



**Metropolitan King County Council
Law, Justice, Health and Human Services Committee**

STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM:	7	DATE:	March 10, 2009
BRIEFING	2009-B0061	PREPARED BY:	Clifton Curry

SUBJECT: Briefing on the Status of the King County Security Oversight Panel and Actions to Improve County Facility Security.

SUMMARY: In late 2007, the council adopted Ordinance 16003. This Ordinance created a security oversight panel for the county's various facilities. In addition, the ordinance established an oversight group to develop security policies for county-owned buildings and/or agencies and establish security protocols. The council also added resources to the 2007 CIP Budget for the improvement of security and for an evaluation of countywide security needs.

Since then, the county has taken several strides in improving physical security in county buildings, has plans to reorganize some security staff, and is awaiting the completion of the first phase of a consultant review of county security practices and plans.

In the 2008 and into 2009, the county has been implementing a series of physical plant improvements to the County Courthouse. These improvements have included new keycard access at many locations in the courthouse, the addition of various improvements to the security checkpoints for the courthouse, and new signage. The security oversight committee is continuing its review of proposed projects and establishing priorities for those projects. Nevertheless, it currently appears that several will not be completed because of resource limitations.

In addition, the committee has been working with all county agencies to establish a web-based incident reporting and tracking system. This system is currently entering its test stage and will soon be available to county agencies for tracking incidents and can be used as a database for management information for analyzing risk, and areas for improvement.

The county has also procured the services of a security consulting firm for the completion of a two-phase review effort. The first phase report is near completion and will be presented to the Law, Justice, Health, and Human Services Committee at the committee's April 14th meeting. This report will describe the status of current security at county facilities and recommendations for improvement. In the second phase, the consultant will develop "security templates" to be used in county buildings and for the planning of new facilities.

In establishing Ordinance 16003, the council found that the current structure for providing security services, especially at its courthouses, is organizationally inefficient. In the county's courthouses, both the King County Sheriff's Office and the Facilities Management Division (FMD) have responsibilities for securing entrances and screening people for weapons. During daytime hours, limited commission sheriff's marshals provide armed security for the Superior Court's facilities and full commission deputies provide security at District Court facilities, while weapons screening is done by civilian employees of the Facilities Management Division. Recognizing that these functions should be managed by a single organization, county staff have been working with the respective bargaining units to evaluate whether the weapons screeners can be moved to the sheriff's office. The preliminary review appears to be that the shift can be accomplished without the need for negotiating with the bargaining units. The reorganization, however, will require legislation. Nevertheless, the reorganization will also require a review to determine whether there are sufficient resources being transferred to fully accomplish the reorganization.

BACKGROUND: A variety of agencies are responsible for providing security for county buildings. Security for the county's court facilities is provided by the Sheriff's Office, the Facilities Management Division, the Seattle Police Department, Harborview Public Safety, and the Kent Police Department. The sheriff's office, under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Superior Court, is responsible for ensuring that no weapons enter the courthouse public entrances from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm (all other responses in the building are beyond the original agreement's scope). The court requires sheriff staff for the Seattle County Courthouse, Youth Services Center, and Harborview Involuntary Treatment Court, the Maleng Regional Justice, and all of the District Court's locations throughout the county. The sheriff uses "limited commission" staff for this function. While these staff are armed, they do not have arrest powers outside of the confines of the building (security at District Court facilities in Bellevue, Burien, Issaquah, Kent, Redmond, and Shoreline are provided by commissioned deputies). At the Seattle Courthouse and Youth Services Center, Seattle Police respond to calls for assistance, to take reports of crime, and apprehend perpetrators. The Kent Police Department provides the same services at the Maleng Regional Justice Center. The Facilities Management Division provides staff that act as weapons screeners under the supervision of sheriff's staff. In addition, the division provides security assistants to monitor the building security at all times (including monitoring security cameras and supporting the 6-500 emergency line). Finally, armed correctional officers are responsible for inmates throughout the county's court buildings. The use of FMD security staff is the extent of security in all other county-owned office buildings in the downtown Seattle campus and throughout the county. Leased county space often has a landlord provided private security staff.

In 2006, and 2007, representatives of the Superior Court, prosecutor, and the Office of the Public Defender reported serious security related incidents. In testimony before the Law, Justice and Human Services Committee, members heard that there are significant strains on the sheriff's court security detail to address calls for security, that judges and prosecutors have been subject to serious threats, and that there are significant drawbacks to county's current system for providing security. In 2007, the US Marshals Service's review the security of the downtown courthouse and noted several areas for improvement.

The Executive's 2008 Proposed CIP Budget (under General Government CIP Project 359828) had a proposal for a Security Master Plan and allocates \$507,381 to the project to establish security requirements for all county facilities. However, Ordinance 15964, adopted November 13, 2007, added these resources to the 2007 Third Quarter Supplemental request for the 2007 Budget. The change allowed for "Courthouse Security Upgrades" up to \$200,000 for the purpose of implementing security upgrades to the King County Courthouse. In addition, the remaining funds were allocated for a security study of all of the other county facilities. The completion of the Security Master Plan is the responsibility of the Facilities Management Division.

Ordinance 16007. In December 2007, the council adopted Ordinance 16007, which created a security oversight panel consisting of the following members:

1. The Executive
2. The director of the Facilities Management Division
3. The director of the Office of Management and Budget
4. The director of the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health
5. The county's risk manager
6. The chair of the County Council and the chair of the Law, Justice and Human Services Committee
7. The Sheriff
8. The Prosecuting Attorney
9. The Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
10. The Presiding Judge of the District Court
11. The Assessor
12. The director of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention

This panel has been setting security policies for county-owned facilities and reviewing the allocation of CIP Program resources for the improvement of courthouse security. The panel has also been working on defining protocols for the sharing of security information, such as incidents, threats and similar occurrences and establishing protocols for reporting and dealing with threats against employees. The panel will also be reviewing how best to measure security performance. Finally, the panel is reviewing options for establishing the appropriate agency to be responsible for all county facility security. This agency would be responsible for security coordination and information sharing.

The panel meets monthly and will continue throughout the completion of the countywide security master plan review.