

Auditor's Summary Report

Implementation of the Jail Integrated Security Project & Adult Detention Operational Master Plan

12/28/05

Cheryle A. Broom

King County Auditor

516 Third Avenue, Room W1033

Seattle, WA 98104-3272

(206) 296-1655

TTY 296-1024

www.metrokc.gov/auditor

Council assigned independent oversight of the Operational Master Plan (OMP) and the Integrated Security Project (ISP) to the King County Auditor's Office. Both of these projects are now in various stages of implementation. The ISP will reach some key milestones in April 2006, which will indicate how well the balance of the project will proceed. The auditor's office participates in work groups that oversee the projects and provides review and analysis as needed, with an emphasis on efficiency and cost-effectiveness issues.

The following highlights indicate that ISP implementation is proceeding smoothly and the OMP is in its early stages. Last year, the auditor's office provided quality assurance and technical assistance oversight to the ISP and the OMP. Audit staff analyzed:

- ISP design, cost, and implementation issues;
- Alternatives for changing the operation of the county's jails in the future, and related costs and benefits;
- Operational issues with potentially significant fiscal impacts; and
- The accuracy of information and analyses prepared for the ISP and OMP.

Audit staff have participated in two advisory work groups: one for ISP implementation and one for OMP. These groups consist of department, council, and audit staff.

Integrated Security Project (ISP)

The ISP consists of a major upgrade/replacement of the electronic security system at the King County Correctional Facility (KCCF) and also includes a reconfiguration and remodeling of the portion of the jail designated for inmate intake, transfer, and release (ITR).

Highlights of ISP activities and accomplishments for 2005 include:

- As we recommended, Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) hired an independent consultant to review the use of corrections officers as escorts in the construction areas of the jail at KCCF during the project. The consultant's first report, issued this past summer, praised the planning and execution of DAJD's escort operations.
- Prior to ISP implementation, we identified efficiencies that reduced the ISP budget by \$2.4 million. Now, due to DAJD's successful efforts to coordinate with the construction crews to reduce the need for escorts, and to continually review escort operations, there will likely be additional savings as implementation progresses.
- Construction began on a new ITR, a project proposed by DAJD, and the Facilities Management Division that takes advantage of the fact that construction is already occurring in the jail for the security upgrades. Due to a better design, the new ITR will have improvements in operations and fewer staff, resulting in a cost savings.
- Progress continues in construction of a new Central Control Room for the new electronic security system. Workers have installed wiring for new circuits and electronic infrastructure.
- Work started on the upper floors of the KCCF, known as the "tower," and jail staff successfully relocated the inmates to other parts of the jail system.
- The county developed plans for remodeling portions of the jail occupied by Jail Health Services.
- DAJD and the Facilities Management Division are taking advantage of the ISP project, when inmates are relocated due

to construction, to make other improvements, such as repairing and upgrading inmate showers.

Key 2006 Milestones for the ISP

By the beginning of April 2006, if the ISP remains on schedule, three major milestones will be met:

- The ITR will be reopened in its remodeled space in KCCF;
- The new Central Control Room will be up and running; and
- The security upgrades to the 11th floor housing and core area will be complete and have been tested.

The successful testing of systems on the 11th floor should provide benchmark information for the work that will need to be completed on the remaining housing floors.

Operational Master Plan (OMP)

The OMP final report (2004) contained several options for improving the operations of the county's two jails. While many of these options must wait for the completion of the ISP, some can be reviewed now. The changes envisioned in the OMP are important to the county and have potential cost saving opportunities in the range of \$3 million to \$3.7 million per year.

For example, operating capacities of the housing units at KCCF are fixed through an agreement known as *Hammer*, that settled several lawsuits against the jail. The OMP

found that modifications could increase the capacity of the KCCF and also save up to \$900,000 in annual operating costs, pending re-negotiation of the *Hammer* agreement. Such a capacity increase is not likely feasible until after the ISP. However, we have recommended that DAJD pursue further evaluation so that any opportunity to make KCCF more efficient can proceed expeditiously upon completion of the ISP.

As we and the OMP consultant noted last year, successful implementation of the OMP will be gradual, and many of the new ideas will have to be tested on a smaller scale before they are put to more general use. One option now being evaluated by a consultant to DAJD involves possible enhancement of the food preparation operation at the Regional Justice Center.

The department has formed implementation staff teams of personnel from management and the bargaining units. To date, no significant progress on implementation of specific OMP recommendations has occurred. We have encouraged the department to make periodic status reports to the council on the project.

Auditor's Office Jail Project Team:

Ron Perry, Deputy County Auditor

Bob Thomas, Senior Principal Management Auditor

Previous reports by the Auditor's Office on King County Jails, the Integrated Security Project, and the Operational Master Plan may be found at www.metrokc.gov/auditor

They include:

Jail Operational Master Plan (OMP) Oversight - Quarterly Reports

Overview and Summary of Auditor's Oversight of the Integrated Security Project (2004)

Adult Detention Jail Costs Follow-up Study (2003)

King County Jails (2002)

