

4. STRENGTHENING THE ORGANIZATION

4.1 Overall Situation Assessment

The Kirkland Police Department has undergone significant change, including the recent appointment of a new Police Chief. The recent changes, including an annexation expanding the geographic jurisdiction of the department, an increase in the number of department personnel, a new facility, and new work shifts, while presenting challenges, also offer an opportunity for the new Police Chief to inspire a course for transformational progress.

Organizational culture can be defined as the way the Department operates and the interactions among its members. It encompasses the work atmosphere; bonds among employees; how the Department learns; and the norms and values of the department. It is the deep identity of the organization and can enhance the Department or damage it.

4.2 Communication, Connection, and Collaborative Leadership

The functioning of any organization is as dependent on internal communications and culture as it is on having the proper people, training, equipment, and procedures. The assessment work found that there are opportunities to improve vertical and horizontal communication flow. Staff described cultural challenges created by the new facility that physically separates functions and decreases informal communication. This has led the Department rely more on e-mail and phone contact rather than face-to-face conversation.

The assessment also found that in addition to physical communication issues, there is a divided culture that has grown out of an historically strong hierarchy that limits innovation and organizational learning and improvement. This has led to limited delegation of tasks that can lead to decreased efficiencies.

Recommendations

Recommendation 33. Implement proactive change management and strengthen internal vertical communication flow.

The residual effects of recent significant changes (annexation, staffing expansion, new facility, new patrol work shifts, and the anticipation of additional change resulting from the recent selection of a new Police Chief) continue to ripple through the Department, creating concurrent feelings of loss and hopefulness among employees. There is a need for a proactive change management approach to address these issues head on, communicating the Department's strategy internally before making public announcements of changes. Department staff should hear of changes first, before hearing on the news or rumor mill.

Communication systems should support the effective dissemination of command direction, organizational, and individual performance expectations, and revisions in departmental policies and procedures. In addition, vertical communication improvements are required for identifying and clarifying decision-making processes and promoting constructive feedback and input from employees.

a. Strengthen leadership's communication of issues of importance.

Focus on decreasing emails to convey important shifts in policy or procedure and increase in-person communications.

b. Focus on improving communication at the sergeant level.

Sergeants are the main connector between command and officers and strong leadership in this position can improve vertical communication for commissioned personnel.

Recommendation 34. Strive to create a strong department-wide culture that unites diverse work groups under the Kirkland Police banner.

KPD is a relatively large and relatively diverse organization. While individuals naturally feel most connected to their individual work group, it is critical for the success of the organization to maintain a strong Department-wide identity that embraces all work units and both civilian and commissioned personnel.

a. Promote a department-wide identity through communications, celebrations, personnel recognition, and other opportunities.

b. Break down silos in horizontal communication.

Staff reported horizontal communication is “siloeed,” i.e., intra-unit information may flow well but inter-unit information flows poorly, creating information voids or confusion that generate inaccurate speculation, rumor, and ill will.

Internal newsletters or other communication devices can be used to share information of unit's work. For example, few people knew about CopLogic, the social media plan, new recruitment strategies, and other meaningful, positive changes occurring in the department. Keeping people notified helps limit rumors or misunderstandings about what is happening.

Recommendation 35. Continue to preach and practice collaborative leadership in which personal initiative and suggestions for improvement are welcomed so long as they are well-intentioned, professionally delivered, and aligned with KPD's Philosophy, Vision, Mission, and Values.

KPD's Philosophy encourages independent decision making and leadership when it is informed by, aligned with, and accountable to community and departmental values.

“Collaborative Leadership,” the systematic development of all formal and informal leadership throughout the Department at all levels, including commissioned and non-commissioned personnel, is a way to enhance the flexibility and responsiveness of the organization to anticipate and respond to evolving environments and associated service expectations. It acknowledges that neither the chief nor any centralized authority can make all the decisions necessary to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of such a complex organization. Collaborative Leadership has five characteristics:

1. A shared understanding of what leadership means in the department.
2. A commitment to shared goals and values by leaders at all levels of the department.
3. A recognition that leaders at different levels in the Department have varying responsibilities and therefore must be trained according to their needs.
4. Formal training to develop leader knowledge and skills at all levels.
5. A means to assess where leaders are in the Department and their evolution as leaders.

Collaborative Leadership has many benefits, including:

- Creating a more intelligent and adaptive agency.
- Cultivating future leaders (succession planning).
- Creating a positive workplace environment in which employees feel valued, respected, and that they have opportunities for growth (retention and attraction).

a. Create opportunities to match individual interest and talents with organizational needs.

Department staff bring a variety of strengths and interests to the workplace, not all of which may be actively utilized. Professional development plans (see **Recommendation 37**) can be used to link individual talents to departmental initiatives, encouraging staff members to contribute in a well-managed way where they have interest/strengths. These contributions and special duty assignments simultaneously strengthen the department, provide professional development and succession planning opportunities (see **Recommendation 38**), and enhance engagement and job satisfaction, leading to retention.

4.3 Performance Evaluations and Professional Development

As an accredited agency, KPD is required to do yearly performance evaluations. KPD Administration states that all employees received an evaluation in 2015, and that a new patrol evaluation was just completed.

In speaking with department employees, we found widespread dissatisfaction with the present performance evaluation process. Moreover, several employees stated they had not been evaluated in some time. Comments about the evaluation form included:

- It lacks meaningful performance standards.
- It is not tailored to the specific positions being evaluated.
- It does not promote constructive discussion between the evaluator and the person being evaluated.
- It fails to contribute to a Personal Performance Plan for the individual being evaluated.
- It is administered infrequently and in a subjective manner.

There is a strong desire for a more meaningful evaluation and professional development processes for both commissioned and non-commissioned employees.

Recommendations

Recommendation 36. Revamp the current evaluation process and supporting tools.

There is a widespread and deep desire for processes that capture not only simple quantitative-based performance but also recognize the qualitative performance, especially in light of how patrol officers function as both first responders and as detectives conducting follow-up investigations. Staff further believe performance should be evaluated for how the individual supports the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the Department.

a. Revise the evaluation process.

Staff currently evaluate their superiors just prior to being evaluated themselves, a sequence which, warranted or not, creates a fear of reprisal. This practice creates strong disincentives for honest

feedback. The Department should create a process for subordinates to evaluate superiors in a way that promotes a productive critique, ensures the anonymity of the subordinate, and protects them from retaliation. This should include separating supervisor evaluations from evaluations of subordinates.

It may be advantageous to have input gathered by a lieutenant, analyzed for themes, and presented in productive fashion.

The employee whose performance is being evaluated and the supervisor conducting the performance evaluation should collaborate to draft a Professional Development Plan for the employee to develop the knowledge and skills helpful for the employee to assume a higher responsibility or desired position. The plan may consist of readings, discussions via mentoring, training classes, or experiences.

b. Establish clear and transparent expectations defining what individuals will be evaluated for by position.

The framework for evaluation should be based on clear position descriptions and identified desired competencies. Revisit and update position descriptions throughout the Department to gain a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities across the agency and how they tie to the overall Department's overarching philosophy.

In addition to capturing simple quantitative-based performance measures, it is important to recognize qualitative performance, especially in light of how patrol officers function as both first responders and as detectives conducting follow-up investigations. A performance evaluation should also consider how the individual supports the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the Department.

The evaluation process should likely incorporate self-reflection and evaluation.

Recommendation 37. Strengthen professional development planning, establishing a longer-term view and linking to Departmental succession management efforts.

An organization's commitment to the ongoing professional development of its employees is directly correlated to staff retention, succession management, and even recruitment.

a. Establish a long-term focus in professional development planning.

The current focus in professional development conversations is very short-term (the current year), resulting in goals that are too modest as staff are incentivized to show attainment of stated goals. Instead, this process should have a long-term focus, looking out 5 or even 10 years.

Long-term goals should align with the organizational needs of the Department (a part of succession management discussed in **Recommendation 38**) and should be used to directly inform training goals and budgets and the departmental level.

b. Support and evaluate staff in leadership positions for their ability to grow their staff through collaborative leadership, evaluations, and professional development.

Supervisors should be mentors and advocates, helping people achieve their long-term goals. If someone aspires to an unreasonable goal given his/her abilities, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to have an honest conversation, or to give them the opportunity to succeed or fail. Supervisors may need training and skill development to perform this function well. It is a core duty for a sergeant.

With the new shift bidding process, people will get a new supervisor, with a new look at their goals, each year.

4.4 Retention, Succession Management, and Recruitment

The Kirkland Police Department pays close attention to the composition of its workforce as it relates to age, seniority, and retirement. The Department enjoys a good reputation in the area with good pay and benefits. That said, as with other public agencies in the region, the Department is facing a pending wave of retirements creating concerns about retention, leadership succession, and recruitment. In the next nine years, almost 40% of Kirkland’s staff will become eligible for retirement. Though all eligible staff will not choose to retire due to health benefits the Department affords as well as increases in pay that come with seniority, the number of staff with eligible retirements remains a risk for the Department. Approximately 15% of the KPD staff are currently eligible for retirement, all of them commissioned officers. See **Appendix 4.** for more information.

Recommendations

Recommendations related to retention, succession management and recruitment are made here, but many other sections of the plan make recommendations related to making KPD a great place to work (including improved communications – **Section 4.2**, personal development – **Section 4.3**, etc.), which will contribute to the retention of existing employees.

Recommendation 38. Establish a succession management program.

- a. Establish a succession management approach.** Establish a deliberate and systematic effort to encourage individual advancement and ensure continuity in key positions, including management, technical and professional specialist roles.
- b. Analyze the data.** Understand where the Department will need to take a more proactive role in cultivating future leaders. This includes identifying key leadership positions that will need replacement due to pending retirements.
- c. Hire for future leaders.** Include consideration of quality and character – key ingredients for future leaders – when hiring at all levels and for all positions.
- d. Be transparent about expectations and competencies for leadership, establishing a career development guide and specifics for each rank/level of responsibility.**

Succession Management

Succession management proactively identifies, trains, and develops internal staff to fill leadership positions, expanding the availability of experienced and capable employees when retirements occur.

Successful succession management can shape an organization’s leadership culture and build a leadership pipeline by concentrating resources on talent development.

There is a large body of research surrounding the leadership competencies for law enforcement employees at all ranks and levels of responsibility within an organization. There are studies from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), U.S. Army, and others that list these competencies for various supervisory and leadership positions. Although there are variations of these lists, most set out similar competencies that can be grouped together in the following categories:

- Ethics/integrity
- Vision and goals
- Getting results - completing tasks/making decisions/solving problems
- Communication
- Coaching/training/mentoring
- Technical improvement/self-improvement

Working within each category, it is possible to list more details specific to a particular rank or position. Therefore, more detailed lists can be assembled for desired ranks/levels of responsibility.

- e. **Cultivate individuals.** Identify those with the aptitude and desire to advance; provide critical development experiences and mentoring that actively guides them through career development.

Recommendation 39. Continue to strengthen recruitment efforts to get the best qualified applicants aligned with KPD's values.

The Department should create a formal recruitment plan that prioritizes desired competencies aligning with the Departmental Philosophy, Vision, Mission, and Values.

a. Modernize hiring standards.

Throughout the organization hiring standards are cited as a point of pride for staff, but they have also posed a challenge for recruitment. We recommend that the Department review all of its oral board testing, background screening, and minimum qualifications criteria to evaluate whether these standards are still relevant to their desired workforce.

b. Use limited commission positions as hiring pool for fully commissioned officers.

Positions like limited commission Community Service Officers can provide opportunities to test recruits before investing in trainings required for full commissioning.

c. Continue a strong marketing campaign that highlights the new Justice Center Facility and demonstrates the Department's progressive stance on technology.

The Department should continue current marketing efforts and increased media presence, which will be helpful in keeping Kirkland at the forefront of potential recruits' minds and updating the image they may have of Kirkland. Specific ideas include:

- Using public events as a forum for promoting the Department as a superior workplace.
- Continuing to host trainings at the new Justice Center and use those trainings as recruitment opportunities while promoting the Department's modern facilities.
- Using technology for marketing efforts: update the Department's website, allow for electronic application forms, and communicate with texts or email on progress of candidate applications.

- Targeting recruitment of Millennials who are increasingly dominating the hiring pool, estimated to constitute more than 75% of the workforce in the next 10 years. See sidebar at right.

In general, the agencies that are doing well hiring and recruiting are those who have a highly motivated and active person dedicated to shepherding applicants through the process and keeping in regular contact with them. The State Patrol and SCORE are noted as being very good at this process; they and others typically have recruiters present when Public Safety Testing holds testing events.

d. Increase diversity in hiring.

As Kirkland continues to grow, the Department should strive to reflect the diversity of the community in its workforce. KPD should work with Civil Service to develop specific, measurable, diversity goals, with incentives to increase diversity in initial applicant pools. Diversity in race as well as gender should be prioritized. For example, additional points could be given during the hiring process for language proficiency in languages that are relevant to the Kirkland population. Other examples of incentives are a 5% dual language premium provided by King County Sheriff's Office. An example of diversity in hiring goal, from Irving, California, is to have minorities and women make up more than 50% of entrance exam takers.

Given Civil Service requirements, some variables related to recruiting cannot be changed. The Department controls its own process, however, and its chances of landing the right candidate will increase if the process is swift and lean:

- Eliminate duplicate processes and meaningless steps.
- Eliminate errors.

Finally, as noted by community stakeholders during interviews, partnerships with local organizations and community-based organizations could be used to raise KPD's profile and reputation with members of diverse communities, encouraging more to apply for open positions with KPD.

Strategies for Recruiting Millennials

Meet them where they are:

- Seattle University Job Fair
- Central Washington University's Women in Law Enforcement Job Fair

Target those employed in:

- Companies that are downsizing as posted on the Washington State Employment Security Department website:
<https://esd.wa.gov/about-employees/WARN>
- Jobs where Millennials may become bored, including the airline industry, nursing, or teaching

Identify personality interests or strengths that are compatible with a public safety career and KPD's Philosophy.