

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

**FACILITIES MANAGEMENT  
DIVISION  
CUSTODIAL SERVICES**



**King County**

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

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April 19, 2011



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# King County

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 19, 2011

**TO:** Metropolitan King County Councilmembers

**FROM:** Cheryle A. Broom, <sup>CB</sup> County Auditor

**SUBJECT:** Facilities Management Division Custodial Services Performance Audit

Attached is the Facilities Management Division Custodial Services Performance Audit. The audit objective was to evaluate whether Custodial Services' staffing and supervision practices manage staffing resources efficiently and promote effectiveness, consistency, accountability, and customer satisfaction.

Overall, the audit found that Custodial Services needs to improve its management practices by conducting a formal assessment of custodial workload and productivity, increasing the frequency of communication with tenants, and implementing an objective tool for evaluating custodial performance. We make recommendations to improve management's ability to develop a custodial service level that matches staffing resources, predict the impact of staffing changes, provide tenants and custodians with objective information about service level and workload decisions, and evaluate custodial performance.

At the same time, the audit recognizes that Custodial Services has made recent changes to improve performance and accountability. Toward the end of our audit, Custodial Services changed its approach to supervising the custodians working in downtown Seattle buildings to increase oversight and communication between supervisors and custodians. The audit recommends that Custodial Services continue these efforts and monitor the impact of its new approach.

The County Executive concurred with the audit findings and five recommendations, and the County Executive's official response is included at the back of the report.

The Auditor's Office sincerely appreciates the cooperation received from the Facilities Management Division management and staff.

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BOMA	Building Owners and Managers Association International
FMD	Facilities Management Division
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
IFMA	International Facility Management Association

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Introduction

This performance audit of the Custodial Services group of the Facilities Management Division (FMD) evaluated whether staffing and supervision practices manage staffing resources efficiently and promote effectiveness, consistency, accountability, and customer satisfaction. The audit objectives included evaluating FMD's management of staffing resources and determination of workload, comparing FMD custodial costs with industry standards, evaluating whether supervision of custodial staff is sufficient to ensure the established service level is met, and assessing customer satisfaction.

FMD Custodial Services needs to make improvements in several areas. In particular, a formal assessment of workload and staff productivity would improve management's ability to develop a service level that matches staffing resources in different buildings, predict the impact of staffing changes, and provide tenants and custodians with objective information about service level and workload decisions. Additionally, building tenants emphasized to us the need for more proactive communication from Custodial Services' managers and regular information about factors that impact service delivery. Finally, Custodial Services' current process for assessing staff performance does not provide management with an objective tool for evaluating individual custodians.

While the audit recommends improvements to Custodial Services' operations, it also identifies areas in which FMD has recently made changes to improve custodial performance and accountability. The audit recommends that FMD continue these efforts to improve staff oversight and monitor the impact of its new approach to supervision in the downtown buildings.

### **Background**

The Custodial Services group is organizationally situated in the Building Services Section of the Facilities Management Division (FMD) of the Department of Executive Services. The group provides custodial services to tenants in all county-owned buildings operated by FMD and also to tenants in the Graybar Building, which the county leases. FMD custodians are responsible for providing services to over 2.23 million square feet in 40 buildings, including courthouses, office buildings, public health clinics, an animal shelter, the airport, and transit facilities, among other facilities and buildings.

Custodial Services' responsibilities are specified in the Service Level Agreements between FMD and its individual tenants. These agreements establish the baseline standards custodians provide in each area of responsibility, such as trash pickup, restroom cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, and general office cleaning. FMD first implemented the Service Level Agreements in 2006, and between 2006 and 2009 the base service level remained fairly constant. In 2009 and 2010, FMD reduced the level of custodial service provided in response to budget and staffing cuts. FMD developed the reduced base service level by assessing how much work the lower level of staffing could achieve while prioritizing services in common areas (e.g., public restrooms) and focusing reductions in tenant occupied spaces (e.g., individual cubicles and offices).

The audit's findings and recommendations are organized into three chapters: Workload and Staffing, Tenant Satisfaction and Custodial Accountability, and Comparison with National and Local Benchmarks.

### **Workload and Staffing**

We evaluated FMD's process for setting the baseline service level and allocating staffing resources throughout the county. We found that FMD's process is not based on an analysis of employee productivity or an inventory of custodial tasks by area or building. Instead, service level and staffing decisions are based on managers' professional judgment. Additionally, FMD has not developed Service Level Agreements that document the varying level of service provided in different county buildings. Our recommendations will help FMD managers ensure that staffing resources are allocated appropriately, predict the impact of budget changes on service levels, provide tenants and custodians with objective information about staffing and service level decisions, and ensure Service Level Agreements document FMD's responsibilities to each tenant.

**Recommendation 1:** FMD should conduct a formal assessment of Custodial Services' workload that includes an inventory of custodial tasks by building or area and an analysis of staff hours required to complete all tasks.

**Recommendation 2:** Using the workload and staffing assessment developed in Recommendation 1, FMD should develop base service levels that reflect the staffing resources assigned to individual tenants.

### **Tenant Satisfaction and Custodial Accountability**

We assessed tenant satisfaction with Custodial Services and found that satisfaction varies by building location, with tenants in the outlying buildings generally reporting a higher level of satisfaction than those working in downtown Seattle buildings. Tenants who were not satisfied with Custodial Services emphasized the need for increased custodial accountability for meeting the requirements of the Service Level Agreement, more

consistent custodial assignments, and improved communication about staffing resources and cleaning schedules. Many tenants emphasized the need for more frequent opportunities to provide feedback to FMD managers.

We also evaluated FMD's methods of supervising and measuring the performance of its custodians. We determined that FMD could improve custodial accountability and performance by increasing the consistency of work assignments, improving employee oversight, developing objective workload expectations, and implementing a meaningful performance evaluation process. FMD managers agreed with the issues we identified, and toward the end of the audit they began to implement a new approach to assigning work areas and supervising teams in the downtown buildings. We are encouraged that FMD is working to improve accountability and the quality of custodial service.

**Recommendation 3:** FMD should improve its communication with tenants and its use of tenant feedback by implementing the following steps:

- a. Increase the frequency of communication with tenants and monitor changes in satisfaction.
- b. In response to consistently reported issues, implement corrective actions and communicate results with tenant representatives.
- c. Provide tenants with regular information about factors, such as staffing levels, that impact custodians' ability to provide the level of service documented in the Service Level Agreements.

**Recommendation 4:** FMD should continue to improve its approach to assigning and supervising custodians working in the downtown Seattle buildings. As changes are implemented, FMD should assess whether improvements are effective and sufficient



by surveying custodians and soliciting regular feedback from tenants.

**Recommendation 5:** FMD should implement a meaningful employee performance evaluation process based on objective productivity measures, workload information, and tenant feedback. FMD should ensure supervisors conduct evaluations consistently and document their reviews.

**Comparison with National and Local Benchmarks**

In the final chapter of our report, we discuss how Custodial Services' costs, staffing levels, and service level compare with benchmarks from building maintenance and management organizations and custodial costs at the King Street Center (the county leases the King Street Center and contracts with a private contractor for custodial services).

We determined that cost of King County's Custodial Services is higher than the local or national average cost of services, and the higher costs are due, in part, to the comparatively higher average salary earned by King County custodians. Further, we determined that Custodial Services' staffing level is below national averages in downtown Seattle buildings and exceeds the national average in outlying buildings. Finally, the base level of service provided by FMD is generally comparable to that provided by peers, although it is lower in the frequency and depth of dusting, vacuuming, and mopping.

Our comparisons underscore the importance of assessing custodial workload and aligning staffing and service levels accordingly. Additionally, although addressing the issue of Custodial Services' costs would require policy decisions and negotiations with the custodians' bargaining unit, the current cost of FMD Custodial Services also emphasizes the importance of

meaningful productivity measures and an effective performance evaluation process for custodial staff.

**Summary of Executive Response**

The County Executive concurred with the audit recommendations. The County Executive's official response, including implementation timelines, is included in the appendices section of this report.

**Acknowledgement**

The Auditor's Office sincerely appreciates the cooperation and assistance received from the management and staff of the Facilities Management Division's Custodial Services group.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## Introduction

At the request of the King County Council, the auditor's office conducted a performance audit of the Custodial Services group within the Facilities Management Division (FMD). This chapter provides background on Custodial Services and describes its responsibilities and service delivery approach. It also summarizes key statistics for Custodial Services and describes recent staffing reductions. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the audit's objectives, scope, and methodology.

## Custodial Services Overview

The Custodial Services group is organizationally situated in the Building Services Section of the Facilities Management Division of the Department of Executive Services. The group provides custodial services to tenants in all county-owned buildings operated by FMD and also to tenants in the Graybar Building, which the county leases.<sup>1</sup> FMD custodians are responsible for providing services to over 2.23 million square feet in 40 buildings, including courthouses, office buildings, public health clinics, an animal shelter, the airport, and transit facilities, among other facilities and buildings. Custodial Services' budget in 2010 was \$7.1 million and included funding for 102.6 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Both Custodial Services' staffing levels and its budget have decreased since 2008 in response to the county's budget reductions, as shown in Exhibit A. From 2008 to 2009, Custodial Services' budget decreased about five percent, while its number of FTEs decreased about nine percent. From 2009 to 2010,

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<sup>1</sup> FMD does not provide services for the leased-to-own space in the King Street Center Building, which is privately managed. A complete list of the buildings maintained by Custodial Services is included in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

Custodial Services' budget was reduced another half of a percent, while the number of FTEs decreased 2.4 percent.

<b>EXHIBIT A</b>					
<b>FMD Custodial Services Budget and Staffing 2008 – 2010</b>					
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>FMD Custodial Services Budget</b>	\$7,489,087	\$7,098,852	- 5.0%	\$7,060,845	- 0.5%
<b>FMD Custodial Services FTE</b>	116.2	105.2	- 9.0%	102.7	- 2.4%

**SOURCE:** Auditor analysis of data from Facilities Management Division (FMD).

### **Custodial Services' Responsibilities**

The details of Custodial Services' responsibilities are specified in Service Level Agreements between FMD and its individual tenants. These agreements establish the baseline standards that custodians must meet in each area of responsibility, such as trash pickup, restroom cleaning and restocking of supplies, vacuuming, dusting, general office cleaning, floor scrubbing and polishing, carpet cleaning, and window washing. The Service Level Agreements specify exactly which tasks custodians must complete and the frequency of completion. For example, Exhibit B shows the 2010 base Service Level Agreement for Office Areas.

<b>EXHIBIT B</b>	
<b>FMD Custodial Services Service Level Agreement for Office Areas</b>	
<b>Five days per week:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empty all waste receptacles and replace liners if soiled, torn, or odor is present.</li> </ul>
<b>Four days per week:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spot dust mop hard surface floors.</li> <li>• Spot vacuum all carpeted areas and remove debris from furniture cushions.</li> <li>• Spot damp mop all hard surface floors that are visibly soiled.</li> <li>• Fill hand soap and hand towel dispensers in kitchen area.</li> <li>• Spot clean doors, walls, and glass.</li> </ul>
<b>Once per week:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace liners in all waste receptacles.</li> <li>• Spot clean doors, walls, glass and light switches.</li> <li>• Dust mop and wet mop all hard surface floors complete.</li> <li>• Power vacuum all carpeted areas. Power edge vacuum in high traffic areas and other areas as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Once per month:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dust vents, office partitions, window sills, and file cabinets.</li> </ul>

**SOURCE:** Facilities Management Division (FMD)

If tenants want services that exceed the base level, they can contract for additional services if they agree to pay for the additional custodial staff required to complete the work or agree to decrease service in another area. Any extended level of service is also documented in the annual Service Level Agreements.

FMD first implemented the Service Level Agreements in 2006, and between 2006 and 2009 the base service level remained fairly constant. In 2009 and 2010, FMD reduced the level of custodial service provided in response to budget and staffing cuts. FMD management explained to us that they developed the reduced base service level by assessing how much work the lower level of staffing could achieve while prioritizing services in common areas (e.g., public restrooms) and focusing reductions in tenant occupied spaces (e.g., individual cubicles and offices).

**Service Delivery Approach – Team and Zone Cleaning**

Custodial Services assigns staff work responsibilities using one of two approaches: team cleaning or zone cleaning. With team cleaning, a group of custodians is assigned to a large area (e.g., multiple floors in a building), and the custodians divide up the tasks and clean the areas together. Some custodians might vacuum while others clean bathrooms, for example. With zone cleaning, a single custodian is assigned to a specific area (e.g., a single floor or a small building), and that custodian is responsible for all tasks in that area. In this approach, an individual custodian both vacuums and cleans bathrooms.

FMD utilizes team cleaning in larger buildings in order to increase custodial accountability and safety and also to allow for flexibility in scheduling (i.e., when a building is cleaned by a large team, managers can move individuals to teams that are temporarily shorthanded). FMD uses zone cleaning in most of the outlying buildings, because many of these buildings are small enough that one or two custodians can clean an entire building. Additionally, many of these smaller buildings are spread throughout the county's suburban cities, and it would be inefficient to schedule a team of custodians to travel between buildings. From our research into custodial service best practices, we determined that both zone and team cleaning are accepted methods of delivering services. Although some tenants reported preferring one method over another, we found that neither service delivery approach by itself had a direct impact on our audit findings.

**Elimination of the Supported Employment Program**

The FMD Building Services' Supported Employment program began in 1990 as an executive initiative to create a supported work environment for individuals with developmental disabilities. In 2009, FMD eliminated its Supported Employment program but

retained the program's eight employees and two supervisors as custodial employees. At the time of our audit, two of the previously supported employees had been integrated into regular Custodial Services crews, and six continued to work a day shift in the downtown buildings. In order to assist these six employees, FMD assigned a single supervisor to oversee and support their daily work and carved out a portion of custodial work to be completed during daytime hours.

### **Audit Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

The audit scope evaluated whether Custodial Services' staffing and supervision practices manage staffing resources efficiently and promote effectiveness, consistency, accountability, and customer satisfaction. The audit objectives were to:

- Evaluate FMD's management of custodial staffing resources and determination of workload.
- Evaluate Custodial Services' costs in comparison with industry standards.
- Evaluate whether oversight and supervision of custodial staff is sufficient to ensure the established service level is met.
- Evaluate customer satisfaction with Custodial Services.

To meet these objectives, the audit team:

- Interviewed FMD managers, the two Building Services' superintendents responsible for Custodial Services, and all seven Custodial Service supervisors.
- Interviewed a total of 41 custodians in groups based on work assignment, including custodians working in downtown Seattle, the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center, and the outlying buildings in the southern region of the county.

- Surveyed 20 FMD tenants about their satisfaction with FMD Custodial Services.
- Surveyed county staff in the King Street Center about their satisfaction with custodial services provided by a private entity.
- Researched benchmarks and analyzed FMD data related to Custodial Services' staffing levels, service level, and cost per square foot.
- Reviewed FMD's process for developing Service Level Agreements and attended two Service Level Agreement negotiations between FMD and tenant representatives.
- Reviewed FMD's process for setting staffing levels and allocating staffing resources.
- Analyzed FMD budget data and documentation related to performance evaluations, custodial productivity, and performance management.

### **Statement of Compliance with Government Auditing Standards**

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

### **Scope of Work Related to Internal Controls**

The audit team evaluated internal controls relevant to the audit objectives. This evaluation focused on the adequacy of management controls such as staff supervision and performance evaluation, measures of employee productivity, and assessments of workload. Our conclusions on the adequacy and effectiveness of these controls are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this report.



# 2 CUSTODIAL SERVICES WORKLOAD AND STAFFING

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## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we discuss our evaluation of Facilities Management Division's (FMD) process for setting the custodial service level and staffing levels in different areas of the county. We found that FMD's current process is limited in that it is not based on analyses of employee productivity and an inventory of custodial tasks by area or building. Instead, staffing levels are based on managers' professional judgment. Additionally, FMD has not developed Service Level Agreements that document the varying level of service provided in different buildings throughout the county. We recommend that FMD conduct an analysis of custodial workload and productivity so that managers can ensure staffing resources are allocated appropriately, predict the impact of budget changes on service levels, and provide tenants and custodians with objective information about staffing and service level decisions. Additionally, we recommend that FMD develop Service Level Agreements that accurately document the services provided to individual tenants.

## Custodial Services Workload and Staffing Analyses

### **FMD Lacks an Effective Approach for Measuring Custodial Workload or Staff Productivity**

Every one to two years, FMD develops the base level of service its custodians will provide to its tenants. FMD's process for setting the service level currently consists of Building Services managers assessing the quantity and frequency of tasks its custodial staff can perform and prioritizing that workload to ensure essential tasks (e.g., trash pickup and cleaning bathrooms) are completed daily. If tenants want a higher level of service, or want to customize services to fit their specific needs, they can either pay FMD for the cost of an additional custodian or

decrease service in one area in order to increase work in another. If a tenant chooses to pay for an additional custodian, FMD must request the budget authority for the added FTE.

FMD's current approach to setting its service level draws on the knowledge of experienced managers, but it does not include an inventory of tasks by area (e.g., square footage of carpeting) or a measure of the time required to conduct each task (e.g., time to vacuum a certain amount of carpeting). Without workload and productivity analyses, FMD managers are limited in their ability to predict the impact of staffing changes and/or budget cuts, ensure the service level is aligned with the staffing level in different buildings, and provide tenants and custodians with objective information about service level decisions.

Implementing an analytical approach to measuring custodial workload and productivity would allow FMD management to make the following improvements:

- **Ability to Predict the Impact of Staffing Changes and Set the Service Level Accordingly** – Tenants in many downtown Seattle buildings reported to us that custodians consistently do not meet the requirements of their Service Level Agreements, and both custodians and supervisors reported that it is a challenge to meet the base service level in particular buildings with the current number of staff. Staffing levels in the downtown buildings were reduced in 2009 and 2010 as a result of budget cuts, and downtown staffing was further strained by the countywide hiring freeze implemented in 2009. With quantitative information about the tasks in each building and the staff time required to perform those tasks, FMD could use objective data to compare the workload in different buildings, predict the impact of staffing reductions, and

appropriately adjust the service level in different areas of the county.

- **Improved Information for Tenants** – Several tenants reported that they would like more information about the kinds of trade-offs they could make to customize custodial services to meet their needs. They want to know what they would have to sacrifice to increase some services, and they also want more information about how FMD determines that an increase in service level would require additional staff. Custodial productivity data would improve the transparency of FMD's process for negotiating service levels with its tenants.
- **Shared Workload Expectations Between Custodians and Management** – In the downtown buildings, both custodians and supervisors expressed concerns about whether the current workload expectations are appropriate. Custodians complained that supervisors do not know how long their work takes, and supervisors have struggled to determine whether workload is too high, custodial productivity is too low, or a mixture of both. An objective measure of the time required to conduct tasks, along with an inventory of those tasks by area, would give FMD supervisors the information they need to develop objective workload and productivity expectations for their staff. (We discuss staff productivity measures more in Chapter 3.)

FMD has a several options for improving its analyses of workload and staffing. One approach is to adapt benchmarks and standards from professional organizations to fit county properties. Organizations such as the Building Owners and Managers Association International and the International Facility Management Association collect information about average

staffing levels and custodial workload by surveying member organizations across the country, and organizations such as the Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association publish general guidelines on cleaning times and staff productivity. Although there are complexities involved in comparing county custodial work with national benchmarks (e.g., some county buildings, such as the King County Courthouse, have use- and age-related traits that make it difficult to compare them with other properties), established benchmarks could provide FMD with a valuable starting point for assessing custodial workload and staff productivity. Alternatively, FMD could independently assess the tasks and challenges specific to each county building and determine appropriate productivity levels for its custodians.

Toward the end of our audit, FMD agreed with the benefits of a more analytical approach to assessing workload, and they began exploring ways to adapt current benchmarks to fit some county properties. They also discussed options for expanding use of their current work order software to assist with the inventory of custodial tasks in each building.

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**RECOMMENDATION 1**

FMD should conduct a formal assessment of Custodial Services' workload that includes an inventory of custodial tasks by building or area and an analysis of staff hours required to complete all tasks.

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**Service Level Agreements Do Not Reflect Varying Staffing Levels Throughout the County**

FMD's current Service Level Agreements do not reflect variations in the actual level of service provided to tenants across the county. As we describe in Chapter 1, in 2009 and 2010, FMD reduced the base level of service described in its Service Level Agreements in response to staffing cuts in those years. However,

**The 2009 and 2010  
Staffing Reductions Did  
Not Impact All Tenants  
Equally**

custodial staffing reductions did not impact all tenants equally, and therefore the current Service Level Agreements do not sufficiently describe FMD's responsibilities to all of its tenants.

Specifically, tenants in the county's outlying buildings did not experience the same reductions in custodial staff or services as tenants in downtown Seattle buildings. Staffing levels vary across the county, in part, because most of the outlying buildings are spread throughout wide geographic areas and there would be inefficiencies in scheduling custodians to travel between buildings. Thus, many outlying buildings are staffed by one or two custodians. For this reason, FMD directed the majority of its 2009 and 2010 Custodial Services' staffing cuts at the teams of custodians working downtown—the large pool of people working in downtown buildings allowed for more flexibility in scheduling. In contrast, cutting staff assigned to the outlying buildings would have left some buildings without any dedicated custodians and would have required custodians to spend part of each shift traveling between buildings.

As a result, staffing levels in the outlying buildings were not significantly reduced by the 2009 and 2010 budget cuts. Tenants in outlying buildings continue to pay for a higher level of staffing—tenant charges for custodial services are based on each tenant's relative staffing level—and continue to receive services consistent with the more broad 2008 Service Level Agreement.

FMD managers explained to us that they developed the 2010 Service Level Agreement around the base level of service provided to downtown tenants, and they recognize that the current agreement does not accurately document FMD's responsibilities to tenants in outlying buildings. In order to ensure Service Level Agreements sufficiently describe FMD's

responsibilities to each tenant, FMD should use the workload and staffing analysis described in Recommendation 1 to develop Service Level Agreements that reflect the varying staffing resources available in individual buildings.

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**RECOMMENDATION 2**

Using the workload and staffing assessment developed in Recommendation 1, FMD should develop base service levels that reflect the staffing resources available in the different areas of the county.

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# 3 TENANT SATISFACTION AND CUSTODIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we discuss our assessment of tenant satisfaction with Custodial Services and our evaluation of Custodial Services' methods of supervising and measuring the performance of its staff. We found that tenant satisfaction varies by building location, with tenants in the outlying buildings generally reporting a higher level of satisfaction than those in downtown Seattle buildings. Tenants who were not satisfied with Custodial Services emphasized the need for increased custodial accountability for meeting the requirements of Service Level Agreements. We evaluated how FMD could improve its management practices to increase custodial accountability and recommend that Custodial Services increase consistency in work assignments, improve communication and employee oversight, develop objective workload expectations, and implement a meaningful performance evaluation process.

## Tenant Satisfaction with Custodial Services

Since FMD has not surveyed its tenants for feedback on Custodial Services since 2006, we conducted a survey in order to assess tenant satisfaction. We spoke with 20 representatives from 14 different county departments or divisions, including eight tenants located in the downtown Seattle area, nine located in outlying buildings throughout the county, and three located in the county's three correctional facilities (the King County Correctional Facility, the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center, and the

Youth Services Center).<sup>2</sup> For the point of comparison, we also spoke with representatives from the two county agencies working in the King Street Center, a lease-to-own building that receives custodial services from a private entity.

**Tenants in Outlying Buildings Reported a Higher Level of Satisfaction Than Tenants in Downtown Buildings**

We found a wide range in tenant satisfaction with Custodial Services. Moreover, we found that tenant satisfaction frequently varied by building location, with tenants in the outlying buildings generally reporting a higher level of satisfaction than tenants in downtown buildings. For example, of the nine outlying tenants surveyed, only one reported being unsatisfied with Custodial Services overall. In contrast, half of the eight downtown tenants surveyed reported being unsatisfied with Custodial Services overall. Additionally, the majority of outlying tenants reported that custodians meet or exceed the requirements of their Service Level Agreements; however, half of the downtown tenants reported that custodians generally do not meet the requirements of the Service Level Agreements. Tenants of the King Street Center, who receive custodial services from a private entity, reported a high level of satisfaction with their custodians and said that services consistently meet expectations.

The downtown tenants who were unsatisfied with Custodial Services consistently emphasized the need for increased custodial accountability in meeting the contracted service level, and they identified the following three areas, in particular, as needing improvement:

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<sup>2</sup> FMD custodians serve 17 county entities in 40 different buildings. We designed our survey to ensure we heard from representatives from each downtown building, each correctional facility, and multiple outlying buildings in different regions of the county. We spoke with two representatives from the same department when that department had operations in more than one location. For example, we spoke with two representatives from Public Health, each working in a different clinic and a different region of the county.



**Downtown Tenants  
Want Greater  
Custodian  
Accountability ...**

**... and More  
Information About  
Staffing Changes and  
Cleaning Schedules**

- **Meeting the Requirements of the Service Level Agreements:** Many downtown tenants reported that custodians in their area do not provide the level of service specified in their Service Level Agreement. Several said that tasks are frequently missed or are not done well.
- **Consistency of Staffing Assignments:** Tenants frequently reported the need for more consistency in custodial assignments. They said that having a regular custodian allows them to build a long-term working relationship and improves accountability and communication. They emphasized that when they have the same custodian every day, they know who to contact with concerns and do not have to regularly explain the location of bathrooms or other details specific to the tenant's area.
- **Communication About Staffing Levels and Cleaning Schedules:** Tenants reported that they want more consistent information about custodial staffing level constraints and fluctuations. They understand that staffing is impacted by budget reductions and leave, and they would like regular updates about staffing adjustments so they can set their expectations accordingly. Additionally, they would like more information about when non-daily services (e.g., vacuuming or dusting) are supposed to occur. With a schedule of services, they can ensure their staff's expectations match custodians' schedules, and they can also plan for services that might require some preparation. For example, tenants reported that they would like to know when carpets are scheduled to be vacuumed so that employees can leave offices unlocked and move items off the floor.

Currently, FMD managers communicate with tenants primarily through the Service Level Agreement process. Tenants can also request quarterly meetings with FMD management, and tenant representatives can call an FMD supervisor or superintendent with a complaint or need for immediate service (e.g., clean up of a spill). However, many of the tenants we surveyed emphasized the need for more frequent opportunities to provide feedback and improved communication with FMD management. More proactive communication with Custodial Services' tenants could provide FMD management with a useful tool for ensuring custodians are accountable for meeting the requirements of the Service Level Agreements, evaluating the impact of staffing or management changes, and ensuring tenant expectations match FMD responsibilities and schedules.

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**RECOMMENDATION 3**

FMD should improve its communication with tenants and its use of tenant feedback by implementing the following steps:

- a. Increase the frequency of communication with tenants and monitor changes in satisfaction.
- b. In response to consistently reported issues, implement corrective actions and communicate results with tenant representatives.
- c. Provide tenants with regular information about factors, such as staffing levels, that impact custodians' ability to provide the level of service documented in the Service Level Agreements.

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**Custodial Services Management Practices**

Tenants who reported being unsatisfied with Custodial Services commented that custodians do not consistently meet the requirements of the Service Level Agreements. We evaluated FMD management practices to determine whether supervision

and oversight of employees is sufficient to ensure custodians meet the contracted service level. We found that Custodial Services could improve staff accountability by improving consistency in work assignments, increasing communication and employee oversight, developing objective workload expectations, and implementing a meaningful performance evaluation process.

#### *Improved Consistency in Staffing Assignments*

FMD supervisors make daily work assignments based on the number of the staff available after accounting for custodians out on leave and the current number of vacancies. As a result, when staffing is low custodians may frequently change teams and work areas. This was the case in the downtown buildings after the 2009 staffing cuts and hiring freeze were implemented, and both tenants and custodians emphasized to us that regular assignment changes have had a negative impact on performance and accountability.

#### **More Consistent Work Assignments Could Improve Custodial Accountability and Performance**

One reason for this is that custodians who are new to an area are not yet familiar with the details of the new assignment. For example, they do not know the location of interior bathrooms, when certain rooms must remain locked, or where to find some supplies. Downtown tenants reported to us that when custodians frequently change assignments, they have to regularly retrain custodial staff on these details. Stabilizing work assignments would reduce this need for retraining and could improve the consistency of performance.

Another issue emphasized by tenants and custodians throughout the county is that custodians who move around a lot cannot build a working relationship with the tenants or develop a sense of ownership for their work area. According to both tenants and custodians, stabilizing work assignments is tied to improved

performance, because custodians are more directly accountable for their area of responsibility.

### *Increased Communication and Oversight*

FMD management has implemented a variety of tools for supervising and supporting custodial staff, including detailed service level agreements, shift schedules, multiple levels of supervision (e.g., team leads, supervisors, and superintendents), and regular walk through and unplanned inspections. Custodians who work in outlying buildings reported to us that they receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisors—their supervisors are clear about expectations, are available when they have a question or need assistance, and conduct regular inspections and catch any tasks that are missed.

### **Downtown Custodians Reported the Need for Improved Communication and Oversight from Supervisors**

However, custodians from each of the downtown buildings consistently reported the need for improved communication and oversight from their supervisors and team leaders. Downtown custodians reported that they sometimes receive different instructions from different supervisors (e.g., whether to clean interior office bathrooms weekly or nightly), and many expressed confusion over how to interpret changes in the service level. They reported that they don't always get their questions answered and that they don't receive enough communication and training from their team lead or supervisor. They also explained that because they work in teams, some staff members do not do their share of the work. Supervisors cannot always tell who is more productive just from a walk through, and so some custodians do the majority of the work while others do less. One of the downtown supervisors acknowledged that fairness can be an issue on the teams and that it is usually worked out among the team members themselves.

FMD managers agreed with many of the issues reported by the tenants and custodians, and toward the end of our audit, they began to develop a new approach to assigning work areas and supervising teams in the downtown buildings. The changes are designed to reduce the frequency with which staffing assignments change and to improve communication and direct oversight. We are encouraged that FMD is working to improve accountability and the quality of service delivered to downtown tenants, and we recommend that they monitor the sufficiency and effectiveness of the new approach in meeting both custodians' and tenants' needs.

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**RECOMMENDATION 4**

FMD should continue to improve its approach to assigning and supervising custodians working in the downtown Seattle buildings. As changes are implemented, FMD should assess whether improvements are effective and sufficient by surveying custodians and soliciting regular feedback from tenants.

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***Objective and Consistent Workload Expectations***

Custodial staffing levels vary throughout the county, as measured by the number of custodians cleaning an equivalent number of square feet, and FMD has not developed an objective measure of workload to determine the appropriate number of staff for a set of custodial tasks. In the absence of such a measure, downtown custodians reported to us that they are understaffed, and supervisors reported that they are unsure whether workload is too high, productivity is too low, or a combination of both. (In contrast, in the outlying areas both custodians and supervisors reported that the service level is manageable with the current staffing level.)

We compared Custodial Services' staffing levels to national standards, and we found that when Custodial Services is fully

**With Formal  
Assessment of  
Workload, FMD Could  
Develop Objective  
Workload Expectations  
and Improve Custodial  
Accountability**

staffed custodians in the downtown buildings are responsible for a higher number of square feet than the national standard.

However, many factors make an exact comparison challenging.

For example, range of services provided, building age, building usage, and building operating hours all impact the workload associated with cleaning a certain number of square feet. By conducting a formal assessment of custodial workload, as recommended in Chapter 1 of this report, FMD could develop objective workload expectations that could be used to improve custodian accountability and ensure tenant service levels are attainable with current staffing levels.

***Custodial Accountability and the Productivity  
Recognition Program***

FMD's existing process for assessing the performance of individual custodians, the Productivity Recognition Program, does not provide management with an objective tool for evaluating staff performance. The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the custodians' union and FMD establishes the Productivity Recognition Program to reward highly productive custodians with a recognition payment of up to \$675 per quarter. The agreement describes the goals of the program as "exceptional quality of work, timely completion of tasks, and satisfied customers," and specifies that the program must involve clear performance standards, clear customer expectations, and an objective measurement system. The intent of the program is to reward custodians who provide a high level of service. However, we found that a number of factors have limited the effectiveness of the program as an objective measure of an employee's performance.

As specified in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, employees are eligible to receive the recognition payment if they exceed performance standards, as measured during a quarterly

inspection. Supervisors conduct the inspections using a checklist on which they rate each custodian's performance of 29 different tasks on a scale of one to five, with one being unacceptable and five being exceptional. In order to qualify for the recognition payments, custodians must attain an average rating of four, which means that the custodian consistently surpassed job standards in all major areas of responsibility. In addition, while completing the inspections, supervisors are supposed to consider the results of customer surveys conducted twice annually and the impact of staffing levels.

### **FMD Lacks an Effective Program for Evaluating Employee Performance**

From our conversations with custodians and supervisors, and our reviews of inspection records, we identified the following gaps in the design or implementation of the program:

- Although a goal of the program is satisfied customers and the results of customer surveys are to be considered when scoring custodians, FMD does not currently conduct formal surveys of its tenants. Additionally, the current evaluation form does not include a method for documenting or considering customer feedback when determining a custodian's score. When we talked with FMD tenants, half of the eight downtown tenants surveyed reported being unsatisfied with Custodial Services.
- Employees earn half of the productivity premium by working a sufficient number of hours during the evaluation period. In other words, half of the premium is earned by being employed, rather than being productive or providing high quality services.
- We reviewed payroll records from five quarters in 2009 and 2010 and found that 100 percent of eligible custodians (i.e., those custodians who worked a sufficient number of hours) received full premiums in four out of five

quarters. In the fifth quarter, one custodian failed to receive the half of the payment that is based on performance. That is, although the program was established to reward exceptional quality of work, almost all custodians receive full payments every quarter.

- The current form weighs all 29 areas of responsibility equally. For example, dusting vending machines is given equal weight as cleaning sinks and toilets. Also, the form does not specify whether supervisors are to spot check areas for each task (e.g., one or two bathrooms on a floor) or should examine all areas for all tasks (e.g., all bathrooms on all floors). From our conversations with both supervisors and custodians, we learned that some supervisors spot check while others try to check everything.
- There are no clear guidelines for using the forms to evaluate custodians who work as a team and do not individually conduct all 29 tasks. Many of the teams split up the work so that one or two people vacuum while others clean the bathrooms, for example. In these instances, the checklist is not an appropriate tool for measuring individual performance or productivity.
- There are no guidelines for considering staffing levels when evaluating performance. The Collective Bargaining Agreement acknowledges that it is appropriate to consider staffing levels when conducting a review; however, the checklist measures only whether individual tasks were completed. This has been an issue in the downtown buildings, where staffing cuts and a hiring freeze meant that teams worked with fewer custodians than planned. Downtown supervisors explained to us that they often have to evaluate effort rather than results when staffing is low; however, there are no guidelines to ensure



supervisors are consistent and fair. Further, past results have been overturned when FMD managers determined that a supervisor did not sufficiently consider staffing levels when scoring performance.

- To achieve a score of four, custodians must consistently surpass job standards. However, the form does not define job standards or what it would mean to exceed them. The only guidance given to supervisors is that a four means that “86% to 95% of the area’s surfaces are cleaned.” Given that the Service Level Agreements describe each task custodians are to complete, it doesn’t seem appropriate that surpassing standards is equivalent to completing 90 percent of the work.
- Finally, one of two downtown supervisors could not provide us with copies of evaluation forms from the past six months and reported basing evaluation results on informal notes taken while walking through the buildings. Moreover, custodians from the downtown buildings reported receiving little constructive feedback from regular inspections and needing more opportunities to discuss evaluation results.

As a result of these issues, the current performance evaluation program is not effective as a measure of individual employee performance. Although it is designed to reward productivity, the checklist is limited to measuring the degree to which particular tasks were completed, without any prioritization of tasks or process for including tenant feedback. The program also is not an effective measure of whether custodians are providing the level of service expected: while almost 100 percent of custodians receive their performance premiums, half of the downtown tenants surveyed reported that the contracted service level is not being consistently provided.

In order to ensure custodians are evaluated consistently and objectively, and to ensure FMD is accountable to its tenants for the contracted level of service, FMD needs to implement an evaluation process that provides managers with an objective tool for assessing employee performance. The tool should be based on the productivity analyses and workload expectations recommended in Chapter 2 and should also include tenant feedback. Finally, FMD should ensure that supervisors implement the tool consistently and document their reviews.

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**RECOMMENDATION 5**

FMD should implement a meaningful Custodial Services employee performance evaluation process based on objective productivity measures, workload information, and tenant feedback. FMD should ensure custodial supervisors conduct evaluations consistently and document their reviews.

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# 4 COMPARISON WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL BENCHMARKS

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## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we discuss our comparisons of Custodial Services' costs, staffing levels, and service level with information from the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) International and the International Facility Management Association (IFMA). BOMA and IFMA are professional organizations that develop performance standards for building management and maintenance by collecting information from member organizations. BOMA maintains information about the average costs of custodial services in different types of buildings and different parts of the country, and IFMA maintains information about average custodial services' costs, staffing levels, and workloads across North America. In addition to comparing Custodial Services' information with data from these two organizations, we also compared Custodial Services' costs and service level with data from county tenants of the King Street Center. The county leases the King Street Center and contracts with a private company for custodial services in the building.

As a result of our comparisons, we found that King County's Custodial Services is more expensive than the local or national average cost of services. One driver of the county's costs is the comparatively higher average salary earned by King County custodians. Further, FMD Custodial Services' staffing level is below national averages in downtown Seattle buildings and exceeds the national average in outlying buildings. Finally, the base level of service provided by FMD is comparable to that provided by peers in some categories, but it is lower in the frequency and depth of dusting, vacuuming, and mopping.

**Custodial Services Costs**

We analyzed FMD's costs for providing custodial services, and we found that the average cost in 2008 was \$3.61 per square foot in the outlying buildings and \$2.90 per square foot in the downtown buildings.<sup>3</sup> Costs are higher per square foot in the outlying buildings because many of these buildings are spread throughout the suburban cities, and FMD schedules one or two dedicated custodians to these buildings in order to avoid inefficiencies associated with travel between multiple locations. As a result, many of the outlying buildings are staffed at a higher level than downtown buildings, as can be seen in Exhibit E.

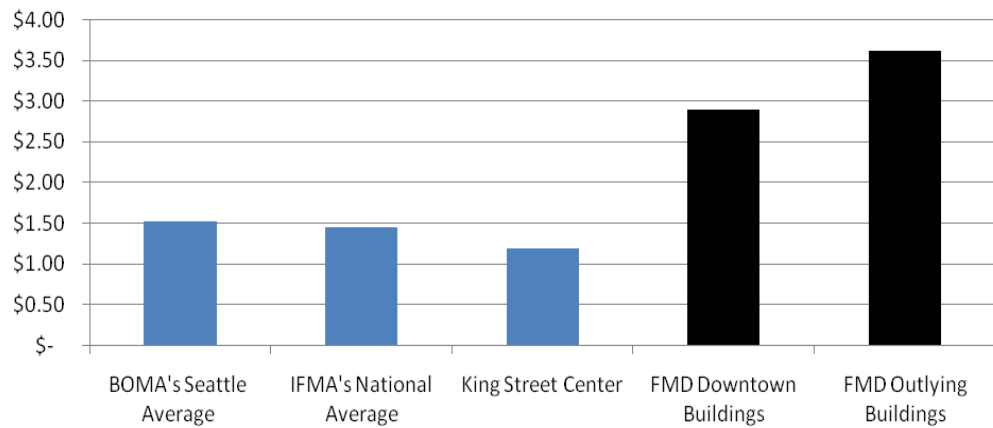
Exhibit C describes the results of our comparison between FMD Custodial Services' costs and BOMA's average costs for Seattle and IFMA's national average costs. As can be seen in the exhibit, FMD's costs are significantly higher than the standard for both county downtown buildings and county outlying buildings. The exhibit also includes our comparison between FMD's costs and the average cost per square foot for custodial services in the King Street Center, a county building which is maintained by a private contractor. FMD's costs are also higher than those of the King Street Center.

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<sup>3</sup> We based our analysis on 2008 costs, because this was the most recent year for which BOMA and IFMA maintain information. In 2008, FMD's Custodial Services' budget was \$7.49 million. By 2010, Custodial Services' budget had been reduced to \$7.06 million. Therefore, FMD's custodial costs in 2010 were about 20 cents per square foot lower than in 2008.

**EXHIBIT C**

**2008 Average Cost of Custodial Service per Square Foot**

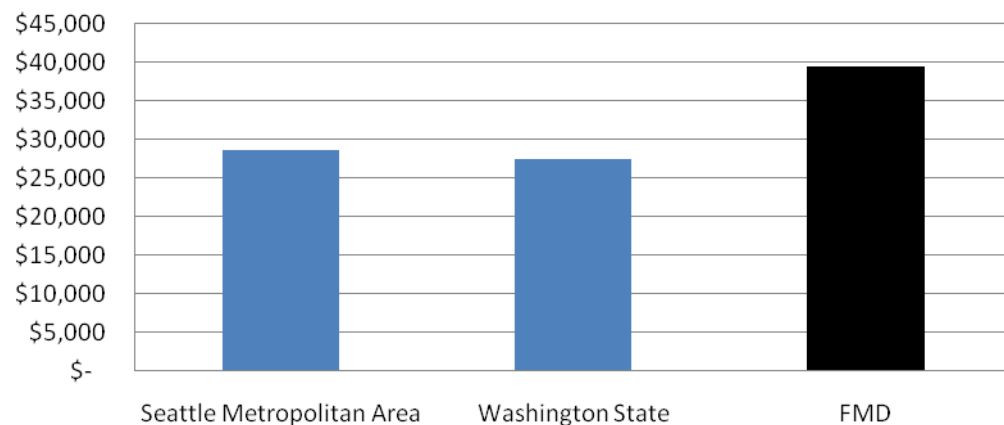


**SOURCE:** Auditor analysis of data from the Facilities Management Division (FMD), Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) International, and the International Facility Management Association (IFMA).

One significant driver of FMD's custodial costs is the salaries set in the labor agreement between King County and FMD custodians' union. As Exhibit D illustrates, custodial salaries for county employees are higher than the average custodial salary in Washington state or the Seattle metropolitan area.

**EXHIBIT D**

**2009 Average Custodial Salary**



**SOURCE:** Data from the Facilities Management Division (FMD) and the Washington State Department of Employment Security.

Other potential explanations for King County's higher costs include:

**Cost of Employee Benefits** – The salary comparison in Exhibit D does not include the cost of benefits, as we did not have information about the average benefit costs for Seattle area or Washington custodians. However, since King County provides its custodians with a full-benefit package, it is likely that the cost of benefits is a driver of the county's higher custodial costs.

**Employee Leave Time** – FMD emphasized to us that many county custodians are long-term employees who accrue sick and vacation leave at a higher rate than custodians in the private sector. The cost of covering for custodians on leave adds to FMD's custodial costs.

#### **Custodial Services Staffing Levels**

We compared Custodial Services' 2010 staffing levels in both downtown and outlying buildings with the current IFMA benchmark for custodial services. We also calculated the 2009 staffing level for the downtown buildings in order to determine the impact of the hiring freeze that was in place at the time. Staffing levels are calculated as the average number of square feet cleaned by each custodian.

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#### **EXHIBIT E**

##### **Average Number of Square Feet Cleaned per Custodian 2009-2010**

IFMA Benchmark	27,000 square feet/FTE
King County Downtown Buildings, 2009	36,500 square feet/FTE
King County Downtown Buildings, 2010	30,000 square feet/FTE
King County Outlying Buildings, 2010	21,300 square feet/FTE

**Note:** The current IFMA benchmark was established in 2008. The benchmark is the median of average staffing levels reported by IFMA survey respondents.

**SOURCE:** Auditor analysis of data from the Facilities Management Division (FMD) and the International Facility Management Association (IFMA).

As Exhibit E shows, while the 2009 hiring freeze was in effect and FMD could not fill vacancies or cover for staff on long-term leave, FMD's staffing level in the downtown buildings fell far below the IFMA standard, with downtown custodians cleaning an average of about 36,500 square feet. With the buildings fully staffed in 2010, the average downtown custodian is responsible for 30,000 square feet, a staffing level that is still below the IFMA benchmark. In the outlying buildings, however, staffing levels exceed IFMA standards, with custodians cleaning an average of 21,300 square feet per FTE.

### **Custodial Services Service Level**

There are challenges in comparing the level of service provided by FMD custodians with that provided in the King Street Center and the IFMA benchmark, including trying to interpret descriptions of services consistently. For example, different entities may use varying criteria to define "spot vacuuming" or how often to perform "as needed" tasks. Additionally, many county buildings, such as the courthouses and public health facilities, have specific characteristics that can make them difficult to compare to more general office space. For example, in the public health facilities, clinic rooms must be disinfected daily, rather than just cleaned.

Therefore, in order to compare service levels, we looked at tasks included in all three service level descriptions, such as emptying trash cans, vacuuming and mopping floors in office and main traffic areas, dusting, cleaning restrooms, and cleaning public areas (e.g., elevators, lobbies, and corridors). We determined that FMD's 2010 base service level provides a comparable level of service in restroom care and cleaning public areas, but it provides a lower level of service than its peers in two key areas:

**Dusting** – FMD custodians dust office partitions, vents, window sills, and file cabinets monthly, rather than the weekly schedule maintained at King Street Center and in the IFMA standards. Additionally, FMD does not provide any dusting of office furniture, computer monitors, chairs, or personal items such as lamps or picture frames.

**Vacuuming, Sweeping, and Mopping** – FMD custodians spot vacuum carpeting or spot mop hard floors four nights per week. They vacuum or mop entire floors only weekly. At the King Street Center and in the IFMA standard, floors are fully vacuumed or mopped nightly.

From our comparisons of services provided, in addition to our review of staffing levels, we determined that FMD custodians provide a lower level of service than their peers in some areas. However, FMD custodians are also responsible for a greater number of square feet than their peers in the downtown buildings.

#### **Conclusion from Comparisons**

Our comparisons of FMD Custodial Services' costs, staffing levels, and service level with local and national averages suggest that King County's costs are comparatively higher, while the staffing level is comparatively lower in many buildings. Further, custodial workload is generally comparable, although in some areas it is lower than its peers. However, we recognize the complexities involved in comparing FMD Custodial Services' information with professional standards and services provided by a private contractor. For example, many county buildings have use- or age-related characteristics that may not match those of the buildings represented by the standards, and many county buildings are relatively small and spread throughout a wide geographic area, making it difficult to achieve economies of scale



by assigning a large team of custodians to clean multiple buildings. Even so, the results of our comparisons emphasize the importance of assessing custodial workload and aligning staffing and service levels accordingly to ensure the contracted service level is attainable and appropriate for the number of staff.

Finally, one significant driver of the relatively high costs of the county's custodians is the salary established in the county's agreement with the custodians' labor group. Addressing the issue of cost would require policy decisions from the King County Council and the County Executive, in addition to negotiations with the custodians' bargaining unit. Nonetheless, the current cost of FMD Custodial Services emphasizes the importance of meaningful productivity measures and an effective performance evaluation process for custodial staff.

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## **APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX 1

### LIST OF BUILDINGS CLEANED BY FMD CUSTODIAL SERVICES, 2011

King County Courthouse  
516 Third Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

King County Administration Bldg.  
500 Fourth Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

Chinook Building  
401 5th Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

Yesler Building  
400 Yesler Way  
Seattle, WA 98104

King County Correctional Facility  
500 Fifth Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center  
401 Fourth Ave. N.  
Kent, WA 98032

Youth Service Center  
1211 E. Alder  
Seattle, WA 98122

Orcas  
707 S Orcas Street  
Seattle, WA 98108

Precinct #2 Kenmore  
Kenmore Gun Range  
18118 - 73rd N.E.  
Bothell, WA 98011

Precinct #3 Hicks/Rayburn  
22300 S.E. 231st St.  
Maple Valley, WA 98038

Precinct #4 Southwest - Burien  
14905 Sixth Ave. S.W.  
Burien, WA 98166

Ravensdale Gun Range  
King County Shooting Sports Park  
26520 – 292nd Ave. S.E.  
Ravensdale, WA 98051

Barclay Dean  
4623 – 7th Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98108

Aukeen Dist. Court  
1210 S. Central  
Kent, WA 98031

Bellevue Dist. Court  
585 – 112th Ave. S.E.  
Bellevue, WA 98009

Issaquah Dist. Court  
5415 – 220th Ave. S.E.  
Issaquah, WA 98029

Northeast Dist. Court  
15920 N.E. 85th St.  
Redmond, WA 98073

Shoreline Dist. Court  
18050 Meridian Ave. N.  
Seattle, WA 98133

Southwest Dist. Court  
601 S.W. 149th St.  
Burien, WA 98166

Auburn Public Health Center  
20 Auburn Ave.  
Auburn, WA 98002

Eastgate Public Health Center  
14350 S.E. Eastgate Way  
Bellevue, WA 98007

Federal Way Public Health Center  
33431 – 13th Pl. S.  
Federal Way, WA 98003

## APPENDIX 1 (continued)

North Dist. Multiservice Center  
K.C. Public Health  
Mental Health North  
10501 Meridian Ave. N.  
Seattle, WA 98133

Northshore Public Health Center  
10808 N.E. 145th St.  
Bothell, WA 98011

Renton Public Health Center  
3001 N.E. Fourth St.  
Renton, WA 98056

White Center Public Health Center  
10821 Eighth Ave. S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98146

Kent Animal Shelter & Warehouse  
21615 – 64th S.  
Kent, WA 98031

Graybar Building  
416 Occidental Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

Black River  
900 Oakesdale Ave. S.W.  
Renton, WA 98055-1219

Regional Communications and Emergency  
Coordination Center (911)  
3511 N.E. 2nd St.  
Renton, WA 98056

Aeronautical Office Center  
9010 E. Marginal Way S.  
Tukwila, WA 98108

Renton Maintenance Facility Complex  
155 Monroe Ave.  
Renton, WA 98056

King County International Airport Complex  
7277 Perimeter Road  
Seattle, WA 98108

West Hill King County Sheriff's Office  
Storefront  
12629 Renton Ave. S.  
Renton, WA 98178

White Center King County Sheriff's Office  
Storefront  
9609 – 16th Ave. S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98112

Lake Dolloff King County Sheriff's Office  
Storefront  
4950 S. 298th St.  
Federal Way, WA 98001

Burien City Hall North  
11846 Des Moines Memorial Drive S.  
Seattle, WA 98168

Goat Hill Garage  
415 6th Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

Renton Dental Clinic  
10700 S.E. 174<sup>th</sup> St.  
Renton, WA 98055

Renton Dist. Court  
3407 N.E. 2nd St.  
Renton, WA 98056

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

**Recommendation 1:** FMD should conduct a formal assessment of Custodial Services' workload that includes an inventory of custodial tasks by building or area and an analysis of staff hours required to complete all tasks.

**Implementation Date:** Inventory of tasks and efforts to be completed by October 2011; implementation of full maintenance management system by May 2013.

**Estimate of Impact:** A formal assessment of workload and productivity would improve the transparency of service level and staffing decisions. It would also improve management's ability to predict the impact of staffing decisions and provide the information necessary for managers to develop objective productivity expectations for custodial staff.

**Recommendation 2:** Using the workload and staffing assessment developed in Recommendation 1, FMD should develop base service levels that reflect the staffing resources available in the different areas of the county.

**Implementation Date:** July 2012

**Estimate of Impact:** By developing service levels that reflect the staffing resources available in different buildings, FMD could ensure its Service Level Agreements accurately document custodial responsibilities to each tenant.

**Recommendation 3:** FMD should improve its communication with tenants and its use of tenant feedback by implementing the following steps:

- a. Increase the frequency of communication with tenants and monitor changes in satisfaction.
- b. In response to consistently reported issues, implement corrective actions and communicate results with tenant representatives.
- c. Provide tenants with regular information about factors, such as staffing levels, that impact custodians' ability to provide the level of service documented in the Service Level Agreements.

**Implementation Date:** a. Improvements to be initiated by June 2011; b. April 2011; c. September 2011.

**Estimate of Impact:** Improving communication with tenants would help FMD ensure custodians are accountable for meeting the requirements of the Service Level Agreements, evaluate the impact of management changes, and better align tenant expectations with FMD responsibilities and schedules.

**Recommendation 4:** FMD should continue to improve its approach to assigning and supervising custodians working in the downtown Seattle buildings. As changes are implemented, FMD should assess whether improvements are effective and sufficient by surveying custodians and soliciting regular feedback from tenants.

**Implementation Date:** Improvements were initiated during the audit.

## **LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (continued)**

**Estimate of Impact:** Improvements to FMD's process for assigning and supervising downtown custodians would improve the consistency of custodial performance and staff accountability for meeting the requirements of the Service Level Agreements.

**Recommendation 5:** FMD should implement a meaningful Custodial Services employee performance evaluation process based on objective productivity measures, workload information, and tenant feedback. FMD should ensure custodial supervisors conduct evaluations consistently and document their reviews.

**Implementation Date:** August 2011

**Estimate of Impact:** Implementation of an effective employee performance evaluation process would ensure custodians are evaluated consistently and objectively and would ensure FMD is accountable to its tenants for the contracted level of service.



## EXECUTIVE RESPONSE



### King County

**Dow Constantine**

King County Executive  
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800  
Seattle, WA 98104-1818

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April 8, 2011

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

RE: Proposed Final Report – FMD Custodial Services Performance Audit

Dear Ms. Broom:

Thank you for your March 25th letter and the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed final report of the Facilities Management Division (FMD) Custodial Services Performance Audit. The audit evaluated whether FMD's Custodial Services staffing and supervision practices manage staffing resources efficiently, and promote effectiveness, consistency, accountability and customer satisfaction.

I am pleased to note that the audit recognizes FMD for recent changes in management of custodial services that improve performance and accountability of staff assigned to the downtown buildings. The audit also notes three primary areas for additional improvement: 1) conducting an assessment of workload and staff productivity that supports the service levels developed for the different buildings; 2) developing a proactive communication model for custodial services management, tenants and staff; and, 3) refining the current staff evaluation process to obtain a more objective tool to assess individual performance.

We concur with the recommendations. Specifically, in response to the recommendations in the audit, we plan to take the following actions:

- Continue efforts to fully implement a robust maintenance management system for FMD by 2013 that includes the establishment of appropriate tasks, performance standards, workload assessment, and an inventory of custodial tasks by building.
- Improve the content of Service Level Agreements to better reflect the base level of janitorial services to be provided in the different types of buildings. Negotiations for next year's service level agreements will begin later this spring.



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and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act*

## EXECUTIVE RESPONSE (continued)

Cheryle A. Broom, County Auditor  
Metropolitan King County Council  
Proposed Final Report –FMD Custodial Services Performance Audit  
April 8, 2011  
Page 2

- Continue the ongoing effort to deploy highly trained janitorial leads to enhance communication with tenants, work towards high quality janitorial services, and confirm the relative performance of individual janitors.
- Improve tenant communications by issuing quarterly newsletters and creating a web-based reporting system giving tenants an avenue to express concerns about services or make recommendations for service level improvements. This should be in place by June 30.
- Improve the design of and quality control over the custodial staff evaluation process before the next evaluation cycle which begins in late summer.

Attachment A identifies the high-level major timelines and actions connected with our response to the recommendations. The FMD Building Services Section has immediately begun work on these recommendations.

I commend you for attempting to draw benchmark comparisons between the County experience and national and local experience, while noting certain factors that distinguish the County from other agencies. I would like to re-emphasize these factors. The FMD has done an extraordinary job of providing janitorial services in light of the multiple hiring freezes in effect over the past several years, the heavy public use of buildings such as the King County Courthouse that are cleaned on a daily basis, the relative age and condition of several of these buildings, and the high levels of backfill necessary to fill in for a long-term workforce accruing a relative high levels of sick and vacation leave. And finally, the report concludes that County custodians earn comparatively higher average salaries, but does not make any recommendations related to wages. I firmly believe that workers from the public and private sectors deserve livable wages and fair pay for credentials they bring to their job. The collective bargaining process is an effective way to control costs in our current economic environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to your report. I appreciate the high level of cooperation and support between the King County Auditor's Office, and FMD management and staff during the audit and look forward to the improvements that are being implemented as a result of this effort.

## EXECUTIVE RESPONSE (continued)

Cheryle A. Broom, County Auditor  
Metropolitan King County Council  
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If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Kathy Brown, FMD Division Director, at 206-296-0631.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: Fred Jarrett, Deputy County Executive, King County Executive Office (KCEO)  
Rhonda Berry, Assistant Deputy County Executive, KCEO  
Natasha Jones, Director of Customer Service, KCEO  
Sung Yang, Director of External Affairs and Governmental Relations, KCEO  
Caroline Whalen, Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services (DES)  
Kathy Brown, Director, Facilities Management Division, DES  
Caroline McShane, Deputy Director, Finance and Business Operations Division, DES

## EXECUTIVE RESPONSE (continued)

Attachment A

Recommendation #	Agency Position	Schedule of Implementation	Comments
<p>1. FMD should conduct a formal assessment of Custodial Services' workload that includes an inventory of custodial tasks by building or area and an analysis of staff hours</p>	<p>Concur</p>	<p>Two year plan –fully implement a maintenance management system</p> <p>1. Inventory of custodial tasks and efforts associated by building –completed by October 2011</p> <p>2. Implement MAXIMO-planning, budgeting, preventative maintenance, inventory and control modules-completed by May 2013.</p>	<p>The existing task structure in ARMS has already been queried and validation of the tasks and workload (including janitorial and other crafts work) associated with tasks is underway.</p>
<p>2. Using the workload and staffing assessment developed in Recommendation 1, FMD should develop base service levels that reflect the staffing resources assigned to individual tenants.</p>	<p>Concur</p>	<p>The schedule of implementation will be affected by any reductions in FMD building inventory (See Comments) and available resources.</p> <p>Estimated completion date is May 2013</p>	<p>The improvement of the Service Level Agreements will need to happen in two phases because the detailed work required by Recommendation 1 will not occur before the current round of negotiations. This next round will break out buildings if we have a different base level of services (suburban vs downtown). These negotiations will take place May through July 2011 for the 2012 service year. The next cycle will incorporate detailed janitorial workload standards. Those negotiations will occur in May through July of 2012 for the 2013 service year.</p>

## EXECUTIVE RESPONSE (continued)

Attachment A

Recommendation #	Agency Position	Schedule of Implementation	Comments
3. a. FMD should increase the frequency of communication with tenants and monitor changes in satisfaction	Concur	Effective June 30, 2011, FMD will begin a new quarterly report and a web based reporting system. FMD has also assigned the lead janitors responsibility for improving communication with tenants.	Under the current model, FMD meets quarterly with tenants to discuss service issues, as requested by the tenants.  The King Street Center model has meetings between the building manager and superintendent and tenants every other week. There are two tenants in King Street. This model is not cost effective for other county buildings with multiple tenants and needs, therefore as an alternative to frequent meetings a web based reporting system, quarterly newsletter, and assignment of communications to custodial leads should facilitate improved communications.
3b. In response to consistently reported issues, implement corrective actions and communicate results with tenant representatives.	Concur	Completed April 2011 The Building Services Manager has already initiated special reporting out of Maximo which will red flag common work orders which need immediate attention and follow-up communication with requesting tenants.	

## EXECUTIVE RESPONSE (continued)

### Attachment A

<p>3c. Provide tenants with regular information about factors, such as staffing levels, that impact custodians' ability to provide the level of service documented in the Service Level Agreements.</p>	<p>Concur</p>	<p>FMD will implement the following: Create and fill the lead janitorial positions-complete. Implement a quarterly service newsletter- to be completed by September 2011.</p>	<p>The Division does employ a formal process of soliciting tenant feedback through SLA negotiations and quarterly meetings to discuss service delivery issues in the context of the applicable SLA. If the level of service actually being provided is of concern, then the agency has a vehicle for addressing this issue. In the past, the FMD expectations were that agencies would communicate the results of these meetings to their various units. This clearly has not taken place. Accordingly, the FMD has created new lead janitorial positions that are responsible for making sure that services are rendered and communicating any service issues to those tenant representatives responsible for the area under janitorial care. Finally, the quarterly newsletter can be used to communicate more serious service delivery issues such as hiring freeze impacts or other disruption of normal levels of service.</p>
		<p>The FMD has created a new level of janitorial lead positions whose duties include scheduling, on-the-job training, and inspecting the quality of cleaning performed by those backfill janitors, communication with tenants about levels of services or any shortcomings in janitorial services for that matter</p>	
		<p>The above cited quarterly newsletter would also be a benefit to implementing this recommendation.</p>	<p>Continuity and consistency have proven an ongoing issue considering the length of service many of the janitorial staff have with the county, the County's sick and vacation accrual and use benefits, the required light duty assignments in cases of injury or temporary reduced physical abilities, the time it takes to fill vacant positions, and the periodic hiring freezes that have been directed over the past few years. The FMD janitorial staff is generally not budgeted at backfill levels creating constant adjustments to workload and assignments to make up for vacancies, particularly for the larger FMD operated buildings. Janitors many times are assigned to new locations and given new tasks as they backfill absent janitors. The lead janitors are responsible for</p>

## EXECUTIVE RESPONSE (continued)

### Attachment A

4. FMD should continue to improve its approach to assigning and supervising custodians working in the downtown Seattle buildings. As changes are implemented, FMD should assess whether improvements are effective and sufficient by surveying custodians and soliciting regular feedback from tenants.
- Concur
- The new janitorial leads will ensure that areas are appropriately cleaned, and make sure that their tenants are aware of any circumstances impacting service levels.
- The use of janitorial leads provide a key strategy in better communicating with tenant agencies and in making sure that janitors are performing their duties as expected.
- Through experience the FMD has found that tenant surveys are hard to administer and not very useful. The concept of satisfaction varies dramatically between respondents. The FMD currently gets much more valuable feedback in the quarterly SLA meetings with tenant management, assessment of incoming work orders, and inspections and assessments being made by janitorial leads. The proposed web based reporting system described above will be a valuable new tool to further assess the effectiveness of services.
5. FMD should implement a meaningful Custodial Services employee performance evaluation process based on objective productivity measures, workload performance, information, and tenant feedback. FMD should ensure custodial supervisors conduct evaluations consistently and document their review.
- Concur
- The 2011 performance evaluations will be based on meaningful documentation supported by inspections. Janitorial leads and superintendants will be appropriately trained to conduct and document these evaluations. This documentation will be subject to a quality control review designed to achieve consistency and fairness.
- This new process will be in place by August 2011.
- The Productivity Recognition Program is one created through the applicable labor agreement and is a program that cannot be changed unless bargained. FMD management uses many other tools to gauge the effectiveness of janitorial services. The referenced program was initiated to give janitors an incentive to show up, work hard, and provide extraordinary services. The FMD Management will continue to strive towards these goals in the context of the labor agreement.