

Status Report on Implementation of Office of City Auditor Recommendations as of December 2021

May 27, 2022

David G. Jones, City Auditor



Seattle Office of City Auditor

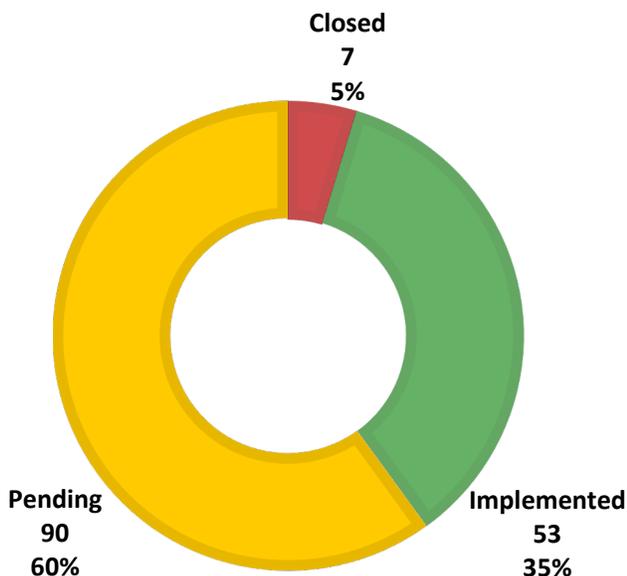
Status Report on Implementation of Office of City Auditor Recommendations as of December 2021

Summary and Results

The Office of City Auditor follows up annually on the implementation status of its audit recommendations and reports the results to the Seattle City Council. This process provides an opportunity for our office, the City Council, and audited City departments to review the results of our past audit work. We appreciate the cooperation of the many City departments involved in this effort.

This report details the status of recommendations reported as “pending” in our [previous March 2021 follow-up report](#) and new recommendations contained in the audit reports we published during 2021. In 2021, we tracked 150 recommendations contained in 23 audit reports¹. As of December 31, 2021, 35 percent of the recommendations (53 out of 150) were implemented, 60 percent (90 out of 150) were pending, and 5 percent (7 out of 150) were closed (no further follow up planned).

Recommendations’ Status as of December 31, 2021



Status Categories

Implemented

We determined that the recommendation or the intent of the recommendation has been met, or we see significant progress has been made and no barrier to its full implementation.

Pending

We determined that implementation is in process or is uncertain, and additional monitoring is warranted. We will follow up on these recommendations in the future.

Closed

We decide to close recommendations when either: 1) the recommendation is no longer relevant; 2) implementation is not feasible; 3) the audited entity’s management does not agree with the recommendation and is not planning to implement the recommendation; or 4) the recommendation was considered by the City Council but not adopted. We will no longer follow up on these recommendations.

¹ See Appendix B.

2021 Recommendation Follow up Report Highlights



SDOT CCTV Traffic Cameras
Source: Seattle Department of Transportation Traffic Cameras Fact Sheet.

Audits of Surveillance Technology

Ordinance 125376 requires the City Auditor to conduct an annual review of the City's use of City Council-approved non-police surveillance technologies. To date, our office has completed two of the initial installments of these required annual reports. These reports were about two Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) surveillance technologies – our [December 2020 report on License Plate Readers \(LPRs\)](#) and our [June 2021 report on Closed Circuit Television \(CCTV\) Traffic Cameras](#).

The two reports contained a total of 28 recommendations. SDOT reported that they are no longer using the LPR system, and that it will be physically dismantled sometime in 2022. To date, SDOT has implemented seven of the report's nine recommendations. We will consider the two-remaining pending LPR recommendations to be closed when SDOT has physically dismantled the system. In 2021 SDOT implemented 17 of the 19 recommendations in the CCTV report.

A large part of our office's workload in 2022 will be comprised of surveillance technology audits. By September 2022, our office plans to issue new reports on three Seattle Fire Department and three Seattle City Light surveillance technologies as well as issuing the first annual follow up review of the CCTV surveillance technology.



Oversight of the Seattle Police Department

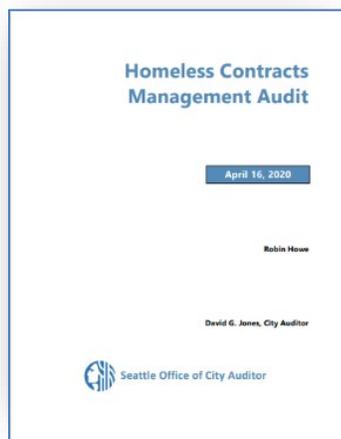
In 2021 our office followed up on 17 recommendations directed at the Seattle Police Department (SPD) from previous audits covering the topics of overtime, special events, hate crimes, and public disclosure requests.

- Seven recommendations remain open from our [April 2016 report on SPD's management of overtime](#). As we reported last year, these recommendations are still open largely due to the need for a new software solution.
- Eight recommendations remain open from our December 2017 report on [SPD's staffing and cost recovery for work performed at special events held in Seattle](#) largely because of

the need for decisions to be made on cost recovery policies for special events and the need for a new software solution.

- One important recommendation from our [March 2015 report on SPD's public disclosure process](#) remains open because SPD has not yet developed a staffing model to estimate the optimal number of staff to handle its workload of public records requests.
- As we reported last year, one recommendation remains open from our [September 2017 Phase One report on Hate Crimes](#) because SPD has not implemented certain activities we suggested: either updating its policy manual or creating a checklist for identifying hate crimes.

Note that although performance audits of SPD are now under the jurisdiction of the Office of Inspector General, we will continue to follow up on the SPD recommendations we made until they are fully implemented or closed.



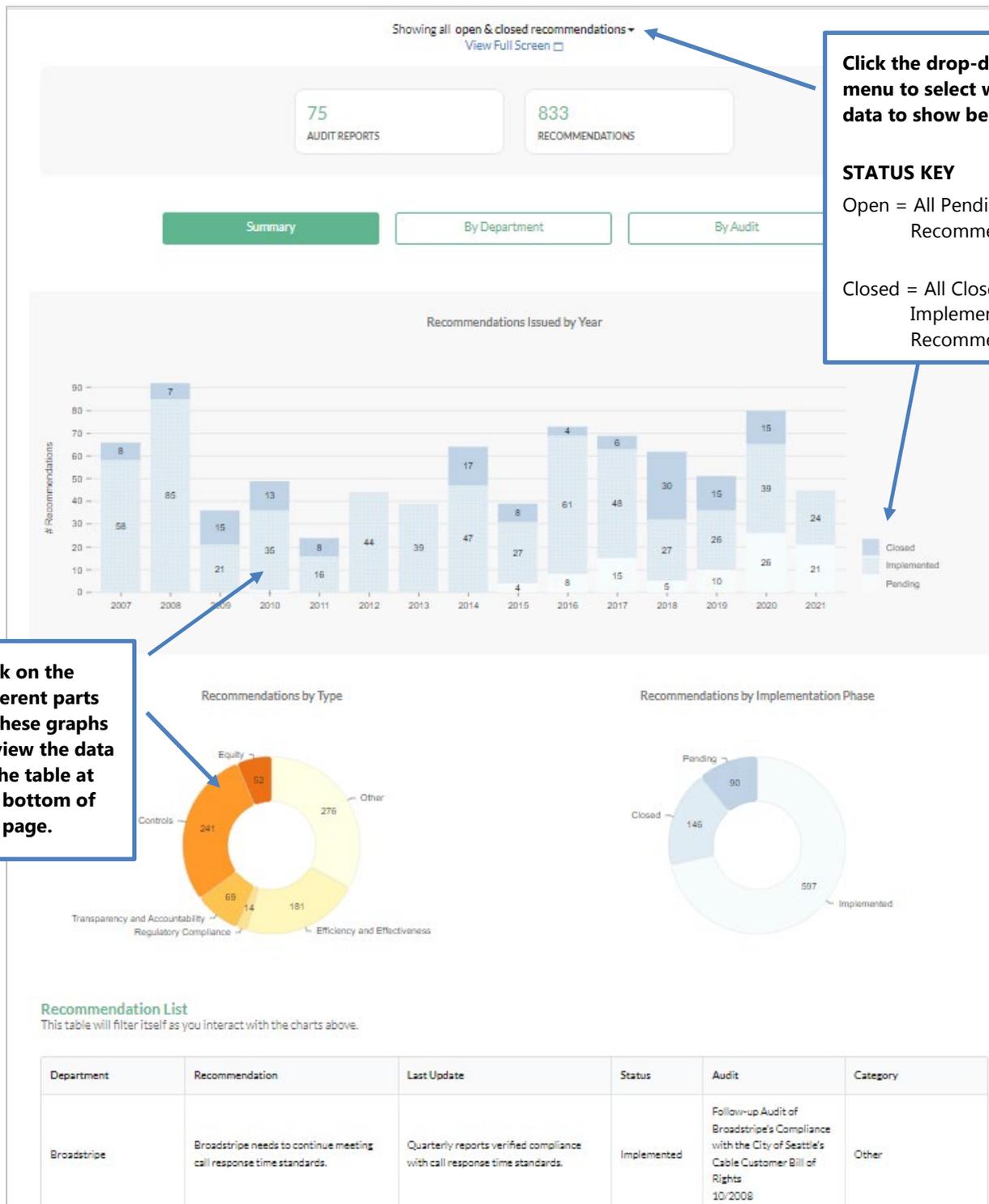
Audit of the Human Services Department's Management of Contracts for Homelessness Services

At the start of 2021, our office was tracking 12 open recommendations from our [April 2020 report on the Human Services Department's \(HSD\) management of its contracts for services concerning homelessness](#). Since then, HSD has:

- Implemented five recommendations, which concerned enhanced monitoring of contracts.
- Closed six recommendations because the responsibilities covered by the recommendations have been transferred from HSD to the King County Regional Homelessness Authority.
- One recommendation is pending while HSD transitions to the City-Wide Contract Management System in 2022.

Detailed Recommendation Status Data Now Available Online

Information about the status of our recommendations is now available online in a more user-friendly interactive visual format, allowing our audience to review, sort, and further examine the results of our follow-up work. Below is an example screen shot of the summary page from the new online recommendation status database. [Please visit our website to view the data.](#)



Click the drop-down menu to select what data to show below.

STATUS KEY
 Open = All Pending Recommendations
 Closed = All Closed or Implemented Recommendations

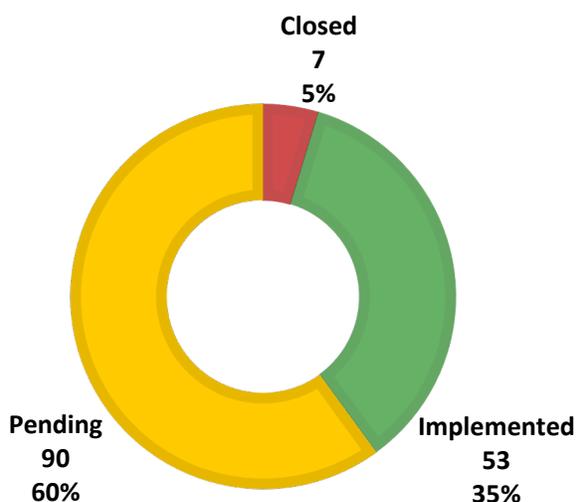
Click on the different parts of these graphs to view the data in the table at the bottom of the page.

Appendix A

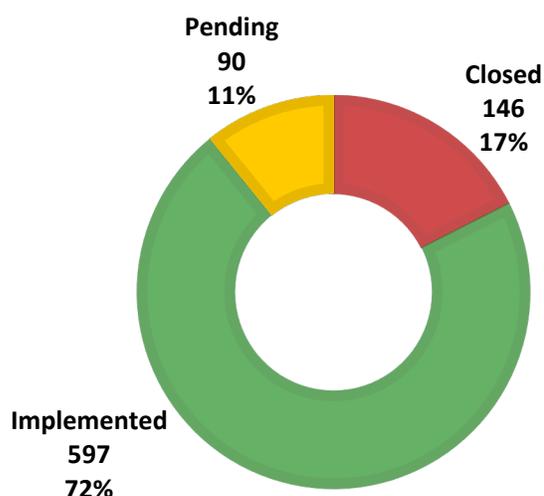
How does the Office of City Auditor follow up on Recommendations?

After we complete an audit report, we add recommendations made in it to our tracking database. Our office verifies the status of recommendations by following up with the appropriate City departments. The chart on the left represents our follow-up progress during 2021 and the chart on the right represents the cumulative follow-up progress from January 2007 – December 31, 2021. We have tracked 833 recommendations contained in 75 audit reports issued from January 2007 through December 2021. As of December 31, 2021, 72 percent (597 out of 833) were implemented, 11 percent (90 out of 833) were pending, and 17 percent (146 out of 833) were closed (categorized as no further follow up planned).

Recommendation Status as of December 31, 2021



Recommendation Status Summary 2007 – 2021



Status Categories

Implemented

We determined that the recommendation or the intent of the recommendation has been met, or we see significant progress has been made and no barrier to its full implementation.

Pending

We determined that implementation is in process or is uncertain, and additional monitoring is warranted. We will follow up on these recommendations in the future.

Closed

We decide to close recommendations when either: 1) the recommendation is no longer relevant; 2) implementation is not feasible; 3) the audited entity's management does not agree with the recommendation and is not planning to implement the recommendation; or 4) the recommendation was considered by the City Council but not adopted. We will no longer follow up on these recommendations.

Appendix B

Reports Included in the 2021 Annual Recommendation Follow up Process

1. Follow-up Audit of Workers' Compensation: Return-to-Work Program
2. Audit of the Seattle Police Department's Public Disclosure Process
3. The City of Seattle Could Reduce Violent Crime and Victimization by Strengthening Its Approach to Street Outreach
4. Seattle Police Department Overtime Controls Audit
5. Seattle City Light Billable Services Audit
6. Audit of New Customer Information System (NCIS) Implementation
7. Review of Hate Crime Prevention, Response, and Reporting in Seattle
8. Special Events – Police Staffing and Cost Recovery
9. Seattle Public Utilities Wholesale Water Sales
10. Review of Hate Crime Prevention, Response, and Reporting in Seattle: Phase 2 Report
11. City of Seattle Financial Condition 2017
12. Seattle Minimum Wage Enforcement Audit
13. Seattle Fire Department – Special Event Cost Recovery
14. Seattle City Light Customer Care and Billing Audit
15. Homeless Contracts Management Audit
16. Seattle Department of Transportation: Strategic Approach to Vehicle Bridge Maintenance is Warranted
17. Seattle City Light Billable Pole Attachments and Pole Replacements Audit
18. Follow Up on Recent Loss Reports Filed by the Information Technology Department
19. Surveillance Usage Review: Seattle Department of Transportation License Plate Readers
20. Evaluation of Compliance with Ordinance 125873: Notice of Intent to Sell
21. Surveillance Usage Review: Seattle Department of Transportation Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Traffic Cameras
22. Assessment of Seattle Municipal Court Probation Racial and Ethnic Proportionality
23. Seattle's Sidewalk Maintenance and Repair Program

Appendix C

Office of City Auditor Mission Statement

Our Mission:

To help the City of Seattle achieve honest, efficient management and full accountability throughout City government. We serve the public interest by providing the City Council, Mayor and City department heads with accurate information, unbiased analysis, and objective recommendations on how best to use public resources in support of the well-being of Seattle residents.

Background:

Seattle voters established our office by a 1991 amendment to the City Charter. The office is an independent department within the legislative branch of City government. The City Auditor reports to the City Council and has a four-year term to ensure their independence in deciding what work the office should perform and reporting the results of this work. The Office of City Auditor conducts performance audits and non-audit projects covering City of Seattle programs, departments, grants, and contracts. The City Auditor's goal is to ensure that the City of Seattle is run as effectively, efficiently, and equitably as possible in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

How We Ensure Quality:

The office's work is performed in accordance with the Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. These standards provide guidelines for audit planning, fieldwork, quality control systems, staff training, and reporting of results. In addition, the standards require that external auditors periodically review our office's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that we adhere to these professional standards.

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