



March 26, 2021

Kymber Waltnunson, King County Auditor
COURTHOUSE, Room 1033
Seattle, WA 98104
KCAO@kingcounty.gov

Dear Ms. Waltnunson,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed final report “Adult Jails Need Risk-Based Approach to Improve Safety, Equity.” I appreciate the efforts of your office to help ensure the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) continues the progress it has been making to ensure the safety and equitable treatment for its staff and some of the most vulnerable King County residents; those in our detention facilities.

We concur with many of the audit recommendations and will be working to determine priorities and form a work plan. For example, there are numerous suggestions for additional officer trainings which are desirable. The department will determine how best to prioritize those training needs along with other educational priorities. The Executive Office will work closely with DAJD to develop a timeline and associated budget requests to support this important work.

One of our priorities is to reduce the need for secure detention, and instead, to utilize other interventions. Towards this goal, the Executive is committed to working with other criminal-legal system and community partners to maintain the average daily population at or below COVID-19 levels. To achieve this important goal and to increase the safety, security and equity within the adult detention facilities, we will need the support and continued cooperation of separately elected criminal justice leaders, law enforcement partners, and other community organizations serving residents of the county. We look forward to working closely with these organizations and county leadership to work towards these goals.

We appreciate that we have a shared outcome – keeping our residents and employees safe and creating a racially just system of public safety – even in the areas where we disagree with some specific recommendations or methodologies. We look forward to working with you on a further evaluation of the data analysis methodologies to ensure accurate and actionable conclusions. Thank you again for your work on behalf of King County. If you have any questions regarding our audit response, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. J. B.", written over a horizontal line.

Deputy Chief Operating Officer