



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Christopher M. Moore

SUBJECT: POLICE BUDGET COMPARISON

DATE: May 21, 2012

Approved

Date

5/23/12

BACKGROUND

In a memorandum submitted by Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio to the Rules Committee on February 8, 2012, the Police Department was asked to provide information regarding how other large and mid-size cities fund their police departments and what percentages of General Fund dollars are allocated to the police department in these cities.

ANALYSIS

Funding for Police Services

Cities reported that most of their funding for police services comes from the General Fund primarily through property tax and sales tax revenue. Many agencies also receive federal and state funds through grants, including federal and state asset forfeiture funds. Some agencies receive utility tax funds or transient occupancy tax funds¹ to support their police department. In 2011, the Major Cities Chief's Association conducted its annual budget survey. The survey results included responses from 42 major cities across the nation and Canada. In this study, only Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Las Vegas Metropolitan reported they have a special tax zone specifically for police. The City of Mesa reported they raised property taxes to specifically fund capital improvements for Police and Fire. El Paso and Las Vegas also reported that they raised property taxes, but it is not clear in the survey if these funds are dedicated for police services. Below is a summary of the various revenue strategies used by cities responding to the 2011 survey:

- Special tax zones for police
- Raising property taxes
- Increased charges for police reports
- Raising or implementing false alarm fees
- Charging for the use of the department vehicle for off-duty employment

¹ It is unknown if these funds are dedicated by charter or ordinance.

General Fund Budget Allocated for Police Services

Police Departments are very distinctive in terms of services offered and workforce size, while the cities they serve are also distinctive in terms of population, infrastructure, geography, demographics of the city, and community demands. There are also significant budgeting differences among the various jurisdictions in terms of how police services are funded and which costs are allocated to the Police Department. While these factors make it difficult to compare the General Fund budgets for police services, staff did compile data on the percent of the General Fund allocated to the Police Department for various comparable cities. As shown in the chart below, the San José Police Department represents 34.61% of the 2012-2013 Proposed General Fund Budget. Similar agencies range from 27.72% to 40.96% of the General Fund budget for their cities. The cities researched do not allocate a fixed percentage of the General Fund budget for police services.

Comparable City	Crime Rate Ranking ¹	Population	Sworn/Civilian	General Fund (\$ Millions)	Police Budget (\$ Millions)	% of Budget
Seattle	241 (7 th)	602,000	1,311/460	\$909	\$252	27.72%
Salt Lake City	241	313,000	426/159	\$195	\$ 57	29.23%
Albuquerque	313	534,652	1,102/407	\$478	\$156	32.64%
Portland	250 (9 th)	570,929	977/267	\$500	\$169	33.80%
San José	173 (4th)	958,789	1,107/439	\$861²	\$298³	34.61%
Sacramento	337	489,488	706/240	\$365	\$127	34.79%
San Diego	180 (5 th)	1,370,000	1,822/690	\$1,150	\$405	35.22%
San Antonio	262	1,319,492	2,352/606	\$948	\$343	36.18%
Phoenix	271	1,601,587	3,150/1,073	\$1,109	\$450	40.58%
Austin	214 (6 th)	785,850	1,604/327	\$691	\$283	40.96%

Data from public websites for each city's 2012-2013 proposed budget.

¹ 2011 City Crime Rate Rankings (Top Ten Cities of 500,000 or more population with lowest crime ratings), 2011 CQ Press using reported data from the FBI
² Does not include Encumbrance Reserve.
³ Includes funding from the City-Wide Expenses Appropriation for Workers Compensation Claims – Police. Does not include funding for Sick Leave Payment Upon Retirement.

As shown in the chart above, there is no direct correlation between the General Fund funding levels and the crime rate ranking as there are many demographic considerations that impact crime rates, as well as differences in the services offered and the budgeting conventions used by various jurisdictions as discussed in more detail below.

Considerations for Comparing Police Departments

There are a variety of operational services other agencies offer within their police departments that San José does not, such as animal control services or correctional facilities. In comparison, other agencies do not have a local international airport, a 911 Call Center, or School Safety Program managed within their police department, like the San José Police Department (SJPD). The following is a summary of the services provided by the major city police departments that participated in the 2011 survey:

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- 50% have a Marine Unit
- 100% have Canine Units*
- 66% have one or more helicopters*
- 40% have a fixed wing aircraft*
- 71% have a Telephone Reporting Unit*
- 41% have a PAL program*
- 26% have a DARE program
- 79% have school resources officers*
- 57% have a Horse Mounted Unit*
- 7% have an Animal Control Unit
- 76% have a 911 Call Center*
- 40% have school crossing guards*
- 33% have a correctional facility
- 24% provide airport security*
- 7% provide school security

* Services offered by SJPD

How cities address community issues, such as partnering with community organizations, like the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) in San José, that prevent crime and educate the community; how resources are deployed; even how budgets are managed is vastly different from city to city. In addition, San José looks at public safety more broadly, as the Police Department collaborates with other City partners in preventing crime, such as community centers, park rangers and libraries. The City does not include these costs in its Police Department's budget but all contribute to how San José addresses Public Safety.

Other considerations are the geographic, population, and staffing differences: square miles of service area ranges from 77 square miles in Cincinnati to 7,560 square miles in Las Vegas² (San José is 179 square miles); population varies from 313,000 in Salt Lake City to 8,175,133 in New York City (San José has 958,789 people); and sworn staffing levels range from 426 in Salt Lake City to 35,367 in New York City (San José has 1,107).

In addition to these operational differences, there are departmental budgeting differences between agencies, and budgets range from \$57 million in Salt Lake City to \$4.5 billion in New York City (San José has \$298 million in the General Fund). As an example, some agencies do not carry fringe benefits in their police department budgets, such as Cincinnati, Honolulu, New York City, and Los Angeles police departments (SJPD includes fringe benefits within its budget). Of the 42 major cities that responded to the 2011 survey, the following is a summary of operating costs included in police department's budgets:

- 95% include fleet expenses*
- 86% include information technology support expenses**
- 81% include fringe benefits*
- 74% include radio maintenance*
- 71% include facility maintenance**
- 76% include communications*
- 40% include school crossing guards*
- 33% include corrections
- 24% include airport security*
- 7% include school security

* Included in the SJPD budget.

** Expenses shared between SJPD and other departments.

² This includes Clark County as Las Vegas Metro Police is consolidated with Clark County.

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Dedicated General Fund Allocation for Police Services

The cities researched did not allocate a fixed percentage of the General Fund budget for police services. This type of dedicated funding would raise significant public policy considerations regarding how the City's budget should be developed, including:

- The use of set-asides when there are competing demands for limited resources
- The clarity of the service delivery trade-offs associated with set-asides
- The correlation between the funding allocated by a set-aside and the funding needed to provide a particular service
- The opportunity for residents to express service delivery priorities

It is important to note that any type of set-aside without dedicated funding would potentially affect all community services offered by the City, and the public would need to be fully informed of all impacts related to any actions to set-aside funding for particular services.

/s/

Christopher M. Moore
Chief of Police

CMM/LP