

# King County Elections Office



## Initial Assessment Reports

1. Election Observation Report
2. Recommendation Matrix

January 25, 2006

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# I. Executive Summary

## Introduction

In an Election Stakeholder Update published September 6, 2005, Dean Logan, Director of Records, Elections, and Licensing Services (REALS), described and acknowledged King County Elections Office (KCEO) problems resulting from system changes, new legal requirements, not enough training, human error, and in some cases, carelessness. Mr. Logan also described how hard the KCEO team was working to make changes and real improvements in how votes are counted. The KCEO has acknowledged that while progress has been made, additional work still needs to be done to improve operational processes, clarify roles and responsibilities, develop comprehensive training programs, recruit experienced managers and staff to fill sixteen (16) positions, and develop a plan to ensure sustainable long-term results.

Waldron & Company was selected to work collaboratively with the KCEO to help restore public confidence in King County Elections and to assist management in improving organizational effectiveness in the areas described above. The Waldron Team was chosen largely because of our demonstrated success in working with clients in cultural change management, developing high performing teams and organizations, and developing effective communication plans.

The purpose of this report is to provide an initial assessment of the KCEO based upon the following: 1) Waldron Team's introduction to KCEO management, staff, and temporary employees; 2) The observation of the 2005 general election activities through the certification of the election; and 3) Development of an integrated Recommendation Matrix which combines recommendations from the 2004 Citizens Election Oversight Committee report (CEOC), Independent Task Force on Elections report (ITFE), and an audit by the Center for Elections (CE).



## Scope

The scope of our initial work does not include an assessment or evaluation of technical matters related to election operations or election laws. Rather, the Waldron Team's role was to gain familiarity with KCEO activities, and to observe management, staff, and temporary employees. In the initial stage, we also began to assess KCEO organizational effectiveness in the following areas:

- Culture of King County Elections Office
- Interactions of managers and supervisors with staff and stakeholders
- Teamwork between permanent and temporary employees
- Morale and signs of stress or fatigue
- Voter experience at polling locations
- Quality of service provided to clients
- Work environment focused on facilities
- Technology

## Methodology

The Waldron Team consists of six (6) consultants: Debbie Bevier, Harold Robertson, Lynda Silsbee, Rita Brogan, Jeff Waldron, and Ivan Barron. Biographies for each of the Waldron Team members can be found in Appendix I.

The Waldron organizational consulting process typically follows a 4-stage methodology:

1. Discovery and Assessment
2. Design and Plan Development
3. Deployment and Implementation
4. Evaluation, Measurement, and Reinforcement

The Election Observation Report and Recommendation Matrix represent a contracted portion of the Discovery Stage intended as a building block on which the County Executive and KCEO can assess further organizational effectiveness needs. During the discovery stage, the Waldron Team began observing the people and operations in KCEO without interfering in elections activities. The Team's direct interactions were primarily with Management and Poll Inspectors who answered questions and provided an overview of election operations. Staff interactions were limited to staff meetings.



## Staff Meetings

One of the key Waldron Team objectives during the discovery phase was to conduct introductory meetings with managers and employees. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the Waldron Team members, explain our approach for working with KCEO, and answer any employee questions. Initial meetings took place with Dean Logan and the REALS Division Senior Management Team on November 3, 2005 and November 15, 2005. On November 16, 2005, the Waldron Team joined KCEO leadership at the weekly elections planning meeting held at the Temporary Elections Annex (TEA). On November 18, 2005, KCEO all-hands staff meetings were held at the King County Administration Building and TEA. Participants from the Election Distribution Center and Mail Ballot Operations Satellite were also included in these meetings along with temporary employees.

At each of the meetings, Dean Logan, Elections Director, introduced the Waldron Team and briefly described the collaborative work to be done between the KCEO and Waldron & Company over the next several months. Debbie Bevier, Project Leader for Waldron & Company, introduced the Waldron Team and outlined the approach to be used in working with the KCEO to improve its organizational effectiveness. We also shared that we are working with the KCEO without a prevailing bias. We acknowledged that considerable work had already been done by the KCEO team to implement a number of operational recommendations. We also emphasized that the Waldron Team would work collaboratively with the KCEO, and would consult with stakeholders to avoid redundancy of efforts.

In some meetings there were few if any questions about our role, while in others, employees stayed after the meeting to continue discussion with team members. Many KCEO employees had to travel from other locations to attend staff meetings. Several of the employees addressed the difficulties they often face in traveling between facilities and the impact it has on effectively and efficiently communicating within the KCEO team. There were also comments and questions about how the KCEO could better communicate to the public on the progress that has been made in improving the performance of election operations. Waldron Team members observed a real desire by election employees to have stronger advocacy for their efforts to external stakeholders, media, and the general public.

In summary, employees seemed interested and enthused with the organizational effectiveness work that the Waldron Team can provide. The discussion in the meetings also included anecdotal comments which may need further review and analysis as we work with the KCEO Team. While it is clear that many employees are experiencing signs of “battle fatigue,” most seem ready and willing to do what is necessary to continue improving the King County Elections Office.



## Election Observation Summary

On November 8, 2005, Waldron Team members began a series of eighteen (18) observational visits at polling locations. We also visited KCEO facilities to observe election operations at the following: the King County Administrative Headquarters, Temporary Elections Annex (TEA), Mail Ballot Operations Satellite (MBOS), and Election Distribution Center (EDC). Observation themes from our visits are grouped by categories: culture, communication, teamwork, morale, voter experience, knowledge and training, facilities, and technology.

### Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Based upon our observations and our initial assessment, we have identified the following issues, challenges, and opportunities. Each will require more in depth assessment and evaluation by KCEO prior to action:

1. Staffing issues have been a major challenge to the KCEO. The operational issues from the 2004 general election along with a major lawsuit against the KCEO have received significant media attention. This created a difficult environment in which to attract experienced and qualified managers and staff. There are currently sixteen (16) open positions which include four (4) key leadership positions: Superintendent of Elections, Assistant Superintendent for Election Operations, Assistant Superintendent of Voter Services, and IT Support Manager. It is critical for the KCEO to get these key positions filled as soon as possible, especially with proposed policy changes on the horizon.
2. Open positions represent approximately 33% of the KCEO permanent staffing. We recommend that an assessment be done to determine the root cause of high turnover and to identify key hiring attributes for each open position.
3. We believe care must be taken to ensure that the staff continues to feel ownership of KCEO results and that staff are allocated an appropriate amount of time to develop and implement plans.
4. Another major challenge is “battle fatigue.” From our observation, KCEO employees had been working in a high pressure environment with significant oversight from key stakeholders for nearly two years. KCEO has been gaining momentum in implementing recommendations and successfully completed the November 8, 2005 election processing. However, KCEO Team resources are stretched. For example, approximately fifty (50) permanent employees are responsible for training and supervising nearly 3800 temporary employees that work on the elections.
5. Changes in organizational culture require a shared understanding of attitudes, practices, and beliefs of all members of the organization. It will be critical to involve the new leadership and staff in defining the future culture of KCEO.
6. Proposed changes in public policy need to be analyzed in terms of the risk of moving too quickly or too slowly. The 2008 Presidential election is only two



(2) years away. Decisions on organizational change need to be put in this context and decisions need to be made and implemented quickly.

7. We strongly recommend the consolidation of KCEO facilities into one location. We believe based on our early observations that this action will enable the KCEO to streamline operations by significantly improving the efficiency of election activities, improve management oversight, enhance communications, reduce the risk of errors, and hasten culture development.



## Recommendation Matrix Summary

The Waldron Team created a Recommendation Matrix by integrating 230 recommendations made by three oversight groups: The Citizen Elections Oversight Committee (CEOC), The Independent Task Force on Elections (ITFE), and the Elections Center Independent Audit (EC). The Matrix organizes all recommendations into four “implementation” categories. The categories include organizational effectiveness, operations, policy, and strategy. In addition, under each of the four “implementation” categories there are subcategories (e.g., training, communications, performance measurement, etc.) to classify all recommendations.

A total of 230 recommendations were identified in all three oversight group reports listed below. Over 70% of these recommendations originated from the CEOC report from May of 2004. An updated report from the CEOC is due on February 1, 2006 and the findings of the updated report are intended to be integrated into the Recommendation Matrix.

# of Recommendations	Source
168	Citizen Election Oversight Committee (CEOC) May, 2004
36	Independent Task Force on Elections (ITFE) July, 2005
26	Elections Center Independent Auditor (EC) October, 2005
<b>230</b>	<b><i>Total Recommendations</i></b>

Based on our analysis, it appears that the 10.9% of the total number of recommendations relating to public policy may have the most significant impact on the future direction of the KCEO. The public policy recommendations are outside of the decision making authority of the KCEO Team. Therefore, depending upon the public policy changes, the priority and relevance of elections operation recommendations may change significantly. It is the Waldron Team’s belief that the organizational effectiveness recommendations for the KCEO will need to be completed regardless of policy changes.

% of Total	#	Category
43.0%	99	Organizational Effectiveness
40.0%	92	Election Operations
10.9%	25	Public Policy
5.7%	13	Strategy





0.4%	1	Not Available (NA) CE report included 1 recommendation containing no content
100%	<b>230</b>	<b><i>Total Recommendations</i></b>

### **Implemented Recommendations**

Based upon the information available at the time this report was written, it appears that thirty-three (33) of the 230 recommendations have been fully implemented with twenty (20) in election operations, twelve (12) in organizational effectiveness, and one (1) in public policy. The remaining recommendations are at various stages of implementation by the KCEO and will be assessed and prioritized based on public policy changes. Each recommendation is listed with its implementation status in the Recommendation Matrix in Appendix I.



## **Consensus Recommendations**

In addition to the total number of recommendations in each category, the Waldron Team also looked at the number of recommendations which appear in two or more of the reports. We identified these twelve (12) as “consensus recommendations” that should be reviewed and considered by the King County Executive, King County Council, King County Elections Office, and Washington State, as appropriate. The recommendations include the following (not meant to be in order of priority):

### **Public Policy**

- King County should research and consider moving to an all-mail voting with a small number of regional voting centers.
- Consider an earlier date for holding the primary election.
- Elevate the importance of the Elections Office within King County government.

### **Organizational Effectiveness**

- Define desired competencies and experience for KCEO leaders and managers.
- Create a formal training plan for KCEO employees and improve poll worker training.
- Develop uniform performance measurement standards for all employees.
- Develop and implement an external communications plan.
- Increase the level of communication with poll workers.
- Increase the diversity in poll worker recruitment in order to effectively implement Chinese language requirements.

### **Election Operations**

- King County should acquire a consolidated elections facility.
- Increase Security Procedures.
- Document and continuously update Elections Office operation processes and procedures.

As demonstrated in the list above, implementing the Consensus Recommendations will require that King County Officials and Elections Office personnel work simultaneously in the areas of public policy, organizational effectiveness, and elections operations. The Waldron Team believes that King County should make it a top priority to successfully implement these recommendations, as they will have a profound and lasting impact on the KCEO.



## II. Election Observation Report

### Overview

On November 3, 2005, Waldron Team members began a series of observational visits at polling locations and to four (4) King County Election Facilities located in the greater Seattle area. The following facilities were visited: the King County Administrative Headquarters, Temporary Elections Annex (TEA), Mail Ballot Operations Satellite (MBOS), and Election Distribution Center (EDC). Observation themes from our visits are grouped by categories: culture, communication, teamwork, morale, voter experience, knowledge and training, facilities, and technology.

At the end of this section we describe the issues and opportunities that we identified during our observation work that could have a significant impact on KCEO performance over the short- and long-term.

### Culture

The Waldron Team has had limited access to KCEO management and staff and have not had a significant opportunity to learn about the culture firsthand. KCEO has been challenged by difficulties in recruiting individuals to fill more than sixteen (16) currently open positions. The turnover in staffing will provide an opportunity to recruit professionals who will bring fresh thinking and perhaps some new “best practices” to the organization. The change will also create a challenge in defining the culture of the organization to create a set of shared attitudes, practices, and beliefs.

### Teamwork

There was a high degree of variability across the polling locations in how staff and volunteers teamed together. At one end of the spectrum, there were sites with lively conversation among employees. We noted that group dynamics, particularly communication, was quite different from one site to the next. This seemed to affect how welcome voters felt when entering a location.

At the four election processing locations, much of the work is done independently and/or in small teams of one or two employees. The election processing work requires close attention to details and repetition of activities. Using the absentee ballot workflows as an example, we observed the transfer of a ballot through a series of steps staffed by individuals and teams which included a carefully maintained audit trail. The workflows also require absentee ballot movement from one location to the next since KCEO facilities are not consolidated. This situation significantly impacts the efficiency of the KCEO teams, adds an additional level of security and procedures, and places significant demands on KCEO leadership and management which are already stretched very thin.

At MBOS we observed that there were only two workers assigned to the “secured cage area” to move ballots. We question whether there is a greater risk for errors as fatigue sets in due to the long work hours for these two employees.



## Communication

Communications were observed between management and staff, poll workers and voters, and among key stakeholders. Questions between staff and management appeared to be addressed in a timely manner with an appropriate level of detail. Since much of the work is done independently and requires attention to detail, there is not a lot of discussion taking place during processing. One election process in particular that requires discussion between workers was ballot duplication. Teams of two employees verbally verify the accuracy of the work that they are completing on each duplicated ballot.

Staff working at the Voter Information Hotline (VIH) received a large volume of calls and handled a fair number of difficult calls with angry voters. Many felt that they had received more upset calls than in the past. Problems centered around voter challenges. A record of call types and volume of calls were recorded so management could review, report, and plan for the next election. We also noted that VIH employees use manual call logs rather than an automated system. Depending upon the statistical data, it may be beneficial to research the cost/benefit of an automated system.

While observing the polling locations, the Waldron Team noted that the placement of inspectors, judges, and other help staff seemed at times to hinder efficiency and quick delivery assistance to those with questions. For example, some inspectors were placed at the front and very accessible to anyone, whereas others were placed behind tables and in the back of other poll workers. A “debrief” type of discussion with this group will assist in identifying best practices that could be standardized across polling locations.

## Morale

Overall, morale was quite high at all sites visited on Election Day. This is a dedicated group of employees, temporary poll workers, and volunteers who were present and passionate about the elections process. Their overall demeanor in assisting voters through the process was very positive.

We observed management and staff closing down the Voter Information Hotline and moving on to the King County Garage to check in bags and memory cards from the polling locations. Despite working into the night, staff was still finding the energy and time to smile.

We observed that in the days following the election, there was a greater level of fatigue by KCEO management and staff.



## Voter Experience

The inspectors and judges encompassed a range of diversity (age, race, etc.). A multilingual team was located at the King County Administration Building providing specialized services to voters by phone or in person. The team was located within easy access near the entrance in the administrative offices.

There was an absentee drop-off section on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the King County Administration Building. Every voter observed seemed to have difficulty understanding the directions. There was nobody managing the box and informing people of the process. It may be helpful to voters to staff the drop-off location in the future.

A few of the polling locations that were visited ran out of ballots. For example, the downtown location on 4th Avenue historically goes through the most provisional ballots, yet the site ran out for a period during the day. There was a pre-developed work-around for this scenario. By analyzing voter geographical patterns, this situation may be avoided in the future.

Poll workers were friendly and helpful in responding to questions. It was interesting to see other activities taking place adjacent to the polling locations, such as a bake sale. Election Day seemed to provide an opportunity for a social gathering for voters, especially elderly voters, adding a sense of community to the event.

The addition of a Quality Assurance Coordinator is a positive step taken by the KCEO to focus efforts on accuracy of results and quality of the voter experience.

## Knowledge and Training

For the most part, training appeared to be sufficient. More attention in the future could be given to prepping staff and ballots for peak times at the sites. It also appeared that the polling sites were staffed with the same number of volunteers no matter the time of day or how busy the polling site seemed. Based on historical data, it should be possible to vary staffing levels at the polling sites and to minimize the impact on volunteer time.

Overall, polling site inspectors and judges were very knowledgeable. There was high variability in how well they were organized and in their organizational practices. This invites further analysis of how inspectors are trained and how they are expected to manage processes at the respective polling sites. There may be benefits to increasing consistency across locations. For example, although all sites used accountability forms (how many ballots did the site get versus how many the site used, which can immediately identify at book level any missing votes), there is variability in how the inspectors apply themselves to this work. One inspector might reconcile every hour. A second inspector might focus on other areas throughout the day, and then reconcile once the poll site was closed.

One consistent observation, though, was that the most experienced inspectors were placed at the larger sites. A broader age range of inspectors and judges recruited might be beneficial to a broader representation at the polling sites.



We had an opportunity to review several training documents. The information was well organized and clearly prepared. We also met Al Marks, the new training consultant that joined the KCEO in November.

## **Facilities**

At most polling sites visited, the outdoor signage directing voters to correct indoor locations was confusing. Election signs and posters had small lettering and were few and far between. We suggest considering larger print on signs and the location of signs closer to a street entrance at some locations.

The Temporary Elections Annex (TEA) provided large open space over three floors that could easily be reconfigured for various types of elections processes. The space easily accommodated large groups for training and meetings. Canvass Board meetings were moved to the TEA during the certification process to eliminate the need to transport ballots between locations. We did observe that the acoustics where public hearings and meetings were held were poor. Even with microphones and speakers set-up, it was difficult to hear someone speaking unless you were very close to the individual.

The Telephone Poll Site Hotline at TEA was well organized and appeared to have very knowledgeable people working there. Team dynamics were positive. There was a lot of support and energy, and there were instructions for all of those answering the phone calls.

The MBOS facility is an older, dimly lit warehouse with few windows. Many employees told us that the conditions had improved dramatically since additional space for processing had been acquired at TEA.

The process of delivering memory cards and ballots to the Garage from poll sites seems to run efficiently.

Security was clearly visible in all facilities. Management described the measures taken by the KCEO to improve security procedures and noted additional security equipment at various locations.

## **Technology**

Two polling sites we visited were demonstrating the Disability Accessible Voting Equipment (D.A.V.E.). The KCEO staff members who walked the Waldron Team through the process of voting on D.A.V.E. were extremely knowledgeable and enthused about what the machine will bring to voters with disabilities. Both demonstrations went very smoothly and with little effort. Each Waldron Team member who experienced voting on D.A.V.E. commented on the ease of use and functionality.

Two polling sites visited were utilizing the Ask Ed electronic assistance device, which provides information on voter registration. In inquiring about their experiences using the device, comments were positive regarding the ease of accessing voter information. It enabled polling site staff to respond to questions and issues that arose more quickly overall than did previous tools that were more manual in nature.



In observing the tabulation of ballots at MBOS, we noted that some equipment required more employee attention while processing the mail-in ballots, resulting in a lower number of ballots processed per hour. If King County moves to all-mail ballots, tabulation equipment efficiency will need to be addressed.

## Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Based upon our observations and our initial assessment, we have identified the following issues, challenges, and opportunities. Each will require more in depth assessment and evaluation by the KCEO prior to action:

1. Staffing issues have been a major challenge to the KCEO. The operational issues from the 2004 general election along with a major lawsuit against the KCEO have received significant media attention. This created a difficult environment in which to attract experienced and qualified managers and staff. There are currently sixteen (16) open positions which include four (4) key leadership positions: Superintendent of Elections, Assistant Superintendent for Election Operations, Assistant Superintendent of Voter Services, and IT Support Manager. It is critical for the KCEO to get these key positions filled as soon as possible, especially with proposed policy changes on the horizon.
2. Open positions represent approximately 33% of the KCEO permanent staffing. We recommend that an assessment be done to determine the root cause of high turnover and to identify key hiring attributes for each open position.
3. We believe care must be taken to ensure that the staff continues to feel ownership of KCEO results and that staff are allocated an appropriate amount of time to develop and implement plans.
4. Another major challenge is “battle fatigue.” From our observation, KCEO employees had been working in a high pressure environment with significant oversight from key stakeholders for nearly two years. KCEO has been gaining momentum in implementing recommendations and successfully completed the November 8, 2005 election processing. However, KCEO Team resources are stretched. For example, approximately fifty (50) permanent employees are responsible for training and supervising nearly 3800 temporary employees that work on the elections.
5. Changes in organizational culture require a shared understanding of attitudes, practices, and beliefs of all members of the organization. It will be critical to involve the new leadership and staff in defining the future culture of KCEO.
6. Proposed changes in public policy need to be analyzed in terms of the risk of moving too quickly or too slowly. The 2008 Presidential election is only two (2) years away. Decisions on organizational change need to be put in this context and decisions need to be made and implemented quickly.



7. We strongly recommend the consolidation of KCEO facilities into one location. We believe based on our early observations that this action will enable the KCEO to streamline operations by significantly improving the efficiency of election activities, improve management oversight, enhance communications, reduce the risk of errors, and hasten culture development.





## III. Recommendation Matrix Report

### Overview

The Recommendation Matrix is a tool developed by Waldron & Company to assist the King County Executive and the KCEO to track and implement the recommendations made by the Citizen Elections Oversight Committee (CEOC), the Independent Task Force on Elections (ITFE), and the Elections Center Independent Audit (EC). The Matrix integrates the recommendations from all three independent reports into a comprehensive table. The Matrix is ultimately designed to become a detailed blueprint for the KCEO to use as a tool to track the implementation of all key recommendations and to manage progress against goals. The Matrix will also be used to facilitate discussions among managers and employees on actions needed to effectively and efficiently implement the recommendations. In addition, segments of the matrix may be used to communicate with external stakeholders on the steps the KCEO is taking to restore public confidence.

This section of the report will describe: 1) The background and methodology behind the Recommendation Matrix; 2) Analysis derived from incorporating the recommendations from all three independent reports into the Matrix; and 3) Next steps necessary to turn the Matrix into a comprehensive recommendation implementation plan for the KCEO.

### Background and Methodology

The Waldron Team divided all recommendations into four broad “implementation” categories to determine the “type” (organizational effectiveness, operations, policy, or strategy) of implementation needed to fulfill each recommendation. In addition, under each of the four “implementation” categories, there are more specific subcategories to classify all recommendations.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Recommendations in this category are focused on how individuals in the KCEO work together to support the organization’s mission. Subcategories found in organizational effectiveness include, organizational culture, leadership development, communications, performance measurement, training, and human resources.

**Election Operations:** Recommendations in this category relate to the processes, procedures, and systems necessary to conduct elections in King County. Subcategories within this group include: procedures, security, information technology (IT), multilingual requirements, facilities, vendor relations, process documentation, political party observers, and voter registration.

**Public Policy:** Public Policy recommendations involve policy decisions at the county, state, and federal level that impact how elections are conducted in King County. Subcategories include: precinct size, KCEO governance, ballot regulations, election process requirements, and vote-by-mail elections.



**Strategy:** Recommendations on strategy are focused around key organizational decisions that must be made by the King County Executive and/or the REALS Director pertaining to the overall direction and activities of the KCEO. Subcategories in this area include: organizational strategy, budgeting, business plans, and oversight.

In each “implementation” category and subcategory the Matrix lists each recommendation as shown in the example table below:

**Recommendation Matrix Layout**

Issue	Source	Recommendation Description	Progress	Implemented
Sub Category Area  Example:  Training	Report in which recommendation was made   (report abbreviations: CEOC, ITFE & EC)   Ex. CEOC #5	Recommendation is described here in detail. (Note: some recommendations are at times abbreviated or summarized)	This section reports the progress made by KCEO in implementing the stated recommendation.   The status on implementing the CEOC report was provided by the KCEO status report in July 2005 (not verified by a third party).   The status of the EC recommendation was provided in a follow-up report by the EC in December 2005.   As of the writing of this report, there was no information available as to the implementation status of recommendations made by the Independent Task Force on Elections.	A check mark (√) is inserted here when our team is able to verify that a specific recommendation has been implemented.



## Recommendation Analysis

The Waldron Team created a Recommendation Matrix from 230 total recommendations made by three oversight groups; the Citizen Elections Oversight Committee (CEOC), The Independent Task Force on Elections (ITFE), and the Elections Center Independent Audit (EC). The Matrix organizes all recommendations into four “implementation” categories. The categories include organizational effectiveness, operations, policy, and strategy. Beneath each of the four “implementation” categories there are subcategories (training, communications, performance measurement, etc.) to classify all recommendations.

A total of 230 recommendations were identified in all three reports listed below. Over 70% of these recommendations originated from the CEOC report from May of 2004. An updated report from the CEOC is due on February 1, 2006 and the findings of the updated report will be integrated into the Recommendation Matrix.

# of Recommendations	Source
168	Citizen Election Oversight Committee (CEOC) May, 2004
36	Independent Task Force on Elections (ITFE) July, 2005
26	Elections Center Independent Auditor (EC) October, 2005
<b>230</b>	<b><i>Total Recommendations</i></b>

Based on our analysis it appears that the 10.9% of recommendations relating to public policy may have the most significant impact on the future direction of the KCEO. The public policy recommendations are outside of the decision making authority of the KCEO Team. Therefore, depending upon the public policy changes, the priority and number of elections operation recommendations may change significantly. It is the Waldron Team’s belief that the KCEO organizational effectiveness recommendations should be implemented even in the face of expected policy changes. However, the policy changes will need to be factored into any implementation plan.

% of Total	#	Category
43.0%	99	Organizational Effectiveness
40.0%	92	Election Operations
10.9%	25	Public Policy
5.7%	13	Strategy
.04%	1	n/a CE report had one recommendation with no content
<b>100%</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>Total Recommendations</b>



## Recommendations by Subcategory

Organizational Development	
# of Recommendations	Recommendation by Subcategory
34	Training (permanent and temp staff, and poll workers)
30	Performance Measurement (agency, staff and poll workers)
12	Leadership Development/Competencies
10	Communications
9	HR (permanent and temporary staff)
4	Culture
<b>99</b>	<b>Total</b>

Election Operations	
# of Recommendations	Recommendation by Subcategory
26	Procedures
19	Security
13	Information Technology (IT)
12	Multilingual Requirements
7	Facilities
6	Vendor Relations
5	Documentation
3	Political Party Observers
1	Voter Registration
<b>92</b>	<b>Total</b>



Public Policy	
# of Recommendations	Recommendation by Subcategory
8	Precinct Size
8	Vote-by-Mail
3	Ballot Regulations
3	Election Requirements
3	Governance
<b>25</b>	<b>Total</b>

Strategy	
# of Recommendations	Recommendation by Subcategory
5	Organizational Strategy
4	Budgeting
2	Business Plans
2	Oversight
<b>13</b>	<b>Total</b>

Other	
# of Recommendations	Recommendation by Subcategory
1	NA
	CE report included 1 recommendation containing no content
2	Business Plans



Organizational Development, Elections Operations, Public Policy, Other	
# of Recommendations	Recommendation by Subcategory
230	Total Recommendations

Please note that a large number of recommendations in a given category or subcategory may or may not be a positive indicator that particular emphasis needs to be placed in that issue area. It is important to consider that about 70% of all recommendations analyzed come from the CEOC report. Thus, a subcategory with a large number of recommendations may be more indicative of report focus than of importance. The CEOC report may have placed particular attention on issues that the other reports may not have addressed or emphasized.

For this reason, we look not only at the quantity of recommendations, but also at the mention of a specific recommendation in more than one of the reports (a consensus recommendation). We believe a consensus recommendation to be an indicator of the degree of importance placed on a specific issue or recommendation in these reports; certainly it indicates a uniformity of opinion.

### Implemented Recommendations

Based on the information available at the time this report was written, it appears that of the 230 recommendations, thirty-three (33) have been fully implemented. The remaining recommendations are at various stages of implementation. This information is based upon a follow-up report by the Elections Center dated December 2005, which reported on the progress made by the KCEO on implementing twenty-six (26) recommendations they made in a report to King County Council earlier in the year. We also listed recommendations completed from the CEOC or the ITFE reports where we could verify that full implementation had been accomplished. The Recommendation Matrix in the appendix shows all recommendations implemented with a check mark (✓).

### Poll Worker Recommendations

During a general election there may be up to 3,800 temporary employees hired by the Elections Office. Many of these temporary employees serve as poll workers. In previous years, some of the critical errors in processing ballots that appeared in the media were attributed to poll worker error. Of the 230 total recommendations, approximately thirty-three (33), or 14%, of these relate to poll workers.

With King County Executive Ron Sims' recent recommendation to conduct an all-mail election in King County, many of these recommendations may need to be modified or eliminated.



## Consensus Recommendations

In addition to the total number of recommendations in each category, our team also looked at the number of recommendations which appear in two or more of the reports. We identified twelve (12) “consensus recommendations” that should be reviewed and considered as appropriate by the King County Executive, King County Council, King County Elections Office, and Washington State. The recommendations include the following (not meant to be in order of priority):

### Public Policy

- King County should research and consider moving to an all-mail-election with a small number of regional voting centers.
- Consider an earlier date for holding the primary election.
- Elevate the importance of the Elections Office within King County government.

### Organizational Effectiveness

- Define desired competencies and experience for KCEO leaders and managers.
- Create a formal training plan for KCEO employees and improve poll worker training.
- Develop uniform performance measurement standards for all employees.
- Develop and implement an external communications plan.
- Increase the level of communication with poll workers.
- Increase the diversity in poll worker recruitment in order to effectively implement Chinese language requirements.

### Election Operations

- King County should acquire a consolidated elections facility.
- Increase Security Procedures.
- Document and continuously update Elections Office operation processes and procedures.

As demonstrated in the list above, implementing the consensus recommendations will require that King County Officials and Elections Office personnel work simultaneously in the areas of public policy, organizational effectiveness, and elections operations. The Waldron Team believes that King County should make it a top priority to successfully implement these recommendations, as they will have a profound and lasting impact on the KCEO.



## Matrix Implementation Plan

As discussed earlier in this report, the Recommendation Matrix serves two purposes. First, it serves as a blueprint for implementing recommendations at all levels of the KCEO. Second, it is also intended to provide a comprehensive side-by-side comparison of all existing recommendations. Below, we outline the critical next steps to transform the Matrix into a powerful project management tool that supervisors and employees can use to measure implementation progress and meaningful results. (See Appendix III for Sample Implementation Matrix Plan.)

- 1. Expand Matrix Categories:** The Recommendation Matrix currently contains five (5) categories. However, as the KCEO begins to focus on implementing recommendations, we advise that seven (7) additional categories be added to the Matrix. This would create a Recommendation Matrix comprised of the twelve (12) categories which are used to plan and track the implementation plans tied to each recommendation.
- 2. Define Priorities:** Using facilitated meetings, senior management will evaluate the recommendations and assign a priority level for each recommendation. Since not all recommendations will have the same impact on the organization, elections managers must determine which recommendations will bring the greatest value to the organization when implemented. In addition, choices will have to be made as to which recommendations can most effectively be implemented within existing budgetary and policy constraints. Once this step is complete, senior management will be able to focus employees and resources to implement the most critical recommendations first.
- 3. Set Goals:** Having determined the key priorities for implementation, managers and staff (depending on the type of recommendation) will work together to define goals for its implementation. In order to assist them in this goal setting process, the Waldron Team will work with the KCEO Team to provide examples of “best practices” identified around the country.
- 4. Evaluate Current Status:** Once managers and staff have defined the goals they want to achieve, they must determine their starting point. This step focuses them on taking inventory of what implementation steps have been accomplished and paves the way for determining the actions still needed to achieve the desired goals (known as a gap analysis).
- 5. Determine Actions Needed to Achieve Goal:** In this phase, managers and staff openly discuss the series of actions that are needed to achieve the desired goal of each recommendation. These discussions will focus on devising a clear plan of action needed to accomplish the desired goals. Once managers and staff have come to an agreement on the actions needed to accomplish the goal, these are articulated in the Matrix as action steps.
- 6. Explore Dependencies:** To successfully implement each recommendation, it will require a collaborative working relationship with the King County Executive, the KCEO Management and staff, and key external stakeholders.





7. **Determine Date When Goal Will Be Reached:** Managers and staff will negotiate together to determine a realistic and acceptable date by which actions will be implemented that will lead to the achievement of each goal and provide status reports.
8. **Assign Responsibility for Accomplishing Goals:** Specific accountabilities should be assigned to KCEO management and staff for achieving the specified goals in the Recommendation Matrix.
9. **Determine How to Measure Performance:** Members of the Quality Assurance team will need to work with managers and staff to determine the best method to measure the success in achieving goals. This performance measure will then be used by the Director and the King County Executive to evaluate the success in the implementation and execution of recommendations.
10. **Celebrate Implementation of Each Recommendation:** Successful completion of a key recommendation is an opportunity for managers and staff in the KCEO to celebrate success. This will go a long way towards building the confidence and pride of KCEO management and staff. It is also an opportunity to communicate progress to the public and key stakeholders. This will assist in efforts to rebuild public confidence in King County Elections.



## IV. Recommended Next Steps

Based on our observations, most recent changes in the elections strategic plans and the stage of the organization's development, we recommend developing a comprehensive Organizational Effectiveness plan for the KCEO.

While, in general, reports are positive around the KCEO performance during the 2005 general election, significant work remains to be done before public confidence is fully restored in King County Elections. One thing is clear – based on the recommendations made by the King County Executive, King County Council, and oversight groups, the KCEO will continue to undergo significant changes for the foreseeable future.

Implementing the changes needed to transform the organization's culture is critical to ensure the KCEO is ready to embrace legislative, staffing, facility, and operational improvements to ensure sustainable long-term results. The Waldron Team is prepared to work side-by-side with KCEO management and staff to develop a high performing organizational culture that will:

- Serve the public interest with integrity and commitment to performance excellence.
- Build and maintain trust and credibility through transparency and openness.
- Conduct clear and on-going internal and external communication.
- Support and develop individual and team growth.

The Organizational Effectiveness plan should include KCEO Management team accountabilities and role clarity to ensure clear direction, communication, and expected results/outcomes. This plan will also define the Waldron Team's role and its responsibility in working with the KCEO team to implement the plan through the steps described below.

In order to ensure long-term organizational transformation, it is important for the KCEO to maintain ownership for implementation and execution against the Organizational Effectiveness plan. The critical steps in creating and implementing this plan are described below.

1. Conduct a full organizational analysis using a facilitated approach with key employees, management, and stakeholders to ensure adequate understanding of the current cultural issues, opportunities, and priorities of the organization. In addition, employee work sessions can be used to develop organizational support at all levels for the actions necessary to develop a high performing culture committed to excellence.

We use a "Transformation Model" as the framework for the analysis. This model analyzes organizational effectiveness from seven separate elements and provides guidance to employees for understanding how these seven work together to create "organizational effectiveness."



The KCEO Management team should be involved in the preparation of and participation in facilitated sessions. An assessment/analysis may be conducted in retreat format (recommended) or in shorter modules. Employees and key stakeholders should be engaged in analysis and discussion of the organization.

2. Create/finalize workflow diagrams for key election processes including changes identified during the facilitated sessions. Any changes in strategic direction such as moving to all-mail ballots may require significant changes in election processes. Best practices from around the country need to be identified and analyzed for inclusion in the KCEO model.
3. Working with the KCEO leadership and management teams to provide real-time coaching and support for leading and managing changes across the organization. This includes coaching related to management's impact on the organizational environment and culture.
4. Create a clear and fully integrated implementation plan which considers the past recommendations from all oversight group reports. This implementation plan should include agreed-upon priorities, goals, dependencies, completion dates, ownership, ongoing actions, and performance measures of success. The proposed expanded Matrix is shown in Appendix IV and can be used as a guiding tool.

In conclusion, we recommend the organizational effectiveness plan be presented to the King County Executive, the King County Council, and the key stakeholders to ensure agreement and transparency of the process.



## Appendix I. Schedule for Waldron Team Election Observation

Location	Activities	Observation Date(s)
<b>King County Administration Building</b>	Election Board Assignments	11/8
	Voter Registration Inquiries & Multilingual Services	11/8
	Voter Information Hotline Phone Bank	11/8
	Absentee Drop-off Location	11/8
	Media Briefing Room/Communications Center	11/8
	Election Results Reporting	11/8
	Memory Card Uploading	11/8
	Geographic Information System (GIS)	11/8
<b>King County Garage</b>	Seattle Poll Worker Depot – return of memory card and supplies	11/8
<b>Temporary Election Annex (TEA)</b>	Absentee Ballot Processing	11/3, 8, 9,10,11,12, 21
	Signature Verification	11/3, 8, 9,10,11,12,
	Ballot Opening	11/3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
	Ballot Duplication	11/3, 8, 9,10,11,12, 21
	Ballot Reconciliation	11/10, 11, 12, 21



<b>Location</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Observation Date(s)</b>
<b>Temporary Election Annex (TEA) – cont.</b>	Canvass Sort	11/10, 11, 12
	Provisional Ballot Prep	11/10, 11, 12
	Distribution In/Out – Quality Control	11/10, 11, 12
	Wanda	11/10, 11, 12
	Help Desk – phone support for poll workers	11/8
<b>Mail Ballot Operations Satellite (MBOS)</b>	Absentee Ballot Tabulation	11/3, 8,
<b>Election Distribution Center (EDC)</b>	Sorting of Bags, Return of Equipment & Supplies	11/9
<b>Polling Locations</b>	Regular Polling Activities	11/8
<b>(Observed at 18 locations around King County)</b>	Disability Accessible Voting Equipment (D.A.V.E.)	11/8
<b>King County Administration Building &amp; Temporary Elections Annex (TEA)</b>	Canvass Board Meetings	11/3, 10, 21



## Appendix II. Waldron Team Biographies

*Debbie Bevier*

*Project Leader*

### Biography

Debbie joined Waldron & Company in 2004 to lead Waldron Consulting to provide consulting services focused on organizational effectiveness and leadership development. As an experienced Chairman, President and CEO, Debbie is a corporate and community leader who creates and communicates a vision and sense of purpose.

Prior to joining Waldron & Company, Debbie served as President and CEO of Laird Norton Financial Group and Laird Norton Trust Company, and CEO of Wentworth Hauser and Violich, Inc. During her six year tenure with Laird Norton Financial Group, Debbie led the strategic plan development and implementation. This resulted in the creation of the largest independent provider of wealth management services for high-net-worth clients in the Puget Sound Region. The visibility of Laird Norton Financial Group increased significantly both regionally and nationally as a provider of wealth management services and investment management strategies and products.

Prior to joining Laird Norton Financial Group in 1996, Debbie was the Chairman and CEO of Key Bank of Washington and led the merger of eight company cultures with over 4000 employees. The new culture shared a common vision, mission and values which enabled the achievement of profit plan goals and objectives. During her 23 year career with KeyCorp she also led the start-up of Key Bank USA N.A., a direct response marketing bank and Key Corp Leasing Ltd., an equipment leasing company.

Debbie serves on the Board of Directors for Coinstar, Inc., Fisher Communications, Inc. She also serves on the Community Board for Regence BlueShield. She also serves on the Board of several not-for-profit organizations including the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Boys and Girls Club of King County, Arts Fund of Seattle and Washington State Women's Forum. She has served as the Chairman for the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Foundation, and the Tacoma Pierce County Economic Development Board.

Debbie received a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the State University of New York at New Paltz and completed a 3-year program for the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Rutgers University.



*Harold Robertson*  
*Strategic Management*

**Biography**

Throughout Harold's career, he has demonstrated leadership of effective organizations. As a result, he has been inducted into the American Institute of Certified Planners' College of Fellows. His collaborative approach has produced impressive results, greatly advancing the effectiveness of local and statewide planning in Washington. Harold's intergovernmental accomplishments highlight thirty years of professional excellence.

As Executive Director of the Elevated Transportation Company, Harold led staff and consultants in preparing a Seattle monorail plan, which was approved by voters in November 2002. Harold supported the citizen Public Development Authority board in the public, intergovernmental, and planning processes that drew kudos for openness and genuineness.

From 1986 to 2000, Harold served as Executive Director of the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC). He led staff and supported elected officials in expanding and solidifying interagency and political participation with the regional council. TRPC developed into an effective "convener" for examination, debate, and policy development on important regional issues affecting growth management, transportation, infrastructure finance, and economic vitality.

During that time, Harold built a dynamic TRPC transportation program through staff collaboration with other agencies, the private sector, and general public. TRPC's regional plan was recognized with a State American Planning Association (APA) Honor Award. That plan, for the first time, integrated transportation with a new regional land use strategy. The Regional Council put accountability into the plan by basing disbursements of state and federal funds on consistency with the plan's priorities. The National Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations recognized TRPC for outstanding leadership in metropolitan transportation planning.

Harold has played a lead role in growth management locally and statewide. Before the state law on growth management, he led collaboration and negotiations for an Urban Growth Management Agreement among Thurston County and its cities. The agreement drew an urban boundary to contain sprawl, required joint city/county planning within growth areas, and established resource lands protection. The Agreement received an Honor Award from the State APA.

TRPC staff spearheaded plan implementation through collaborative regional programs and contract work for various jurisdictions. A city/county memorandum of

understanding on zoning and development standards, city/county joint plans, and development regulations were recognized with State APA Chapter and League of Women Voters awards.

In the mid-1980s, as Manager of King County's Planning Division, Harold directed the staff team through an extensive technical and public process that resulted in a new Comprehensive Plan. For the first time, the county plan drew an urban boundary to contain sprawl and established new implementation measures.





## *Lynda Silsbee*

### *OE / HR Manager*

#### **Biography**

Lynda Silsbee has more than 22 years of working in fast-paced, high growth companies such as Nordstrom, Genie Industries, and Vulcan Northwest prior to developing a successful consulting practice in 1999. Lynda specializes in creating great leadership in organizations, developing high-performing teams, and increasing organizational capacity to deliver results. Her specialties include work in strategic planning and integration, organization design and development, executive coaching, leadership and team development, performance management systems, process improvement, and employee retention. She has the broad leadership and industry experience needed in a consultant, facilitator, and coach. Her diverse business experience gives her valuable wisdom, knowledge, and skills that she applies to benefit clients.

Lynda is able to keep an eye on the strategic mission of an organization, while empathizing with and balancing the business needs with employee needs. She has created and facilitated leadership and team development programs, including the prestigious Future Nordstrom Leaders Program, and the Genie Industries' Scissor Plant Start-Up Training Program. She also has developed and implemented performance management systems, compensation systems, and is an insightful negotiator and professional coach.

Lynda serves on the boards of the Society of Human Resource Management-Seattle, the Northwest Entrepreneur Network, and the International Society of Performance Improvement. In addition, she is an adjunct faculty member of Seattle Pacific University in connection with the University's Human Performance Improvement program as well as facilitates the Business Advisory Group for Seattle Executives Association. Lynda is also an accomplished writer and national speaker on achieving High Performance in organizations.

Lynda received a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, with a concentration in Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior, from the University of Washington. Additionally, as a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources, Lynda is able to create thorough, systemic and measurable solutions for clients. Lynda was awarded the prestigious CPT – Certified Performance Technologist – designation by the International Society of Performance Improvement in fall of 2003 for her proven work in the field.



## *Rita Brogan*

### *Communications / Public Information Manager*

#### Biography

Rita Brogan is Chief Executive Officer of PRR, Inc., one of the Northwest's leading public affairs and communications consulting firms. Under her leadership, PRR has provided strategic planning and communications solutions throughout the nation – all with a focus on environmental, community, and human health. Most recently, Ms. Brogan provided communications support to the King County Independent Task Force on Elections.

Prior to joining PRR, Brogan was the Superintendent of Public Transportation Development at Seattle Metro where she directed research, marketing, and transportation development functions of the agency, and led a major reorganization of the agency. She also served as chief land use advisor to King County Executive Randy Revelle, where she mediated the agreements leading to the development of the King County Comprehensive Plan and implementation of the Farmlands Preservation Program.

Rita Brogan has a long history of public and civic service, and has served on numerous boards and commissions. Her service spans the fields of education, human services, environment and land use, transportation, civil rights, research, and education.

She currently chairs the Municipal League of King County, a civic organization that has advocated for good government since 1910. She also serves on the Board of the Downtown Seattle Association and is a founding leader of the Asian Pacific Islander Roundtable. Ms. Brogan has authored numerous articles on communications, marketing, and public affairs, and hosts a monthly public affairs show on CTV.



## *Jeff Waldron*

### *Senior Analyst*

#### Biography

Jeffrey joined Waldron & Company in 1999 to provide overall consulting support across the firm's practice lines. In the past six years, he has quickly risen to the role of senior consultant and leads and/or participates in some of the firm's largest client engagements. Most recently, Jeffrey has become a key member of the Organizational Effectiveness practice, including leading and contributing to portions of organization-wide effectiveness projects as well as supporting leadership development and coaching assignments.

Jeffrey's experience also includes managing executive searches for both the nonprofit and public sectors, with a specialized focus in the firm's CFO, HR, and Audit search engagements. He further acted as a senior manager for the firm's Interim Placement Division, which focused on providing clients with interim professionals in executive-level or technical positions in the public and nonprofit sectors.

Part of Jeffrey's responsibilities at Waldron & Company include managing and supporting many of the firm's administrative functions, including marketing, technical resource allocation, and financial tracking. Prior to joining Waldron & Company, Jeffrey's experience includes working with Jackson-Lewis, a nation-wide law firm, as well as working with a mediation company.

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Jeffrey holds Bachelor's degrees in Business Administration and Psychology. While at the University, Jeff served as President, Society for Human Resource Management, University Chapter and was committee member of the Presidents' Council in the School of Business.

Jeffrey is an active member of the community, serving on the Board of Directors and Advisory Council for two community service organizations.



*Ivan Barron*

*Senior Analyst*

### Biography

Ivan has worked in the nonprofit, government, and business sectors as a consultant and manager. Currently, he is the co-founder and consulting director for the Public Synergy Group, a consulting company specializing in developing performance management and evaluation systems for government and nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Barron has also served as Deputy Director for the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals and as President of SDF Mortgage Corporation. Ivan served as an advisor to the Assistant Director of the Minority Business Development Agency at the US Department of Commerce and as a policy associate on Capitol Hill.

Prior to working in Washington D.C., Ivan served as a research consultant at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and was responsible for the operations of three nonprofit enterprises at the University of Washington in Seattle. Ivan holds a Masters of Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Washington.



