



GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Report recommends KC Police Department trim management, put more officers on patrol

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Kansas City's police department is top heavy with managers compared to other similar-sized or larger cities, and should work quickly to get more patrol officers on the street, a study released Friday recommends.


"Most larger police departments have fewer managers than does Kansas City," said the 300-page report by the Matrix Consulting Group. "On the basis of managers per sworn employees, only Indianapolis is higher."

The report, given to both police and city officials in closed session earlier this week, also says an "urgent priority" should be increasing the number of patrol officers by 37. But it says that can be accomplished not by bulking up overall staffing but by reallocating other officers or not filling other positions.

With the city facing a spike in murders and shootings, the police bargaining unit and many Kansas City citizens have argued that the department should hire many more officers. But the report calls that into question.

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For example, it says the patrol bureau's current authorized staffing of law enforcement personnel is 965 positions, and recommends 966 — an increase of just one sworn position.

The report compared Kansas City's police staffing levels to those in Indianapolis; St. Louis; Tucson, Ariz.; Long Beach, Calif.; Albuquerque, N.M.; Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C.; Milwaukee; Austin, Texas; and Mesa, Ariz. It suggests numerous ways existing staff could be redeployed for more cost-effective and perhaps even less expensive operations.

“In the KCPD, management and sworn staffing levels have resulted in many functions that could be civilianized or managed by lower ranks,” it said. With 1,882 positions currently authorized, the report recommends a reduction in 30 sworn personnel and adding 88 civilians, for a net increase of just 58 positions.

The consultants emphasized that the department should “continually evaluate opportunities to civilianize and place responsibilities lower in the organization.”

City Councilwoman Alissia Canady, a former Jackson County assistant prosecutor and chair of the council's public safety

committee, said her report confirmed what she said the city has known needed. By continuing to use this site, you give your consent to our use of cookies for analytics, personalization and ads. [Read more](#) 

“We have enough staff. They’re just not adequately deployed,” she said.

She agreed with the urgent need for more patrol officers, and also with a recommendation to add four more homicide detectives and six more assault detectives and to located assault squads with the homicide unit in a redefined major crimes division.

One key recommendation is to discontinue the practice of deploying two-officer patrol cars, except in special assignments and circumstances.


“Two-officer units reduce the capacity of patrol to respond to calls for service,” the report contended, while cautioning that it’s important to consider the impact on officer safety and on the need for backup units.

Canady said the two-officer patrol cars were implemented because officers were getting shot in other cities, and she recommended a judicious review of changing that policy.

The report comes just as the police department is seeking a new police chief to replace Darryl Forté, [who retired in May](#).

It also comes as the city is confronting a serious spike in

homicides, with [more than 100 deaths in 2018](#). The city has had more than 100 homicides in any year since 2008.

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The \$140,000 study, which began in January, was done collaboratively between the city and the police department, which is a separate state-controlled agency but funded by the city.

The police budget this year is [\\$250.8 million](#), but the police routinely ask for millions more dollars. The study was prompted in part because the city manager and city council said they wanted to make sure police resources are allocated as effectively as possible.

The report even provides some advice for the Kansas City Board of Police Commissioners, which governs the department: “The police board needs to play a role more like a City Council, ensuring that there is a continual process of establishing service goals, maximizing community service, and measuring performance with appropriate metrics.”

Police Board Chair Leland Shurin said Friday he was still reviewing the report, along with the department.

“KCPD’s executive staff were presented with the staffing study on Monday, July 10. We are currently reviewing the 300-plus-page document and taking a hard look at all the recommendations in the study,” Shurin said, adding that it will be discussed at the next police board meeting, Aug. 15.

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“It would be inappropriate for me to comment on a particular line item at this time as KCPD is reviewing each and every recommendation and our deployment strategy.”


Mayor Sly James also serves on the police board. His office said the mayor would be ready to comment next week but was still reviewing its findings at this time. Other city officials also declined comment.

Brad Lemon, president of Kansas City’s Fraternal Order of Police, said the bargaining unit was reviewing the report item by item.

“Some of the findings we have reviewed have left us with serious concerns and questions as to how these results were reached,” Lemon said in a statement, adding that the Fraternal Order of Police will comment in greater detail when the police board has its discussion.

The report does note that the Kansas City police department does some things well:

- Though in its early stages, the Real Time Crime Center is a progressive attempt at operational intelligence and predictive policing.

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- The department has a state-of-the-art forensics lab with space for growth.
- The department has high standards for training new recruits and for annual re-training.


Some things don't need to change, according to the report.

For example, it said to maintain current authorized staffing of 45 officers in traffic enforcement, one sergeant and five detectives in traffic investigation; and current staffing in accident investigations. IT called for increasing the robbery and crimes against children sections while reducing the missing persons/cold case section.

It called for eliminating the mounted patrol section and reassigning personnel where needed. Canady said she would need more information before deciding whether that was justified.

Other recommendations:

- Reduce management staffing levels over time. The report says the department has too much management support, in which one senior manager, a major, provides back up to other senior managers, deputy chiefs, in each bureau. That's

not the case in By continuing to use this site, you give your consent to our use of cookies for analytics, personalization and ads. [Read more](#) 

- Convert a number of captain, sergeant and other law-enforcement positions to civilian positions throughout the administrative and management parts of the organization, including in the chief's office.
- Improve information technology coordination between the city and police. This is already underway.
- Develop a robust recruitment and retention strategy.

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