are restrictions on the type of complaints accepted.*** The Sheriff's Office takes complaints through the Internet, by phone, and by mail using a form that is reviewed by the Internal Investigations Unit. Some complaints may never be investigated by the unit because the complaint process does not generally allow for third-party, anonymous complaints, or complaints received more than 30 days after the alleged incident. The unit does take complaints after 30 days if they are serious, and third party complaints are also accepted in some limited circumstances. Complaints are not effectively tracked when they are received by deputies or at the precincts.
- C. *The complaint process does not adequately inform citizens about how complaints will be processed, investigated, and resolved.*** There are no public documents outlining the complaint process that would give citizens a reasonable understanding of what to expect during the complaint process, including the ability to track the progress of their claim or the potential length of time to resolution. The panel reviewed media reports and heard testimony in public hearings that revealed inattention to timely, responsive communication with citizens who took the time and effort to file a complaint. Interviews with other police departments show that encouraging citizens to make complaints as part of a simple and comprehensible system that treats them respectfully provides useful information to the public and the departments.
- D. *The complaint process does not provide training for employees to be consistent in processing complaints.*** Whether the complaint is made to the Internal Investigations Unit or the precinct, there is an inconsistent approach to taking, tracking, and handling public complaints that leads to inconsistent results and can damage the community image of the Sheriff's Office.
- E. *There is no system to classify complaints consistently.*** There are no clear guidelines for the initial processing and classification system to determine how a complaint should be investigated or resolved. Some complaints are identified as "informal" or "minor" and sent to first-line supervisors for resolution. As previously noted, these complaints are not tracked. Other complaints are classified as "serious" and have formal investigations by the Internal Investigations Unit. Under this lack of consistency, some misconduct allegations may fall through the cracks and never be adequately investigated.
- F. *Complaint tracking is done only for serious complaints that result in formal investigations by the Internal Investigations Unit.*** As noted above, minor complaints not investigated by the unit go to the precinct for follow-up by a supervisor without any tracking mechanism. While precinct-level corrective counseling or discipline is probably occurring, there are no reports to reveal how complaints are addressed at this level.

**G. *There is no mediation program available to resolve some types of complaints.***

For appropriate cases, mediation allows for voluntary face-to-face discussion of different perspectives between an officer and the complainant(s) as an alternative to internal investigations. This process can encourage greater understanding and improve police-citizen relations. The cities of Seattle and Portland use mediation programs for appropriate cases with some success.

**H. *There is no systemic analysis of complaints that would reveal underlying patterns of misconduct.***

The Internal Investigations Unit does not analyze complaint data for employee conduct or systemic performance problems. Police oversight agencies in other jurisdictions commonly perform these analyses to identify and correct issues in the form of improved disciplinary or policing policies and procedures.

**I. *The location of the Internal Investigations Unit in relation to other Sheriff's Office units can present a barrier for citizens to make complaints or for witnesses to feel comfortable when giving statements during the complaint process.***

The unit is the primary location for processing citizen complaints and conducting witness interviews. The unit's location at the administrative headquarters of the Sheriff's Office can have a chilling or intimidating effect on individuals filing a complaint or responding to questions for interviews. Citizens who are apprehensive about interactions with police may choose not to make complaints about valid concerns.

**6. Internal Oversight** refers to the Sheriff's Office mechanisms for internal investigations and systems to conduct periodic evaluations and audits of all functional units, employees, policies, procedures, and practices. These internal assessments can provide a level of monitoring and reporting to provide feedback, evaluate individual performance, identify patterns of misconduct, and develop systemic improvements.

**A. *Internal oversight of misconduct and discipline in the Sheriff's Office currently rests primarily with the Internal Investigations Unit, staffed by a captain and two detective sergeant investigators who meet weekly to review cases.***

The unit investigates and makes a recommended factual finding on each case. The ultimate decision on a finding and discipline rests with the command staff and the Sheriff. In 2005, the unit conducted 83 formal investigations.

*"The internal investigation function is critical to maintaining the integrity and professionalism of a police agency. Public trust and confidence in law enforcement are injured where the public perceives that officer misconduct is ignored or that punishment is not commensurate with the misconduct."*

- International Association of Chiefs of Police,  
Investigation of Employee Misconduct, 2001

- B. *There is no structured performance measurement or standard in the Sheriff's Office that assesses the policies, performance, and effectiveness of individual organizational units.*** The Sheriff has several initiatives underway to address this problem, proposing the creation of an Inspectional Services Unit to assess, audit, and make recommendations to improve the performance, policies, procedures, and practices of all functional units in the office.
- C. *The Internal Investigations Unit is understaffed relative to units in comparable departments and has not grown commensurately with work force size or county population over the past 15 years.*** The unit has only three commissioned staff consisting of a captain and two sergeants. Without adequate staffing, the unit is limited in the depth, quality, and number of investigations that can be processed. The unit cannot adequately analyze the data from the cases it does investigate. The staffing level of the unit adversely impacts the timeliness and effectiveness of discipline, particularly in situations in which complex investigations have already taken a long period of time to complete. The City of Boise's internal affairs office has a staff of four for 231 annual complaints/inquiries and 1,114 total contacts for 286 officers. The City of Portland's internal affairs department operates with 11 staff to handle a workload of 831 cases per year (2000) for 1,000 officers. The City of Seattle's Office of Professional Accountability operates with six sergeants, one lieutenant, one captain, and two administrative staff in addition to the director. According to the director, most departments nationwide work with a ratio of one investigator to 150 staff.
- D. *A variety of structures and approaches are available to ensure the consistency and integrity of internal oversight practices in other police departments.*** The City of Seattle places a civilian director in the role of leading internal investigations. The director reports directly to the Chief of Police and occupies a command position within the department. Other departments, such as the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, have two internal bureaus to investigate claims against employees (one for criminal and one for administrative allegations). The King County Sheriff has proposed the creation of an Inspectional Services Unit consisting of a manager hired from outside the department to engage internal and external resources to conduct audits of every functional unit of the Sheriff's Office. The purpose of the audits is to review the policies and procedures in place today, compare them with best practices, and determine if they are being followed.
- E. *Police departments pursue accreditation from law enforcement associations that have established standards for the profession as a way to ensure policies and procedures are aligned with best practices in law enforcement.*** The Sheriff's Office may pursue accreditation some time in the future. To do so, some of the recommendations in this report and the Sheriff's recent initiatives to revise the policy

manual and implement internal audits would need to be in place. All departments interviewed for this report noted that accreditation is a lengthy process that requires a strong organizational commitment. Currently, the Clark County Sheriff's Office is the only county sheriff in Washington State that is accredited. The Washington State Patrol, Bellevue, Seattle, and several other Washington city police departments are also accredited.

**7. External Oversight** offers continuous review and advice from experts who are outside a police force. These experts are charged with oversight of the police misconduct and discipline processes. Such an independent entity can suggest reforms to police management.

**A. *There is little independent oversight of the Sheriff's Office. The King County Ombudsman's Office, an office of the King County Council, is charged with investigating complaints concerning the operation of county government and publicizing recommendations regarding its findings.*** Investigations of

the Sheriff's Office have made up five to 13 percent of the Ombudsman's Office caseload over the past five years, primarily in the areas of use of force and violations of policy and procedure. The Ombudsman's scope of responsibilities is broad to the point of extending to all county services and narrow to the point of not being able to investigate or correct major misconduct allegations in the Sheriff's Office. While the Ombudsman's Office serves a valuable function for King County citizens, it does not have a major impact on the quality of investigations of police misconduct and directs most complaint investigations to the Sheriff's Office itself.

*"A person or group, outside of county government, should regularly review the policies and practices of the discipline system and report to the public."*

- Honorable Terrance Carroll, Review of Polices and Procedures of the Internal Investigations Unit within the King County Department of Public Safety, 1995

**B. *A review of models of independent oversight throughout the country reveals no one model of accountability that will address all the needs of every jurisdiction.***

No one approach from another jurisdiction can be adopted "as is" in King County. A system of police accountability must be created with an eye towards the needs of the citizens of the affected jurisdiction, the history of the law enforcement agency, and the ability of the governing body to implement and fund the system. Two national associations, the National Association of Citizen Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) and the Police Assessment Resource Center (PARC) suggest the appropriate models for any community are driven by community trust and the need for

profound cultural and systemic change. The specific needs of each community must be considered in this context. NACOLE suggests that two models for independent oversight exist. The first is an individual professional such as an auditor, monitor, inspector general, or ombudsman; the second is a group (board or commission). These models can work internally or externally with a police department. (See Appendix E for additional discussion of this finding.)

**C. *A balance of independence and authority must be struck and maintained between the independent oversight agency's need to partner with the police agency while maintaining the distance needed for independence.*** The leadership of the independent oversight entity is key to its effectiveness. The authority of independent oversight bodies varies with respect to the monitoring of investigations, access to records by the independent agency (including whether information is unredacted), investigative powers, and the ability to make policy recommendations.

**D. *There is no independent oversight at the scene of critical incidents where an officer is involved in a shooting or other event resulting in a death.*** “Critical incidents” are incidents involving the use of deadly force by an officer or any other incident involving a death during the course of an officer’s duties. These are the most serious and difficult types of officer-civilian interaction. They impact the officer, his or her co-workers, the family and friends of the injured person, and the community as a whole. They are also the focus of intensive media interest. Without an independent observer focused solely on police accountability issues, the police and the public are left with the media’s evaluation of the incident. Several jurisdictions have successfully given their independent oversight administrators the authority to respond with the police to the scene of critical incidents; these jurisdictions include the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Office of Independent Review, the Denver Office of the Independent Monitor, and the Boise Police Ombudsman. Additionally, the director of the Seattle Office of Professional Accountability has testified that the authority to respond to the scene of critical incidents is an important element missing from the Seattle ordinance.

**8. Transparency** describes the amount and quality of public access to relevant policing information, as well as mechanisms for citizens to know about their police department's activities. The degree of transparency helps determine the public's perception of the openness and fairness of the misconduct and discipline processes.

**A. *The Sheriff's Office does not have a strong policy promoting the value and acceptance of citizen complaints.*** Complaints are taken inconsistently and many have not been responded to promptly. Whether complaints turn out to be valid or not, they provide valuable information about how the office is viewed by the community. Police departments in Boise and Seattle offer examples of creating an inviting, inclusive approach to processing citizen complaints.

**B. *There is a low level of outreach and communication to the community about the complaint process.*** Proactive, inviting materials that encourage citizens to come forward with complaints and commendations are not available from the Sheriff's Office. The office website has information about the complaint process, but it is limited and difficult to find. Model examples of effective citizen outreach exist in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Seattle, San Jose, Denver, and Boise. Each of these police departments has extensive outreach efforts to help citizens understand and use the complaint process.

*"There doesn't appear to be much public information about the complaint process."*

- Honorable Terrance Carroll,  
Review of Polices and Procedures of the  
Internal Investigations Unit within the King  
County Department of Public Safety, 1995

**C. *There is little public information and reporting about the number, type, and resolution of complaints.*** Reports systematically tracking and analyzing complaints are not regularly compiled and published. The King County Ombudsman does publish reports on the Sheriff's Office, but this information is limited to its own investigations of the office (a total of 11 in 2005).

**D. *There is little information available to citizens on Sheriff's Office policies and procedures.*** The office's operations manual is not readily available to citizens through the Internet, libraries, county offices, or precincts. Many police agencies post their general operations manual on their website.

***E. There are limited public outreach structures that allow citizens to inform the Sheriff's Office of their concerns.*** The office has various formal public outreach processes to King County's unincorporated area councils. They work with city councils, youth and citizen programs, storefront and volunteer programs, and community events; however, there is no specific forum or mechanism that allows citizens to comment and discuss issues related to policing. Some police departments sponsor formal or informal public outreach mechanisms, such as citizen advisory groups and community hearings, to provide opportunities for engaging in dialogue about neighborhood or precinct issues. These mechanisms also serve as a reminder and resource to police departments about their responsibility to earn the public's trust.



The Blue Ribbon Panel's 43 findings in the foregoing eight areas of police accountability led to the following six major recommendations and 36 actions to be implemented by King County's elected officials to improve the management systems, misconduct review, and discipline processes of the Sheriff's Office.



# RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

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The recommendations of the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel are aimed at improving the level of accountability within the Sheriff's Office by addressing the management and supervision of employees, as well as the systems for dealing with employee performance and behavior. To accomplish these improvements, the panel offers the following six recommendations and 36 implementing actions that integrate:

- A leadership strategy that increases the attention paid to employee performance and behavior;
- Robust supervision and management systems that support efforts to increase employee accountability; and
- An aligned organizational structure that collaboratively and effectively supports leadership, management, supervision, and accountability.

## **1** *Executive leadership of the Sheriff's Office should take primary responsibility for creating, implementing, modeling, and sustaining reforms that improve accountability.*

**Action A:** Articulate clear expectations that all employees will be held accountable for job performance and conduct, and specify how that will occur. These expectations should be modeled by leadership and reinforced in the office's recruiting, hiring, training, and promotion policies, procedures, and practices.



**Action B:** State clearly that poor performance and misbehavior will no longer be tolerated. The Sheriff should continue her focus on accountability as stated in her 100-Day Plan, stressing improved accountability through the introduction of performance standards, an Inspectional Services Unit, and a risk management program, as well as improved professionalism through a career development plan and improved recruiting, screening, and hiring processes.

**Action C:** Create and prominently post a code of values, ethics, and conduct that all employees are expected to follow. Such a code would stress a commitment to service to the community, impartiality, integrity, professionalism, and public accountability.

**Action D:** Establish a professional and collaborative relationship with the labor organizations that represent Sheriff's Office employees, including:

- The Sheriff should continue to use a committee of human resource and legal experts from within and outside King County government to help ensure misconduct investigations follow due process and appropriate disciplinary decisions are made and implemented. This committee consists of representation from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Office of Human Resources Management, the Sheriff's Office, and outside labor counsel when needed. The director of the Office of Independent Oversight (Recommendation 6) should also be a part of this committee.
- Conduct a continuing assessment of all existing labor contracts. The King County Executive and Sheriff, with assistance from the Prosecuting Attorney, should be responsible for this assessment. The Executive and Sheriff should develop consistent positions with regard to all issues likely to arise in future contract negotiations. Subjects of collective bargaining and negotiations must be carefully reviewed by management in the Sheriff's Office for their potential impact upon management's core function of administering the office. Particular attention should be given to whether provisions of existing contracts, and the interpretations which have been given to these contracts, unduly restrict management's ability to manage the office effectively.
- King County Police Officers Guild leaders working in the Sheriff's Office should not be located next to the office of the Internal Investigations Unit. This proximity suggests the appearance of possible undue influence on misconduct investigations and discipline.

**Action E:** The Sheriff should retain qualified professionals to perform an institutional audit of the office's culture and its influence on employee behavior. This "cultural audit" should enable the leadership team to determine whether employees think, feel, and act the way leadership believes they do and provide a baseline for future improvements. Using surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews, this audit would focus on how aspects of the organizational culture of the office impact the effectiveness of efforts to address problems outlined in this report.

*"An agency's culture of integrity, as defined by clearly understood and implemented policies and rules, may be more important in shaping the ethics of police officers than hiring the 'right' people."*

- U.S. Department of Justice,  
Enhancing Police Integrity, 2005

Such a cultural audit could help the Sheriff improve communication and adherence to values that serve the public and promote safety, identify and address systemic employee dissatisfaction, integrate subcultures, focus training needs, and measure progress towards improving the Sheriff's Office. Among the items the audit should measure and assess are:

- Whether deputies are discouraged by peers or unit loyalty to report wrongdoing by fellow employees;
- The extent to which management and supervisors demonstrate their interest in and active support of those they manage or supervise, and the extent to which employees feel supported and challenged by leadership;
- Whether supervisors know they are responsible for diligently supervising and implementing disciplinary actions and that failure to perform these duties will have meaningful consequences;
- Effective communication of leadership values and the extent a shared vision exists of the mission and goals of the Sheriff's Office;
- Openness to evaluation of performance by leadership, and the willingness of employees to innovate, collaborate, and improve their performance;
- Understanding of and support for diversity among citizens and in the Sheriff's Office work force;
- Tolerance of poor performance and misconduct;
- Employee morale and enthusiasm for a career in law enforcement; and
- Effectiveness of the office's recognition and reward structure.

## **2** *The Sheriff's Office should examine and implement methods for increasing the level of public trust and transparency of the office.*

**Action A:** Create a robust culture of valuing citizen complaints, including a mandate that all employees be trained to properly take, record, and courteously process all complaints.

**Action B:** Make the Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual available on the office website and in other public spaces such as libraries, county offices, and police precincts.

**Action C:** Create precinct-level citizen advisory committees that would meet regularly to discuss current community problems and issues related to policing and public safety. The committees would be selected by the precinct commanders and represent the diversity of communities served by each precinct.

**Action D:** With the help of the citizen advisory committees, hold regular public meetings throughout the county to provide information and receive advice about policies, procedures, and citizens' rights with respect to the Sheriff's Office.



### **3** *The Sheriff's Office management and supervision systems should be improved to support supervisors in making the office more accountable.*

**Action A:** Provide meaningful performance evaluation for all employees once adequate span of control ratios and supervisory training are in place. Sheriff's Office leadership and management must convey to all employees its belief in the importance of a meaningful review process and its commitment to recognize positive accomplishments, as well as to correct failures to meet standards. Supervisors should be trained to implement the review process and held accountable for properly evaluating employees. The Sheriff should continue efforts to implement performance evaluations. The evaluations should:

*"Evaluations of officers must be the product of daily observation and close working relationships."*

- International Association of Chiefs of Police, Investigation of Employee Misconduct, 2001

- Provide performance standards tailored to the unique characteristics of the various jobs within the Sheriff's Office;
- Provide an assessment of employees' performance and behavior in a way that holds them accountable;
- Provide meaningful feedback to employees about how they are performing relative to the expectations of the job;
- Be conducted periodically, but not so often that performance evaluations create a substantial administrative burden for supervisors; and

- Serve as an assessment of future need within the office for positions in management, leadership, or other areas of need.

**Action B:** Create a clear and consistent approach to the discipline of misconduct and other performance issues. This could include evaluating the suitability of a “discipline matrix” that specifies disciplinary actions for the most common types of misconduct, adjusted to reflect an officer’s previous disciplinary record. A discipline matrix has been used in the Phoenix Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Office with some success.

**Action C:** Improve the variety, amount, consistency, and quality of training available for all employees, including recruits, sworn personnel, civilian personnel, and executive leadership. These improvements include:

- Continue efforts to provide regular and required training to supervisors on effective management and supervision, such as the recent training conducted by the Sheriff’s Office on effective discipline at the supervisory level.
- Provide regular and required training to majors and chiefs about effective management and leadership, such as the training offered through the Executive Police Leadership Program at the Kennedy School of Government or other similar programs. Consult with high-performing departments such as the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Office or the Seattle Police Department for suggested training models.
- Evaluate the Field Training Officer program to ensure trainers and new officers are effectively trained and regularly evaluated. The program should be transparent and fair, with standards for all recruits applied consistently.
- Ensure the Internal Investigations Unit investigators receive the necessary training needed to conduct thorough and professional misconduct investigations.
- Provide all relevant employees proper training for taking, tracking, recording, investigating, and otherwise processing citizen complaints respectfully and professionally. Use other departments such as the Seattle Police Department as models.

*“The most influential training received by a probationer comes from the example set by his or her FTO [Field Training Officer].”*

- Report of the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, 1991

**Action D:** Create an Early Intervention System. The system should aid the Sheriff's Office in collecting and analyzing data on employee performance and identifying interventions as appropriate. The system should be separate from the disciplinary system and designed primarily to help officers improve their performance through counseling, training, and mentoring. The system should be evaluated periodically to consider and analyze such factors as citizen complaints and commendations, use of force, officer-involved shootings, attendance, use of sick leave, and performance evaluations.

**Action E:** Evaluate the Car Per Officer program for its impact on overall department performance and public safety. Specifically, the evaluation should assess whether the program contributes to personal and professional isolation of employees, whether it contributes to inadequate oversight of performance on the part of supervisors, and whether it impacts overall public safety.

**Action F:** Create a program to assist employees in their professional development and attainment of career goals. The program would:

- Be incorporated with the performance evaluation process;
- Enhance employee development by directing them to training, workshops, or mentoring;
- Help employees in planning their own careers; and
- Provide information on overall training needs for the Sheriff's Office.

**Action G:** Assess the demographic distribution of officers relative to the communities they serve. A work force reflecting the particular area it serves – not just King County overall – contributes to public trust and enhances the performance of employees. To work towards this goal, the Sheriff's Office should continue and strengthen its efforts to recruit, hire, train, and promote qualified employees that reflect the ethnic, racial, and gender diversity of its service area. Likewise, the Sheriff's Office should continue to use the characteristics developed in the Hiring in the Spirit of Service program for initial hiring and promotions.

### Guiding Principles for Early Intervention Systems

- The Early Intervention System should be part of an agency's larger efforts to support and improve officer performance.
- First-line supervisors are really the lynchpin of Early Intervention Systems.
- Intervention options should vary to meet the wide range of officer needs.
- The success or failure of an Early Intervention System depends primarily on the chief executive's leadership.
- Early Intervention Systems are a valuable administrative tool that can enhance accountability and integrity in a law enforcement agency.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Supervision and Intervention within Early Intervention Systems, 2005.

**Action H:** Examine the Field Training Officer program to identify any systemic problems that contribute to the low retention rate of academy recruits. The Sheriff's Office should continue its ongoing evaluation of this program.

#### **4** *The Sheriff's Office should improve the processes and guidelines for taking, classifying, investigating, and responding to all citizen and employee complaints.*

**Action A:** Develop a system for tracking complaints at all levels of the complaint process. Investigate the usefulness of proprietary internal investigations software used in police agencies in Seattle, Portland, and San Jose.

**Action B:** Increase public accessibility to and understanding of the complaint process, including:

- Produce public materials describing the complaint process, in order to enable citizens to have an informed expectation of how complaints are handled.
- Develop required training for all Sheriff's Office employees to ensure they are proficient in properly and professionally handling complaints.

**Action C:** Develop policies that allow for receiving and processing all citizen and employee complaints, including:

- A clear process for accepting third party and anonymous complaints.
- Placing no limitation on how much time passes between an incident and when a complaint may be filed.
- A system for receiving and tracking complaints taken at the precincts or by deputies in the field.

*"Police departments should allow public complaints to be received initially by any member of the department."*

- International Association of Chiefs of Police, Investigation of Employee Misconduct, 2001

**Action D:** Develop clear and publicly accessible guidelines for complaint screening and classification that specify how complaints are assigned for:

- Formal Internal Investigations Unit misconduct investigations;
- Supervisory investigations of minor violations;
- Referral for mediation;
- Dismissal; and
- Referral to another government or police agency.

## **5** *The Sheriff's Office should create and strengthen organizational structures that support leadership, management, supervision, and accountability.*

**Action A:** Evaluate and oversee policing policies, procedures, practices, and performance through the creation of an Inspectional Services Unit. The Sheriff should continue her advocacy of additional budget resources to be provided for this unit.

- The manager of the unit should be hired from outside the Sheriff's Office to become an employee of the office and report directly to the Sheriff.
- The manager should be empowered to engage internal and external experts to audit the operations of the Sheriff's Office and make recommendations for improvements.
- These audits should identify systemic management and structural issues that negatively impact performance. The identification of these issues will help improve the performance and accountability of the office by providing information on current policing policies, procedures, and practices. Information gathered in these audits can also inform the reallocation of resources to areas of greatest need, identify future labor negotiation issues, and help ensure policies are consistent with Washington State law.

**Action B:** Pursue the Sheriff's Office's goal of accreditation at a future time when the office has successfully implemented the major recommendations of this report. The accreditation process requires a complete audit of the office, and the process ensures that policies, procedures, and practices are in alignment with national best practices in law enforcement. The effort to achieve accreditation should be led by the manager of the Inspectional Services Unit.

**Action C:** Attain an acceptable ratio of field supervisors (sergeants) to employees (deputies) to achieve effective supervision. Standards for effective span of control are in the range of six to ten employees per supervisor. Actual span of control targets should be developed considering the geographic size and population density of the coverage area requirements of the assignment, as well as the complexity and risk associated with particular assignments. The Sheriff's Office also should work to attain an appropriate ratio of supervisors to employees in sensitive units such as vice, intelligence, and narcotics.





**Action D:** Provide commanders on duty at all the precincts at least 18-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. This position should have a higher rank than sergeant and should have command, administrative, and operational responsibilities. Sergeants are the office's front-line supervisors and should spend the majority of their time in the field interacting with and supervising the deputies under their command. They also provide an added uniformed presence in the field. The command presence can be provided by having captains work longer hours or by establishing an intermediate command rank between sergeant and captain that would provide this function.

**Action E:** Increase the number of staff in the Internal Investigations Unit. The staffing should be increased to levels that ensure the thorough and timely completion of investigations and the timely publishing of relevant internal management and public reports about the units. Once the complaint process and oversight recommendations of this report are implemented, the office will have a new level of baseline workload, and unit staffing should be configured to meet that workload.

**Action F:** Move the Internal Investigations Unit to another facility or another area in the King County Courthouse that does not have other Sheriff's Office functions in order to:

- Remove barriers for citizens who might be intimidated by the prospect of going to the Sheriff's Office to make a complaint.
- Lessen the perceived possibility of retaliation against citizens and employees making complaints.

## **6** *The King County Executive and the King County Council should create and fund an Office of Independent Oversight.*

**Action A:** Create an Office of Independent Oversight with four full-time staff: a director, an investigator, and two support staff. A framework for the office's roles, responsibilities, and authorities is outlined below in Actions B through G. Decisions about the functions and implementation of the office should be the result of a collaborative process that involves, at a minimum, the King County Executive, County Council, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, and the labor organizations that represent Sheriff's Office employees.

**Action B:** The director of the Office of Independent Oversight should be given authority and independence through nomination by the King County Executive and confirmation by the King County Council. The director should:

- Report to the King County Council;
- Be appointed for an initial four-year term, subject to reappointment and reconfirmation for additional four-year terms; and
- Be removable for cause by the King County Executive and a majority vote of the King County Council.

**Action C:** The King County Executive should conduct a professional search for the director to identify candidates with the following characteristics:

- A reputation for integrity and professionalism, as well as the ability to maintain a high standard of integrity in the Office of Independent Oversight;
- An understanding of and a commitment to the responsibilities of the office;
- Demonstrated leadership and a history of effective management and administration;
- The ability to gain the trust and respect of Sheriff's Office employees;

### **Core Principles for an Effective Police Auditor's Office**

- Independence
- Clearly defined scope of responsibilities
- Adequate resources
- Unfettered access
- Full cooperation
- Sanctions for failure to cooperate
- Public reports
- No prior censorship by the police department
- Community involvement
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Access to the police chief or sheriff
- No retaliation

Source: Samuel Walker, *The New World of Police Accountability*, 2005

(For an explanation of these principles, see Appendix D of this report.)

- The ability to work effectively with the King County Executive, County Council, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff, as well as other public agencies, labor organizations, private organizations, and citizens;
- An openness to innovation and new ideas;
- Sensitivity to and knowledge of the particular needs and concerns of minorities and women in a law enforcement setting;
- The ability to work effectively under pressure, with common sense and a sense of humor; and
- No history of employment in the King County Sheriff's Office.

**Action D:** The Office of Independent Oversight should have:

- The authority and responsibility to monitor, check for completeness, and require additional investigation as necessary of all formal Internal Investigations Unit activities, including administrative and employee-initiated complaint investigations.
- The discretionary authority to monitor, check for completeness, and require additional investigation as necessary of all other complaints assigned to supervisors.
- The discretionary authority to review and make recommendations to the Internal Investigations Unit about the screening and classification of complaints, as well as to make recommendations to the Sheriff about screening/classification policies and procedures.

**Action E:** The Office of Independent Oversight should have the following authority to oversee misconduct investigations:

- Unimpeded and real-time access to unredacted case information and all information related to ongoing investigation files, treating all documents and information regarding specific investigations or officers as confidential. The only exception to this rule would be files related to ongoing criminal investigations.
- The ability to respond to the scene of "critical incidents." Critical incidents would include:
  - An officer-involved shooting resulting in death or injury;
  - Use of force resulting in death or serious bodily injury;
  - In-custody deaths;
  - Vehicular pursuits resulting in death or serious bodily injury;
  - Any traffic collision involving an officer resulting in death or serious bodily injury; and
  - Any incident of workplace violence.

At these critical incident scenes, investigators from the Office of Independent Oversight will only be observers. They will not conduct or interfere with any investigation, and they will coordinate their presence and activities with the on-scene commander from the Sheriff's Office. The investigators' duties to monitor, check for completeness, and require additional investigation as necessary will apply if and when a formal complaint investigation is conducted by the Internal Investigations Unit.

- Approval for completeness of complaint investigations before a finding can be issued. The Internal Investigations Unit must submit all completed misconduct investigations to the Office of Independent Oversight, with an amount of time specified for the approval or direction for further investigation. If the unit disagrees with the office, the Sheriff acts as arbiter and makes the final decision(s).
- The option to consult with command staff as to their own review and recommendations regarding a particular investigation.
- The option to submit recommendations regarding findings and discipline directly to the Sheriff prior to a final decision on misconduct cases.

**Action F:** The Office of Independent Oversight should have additional duties to:

- Monitor the investigation and resolution of all complaints to ensure they are handled in a timely fashion and complainants are notified of the final disposition of their complaints.
- Coordinate with the Sheriff's Office to select an appropriate technology application for tracking and information sharing.
- Issue annual reports available to the public that provide a statistical analysis of complaints, investigative findings, and final discipline for sustained complaints. The reports should include information about the number and type of misconduct cases where the director disagreed with the Sheriff on either findings or discipline decisions.
- Make recommendations for action by the Sheriff on needed improvements in policies, procedures, and practices stemming from analyses that look beyond the individual cases of misconduct to identify systemic problems within the Sheriff's Office.

**Action G:** The Office of Independent Oversight, in collaboration with the Sheriff's Office, should explore the establishment and administration of a voluntary officer-citizen mediation program. This program should provide an alternative method to resolve citizen complaints by allowing willing citizens and officers to meet face-to-face under the guidance of a professional mediator to discuss and resolve their differences. Serious complaints, officers with an extensive history of sustained complaints, and citizens with an agenda of punishment or retaliation should be excluded from the use of mediation to resolve allegations.

**Action H:** The King County Executive should appoint, subject to King County Council confirmation, a citizens' committee to advise the director of the Office of Independent Oversight on policies, procedures, and practices relating to officer misconduct, discipline, and other responsibilities of the director.

- The committee members would be appointed for three-year staggered terms, subject to reappointment for an additional term. The advisory committee should include 7 to 11 members of the public who represent the geographic, ethnic, and economic diversity of the King County Sheriff's service area.
- The advisory committee will make recommendations to the director regarding:
  - Misconduct/discipline policies, procedures, and practices of the Sheriff's Office;
  - Policies, procedures, and practices related to other responsibilities of the director;
  - Public perceptions of the Sheriff, her deputies, and their roles/functions in the community.
- The advisory committee will also serve as a means for the director to communicate with King County's many diverse communities. Such communication should increase accountability and public understanding of the misconduct/discipline policies, procedures, and practices of the Sheriff's Office and other issues related to the director's responsibilities.
- The advisory committee will *not* be authorized to review or advise the director on individual complaints, investigations, or disciplinary actions.

**Action I:** The King County Office of Citizen Complaints-Ombudsman should no longer have oversight responsibilities for the King County Sheriff's Office. The services performed by the Ombudsman will be performed by the new Office of Independent Oversight.

# MAJOR BUDGET PRIORITIES

Listed below are the Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations that have an estimated budgetary impact of more than \$10,000 in 2007. The recommendations are listed in approximate order of priority. The first column contains the panel's recommendation followed by an explanation of the assumptions used to develop the cost estimates. The next two columns contain one-time and ongoing cost estimates for 2007. The costs would be supported by King County's general fund, offset by some police contract revenues.

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	2007 COSTS	
	Estimated One-Time	Estimated Ongoing
<p><b>Priority 1.</b> Attain an acceptable ratio of field supervisors (sergeants) to employees (deputies) to achieve effective supervision. The Sheriff's Office would add ten sergeants and use overtime to backfill some sergeant vacancies. The one-time cost estimate include vehicles, radios, uniforms, and other equipment. The ongoing cost estimate includes salaries and benefits for the new sergeants and backfill overtime. This would bring the office closer to the standard range of six to ten deputies per sergeant. After the ten sergeants are in place, supervision will be reevaluated to determine whether additional sergeants are needed.</p>	\$350,000	\$1,600,000
<p><b>Priority 2.</b> Create an Inspectional Services Unit to evaluate and oversee policing policies, procedures, practices, and performance. The one-time cost estimate includes office space and equipment for the new unit. The ongoing cost estimate assumes the new unit would use both external and internal audit capability and would be staffed by a manager, trainer, and clerical support.</p>	\$87,000	\$280,000
<p><b>Priority 3.</b> Improve the type, amount, consistency, and quality of training available for all employees – from recruits to executive leadership. The ongoing cost estimate assumes the following types of priority training are provided to appropriate staff. Priorities for this training are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Sergeant training;</li> <li>(2) Training for all staff regarding complaint intake;</li> <li>(3) Captain leadership development training;</li> <li>(4) Internal Investigator Unit training; and</li> <li>(5) Senior command staff executive level training.</li> </ul> <p>In 2007, much of the captains' leadership development training will be paid for through specially earmarked grant funds. After 2007, the captains' training will be an additional cost.</p>	\$0	\$800,000 - \$1,000,000

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS	2007 COSTS	
	Estimated One-Time	Estimated Ongoing
<p><b>Priority 4.</b> The King County Executive should appoint, subject to King County Council confirmation, a director of the Office of Independent Oversight. The office will consist of four full-time staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A director,</li> <li>• An investigator, and</li> <li>• Two support staff (an analyst and clerical support).</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the Executive will appoint, subject to Council confirmation, a voluntary citizen committee to advise the director on policies, procedures, and practices relating to officer misconduct, discipline, and other responsibilities of the director. The minimal ongoing costs for the citizen advisory committee could be absorbed by the office.</p>	\$18,000	\$340,000
<p><b>Priority 5.</b> Establish a professional and collaborative relationship with the labor unions that represent Sheriff's Office employees. The Sheriff would continue to use a committee of human resource and legal experts from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Office of Human Resources Management, the Sheriff's Office, and outside labor counsel when needed to help ensure misconduct investigations follow due process and appropriate disciplinary decisions are made and implemented. The estimated cost relates to outside labor counsel to supplement legal advice from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, depending on the number of serious labor issues.</p>	\$0	\$50,000 - \$100,000
<p><b>Priority 6.</b> Improve the effectiveness of supervisory systems and tools through the creation of an Early Intervention System. One-time costs include training for all employees and supervisors on the system, as well as software and equipment. Ongoing costs are for clerical support and software updates.</p>	\$190,000	\$65,000
<p><b>Priority 7.</b> Increase the number of staff in the Internal Investigations Unit. The unit staffing should be increased to levels that ensure thorough and timely completion of investigations and timely publishing of relevant internal management and public reports. Once the complaint process and oversight recommendations of this report are implemented, the office will have a new level of baseline workload, and unit staffing should be configured to meet that workload. One-time costs are for vehicles and related equipment for two investigators. Both investigators are detective sergeants.</p>	\$30,000	\$220,000

<b>PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>2007 COSTS</b>	
	<b>Estimated One-Time</b>	<b>Estimated Ongoing</b>
<b>Priority 8.</b> Provide commanders on duty at all precincts at least 18-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. Initially, the commander coverage will be increased by staggering shift coverage using existing commanders at no cost. After evaluating the effect of additional sergeant supervision, the Sheriff's Office will evaluate adding two or three captains at \$135,000 per year to gain additional coverage on weekends.	\$0	\$0 - \$400,000
<b>Priority 9.</b> The Sheriff should retain qualified professionals to perform an institutional audit of the office's culture and its influence on employee behavior. This "cultural audit" should enable the leadership team to determine whether employees think, feel, and act the way leadership believes they do and provide a baseline for future improvements. The cost of the audit will depend on the scope and detail desired.	\$50,000 - \$100,000	\$0
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED 2007 COSTS</b>	<b>\$725,000 to \$775,000</b>	<b>\$3,355,000 to \$4,005,000</b>



# NEXT STEPS

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## **Response from the Sheriff**

By October 2006, the Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel requests that the King County Sheriff respond in detail to the panel regarding all findings, recommendations, and implementing actions published in this report. The Sheriff's response should include a realistic implementation schedule and indicate whether she would support, revise, or reject each recommendation and implementing action.

## **Progress Report**

The Blue Ribbon Panel requests the King County Executive, County Council, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff reconvene the panel no later than December 2007 to review the progress made on implementing the panel's recommendations. The panel's review should be based in part on a written progress report prepared in advance by appropriate county staff.





# REPORT OF THE KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL

## *APPENDICES*

**Appendix A: Panel Credentials**

**Appendix B: Panel Charge, Operating Guidelines, Staff Support,  
and Work Program**

**Appendix C: Major Influential Factors**

**Appendix D: Core Principles**

**Appendix E: Best Practices in Police Accountability**

**Appendix F: Contributors to the Panel's Work**

**Appendix G: Resources**



## PANEL CREDENTIALS

**Randy Revelle**, chair, is Senior Vice President for Policy and Public Affairs for the Washington State Hospital Association. As King County Executive (1981-1985), he was responsible for the Sheriff's Department, the King County Jail, and the Department of Youth Services. As a Seattle City Councilman, he served as chair of the Public Safety and Health Committee (1974-1977) and as vice chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee (1977-1981). As an elected official, Mr. Revelle played a leadership role regarding the Mayor's Task Force on Arson, Seattle's police shooting/ammunition policies, the financing of four police precinct stations, Seattle's police investigations ordinance, King County's inquest policies/procedures, construction and operation of the King County Jail, the Enhanced 911 Emergency Communications System, use of deadly force policies/procedures for King County's detention facilities, and creation and implementation of the Green River Task Force. Mr. Revelle graduated with honors from Princeton University and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He also earned a Juris Doctor degree working his way through Harvard Law School as a Fuller Brush Man.

**Faith Ireland**, vice chair, is a retired Washington State Supreme Court Justice (1999-2005), a former King County Superior Court Judge (1983-1998), and a litigation lawyer (1970-1983). Ms. Ireland's background brings expertise in the criminal justice system, employment law, government operations, and separation of powers. She has participated in systemic reviews and strategic planning efforts in the justice system, including serving as chair of the Washington Gender and Justice Committee and as chair of long range planning for the King County Superior Court. She served as a trustee and President Judge of the Superior Court Judges Association and as vice chair for the Board for Judicial Administration. Ms. Ireland received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Washington in 1965 and her Juris Doctor degree from Willamette University School of Law in 1969. She received her Masters of Science degree in taxation with honors from Golden Gate University in 1984. Ms. Ireland is a member of the TVW Advisory Board and The Law Fund, as well as a past president and current board member of the Austin Foundation. She is also a member of the board of visitors of Willamette University School of Law.

**Anthony Anderson** is the Administrative Lieutenant for the Port of Seattle Police Department. He has worked 24 years in law enforcement, beginning with the Seattle Police Department in 1980. He serves on the SeaTac City Council as chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee. Mr. Anderson has been an adjunct faculty member in the School of Law and Justice at Central Washington University for more than ten years. He received his Doctorate in Education Leadership from Seattle University (1994), a Masters of Science in Business Administration from Boston University (1990), and a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology from Seattle Pacific University (1979).

**David Boerner** is an associate professor at the Seattle University School of Law. He was associate dean and an associate professor of law at the University of Puget Sound School of Law. He also served as Chief Criminal Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for King County, as Assistant Attorney General for the state of Washington and as Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington. Mr. Boerner received the Washington State Bar Association's 2004 Award of Merit for long-term service to the bar association and the public. He has served as chair of various justice system committees,

including the Washington State Supreme Court's Time for Trial Task Force, the Board for Court Education, the King County Inquest Procedures Review Committee, the King County Charter Review Commission, and the bar association's Character, Fitness, and Ethics Committee. He earned Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Law degrees from the University of Illinois.

**Michael O'Mahony** joined the Seattle Police Department in 1966; served in various assignments in patrol and the detective division; and moved through promotions into policing assignments that included training, vice, special patrol unit, traffic, internal investigations, juvenile, auto theft, homicide, and robbery. He served as precinct commander, patrol commander, and as Assistant Chief for the Family and Youth Protection Bureau, which focuses on gangs, sex crimes, domestic violence, and juvenile crime. Mr. O'Mahony has investigated, reviewed, and made recommendations on several hundred internal investigations of police misconduct. He is a graduate of the University of Puget Sound, the FBI National Academy (Quantico), and the Secret Service Dignitary Protection School. He has been an instructor for the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Center, the Washington State Arson Investigators Program, and the police department of American Samoa. Since leaving police service in 1996, he has enjoyed volunteer work with Children's Hospital, Neighbors in Need, and several social service programs on Whidbey Island.

**Wilson Edward Reed** has more than 30 years of experience working with communities, universities, and police departments around issues of equity, educational reform, and social justice. He is a published author, researcher, and consultant with these same institutions and has taught at colleges and universities throughout the United States. His 1999 book, *The Politics of Community Policing: the Case of Seattle*, is considered the leading review of the subject in law enforcement. Mr. Reed recently published an article about women and black police officers in the Seattle Police Department and frequently lectures in the Seattle area on policing youth, diversity issues, poverty in America, and domestic violence. He teaches at Seattle University's Matteo Ricci College, advising students and focusing on global African studies. He has also served as a criminal justice consultant for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. He graduated from the University of Washington with Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts degrees in Political Science. He earned a Masters degree in Criminal Justice from the State University of New York-Albany and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Northern Arizona University.

**Jennifer Shaw** joined the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington as the Legislative Director in November 2004. She was a trial attorney with the firm Aoki & Sakamoto for eight years, representing individuals in criminal defense, personal injury, civil rights, and discrimination cases. She was a staff attorney for the Seattle-King County Public Defender Association for seven years. Ms. Shaw has served as a Commissioner Pro Tem for King County Superior Court and has chaired the Criminal Law Section of the Washington State Trial Lawyers and the Legislative Committee for the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She is a 1987 graduate of Seattle University Law School and earned undergraduate degrees in English and Political Science from the University of Washington in 1984.

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**Richard K. Smith** spent his entire 35-year law enforcement career with the Washington State Patrol. His work progressed in rank and responsibility as a supervisor and administrator in different locations throughout the state. Among his many assignments, he supervised the Executive Protection Unit of the Patrol, which provided security to two governors and their families. Mr. Smith is a graduate of the FBI National Academy (Quantico) and the Secret Service Dignitary Protection School. He was credited during his career as being a well-respected supervisor and administrator. Following his retirement as a Lieutenant and Assistant District Commander in King County, he was appointed administrator of the Washington State Fire Training Academy in North Bend. Mr. Smith attended Everett Community College. He currently works as the supervising investigator with the Washington State Horse Racing Commission.

**Patricia H. Stell** has been active in organized labor issues for more than 30 years. In 2001, she retired from a Presidential appointment by the Clinton administration as the Northwest Regional Representative for the U.S. Secretary of Labor (1994-2001). She served eight years on the Washington State Higher Education Personnel Board, chairing six of them. From 1989 to 1993, she was a staff aide to U.S. Representative Jim McDermott. She spent four years from 1963-1973 working as a riot conciliator with the U.S. Department of Justice, responding to conflicts and crises between law enforcement and communities of color. Ms. Stell is a graduate of Stanford University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in American History with additional doctoral work in cultural anthropology.

**David Eugene Wilson** has more than 30 years of experience in criminal and civil litigation as a trial lawyer, judge, mediator, and arbitrator. He currently works for McKay Chadwell, PLLC, which represents corporations and corporate officers facing government allegations of civil or criminal misconduct and other civil disputes. His law practice focuses on white collar criminal defense and civil mediation. Mr. Wilson served eight years as a U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Western District of Washington and 19 years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Seattle and Washington, D.C. In Seattle, he worked in both the civil division and the criminal division of the U.S. Attorney's Office, and served as interim U.S. Attorney in 1989. From 1983 to 1992, he was Chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorneys Office. Mr. Wilson was lead counsel in several lengthy Racketeer Influenced and Controlled Organization cases, including the successful prosecutions of the Sheriff of Pierce County, Native American businessman Robert Satiacum, and the Neo-Nazi group known as The Order. In recent years, he has served as lead counsel for a defendant in a war crimes trial in The Hague, Netherlands. He is a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers.





# APPENDIX B

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## **PANEL CHARGE, OPERATING GUIDELINES, STAFF SUPPORT, AND WORK PROGRAM**

At its first meeting on March 8, 2006, the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel adopted the following panel charge and operating guidelines:

### **Panel Charge**

The King County Sheriff seeks the advice of an expert panel to research internal management systems, suggest well-functioning internal review processes, and identify and recommend areas of needed improvements. The panel's efforts complement other Sheriff's Office reforms. Specifically, the panel is charged with:

- Reviewing internal management systems for addressing employee misconduct and discipline;
- Gaining an understanding of leading management practices in other departments and their applicability to a department with characteristics like the Sheriff's Office;
- Making recommendations to the Sheriff for improvements to the accountability system for misconduct and discipline; and
- Delivering a final report and written recommendations to the Sheriff by no later than August 31, 2006.

The panel will establish a written work program and schedule of meetings to review the current system, develop consensus about potential changes to current practices, and present findings and recommendations. The panel is expected to meet every two or three weeks for five to six months.

### **Operating Guidelines**

#### **A. Responsibilities of Panel Chair**

1. Chair all meetings of the panel;
2. Work with Berk & Associates to facilitate consensus on panel issues;
3. Act as spokesperson for the panel; and,
4. Work with Berk & Associates to prepare meeting agendas and facilitate debate.

#### **B. Meetings and Attendance**

1. Panel meetings will start and end on time.
2. Only appointed panel members will participate on the panel; no alternates allowed.
3. The time and place for panel meetings will be set by the chair in coordination with Berk & Associates, who will make public all panel meeting notices and agendas.

4. Meetings will be open to the public. The panel may choose when and how to receive public comment, structured presentations, and comments provided to Berk & Associates. Members of the public wishing to present materials to the panel should arrange to do so by contacting Berk & Associates.
5. If time permits, the chair may allow public comment during panel meetings.
6. Berk & Associates will produce summary proceedings of meetings.
7. Panel members will communicate planned absences at least one day in advance of a meeting by notifying Berk & Associates via email.
8. Agendas will be distributed in advance to panel members and interested parties, with a goal to provide agendas and meeting materials to panel members at least 48 hours in advance of panel meetings.
9. Panel members may offer changes or additions to the agenda at the start of each meeting. If two panel members object to a change, a majority of the members present will decide whether to change the agenda.

### **C. Panel Discussions and Decisions**

1. The panel will have candid, efficient, effective, and open discussions:
  - a. All panel members should attend and participate in meeting discussions.
  - b. Only one person should speak at a time.
  - c. Points should be made concisely and clearly.
  - d. All members' interests and positions will be respected and considered.
2. The chair and Berk & Associates will work toward panel consensus. Consensus is defined as a collective opinion reached by a group of people that resolves or advances issues at hand. Consensus is best met when the following conditions exist:
  - a. Each panel member feels s/he has had a fair chance to speak and be heard.
  - b. Sufficient time is given to thoroughly discuss the issue and for everyone to gain an understanding of the panel's decision.
  - c. Each member understands the decision or solution on the table.
  - d. Substantial differences of opinion are represented in the final report to reflect the divergence of views, if any. Where panel members disagree, the majority will seek to assure that final recommendations will be constructed to achieve the broadest support by the panel.
3. Decisions should be made only when a quorum is present, defined as a majority of members.
4. The panel may opt to create subcommittees, and the chair may appoint subcommittee chairs and members for the study of specific issues.

## D. Communications

1. Panel members should communicate questions, issues, and suggestions to Berk & Associates who will coordinate actions and responses among the panel chair, subcommittee chairs, and members.
2. Panel members will be copied on communications sent to Berk & Associates. Supplemental materials a member or third party may want to provide to other members should be coordinated through Berk & Associates.
3. Email communications to panel members by individual members will preferably be copied to Berk & Associates in order to coordinate information sharing and responses among members.
4. Berk & Associates will create an email address where comments and questions can be directed and relayed to the panel and will forward all comments and questions from all sources to the panel at each meeting.
5. Berk & Associates and panel members will forward all media inquiries directly to the chair for response.
6. To the extent practicable, one or two interim briefings with the King County Council will be scheduled to keep council members and the public informed about the work of the panel.

## Staff Support

The panel was supported by Marty Wine and Morgan Shook of Berk & Associates, a policy consulting firm, who provided:

- Meeting facilitation, including the development of meeting agendas and summaries, research summaries, and materials for discussion;
- Assistance in decision making by identifying relevant questions, presenting research findings, and focusing the panel on findings and recommendations;
- Independent, neutral research and information, prepared for presentation to the panel;
- A concise and clear final report on behalf of the panel; and
- Facilitation and involvement of the public and media as appropriate.

Additional expertise and support will be provided by the Sheriff's Office, with Virginia Kirk, Human Resources Manager, as the day-to-day lead contact and coordinator of information and resources available from the office. Others within and outside the office may be consulted who have expertise in police operations and best practices in personnel systems.

***Marty Wine, Morgan Shook, and Virginia Kirk provided outstanding staff support to the Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel.***

## Work Program

The Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel carried out the following work program, ably assisted by excellent staff:

<b>Day/Date</b>	<b>Meeting/Agenda</b>
<i>February 23</i> through <i>March 8</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint, announce, and convene the Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel</li> <li>• Develop a roster of contact information</li> <li>• Develop a draft work program, agenda, and operating guidelines</li> <li>• Meet with the Sheriff's staff to plan and organize logistics</li> <li>• Initial research into the current process and comparable agencies</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>March 8</i>	<p><b>Panel Meeting 1 – Organization and Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part 1: Organizational Elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Panel introductions</li> <li>◦ Review the panel's charge</li> <li>◦ Review and approve the operating guidelines</li> <li>◦ Review and approve the panel's preliminary work program</li> <li>◦ Review the flow of information and meeting materials</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Part 2: Disciplinary Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Overview of Sheriff's Office services and work force</li> <li>◦ Overview of current misconduct and disciplinary procedures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>March 22</i>	<p><b>Panel Meeting 2 – Problem Identification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview and discussion of current investigative procedures</li> <li>• Problem identification: brainstorm factors that influence the success or failure of the misconduct and discipline process</li> <li>• Begin identification of comparable agencies and best practices</li> <li>• Initial impressions and future directions for research</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>April 12</i>	<p><b>Panel Meeting 3 – Development of Alternatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and approval of major influential factors</li> <li>• Overview of King County Office of Citizen Complaints-Ombudsman</li> <li>• Overview of employment law and labor environment</li> <li>• Initial findings: model programs and best practices</li> <li>• Identification of comparable agencies for research</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>April 26</i>	<p><b>Panel Meeting 4 – Development of Alternatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and approval of revised work program</li> <li>• Presentation of Sheriff's 100-Day Plan</li> <li>• Presentation of current training programs and hiring practices</li> <li>• Preliminary findings: model practices and programs research</li> <li>• Discussion of the preliminary identification of concerns</li> </ul>

<b>Day/Date</b>	<b>Meeting/Agenda</b>
Wednesday <i>May 17</i>	<b>Panel Meeting 5 – Findings/Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation by police labor organizations</li> <li>• Additional findings: model programs and best practices</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>June 7</i>	<b>Panel Meeting 6 – Findings/Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation: Sheriff’s Office management, supervision, and promotion practices</li> <li>• Discuss and revise preliminary findings/recommendations</li> <li>• Develop report structure and outline</li> <li>• Prepare for public hearings</li> </ul>
Weeks of <i>June 12 and June 19</i>	<b>Public Hearings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renton</li> <li>• Kenmore</li> <li>• Issaquah</li> </ul>
Monday <i>June 26</i>	<b>Panel Briefing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief the King County Council, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff</li> <li>• Distribute preliminary written materials to the elected officials and the media.</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>July 12</i>	<b>Panel Meeting 7 – Panel Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of draft problem statement</li> <li>• Discussion and revision of findings/recommendations</li> <li>• Substantive review of draft report</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>July 19</i>	<b>Panel Meeting 8 – Panel Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and revision of findings/recommendations</li> <li>• Review and discuss draft report</li> </ul>
Week of <i>July 24</i>	<b>Panel Report Preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute draft report to panel members for review</li> <li>• Panel member edits and revisions by email</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>July 26</i>	<b>Panel Meeting 9 – Panel Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, discuss, and revise the draft report</li> <li>• Discuss and approve the process for completing and publishing the panel report</li> </ul>
Wednesday <i>August 16</i>	<b>Panel Meeting 10 – Panel Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, discuss, and revise the draft panel report</li> <li>• Adopt the panel report, including the findings/recommendations</li> </ul>
Monday <i>September 11</i>	<b>Panel Report Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present the panel report to the King County Council, Executive, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff</li> <li>• Deliver the panel report to the media and other interested persons</li> </ul>



## MAJOR INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

Based on a March 22, 2006 brainstorming session and a discussion on April 12, 2006, the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel agreed unanimously that the following are the nine major factors influencing the misconduct and discipline processes of the King County Sheriff's Office:

- **Department leadership and culture:** customs, values, informal standards of conduct, leadership, and professionalism expected and modeled by departmental leaders;
- **Management and supervision:** prevention of misconduct, intervention when it occurs, and correction/discipline when needed;
- **Human resource systems:** recruitment, hiring, training, promotions, and recognition;
- **Labor environment:** collective bargaining agreements and relations with and influence of labor unions;
- **Complaint process:** how it is structured and conducted, including intake, investigation, discipline, remedies, and appeals;
- **Internal oversight:** tracking, monitoring, and reporting procedures and systems to provide feedback, evaluate individual performance, identify patterns of misconduct, and develop systemic improvements;
- **External oversight:** governmental and citizen oversight of police misconduct and discipline processes;
- **Transparency:** public access to relevant information and the public's perception of the openness of the investigation and discipline processes; and
- **External factors:** events or factors that prompt changes, such as elections and politics, media coverage, and community reactions.





## CORE PRINCIPLES

The following “Core Principles for an Effective Police Auditor’s Office” are excerpted from Dr. Samuel Walker’s book, *The New World of Police Accountability*:

- **Independence.** A police auditor’s office must be fully independent of the law enforcement agency under its jurisdiction. Specific language in the enabling ordinance must indicate that an auditor may be removed from office only for cause and through a clearly defined removal process.
- **Clearly defined scope of responsibilities.** The scope of the responsibilities of a police auditor’s office must be clearly defined by ordinance (or contract). Specific language, for example, must define the auditor’s responsibility to audit complaint files, have unfettered access to all relevant records and reports, make policy recommendations, issue public reports, investigate individual critical incidents, and so on.
- **Adequate resources.** A police auditor’s office must have adequate resources to ensure that all duties can be conducted effectively and efficiently. Adequate resources primarily include full-time professional and clerical staff. Part-time staff only are not considered adequate. Volunteer staff are not adequate. The exact size of an auditor’s office staff should be based on a formula reflecting the size of the law enforcement agency under the auditor’s jurisdiction, as measured by the number of full-time sworn officers.
- **Unfettered access.** A police auditor must have unfettered access to all documents and data in the law enforcement agency. This unfettered access must be spelled out in the enabling ordinance. The only exception to this rule would be files related to an ongoing criminal investigation. All documents must be provided to the police auditor without charge to the auditor’s office.
- **Full cooperation.** A police auditor must have the full cooperation of all employees of the law enforcement agency under its jurisdiction. All employees, including sworn officers, shall cooperate as a condition of their employment. With respect to potential self-incrimination, the standards defined in *Garrity v. New Jersey* shall prevail.
- **Sanctions for failure to cooperate.** The enabling ordinance of an auditor’s office must specify sanctions for failure to cooperate with the work of an auditor on the part of any law enforcement agency employee.
- **Public reports.** A police auditor must issue periodic public reports. Such public reports shall be issued at least once a year and, ideally, more frequently.
- **No prior censorship by the police department.** Reports by the police auditor shall not be subject to prior censorship by the law enforcement agency. A police auditor may reject any and all demands by the law enforcement agency to see draft copies of public reports.

- **Community involvement.** A police auditor must have the benefit of community involvement and input. Community involvement and input can best be achieved through an advisory board consisting of members who represent the diverse composition of the local population.
- **Confidentiality and anonymity.** The work of a police auditor must respect the confidentiality of public employees as defined in the applicable state statute. Violation of confidentiality shall be considered a serious breach of professional standards. In the interest of enhancing public understanding, a police auditor may report on specific incidents with personal identifiers removed without violating standards of confidentiality.
- **Access to the police chief or sheriff.** A police auditor must have direct access to the chief executive of the law enforcement agency under its jurisdiction. Upon request, a police chief or sheriff must agree to meet with the police auditor. It is understood that a chief executive may decline to meet in the case of an unreasonable number of such requests. Failure to meet with a police auditor for a period of one year shall be considered unsatisfactory performance on the part of a chief executive and shall be taken into consideration in performance review.
- **No retaliation.** The enabling ordinance of an auditor's office must specify that there shall be no retaliation against the auditor for work done as a part of the auditor's responsibilities, including statements made in public reports.

## BEST PRACTICES IN POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

### Identifying Police Agencies for Research

As outlined in the King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel charge, panel members sought to gain an understanding of best management practices in other police departments that had experienced reform in their misconduct and discipline systems. The panel considered the applicability of these models to the King County Sheriff's Office, with the purpose of making recommendations for improvements to King County's police accountability system. Another purpose of reviewing these "best practices" is to provide examples for discussion about "what works" in selected communities, recognizing the panel would need to understand that some practices and programs that are successful elsewhere will not work well in King County.

The panel's review process identified comparable agencies to research their investigation, discipline, and management systems, with a focus on factors that influence the strength or weakness of their systems. The panel and staff looked first at Washington State police and sheriff agencies that have an internal investigations unit; serve a large population; provide a similar complement of police services; and operate in Washington's labor environment. Seven agencies were identified, including the Washington State Patrol, Pierce County Sheriff, Snohomish County Sheriff, Spokane County Sheriff, and the police departments of Vancouver, Everett, and Seattle.

Additionally, the panel considered comparable departments identified in the Sheriff's Office Operational Master Plan. These agencies were identified as peers of the office in partnership with Management Partners, Inc. because the agencies serve a mix of urban and rural areas; contract with other agencies; and staff at a level within a standard plus/minus range of the office. Potential agencies on this list include Pierce County, Washington; St. Louis County, Missouri; Oakland County, Michigan; Pinellas and Broward counties in Florida; and Ventura, Santa Clara, Orange, Alameda, Sacramento, and San Bernardino counties, all in California.

The panel reviewed other sources for "best practices" by asking police professional associations and citizen advocacy groups knowledgeable about police misconduct, discipline, and oversight systems to suggest other agencies that incorporate elements of best practices in their processes or systems. Examples of police agencies with recent police accountability experience/reform include: Portland and Eugene, Oregon; Los Angeles County and San Jose, California; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The panel identified individuals and organizations with expertise or research into police accountability, and staff conducted several interviews to understand current research by accountability, oversight, and advocacy organizations – including Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), National Association for Citizen Oversight of Law

Enforcement (NACOLE), Police Assessment Resource Center (PARC), Human Rights Watch (HRW), Seattle’s chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

From this extensive list of suggestions, seven police and sheriff departments were selected for an intensive interview and inquiry process focused on the “major influential factors” identified by the Blue Ribbon Panel (see Appendix C). The seven police departments include: the City of Seattle Police Department; the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Office; the City of Boise Police Department; the City of San Jose Police Department; the Washington State Patrol; the City/County of Denver Police/Sheriff Departments; and the City of Portland Police Department. Project staff asked each department detailed questions that followed the influential factors outline.

## Findings

From this review, the panel found that many organizations suggested individual best practices, but there are few model programs suggested that could be treated as a “turn-key” program and implemented on a wholesale basis in King County because of the unique characteristics of each community. Further, most organizations do not have formal research or policy staff and suggested the same, select number of individuals and organizations that are identified as national experts on police misconduct, discipline, and oversight. These organizations included the National Association of Citizen Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), Police Assessment Resource Center (PARC), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and Dr. Samuel Walker of the University of Nebraska.

From these sources, the panel found, for example, in PARC’s Review of National Police Oversight Models (Eugene, Oregon 2005), that the accountability structure and system that works best in a community depends on the perception and level of community trust and the need for profound cultural change. There are three types of oversight models:

- Review and appellate models in the form of citizen oversight and review boards that operate after an investigation in an advisory role to the chief or sheriff, providing visibility to the community;
- Investigative and quality assurance models give the power to investigate police actions to an outside individual, civilian board, or panel of attorneys or investigators to complete a fair response to complaints; and
- Evaluative and performance-based models that are geared to minimizing risk, identifying patterns and practices of police misconduct and systemic failures to deal with them, and changing culture by requiring accountability.

As another example, the panel learned from NACOLE, which provides a national directory of citizen oversight agencies, that two basic citizen oversight models exist:

- An individual (auditor, monitor, inspector general, or ombudsman) internal or external to the organization conducts oversight. Critical issues in this model include the extent of authority and power to investigate independently; how much the individual is controlled by the police agency; adequate funding, training, and staffing to be credible to agency personnel and the community; adequate outreach and listening to all parties; collecting all evidence before analysis; and respectful, not timid or “co-opted.”
- A group (board or commission) internal or external to the organization conducts oversight. Critical issues in this model include the same factors listed above, plus NACOLE suggests the group should not be splintered into ineffectiveness by conflict.

Debra Livingston, Professor of Law at Columbia University and a member of the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, recently suggested at the NACOLE annual conference that the value citizen oversight provides includes holding officers accountable for misconduct; keeping a record; recognizing complaints as vital sources of information about a police department; identifying patterns and problems related to policies or supervision rather than misconduct; and building public trust and community cohesion through patient listening to all complaint parties and letting them know they have been heard. She suggests that “what works” must consider the specific issues in context.

“What really works is oversight that is independent; that selects people with integrity who will go where facts lead them; that supplies its overseers with adequate budgets, training and time; and that expects them to listen deeply and to address detailed issues with fairness, patience and compassion for all parties.” (Citizen Review of Police Complaints: Four Critical Dimensions of Value, Eighth Annual Conference of NACOLE, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002.)

The City of Seattle’s Director of the Office of Police Accountability suggested in a 2006 presentation that each oversight agency must balance independence and authority as it carries out oversight functions. To those two dimensions, the panel found a third dimension – transparency – that must be balanced and addressed differently in each accountability system. A discussion of these three dimensions is provided below:

- **Independence:** How separate is the oversight agency from the police agency it is overseeing and who is part of it? Who does the oversight or accountability system report to, what is their sphere of influence, and what kinds of checks and balances are in place? The Blue Ribbon Panel found that all the agencies chosen for research at least had the “traditional” approach of an internal investigations unit responsible for complaint investigations. Complaint investigations are conducted internally (such as in Portland and Boise), externally, and/or both (such as in Los Angeles County). All external oversight agencies cited the need to balance partnership with the police agency, keeping the distance needed to maintain independence. In addition, the leadership in the external oversight agency is a key component of the effectiveness of oversight, including who is in charge, what kind of background they have, and how they approach their work.

- **Authority:** What is the oversight agency's charge and what does it have control over? What tools does it have to make change? What aspects of the police agency are accessible to the oversight agency? Does it have the ability to oversee, make decisions, implement, and act? Some of the agencies researched have city ordinances as the source of their authority, while others are created through contract. The level of monitoring of investigations, access to investigation records, and investigative powers varies during different stages of the investigation. In addition, some agencies can only issue reports (Los Angeles County's Office of Independent Review), while other agencies issue findings and make recommendations for discipline. While some agencies can make policy recommendations (Portland, San Jose, and Boise), none have the power to implement changes. In all cases, the person who decides and carries out discipline is the chief of police or sheriff.
- **Transparency:** How much do complainants and the public know at each point in the process about what is happening? In all jurisdictions researched, the Blue Ribbon Panel found that the complaint intake is a very important characteristic of the system, including who, how, and where a complaint can be made. Appropriate answers to these questions help instill confidence in the system. The panel further found that tracking and information management tools are essential for effective evaluation and reporting (San Jose and its Independent Police Auditor). Finally, most external accountability agencies were created in response to external events.

The police agencies researched had recently made changes in their processes and systems in ways that increased oversight of police operations, investigations, and discipline process. Profiles of each of the seven agencies interviewed are detailed in a report of meeting materials from the panel's May 2006 meetings. To review profiles of each police agency, visit the Sheriff Office's website at:

[http://www.metrokc.gov/sheriff/downloads/sheriff/bluepacket\\_051706.pdf](http://www.metrokc.gov/sheriff/downloads/sheriff/bluepacket_051706.pdf)

## **CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PANEL'S WORK**

The King County Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel appreciates the individuals and organizations that contributed to its research into the misconduct, discipline, and management systems of the King County Sheriff's Office.

### **Panel Presenters**

- Nancy Buonanno-Grennan, King County Office of Human Resources Management
- Amy Calderwood, Director, King County Office of Citizen Complaints-Ombudsman
- Steve Eggert, President, King County Police Officers Guild
- Dustin Frederick, Business Manager, SEIU, Public Safety Employees, Local 519
- Rick Hayes, King County Office of Human Resources Management
- Virginia Kirk, Manager, Human Resources, King County Sheriff's Office
- Sue Rahr, Sheriff, King County Sheriff's Office
- Susie Slonecker, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Chris Vick, Attorney for the King County Police Officers Guild
- Cameron Webster, Captain, Internal Investigations Unit, King County Sheriff's Office

### **Consultation and/or Research Materials**

- American Civil Liberties Union
- Human Rights Watch
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Japanese American Citizens League
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- National Association for Citizen Oversight of Law Enforcement
- National Center for State Courts
- National Coalition on Police Accountability
- National Council of La Raza
- National Sheriffs' Association
- Police Assessment Resource Center
- Police Executive Research Forum
- Justice Charles Z. Smith, Washington State Supreme Court

- State Justice Institute
- U.S. Department of Justice
- Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

### **Profiles of Police and Sheriff Agencies**

- City of Boise, Idaho
- City of Portland, Oregon
- City of San Jose, California
- City of Seattle, Washington
- City and County of Denver, Colorado
- Los Angeles County, California
- Washington State Patrol

### **Interviews of King County Sheriff's Office Employees**

Sheriff's Blue Ribbon Panel members conducted interviews with 18 current and former King County Sheriff's officers. The interviewees were promised confidentiality to encourage a candid discussion of the issues so their names are not included in this report. The interviewees included a significant number of past and present managers of the Sheriff's Office who were able to address management issues from the vantage point of their positions within the office's management system. The interviewees also included a number of "line" deputies who had not been involved in the management system and who provided their perspective as persons subject to that system.

### **Public Testimony**

- A total of 15 people who testified at one of three public hearings in Kenmore, Issaquah, and Renton in June 2006
- Public comment provided at Blue Ribbon Panel meetings since March, 2006

### **Expert Reviewers**

- Barbara Attard, Independent Police Auditor, City of San Jose, California and President, National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement
- Richard Rosenthal, Independent Monitor, City and County of Denver, Colorado



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