



## Highlights of 2015 Performance

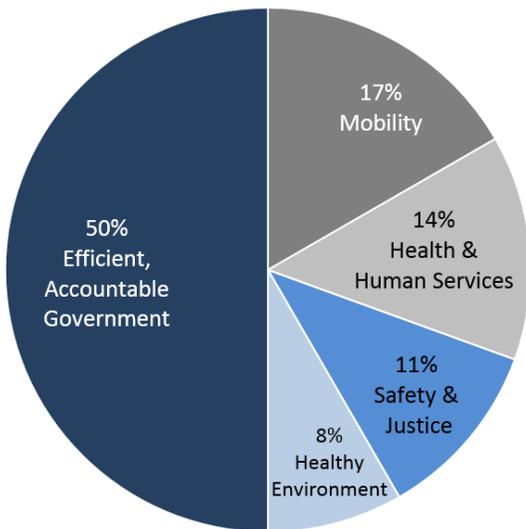
Published January 2016

### Advancing Performance and Accountability in County Government

As each year closes, I spend time reviewing Auditor's Office performance and impact to identify ways to achieve even more in the coming year. As I looked back on 2015, I found some great successes. Over the past four years, our office doubled productivity by upping expectations, reworking processes, and reorganizing teams. We also:

#### Amplified County Strategic Goals

Our 2015 work contributed to county goals, focusing on efficient and accountable government and had significant impact on other goals.



#### Reduced Risk in County Programs

Some of our greatest impact is reducing risk to the county. This year we reduced the risk of:

- paying more than necessary for construction
- capital budget and schedule overruns
- abuse of county fleet and fuel resources
- repeating costly capital and IT mistakes
- abuse of family and medical leave

#### Enhanced Transparency of County Operations

Transparency promotes accountability to policy-makers and the public. This year we enhanced transparency in:

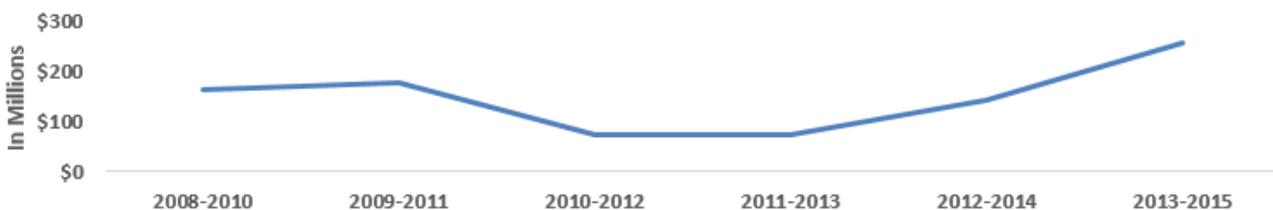
- sheriff internal investigations
- capital project management
- E-911 financial operations
- utility rate setting
- transit capital spending

#### Recognized for Rigorous, High-Impact Work

We received a Knighton Award honoring our audit of the Georgetown Combined Sewer Overflow Project.

#### Identified Millions in Savings

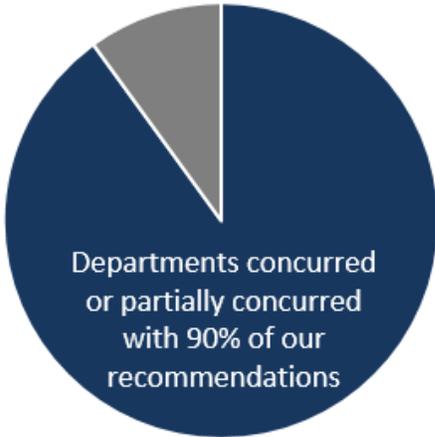
The Auditor's Office has contributed to saving millions of dollars for county residents. Over the past three years, we identified almost \$128 million in one-time impacts, \$12.3 million in annual ongoing savings, and a further \$181.6 million in potential savings that we will reassess as recommendations are implemented.



I greatly appreciate the King County Council's enduring support of this high-impact program, the executive branch's openness to working together for change, and the staff of the King County Auditor's Office for their willingness to go the extra mile for results.

**SOLID CONCURRENCE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Although auditee concurrence with our recommendations is not a primary goal, a high concurrence rate signals that we have set the stage for implementation of our recommendations.



Departments implemented or are in the process of implementing most of the 50 recommendations we followed up on this year.



**HIGHLIGHTS OF HIGH-IMPACT PROJECTS**

**Law Enforcement Oversight: Limited Independence, Authority & Access to Information Impede Effectiveness**

Our office evaluated the effectiveness of a key police oversight function in order to address concerns from decisions-makers and the public. In response to our recommendations, the King County Council put before voters a charter amendment to give the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight greater independence, authority, and access to information. The amendment was approved by voters in the November 2015 election. With the passage of the charter amendment, the audit has already brought about progress toward a more effective and credible police oversight function.

**King County Courthouse: Costly Revitalization Might Not Meet County Needs**

Several mechanical systems in the King County Courthouse are old and failing, which means the County faces a critical decision about whether to replace these systems or to pursue an alternative that might better meet its needs. At the time of our audit, the Courthouse Revitalization Project proposed by the Facilities Management Division would have repaired aging mechanical systems and made other priority improvements, committing the county to one option without first thoroughly analyzing possible alternatives. As a result of the audit, county agencies have taken a step back to strategize before committing over \$100 million to a building that may not serve the needs of resident agencies or the public. Implementation of the audit recommendations could also have broader impacts on county real estate decisions as the County will have more information about the future needs of its downtown campus.

**Transfer Plan Report Outlines Viable and Cost-Effective Alternatives to Building a Northeast Transfer Station**

The County plans to close the Houghton transfer station, which will increase demand on other stations. A consultant hired by the Solid Waste Division concluded that it is not necessary to build a new Northeast transfer station, since demand management strategies could keep existing stations operating within standards. Our review found that this conclusion was reasonable, especially since our analysis shows the consultant used worst-case scenarios when estimating the impact to other stations. As a result of our review, decision-makers now have an objective validation of the consultant's work. In addition, implementation of our recommendations could reduce the costs of demand management strategies.

**CAPITAL PROJECT OVERSIGHT SUCCESSES**

In 2015, the Capital Project Oversight program monitored four major capital projects and led three key efforts to improve capital programs across the county. Two vital outcomes of our efforts included helping to avoid unnecessary project delays on the Children and Family Justice Center and prompting the Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network project to reduce the risk of higher costs.

## **2015 PUBLICATIONS**

This year we published 27 reports and one white paper. Our productivity has doubled over the past four years.

### **PERFORMANCE AUDITS**

- Opportunities to Improve Family and Medical Leave Administration
- Light Duty Fleet: Costs and Emissions Could Be Reduced
- In-River Projects: More Systematic Focus Needed on Risk & Lessons Learned
- King County 911 System: Governance Structure and Plan Needed to Move Forward
- Law Enforcement Oversight: Limited Independence, Authority & Access to Information Impede Effectiveness
- Small Construction Contracts: Opportunities to Save Money & Reduce Risks
- Transfer Plan Report Outlines Viable and Cost-Effective Alternatives to Building a Northeast Transfer Station
- King County Courthouse: Costly Revitalization Might Not Meet County Needs
- Utility Rates: Long-Term Forecasts Should Reflect Uncertainty
- Transit Asset Management: Improvements Needed to Meet Workload
- EMS: 2014 Finances Managed According to Plan, Opportunities to Improve Efficiency

### **CAPITAL PROJECTS OVERSIGHT**

- Children and Family Justice Center Project Design-Build Contract Needs Council Approval
- Improvements Made but Capital Project Data Issues Persist
- Factoria Recycling and Transfer Station Project Is Currently on Track
- Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network: Project Schedule & Cost Risk

### **FOLLOW-UP ON COMPLETED PROJECTS**

- Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network
- Emergency Medical Services Levy 1
- KCAO and APTA Recommendations of Transit
- Environmental Health Services
- Strategic Climate Action Plan
- Brightwater Close Out
- Part-Time Employment
- Emergency Medical Services Levy 2
- Office of Risk Management
- Data Center Relocation Project
- Ninth and Jefferson Building Project

### **WHITE PAPER**

- Cost Analysis: Best Practices for Comparing Alternatives