

May 28, 2009

Pre-Audit Planning Study

Sheriff Workload and Staffing

Report to the Performance Audit Committee

by

William Vetter, Research Analyst

Chris Webster, Consultant



Performance Audits

955 Tacoma Avenue South, Suite 302A
Tacoma, WA 98402
Telephone (253) 798-4927 Fax (253) 798-4906

May 26, 2009

To: Performance Audit Committee

From: Matt Temmel, Performance Audit Coordinator 

Re: Pre-Audit Planning Study of Sheriff Workload and Staffing

We are pleased to present this pre-audit analysis of Sheriff's Department workload and staffing issues by staff member Bill Vetter and consultant Chris Webster. The report addresses two topics:

- Workload analysis since 2004, including the staffing level in relation to crime rates, calls for service, and response times.
- Comparisons with other jurisdictions as of 2008 and 2009 in terms of staffing level and crime rates.

Some material in the report is new, and the interpretation is different from what the Sheriff has previously presented to the County Council.

The recommendations are to:

1. Develop a request for proposals (RFP) for a 2010 consultant study of staff allocation and deployment in the Sheriff's Department, and
2. Resume staff work on performance measures when the data become available, and/or include performance measures in the RFP.

The report presented today is rather different from what was envisaged in January 2009, when the study was planned and added to the work program of the Performance Audit Committee. The original work plan, communicated to the Sheriff on January 9 and discussed at a meeting in his office on February 5, called for performance audit staff to conduct pre-audit planning work on two main topics:

1. Staffing issues, with analysis of workload, funding, and deployment of officers in the field.
2. Performance measures and development of an agreed data set to analyze and measure department performance.

On the first topic, the report analyzes staffing and workload issues at a general level. However, there is no analysis of deployment issues because of limited data and because we found that the topic requires the assistance of a consultant with subject matter expertise.

The second topic, performance measures, is touched briefly in the report, but not systematically addressed because the Sheriff's Department requested a delay three months into the project. On April 24, the Sheriff's Department informed us that the department is engaged in strategic planning, which includes developing performance measures for use in the 2010 budget process, and the department therefore wished to postpone the scheduled briefing on performance measures until the new measures are ready for public discussion. We asked to see preliminary strategic planning materials, but the request was denied. In these circumstances, having devoted a substantial amount of staff time to the topic, we decided to suspend work on performance measures for the time being.¹

While this report does not cover everything that was planned, we believe that the material presented here on workload and staffing has value, and we trust it will lead to a fruitful discussion. We look forward to discussing the material with the Performance Audit Committee and the Sheriff on May 28.

Note on Compliance with Audit Standards

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

¹ It was later learned that the Sheriff's Department signed the contract with the strategic planner on February 3, and it is unclear why we were not informed until April that the strategic planning would affect our work on performance measures.

Table of Contents

Summary of Key Points	iv
A. Objectives	1
B. Methodology	1
C. Workload Comparisons over Time	2
1. Funding	2
2. Staffing and Crime	4
3. Staffing and Calls for Service	6
4. Response Times.....	7
5. Conclusions	9
D. Comparisons with Other Jurisdictions	10
1. Comparisons with Counties	11
2. Comparisons with Cities	13
E. Conclusions	15
F. Recommendations	17

Exhibits

1. Sheriff's Department Budget since 2004	3
2. Annual Percentage Change in Deputy Sheriffs and Part 1 and 2 Crimes	5
3. Annual Percentage Change in Deputy Sheriffs and Priority 1 and 2 Calls for Service	6
4. Calls for Service per Deputy, 2004-2008	7
5. Priority 1 Response Times for Unincorporated County Patrol Areas	8
6. Comparison of County Staffing and Crime, 2008	11
7. Comparison of Commissioned Officers, Selected Counties, April 2009	12
8. Staffing and Funding in Selected Jurisdictions, 2009	13
9. Comparison of Selected Jurisdictions, 2008	14

Summary of Key Points

1. Currently available measures suggest that increases in Sheriff's Department staffing have been consistent with workload over recent years.
2. Currently available measures indicate that staffing in the Sheriff's Department is similar to staffing in nearby counties.
3. Current data are not very useful for measuring performance or assessing staffing levels. Data sufficient to evaluate workload and staffing should be generated by developing detailed workload and performance measures.
4. The report recommends:
 - Develop a request for proposals (RFP) for a consultant study in 2010 of staff allocation and deployment in the Sheriff's Department, and
 - Resume staff work on performance measures when better data become available, and/or include performance measures in the RFP.

A. Objectives

At the request of the Performance Audit Committee, staff conducted a pre-audit planning study to identify issues related to the perceived “disconnect” between funding provided by the County Council and actual deployment by the Sheriff’s Department of officers in the field. This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Is the Sheriff’s Department understaffed compared with other jurisdictions?
2. Is the staffing of the Sheriff’s Department in line with the department’s workload?
3. Are currently available data useful for evaluating workload and staffing?

To answer these questions, staff analyzed information from the following sources: Pierce County Budget books; reports presented by the Sheriff’s Department in public meetings; information and data provided by the Sheriff in response to questions relating to the current report; the 2001 performance audit of the Sheriff’s Department; budget data from Thurston, King, Snohomish, Spokane, Clark, and Kitsap counties; interviews with staff in Thurston and Snohomish counties; “Crime in Washington” reports published by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; research literature on law enforcement staffing; and reports from other jurisdictions.

B. Methodology

The 2001 performance audit of the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department demonstrated that staffing and deployment practices should be driven by workload rather than measures related solely to number of staff.² Therefore, this report focused on comparisons of staffing and workload over time.

The analysis included a review of budget data, staffing numbers, crime rates, calls for service, and response times. We also reviewed data from the six largest counties in western Washington, as well as the three largest cities in Pierce County. Specific details on methodology are covered in the following sections.

This analysis was originally intended to cover performance measures. It does not do, however, as noted above on pages i-ii, because the Sheriff decided to develop

² Performance Audit of the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department, by Police Management Advisors, June 8, 2001. Available at <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/abtus/plans/perf-audit/reports/SHR-The%20Report.pdf>.

measures as part of a strategic planning process. We were informed that the new measures will be available later this year.

C. Workload Comparisons over Time

1. Funding

To analyze Sheriff's Department workload over time, we first reviewed the budget of the department from 2004 to 2009. This period was chosen because:

- Inconsistent workload data was reported in the budget books prior to 2004.³
- Pierce County budget books now report Sheriff's staffing by service area (contract versus unincorporated county) going back to 2004.
- Data capabilities of the Sheriff's Department within the Crime Analysis Unit have been greatly enhanced since the 2001 performance audit, and the unit was able to provide reliable workload data for this period.

The Sheriff's Department budget includes funding from four sources:

1. The county's General Fund
2. Grants and intergovernmental transfers (including contracts to provide law enforcement services to other jurisdictions)
3. Fees and charges
4. Revenue from the Law Enforcement Levy.⁴

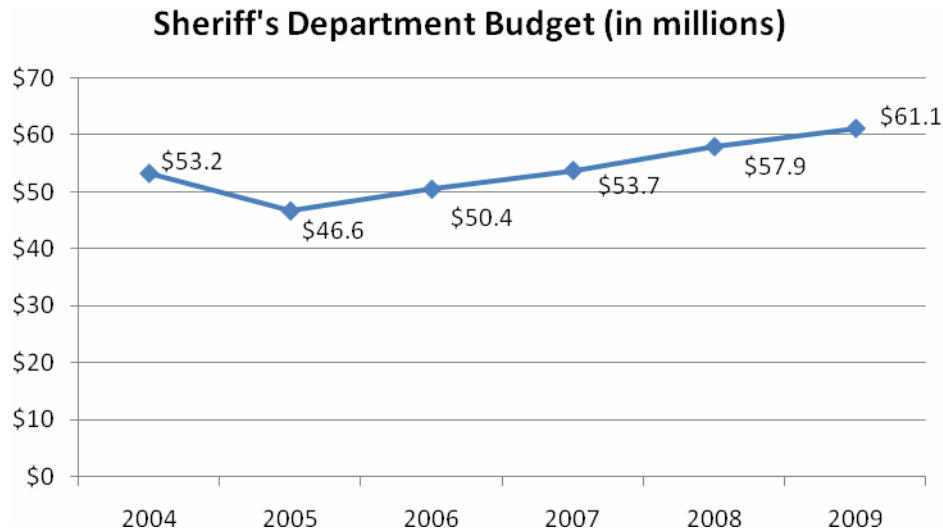
The bulk of department funding (78% in 2009) comes from the General Fund and the Law Enforcement Levy.

³ For instance, the reported calls for service for the years 2001 and 2002 are different in budget books of different years.

⁴ In 1987, voters approved a levy lid lift for the unincorporated tax levy (a.k.a. the "Road Levy") of approximately 20%. This increase was dedicated to law enforcement purposes (including the judicial system). The practice has developed and continued of directing this funding source to the Sheriff's Department.

Exhibit 1 displays the change in total funding for the department from 2004 to 2009. The drop in funding from 2004 to 2005 reflects the discontinuation of contract law enforcement services to the city of Lakewood.

Exhibit 1



Source: Pierce County Budget Books, 2004-2009.

Over these five years, General Fund allocations to the department increased from \$26.5 million in 2004 to \$36 million in 2009 (an increase of \$9.5 million, or 35.8%). Total Pierce County General Fund expenditures over that period increased from \$236 million to \$289 million (an increase of \$53 million, or 22.5%).

Although this suggests that the Sheriff's Department is receiving an increasing share of the General Fund, it does not reflect the relationship between department budget and workload. Therefore, we reviewed additional data to look more closely at the staffing levels of the department in relation to specific demands for the Sheriff's services, including measures recommended in the 2001 performance audit.

2. Staffing and Crime

We reviewed department staffing in relation to crime from 2004 to 2008. Analysis was focused on the following:

- Unincorporated Pierce County, that is, excluding the contracts with Edgewood, University Place, and Pierce Transit.
- Sheriff's deputies. Deputies are the "first responders" to crime and their workload is directly affected by the measures analyzed below.
- Budgeted positions. Budgeted positions do not necessarily reflect the actual deployment or availability of personnel, the impact of overtime, and leave of various kinds (e.g., military leave, sick leave, etc.).⁵ However, data reflecting available personnel were not available for prior years at the time of this report.
- Part 1 and 2 crimes.⁶ These crimes are most likely to affect the workload of deputy sheriffs, and reliable data were available for the period under review.

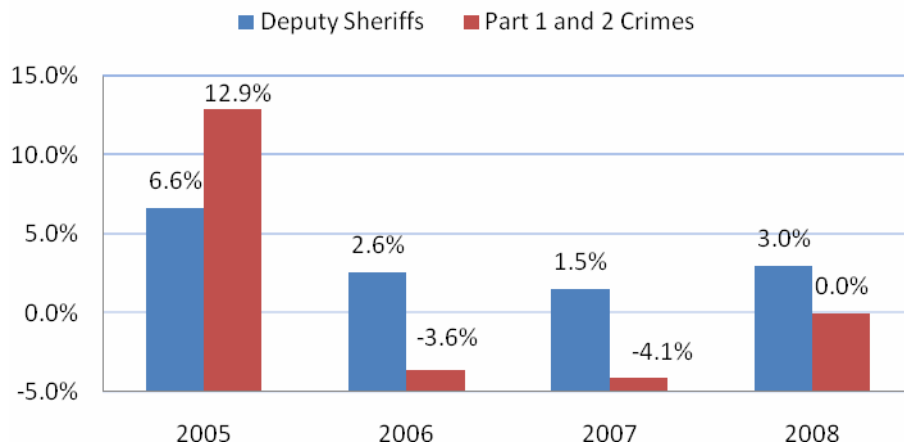
Exhibit 2 displays the annual percentage change in the budgeted number of deputy sheriffs assigned to unincorporated Pierce County compared with the annual percentage change in the number of Part 1 and Part 2 crimes from 2004 to 2008. For instance, the first two columns, labeled "2005," represent the changes from 2004 to 2005.

⁵ Data from the Sheriff indicates that as of May 11, 2009, out of 248 authorized deputies, 31 are unavailable for assignment due to leave, vacancies, and training, and 32 are assigned to contract jurisdictions, leaving a total of 185 available for deployment in the unincorporated county.

⁶ As defined by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program, "Part 1" crimes include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, arson, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. "Part 2" crimes include Simple Assaults, Forgery and Counterfeiting, Fraud, Embezzlement, Stolen Property Offenses, Vandalism, Weapons Offenses, Prostitution and Commercialized Vice, Sex Offenses (except rape and prostitution), Drug Abuse Violations, Gambling, Offenses Against the Family and Children, Driving Under the Influence, Liquor Laws, Drunkenness, Disorderly Conduct, Vagrancy, Curfew and Loitering Laws (Juveniles only), and Runaways (Juveniles only).

Exhibit 2

Annual Percentage Change in Deputy Sheriffs and Part 1 and 2 Crimes, 2005-2008



Sources: Pierce County Budget Books; Pierce County Sheriff Crime Analysis Unit

As the exhibit indicates, the budgeted number of deputies has been increasing annually. This percentage change represents an increase from 181 deputies in 2004 to 207 in 2008. In contrast, the number of Part 1 and 2 crimes increased nearly 13% from 2004 to 2005, declined between 2005 and 2007, and remained steady from 2007 to 2008, representing a change from 37,401 in 2004 to 39,001 in 2008.

Thus, the number of deputies serving the unincorporated county increased 14% from 2004 to 2008, while the number of Part 1 and 2 crimes increased 4%. However, these raw percentages do not reflect changes in the mix of crimes, which could result in different levels of workload.

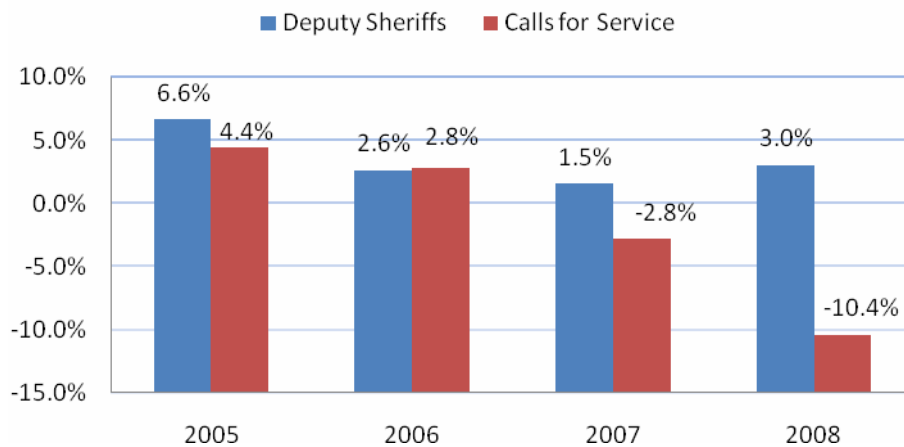
3. Staffing and Calls for Service

The number of Priority 1 and 2 calls for service is more directly related to the workload of deputies than the raw number of crimes, because each of these calls requires an immediate response.⁷

Exhibit 3 compares the percentage change in number of deputies to the percentage change in Priority 1 and 2 calls for service.

Exhibit 3

Annual Percentage Change in Deputy Sheriffs and Priority 1 and 2 Calls for Service, 2005-2008



Sources: Pierce County Budget Books; Pierce County Sheriff Crime Analysis Unit

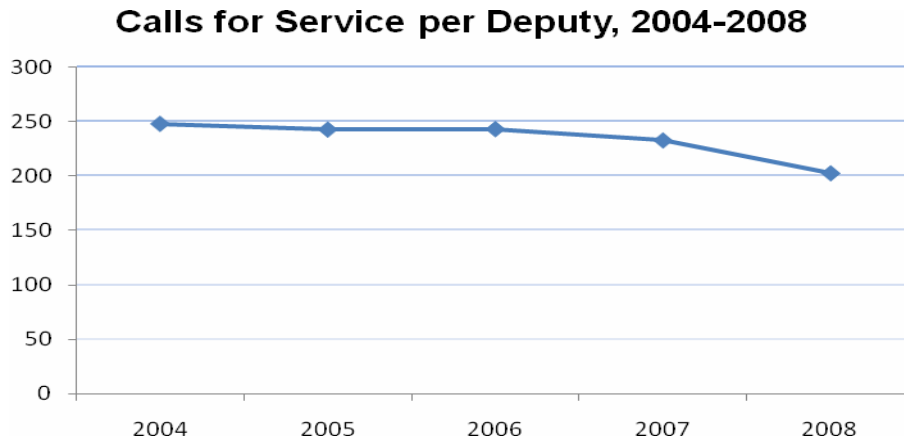
Between 2004 and 2005, as the exhibit shows, the number of Priority 1 and 2 calls for service increased by a lesser amount than the number of deputies. Between 2005 and 2006, the number of calls for service increased slightly more than the number of deputies. Finally, between 2006 and 2008, the number of calls for service decreased, while the number of deputies increased.

⁷ According to the Law Enforcement Support Agency, Priority 1 calls for service are defined as “a life threatening situation occurring now.” Priority 2 calls for service are defined as “a situation with imminent danger to life or property, that is occurring now or just occurred.”

In total, the number of deputies increased from 181 in 2004 to 207 in 2008 (an increase of 14%), while the number of calls for service decreased from 44,837 in 2004 to 41,852 in 2008 (a decrease of 7%).

Exhibit 4 displays the number of Priority 1 and 2 calls for service per deputy for the years 2004 to 2008.

Exhibit 4



Sources: Pierce County Budget Books; Pierce County Sheriff Crime Analysis Unit

The number of calls for service per deputy decreased from 248 to 202 over these years. However, as with numbers of crimes, raw data on calls for service do not reflect changes in the crimes associated with these calls, which could result in different levels of workload. More data on time spent on calls would be a useful addition to the analysis.

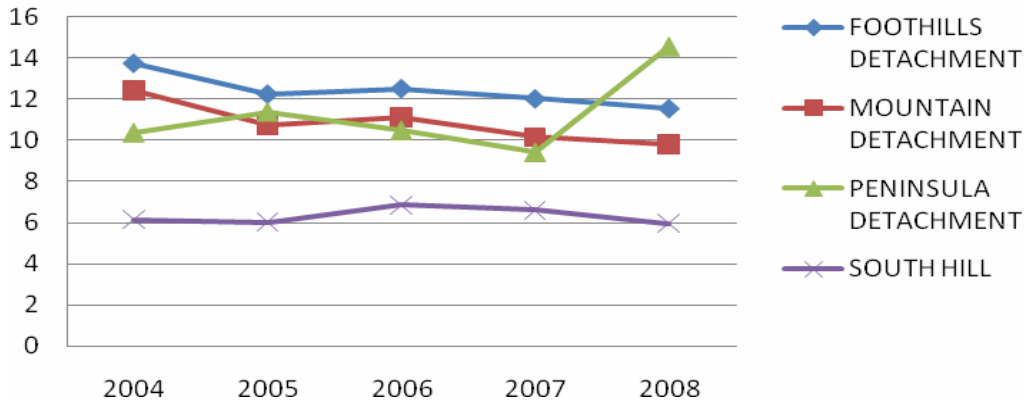
4. Response Times

While calls for service show the volume of activity for first responders in the department, response times can indicate how adequately equipped the department is to handle that volume. The Crime Analysis Unit provided response time data for the period under review. Exhibit 5 displays average response times to Priority 1 calls by unincorporated patrol area.⁸

⁸ Median response times may be a better measure than mean (average) response times, because using the median diminishes the influence of extreme cases. Median times were not available for this report.

Exhibit 5

**Priority 1 Response Times (in minutes) for
Unincorporated County Patrol Areas**



Source: Pierce County Sheriff Crime Analysis Unit

The exhibit shows that the response times in the patrol areas have remained steady between 2004 and 2008, with the exception of an increase from 2007 to 2008 in the Peninsula Detachment.⁹ Over this time, the South Hill patrol area received an annual average of 573 Priority 1 calls for service, the Mountain Detachment received 72, the Peninsula Detachment received 62, and the Foothills Detachment received 58.

This suggests that staffing has been adequate to achieve consistent response times over this period. However, these data do not reflect the potential impacts of maintaining consistent response times on factors such as officer safety and time available for proactive police work.

⁹ With a low number of calls for service, the Peninsula Detachment average may be more susceptible to extreme cases. This may explain the increase in response time from 2007 to 2008, but the matter needs further investigation.

5. Conclusions

Based on the available data since 2004, it is clear that:

1. The Sheriff's Department has received a growing proportion of the General Fund budget.
2. The number of deputy sheriffs has increased relative to the number of crimes and calls for service.
3. Response times to Priority 1 calls for service have remained relatively steady.

As mentioned above, the Sheriff's Department has raised the concern that these data do not adequately reflect the workload of the department. Specifically, the department points out that (a) quicker response times can be achieved at the expense of officer safety and investigation quality, and (b) responding to a different mix of crimes from year to year may require more or less resources. For example, certain types of the same "crime" may be more staff intensive, such as theft crimes involving newer technologies (e.g., identity theft).

Another measure recommended in the 2001 performance audit was "problem-solving time," which was intended to capture time devoted to "community-police" problem solving. However, in practice, this is essentially time that cannot be accounted for by other reported activities. Thus, it does not involve any measurable activity connected to solving problems. Further, reporting average problem-solving time does not take into account the fact that a large amount of that time is likely in the late night or early morning hours, when problem-solving opportunities are more limited.

The lack of descriptive power of the currently available measures underscores the need for more detailed performance measures to capture these hidden issues and to allow for a better analysis of workload.

While the Sheriff has indicated that crime analysis data are used in determining deployment practices, the current publicly available workload measures do not allow for an analysis of allocation and deployment efficiency. A complete analysis of staff deployment would more thoroughly investigate staff allocation practices within the department.

D. Comparisons with Other Jurisdictions

Another way to analyze the staffing and workload of the Sheriff's Department is to compare it with agencies in other jurisdictions. Comparisons of regional agencies can tell us how different jurisdictions are addressing crime in somewhat similar environments.

The following analyses compare Pierce County Sheriff's staffing and workload to that in other jurisdictions. The other jurisdictions include the five largest Sheriff's offices in western Washington (Clark, King, Kitsap, Snohomish, and Thurston) and the largest cities in Pierce County (Lakewood, Puyallup, and Tacoma).

Before discussing comparisons with other jurisdictions, it is important to note that measures such as "officers per 1,000 residents" that rely solely on number of staff are not reliable indicators of workload. The sheer number of staff in a department indicates nothing about workload demands.

As noted in the 2001 performance audit, "officers per thousand citizens" ignores population characteristics, service demands, and police response time to priority calls. The audit concluded that "the number of officers per thousand residents indicates very little about police performance."¹⁰

Other research has indicated that "no meaningful correlation has been found between the number of officers and the crime rate." Instead of basing staffing on ratios, successful law enforcement organizations have established goals, reviewed efficiency, and measured the results of their activities.¹¹

Despite these issues, "officers per 1,000 residents" is often used as a point of comparison between agencies. Therefore, when comparing Pierce County Sheriff staffing to other jurisdictions, we considered it essential to include some measure of workload. We reviewed crime data to give some indication of the relative workload of these agencies. More detailed measures of workload, such as calls for service, were available only for the city of Tacoma at the time of this report.

¹⁰ "Performance Audit of the Pierce County Sheriff's Department," Police Management Advisors, June 8, 2001 (p.25). Available at <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/abtus/plans/perf-audit/reports/SHR-The%20Report.pdf>.

¹¹ "Officers-per-Thousand Formulas and Other Policy Myths," Public Management, March 2004.

1. Comparisons with Counties

Comparing the Pierce County Sheriff's Department with other Sheriff's offices in the region can indicate how similarly structured agencies respond to crime. "Crime in Washington" reports from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) present crime and staffing data from many jurisdictions in the state. Exhibit 6 displays selected information for the six largest western Washington counties.

Exhibit 6

Comparison of County Staffing and Crime, 2008

County	Population ^a	Part 1 Crime Rate ^b	Officers per 1,000 Residents ^b	Part 1 Crimes per Officer
Thurston	139,605	26.0	0.64	40.7
Kitsap	170,500	26.2	0.72	36.3
PIERCE	377,660	29.8	0.86 ^c	34.6
Clark	206,830	22.6	0.71	32.0
Snohomish	324,320	16.2	0.85	19.1
King	341,150	22.5	1.52	14.8

Sources:

^a Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, 2008

^b Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, "Crime in Washington, 2008" preliminary data.

^c When the military populations of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base are removed from the unincorporated population, Pierce County's sworn officers per 1,000 rises to 0.93. Population data from military bases in Kitsap and Snohomish counties were not available at the time of this writing.

As Exhibit 6 shows, unincorporated Pierce County in 2008 had the highest crime rate among the selected counties, defined as the number of Part 1 crimes per 1,000 residents. In addition, Pierce County had the second highest number of officers per thousand citizens, and the third highest Part 1 crimes per officer.

Figures were similar for 2007, when Pierce County had the highest crime rate (30.7) in the counties that were studied, second highest number of officers per 1,000 citizens (0.89), and the highest number of crimes per officer (34.4).

It is also noteworthy that the crime rate in Pierce County has decreased 38% since 2000, more than in any of the above counties.¹²

Overall, these data suggest that Pierce County Sheriff's staffing is similar to staffing in other jurisdictions.

However, because the number of "commissioned officers" is self-reported by each agency to WASPC, there could be inconsistencies in what is reported. For example, it is unclear whether every county excludes officers assigned to contract cities when reporting commissioned officers.

To account for possible inconsistencies in definitions of commissioned officers, we reviewed another data source. Exhibit 7 reflects human resource data, showing who is on the payroll at a point in time in April, for Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston counties.

Exhibit 7

Comparison of Commissioned Officers, Selected Counties, April 2009

Jurisdiction	Officers per 1,000	
	Officers	Residents
Snohomish	263	0.83
PIERCE	296	0.78 ^a
Thurston	89.5	0.64

Sources: Pierce County and Thurston County Human Resources staff and Snohomish County Civil Service Board staff. Officers exclude those dedicated to contract jurisdictions.

^a This exhibit uses human resource data, as opposed to WASPC data. When the military populations of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base are removed from the unincorporated population for this comparison, Pierce County's sworn officers per 1,000 rises to 0.85. However, population data from Everett Naval Station are not available at this time.

As Exhibit 7 indicates, the Pierce County rate of commissioned officers appears to be a little lower than in Snohomish County and substantially higher than in Thurston County.

¹² Since 2000, the crime rate has decreased 27% in Kitsap, 8% in Thurston, 18% in Clark, 11% in Snohomish, and 27% in King Counties.

2. Comparisons with Cities

Comparing workload in the Pierce County Sheriff's Department with other agencies in Pierce County has the advantage of comparing organizations that are geographically close. Presumably, this proximity reflects similar populations and crime problems to some extent. However, cities and counties differ in significant ways that make straightforward comparisons problematic.

The Pierce County Sheriff has often cited staffing numbers to indicate that the department is understaffed compared with selected municipal police departments in the county. The data in Exhibit 8 are taken from a Sheriff's Department report to the County Council in a memorandum of March 10, 2009.

Exhibit 8

Staffing and Funding in Selected Jurisdictions, 2009

Jurisdiction	Sworn Officers	Sworn Officers per 1,000 Residents	Cost per Capita
Pierce	277	0.73	\$139.75
Tacoma	398	1.96	\$357.64
Lakewood	103	1.75	\$306.43
Puyallup	57	1.54	\$395.52

Source: Report from the Sheriff to the County Council, March 10, 2009

As can be seen from the exhibit, the Pierce County Sheriff has the lowest number of sworn officers per thousand citizens in the region. However, as noted above, staffing numbers alone do not reveal anything about workload.

Exhibit 9 displays information on crime and calls for service for the same jurisdictions.

Exhibit 9

Comparison of Selected Jurisdictions, 2008

Jurisdiction	Crime Rate ^a	Part 1 Crimes per Sworn Officer ^b	Priority 1 + 2 Calls for Service ^c
Pierce	29.8	40.6	41,852
Tacoma	84.7	43.2	58,957
Lakewood	68.6	39.2	n/a
Puyallup	76.0	49.2	n/a

Sources:

^a Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, 2008 preliminary data.

^b Report from the Sheriff to the County Council, March 10, 2009.

^c Pierce County Sheriff Crime Analysis Unit (for Pierce County) and Law Enforcement Support Agency (for Tacoma).

Exhibit 9 shows that Tacoma, Lakewood, and Puyallup have vastly higher crime rates than Pierce County, and that Tacoma has more Priority 1 and 2 calls for service. In addition, the four jurisdictions have a similar number of Part 1 crimes per sworn officer. This suggests that while staffing in Pierce County is lower than in these agencies, overall workload is similar.

There are several caveats to keep in mind when looking at different agencies:

- Jurisdictions have different geographical challenges, which can have a substantial effect on the way personnel are deployed. For instance, a city might need a larger traffic division than would be needed in a rural area, while unincorporated patrol units have to cover larger areas to maintain consistent response times.
- Jurisdictions have a different mix of crimes that may entail a different workload (some crimes require more “work” than others).
- Contract services provided to other agencies vary across agencies.
- Internal deployment practices and efficiency may differ across agencies.

As with workload comparisons over time, the development of more detailed performance measures would permit a better analysis of workload than the general measures reviewed above.

E. Conclusions

The available evidence suggests the following general conclusions about staffing and workload in the Sheriff's Department.

1. Currently available data indicate that Pierce County Sheriff's staffing has more than kept pace with workload increases between 2004 and 2008.

- a. The Sheriff's Department has received a growing proportion of the General Fund budget.
- b. The number of Sheriff's deputies has grown at a faster rate than the number of Part 1 and 2 crimes.
- c. The number of Sheriff's deputies has grown at a faster rate than the number of Priority 1 and 2 calls for service.
- d. Average response times have remained steady.

However, these numbers do not reflect factors such as officer safety, proactive police work, and crime complexity that more detailed performance measures would capture. While the Sheriff has indicated that crime analysis data are used in determining deployment practices, these data are not publicly available.

2. Pierce County Sheriff's staffing and workload is similar to staffing and workload in other county and city law enforcement agencies.

- a. According to WASPC data, the number of commissioned officers per 1,000 residents in the Pierce County Sheriff's Department is consistent with that in other western Washington counties. Pierce County ranks second among these counties, with 0.86 officers per 1,000 residents.¹³ Pierce County has the highest crime rate among these counties, and the third highest Part 1 crimes per commissioned officer.
- b. According to data from human resource departments, the number of commissioned Sheriff's officers per 1,000 citizens is a little lower than in Snohomish County and substantially higher than in Thurston County.

¹³ This number rises to 0.93 officers per 1,000 residents when military base populations are removed from the county population.

- c. Pierce County has fewer sworn officers per 1,000 citizens than the municipal police departments in Tacoma, Lakewood, and Puyallup. However, Pierce County has a much lower Part 1 crime rate than the three other jurisdictions, and the calls for service are lower than in Tacoma.

3. More detailed performance measures are necessary to account for the “missing information” in the measures cited above. Detailed performance measures are useful not just for workload assessment, but also because:

- a. Grant agencies require performance measures. We believe that similar measures should be developed by the department as part of the internal budgeting process. Performance measures were supposed to be a major part of this analysis, but the Sheriff is currently working independently on measures as part of a strategic planning process.
 - b. Good management requires good information for internal decision-making and problem solving and for holding staff accountable.
 - c. Good performance measures can enhance credibility and transparency.
 - d. Good performance measures allow departments to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and implementation of “best practices.”
- 4. A more detailed analysis of allocation and deployment issues is required to evaluate workload and staffing.** This analysis should be conducted with the assistance of a subject matter expert in law enforcement issues.

The ultimate goal of a workload analysis is to assess the productivity of the staff. Such an analysis would require, at a minimum, a study of the deployment of officers budgeted. The Sheriff must contend with both anticipated staffing issues, such as leave and administrative duties, and with less predictable demands such as military leave or disability. The Sheriff generally has the authority to reassign positions budgeted by the Council for a specific purpose. This flexibility enables the department to respond quickly to emergencies and unanticipated changes in circumstances. A workload study would account for all of these issues.

F. Recommendations

1. Authorize staff to develop a request for proposals (RFP) for a consultant with subject matter expertise to conduct a more detailed study of allocation and deployment practices in the department. This would be the main study conducted in 2010. To provide a clear focus to the study, it is important to limit the scope of the work to staff deployment in the field and closely related subjects, rather than authorize a broader evaluation of the department such as done in 2001.
2. Authorize continued staff work on this project through the assessment of performance measures when the new measures are available, and / or include performance measures in the RFP.