



City of Seattle

Seattle Police Department

March 18, 2016

Mayor Edward Murray
PO Box 94749
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

Dear Mayor Murray:

I am pleased to present the results of the Seattle Police Department's work with Berkshire Advisors on staffing level assessments. This collaboration, which started in March 2015, is not limited to the results presented in the report, which are essentially a snapshot of conditions in June, 2015. Instead, the work with Berkshire has demonstrated that we need to develop an operational staffing model to inform how many officers we need, where they should be most effectively deployed, and how we should define operational priorities. This effort, already underway, evolved as we studied and considered the snapshot results and recognized that we needed a dynamic, on-going model, not just a static picture of a single point in time. The City is growing rapidly, calls for service are increasing, and community expectations are expanding. Seattle wants excellent and fast first responders; high police visibility, strong community outreach and collaboration; effective investigations of *all* crimes, personal or property; respectful and fair crowd management practices that balance free expression and public safety; and a strong and transparent accountability system that ensures impartial, constitutional policing.

Your original commitment to 100 officers enabled the department to begin hiring and training necessary officers to bring the department back to historic levels from the low-point in 2013. Your additional commitment to another 100 officers by 2019 – which matches the Berkshire recommendations – ensures that SPD can continue hiring at record pace.

Overall, Berkshire's staffing recommendations are driven by two key service level goals: (i) priority 1 calls should be responded to in 7 minutes 90%¹ of the time on an hourly basis; and (ii) equal resources should be dedicated to reactive and proactive functions. While these are good starting points to analyze department resources, I believe that more comprehensive measures—including clearance rates, crime trends, and more granular sector and beat response times—should also be considered.

Berkshire provided two patrol staffing scenarios for consideration. Scenario A assumes a mix of sworn and civilian call response on demand, scheduled and via phone. Scenario B assumes sworn officers respond to all calls on demand except those handled by telephone.

- Scenario A calls for the addition of 143.0 full-time equivalents (FTE) and 210,000 hours of overtime; while
- Scenario B calls for the addition of 175.0 full-time equivalents and 220,000 hours of overtime.

¹ This measures a subset of total calls and should not be viewed as real-world response time.

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It is important to note that Berkshire's analysis is based on SPD's June 2015 staffing levels. Since then, SPD staffing levels have increased and we are well on our way to meeting the goal of adding 100 officers by 2017.

Given this, in order to reach the funded FTE levels prescribed in Berkshire's report, SPD would need to hire an additional 61 to 93 full-time equivalent officers above the original 2014 hiring plan. Some additional supervisors are necessary to accommodate the new staff. Therefore, the new commitment to hire 200 net new officers by 2019 should allow the City to match the prescribed staffing, including additional supervisory staff recommended by the Berkshire study.

Berkshire also recommends an overtime allocation of approximately 220,000 hours for 911 response; Berkshire describes overtime in terms of "overtime FTEs". Additional analysis is needed to determine what the department's capacity for overtime is and what of Berkshire's recommended overtime allocation is included in the existing overtime budget. We are also working with our city partners to find good solutions to improve response times by identifying administrative workstations for officers outside the precincts, investing in new and better technology to reduce report-writing times, and implementing new operational and deployment efficiencies to make more effective use of the officers we have.

There have been some media reports that Berkshire recommended the addition of 350 officers, which is inaccurate. The confusion is based on early drafts of the report where Berkshire recommended adding 65 *vacant* positions to ensure seamless hiring. These were never meant to be additional officers, but merely placeholders. After further discussion with Berkshire, they recognized that these placeholders are not necessary under our current hiring system (we typically hire in advance of attrition) and therefore they were removed. Therefore, the reported 350 number (actually 343) from an earlier draft of the Berkshire report was based on the following: 171.5 actual officers, 107 overtime FTEs, and 65.2 vacant positions. At no time did Berkshire recommend hiring 343 officers.

In continued partnership with Berkshire, we are developing a dynamic model that will allow us to adjust hiring needs based on current data and strategize deployment based on what is happening in Seattle. I caution that the numbers in the report will evolve as we continue hiring at a fast pace through 2019. While there are always strategies to hire more quickly, the hiring pace before us is aggressive.

Attached is a detailed summary of the report for your convenience, as well as the full report. Again, thank you for your continuing support of the Seattle Police Department.

Sincerely,



Kathleen O'Toole
Chief of Police

Mayor Murray
March 18, 2016

cc: Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
Councilmember Tim Burgess
Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez
Councilmember Lisa Herbold
Councilmember Rob Johnson
Councilmember Debora Juarez
Councilmember Mike O'Brien
Councilmember Kshama Sawant

Summary of Berkshire Advisor's Sworn Staffing Study

Background

Berkshire Advisors was selected by SPD to conduct a study of the department. The study had three main objectives:

- 1) To evaluate the size of the police patrol force;
- 2) To determine the appropriate balance and division of responsibilities between patrol and non-patrol functions; and
- 3) To evaluate the staffing levels used to support special events.

Assumptions

The analysis is informed by several key assumptions:

- SPD will aim to respond to Priority 1 calls within 7 minutes, 90% of the time on an hourly basis; and
- SPD should devote equal effort to addressing proactive and responsive needs (50% responsive time and 50% proactive efforts); and
- SPD will maintain the current shift schedules (three nine-hour shifts).

Methodology

The study incorporates a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess SPD's staffing including interviews, activity surveys, data collection for eleven comparable police departments, and analysis of data provided by SPD.

The analysis has three main components: 1) response to calls for service, 2) other specialized units and 3) proactive time.

- 1) **911 Response:** Berkshire estimated the number of officers needed each hour in each precinct in order to meet response time goals for Priority 1 and 2 calls.² Berkshire recommends that SPD staff to the peak hour within each shift. Berkshire conducted analyses of queuing, travel time, workload and productivity to arrive at recommendations for the number of officers and overtime hours needed in each precinct to meet the 911 response targets set forth in the study.
- 2) The following response goals were used for Priority 1 and 2 calls:
 - The priority 1 response time goal is to respond to 90% of Priority 1 calls in each hour within seven minutes, as compared to the current goal of an average of 7 minutes.
 - The priority 2 response time goal is to respond to 90% of Priority 2 calls in each hour within fifteen minutes, as compared to the current goal of an average of 16 minutes.

² The analysis assumed no changes in shift structures to meet variations in demand.

- 3) Other functions: Berkshire looked at staffing levels for other areas of the department some of which require highly specialized training, but respond infrequently to incidents. At SPD's direction, Berkshire reviewed arson/bomb, SWAT, canine, mounted, harbor, Force Investigation Team, crime scene investigation, photo enforcement, training, Audit and the Real-Time Crime Center. For these units, Berkshire considered the frequency and timing of calls for these units, how staff time is spent, costs associated with the function, need for expertise and training.
- 4) Proactive time: Berkshire applied a general rule that the department should devote equal time to responsive activities (50%) and to proactive activities (50%). SPD estimates that the department currently spends 60% of its time on responsive activities and 40% on proactive work.

Results

Berkshire presents two staffing scenarios for responding to calls for services:

Scenario A assumes that responses to some low priority calls for service can be scheduled rather than queued up for response as soon as possible, and that civilians can respond to some calls.

Scenario B assumes that no responses are scheduled, and that sworn officers respond to all calls either in person or by telephone.

Table 1 shows Berkshire's staffing recommendations for sworn patrol staffing under Scenarios A and B; Berkshire recommends changes to FTEs (full-time equivalent) staff and overtime hours presented as "overtime FTEs." It is worth noting that overtime can provide a cost-effective way to enhance officer deployment during periods of peak demand.³ Berkshire recommends SPD dedicate 50% of its resources to proactive functions; "proactive patrol," shown in Table 1 is one key element of SPD's proactive work. Proactive patrol officers are those whose primary duty is not responding to 911 calls but actively work to reduce crime and improve quality of life issues, examples include bike squads, anti-crime teams and emphasis patrols.

In addition to recommending changes to staffing levels for patrol, Berkshire recommended changes to staffing levels for specialized units. The staffing recommendations for specialized units are the same for Scenarios A and B. Table 1 includes a summary of recommendations for specialized units, additional detail can be found in Appendix A.

³ Berkshire's analysis includes the concept of an "overtime full-time equivalent (FTE)." Berkshire performed a break-even analysis to determine at what point new officers should be hired versus when SPD should use existing resources on overtime to provide the coverage necessary to meet the call response standards. Officers on overtime are paid 1.5x their standard hourly wage, but hiring additional officers is associated with other costs beyond base salary, including health benefits, pension, vacation and equipment. The Berkshire break-even analysis considered such costs. Berkshire then calculated an "overtime FTE" assuming 1.0 overtime FTE is equivalent to approximately 2,080 hours of overtime each year. Table 1 shows the hours of overtime (also shown as overtime FTEs) Berkshire recommends be funded in order to meet the response targets set forth in the study

Table 1. Staffing Recommendations under Scenarios A & B.

Scenario A. A range of approaches to handling calls including sworn and civilian response both on-call, scheduled and via phone.				
Unit/Function	Current Staffing ^(a)	Recommended FTEs	Addition/ (Reduction) in FTEs	Recommended overtime FTEs (approximate hours) ^(b)
Patrol (call response) ^(c)	482.0	429.0	(53.0)	97.4 (~203,000 hrs)
Patrol (proactive)	108.0	256.0	147.5	0.2 (~416 hrs)
Specialized units ^(d)	154.0	202.0	48.0	3.74 (~7,800 hrs)
Scenario A sworn total	744.0	887.0	143.0	101.3 (~211,216 hrs)
Scenario B. Sworn officers respond to all calls on-demand except calls handled by telephone.				
Patrol (call response)	482.0	461.0	(21.0)	103.2 (~215,000 hrs)
Patrol (proactive)	108.0	256.0	148.0	0.2 (~416 hrs)
Specialized unit ^(d)	154.0	202.0	48.0	3.74 (~7,800 hrs)
Scenario B Sworn total	744.0	919.0	175.0	107.1 (~223,216 hrs)
a. Current staffing as of June 2015 b. One overtime FTE equates to 2080 hours of overtime. c. Scenario A calls for an additional 9.0 FTE civilians with an additional 3.8 overtime FTEs to support call response. d. See Appendix A for additional detail on specialized units staffing.				

As shown in Table 1, in both scenarios Berkshire recommends a reduction of FTE's in patrol (call response) from June 2015 levels and a significant increase in the amount of overtime hours to be dedicated to responding to 911 calls (~200,000 hours); combined, Berkshire's recommendation is for additional resources to respond to 911 calls to meet the response targets outlined in the report. SPD continues to analyze call response data to gain a better understanding of the balance between full-time employees and overtime hours for call response. The department will evaluate Berkshire's recommendation in the context of assessing how much overtime it can prudently expect of individual officers and what other department functions require overtime to be efficiently staffed.

Berkshire's analysis is based on 2014 data and staffing levels from mid-2015. While the report provides a solid foundation for thinking about SPD staffing, it represents only one snapshot in time. SPD is currently working to take the foundations included in the staffing study and develop a dynamic internal management tool for staffing levels that would allow the department to adjust inputs such as call volumes, staffing levels or technology changes as we move forward.

In addition to the recommendations shown in Table 1, Berkshire's first draft of the report noted that vacancies in 911 response can impact service levels. The report notes that it takes SPD approximately 16 months to fill a vacant position. Berkshire originally indicated that SPD should hire additional officers to serve as a "vacancy pool" or additional officers that are available to offset vacancies. However, this initial conclusion was based on a misunderstanding of how SPD conducts recruitment. SPD works diligently to try and predict and plan for attrition on a monthly basis so we avoid long lag times between when positions are vacated and replacements are hired. Therefore, SPD does not require a "vacancy pool" to maintain staffing levels.

Opportunities for Civilianization

Berkshire did not provide specific recommendations for civilianization but did suggest that a number of existing functions could be assigned to civilian employees including cybercrime support, real-time crime center, Office of Professional Accountability intake and investigations, special events planning, and Audit Policy and Research curriculum writing. Berkshire also suggested areas where SPD could deploy a mix of sworn and civilian staff such as public information officers, crime analysis, training instruction and policy development.

SPD needs to further evaluate these recommendations and consider the labor implications of each before moving forward.

Staffing for Special Events

The study reviewed SPD's incident action plans from January 2014 to April 2015. The study concludes that with the exception of specialized units such as SWAT, mounted, canine, and traffic the department should use overtime to support special events.

Benchmark Comparison

Berkshire researched police staffing for eleven cities they deemed comparable to Seattle. The benchmark cities were Portland, OR, Aurora, CO, Omaha, NE, Denver, CO, Mesa, AZ, Atlanta, GA, Long Beach, CA, Raleigh, NC, Fresno, CA, and Wichita, KS. Benchmark information was used by Berkshire as context for the study rather than the basis for making specific recommendations.

Conclusion

Following the approach described above, Berkshire recommends the following changes to SPD staffing under their two scenarios:

- Scenario A calls the addition of 143.0 full-time equivalents and approximately 210,000 hours of overtime (101.0 overtime FTEs) ; while
- Scenario B calls for the addition of 175.0 full-time equivalents and approximately 220,000 hours of overtime (107.1 overtime FTEs)

The key service level goals underlying these staff figures are: (i) Priority 1 calls should be responded to in 7 minutes 90% of the time; and (ii) equal resources should be dedicated to reactive and proactive functions.

Berkshire's analysis is based on SPD's June 2015 staffing levels, a little over a year into Mayor's initial goal of hiring 100 net new officers by the end of 2017. At that time, the City had hired 18 of the 100 planned hires. Thus, without any further changes in planned staffing, the original commitment would have added an additional 82 officers by end of 2017. Therefore, in order to reach the funded FTE levels prescribed in Berkshire's report, SPD would need to hire an additional 61 to 93 full-time equivalent officers; some additional supervisors are likely necessary to accommodate the new staff.

Appendix A Specialty Unit Sworn Staffing Recommendations

Unit/Function	Current Staffing	Recommended FTEs	Addition/(Reduction) in FTEs	Recommended Overtime hours (shown as FTEs) ^(b)
Arson/bomb	6.0	2.0	(4.0)	0.0
Auto theft	4.0	11.0	7.0	0.0
Burglary/theft	20.0	34.0	14.0	0.0
Canine	11.0	12.0	1.0	0.0
Crime scene	6.0	4.0	(2.0)	0.14
Gang intelligence	1.0	2.0	1.0	0.0
Gang squads	12.0	16.0	4.0	0.0
Harbor	16.0	12.0	(4.0)	0.0
Homicide/assault	16.0	18.0	2.0	0.0
Human trafficking	1.0	2.0	1.0	0.0
Internet crimes against children	7.0	10.0	3.0	0.0
Major crimes task force	6.0	7.0	1.0	0.0
Real-time crime center ^b	3.0	15.0	12.0	0.0
Robbery	8.0	10.0	2.0	0.0
Street vice	5.0	6.0	1.0	0.0
SWAT	21.0	24.0	3.0	0.0
Telephone response	6.0	9.0	3.0	3.6
Vice	3.0	4.0	1.0	0.0
W. Precinct DOC assistance	2.0	4.0	2.0	0.0
Total specialty units	154.0	202.0	48.0	3.74
<p>a. Current staffing as of June 2015 b. Only includes units/functions where changes in staffing are recommended c. Some of these positions may be civilians d. One overtime FTE equates to 2080 hours of overtime.</p>				