

Issue Brief



July 17th, 2006

Revenues & Officer Retention

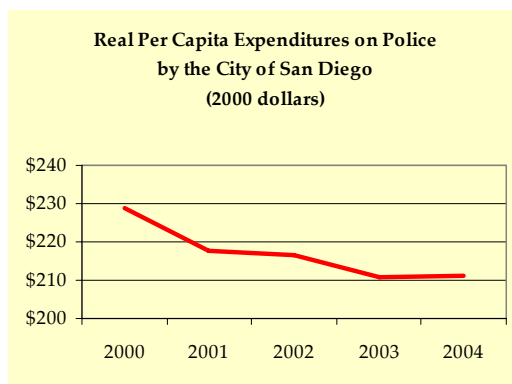
An historical perspective to the current police retention issue

The retention issue facing the City of San Diego's police department is a crisis of affordability. San Diego does not collect the revenues that are needed to build and maintain the police service levels that taxpayers expect.

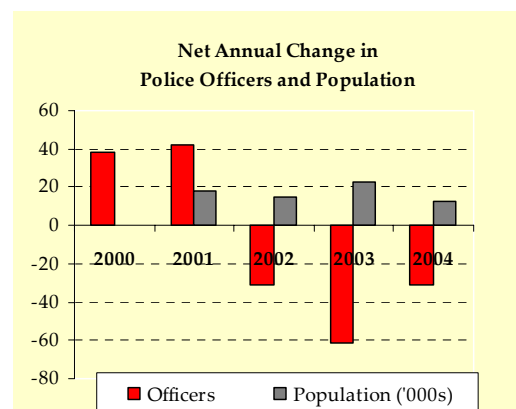
Even as demand from population and business growth increased during the period examined, the City of San Diego decreased its inflation-adjusted police expenditures per resident. The result of this under-funding was a consistent net loss of police officers. This has resulted in one of the lowest police-population ratio among the largest cities in California. As a result of this low staffing, the burden on an average City of San Diego police officer (in terms of crimes reported) is the highest.

Over the period 2000-2004, the City's population was growing at an average rate of 1.31 percent every year. New data released by the State Controller's Office shows during this period, the City of San Diego was decreasing its spending on police, in inflation-adjusted dollars per person.

This decrease in spending had an effect on the ability of the City of San Diego to retain the size of its police force. The police force started shrinking during this duration. Between 2000 and 2004 San Diego's police force shrunk 3.8 percent even as the population continued to grow. In 2004 San Diego's police force shed 31 positions at the same time the City's population grew by 12,176 residents.

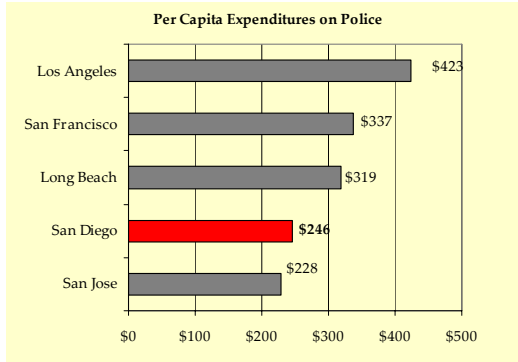


Source: Expenditures from various Cities Annual reports 1999-2000 through 2003-2004, California State Controller's Office; Consumer Price Index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics



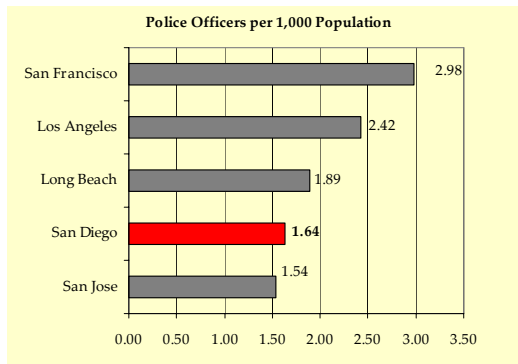
Source: Net change in sworn police officers calculated from FBI's Uniform Crime Reports 1999 through 2004; Net change in population calculated from California Department of Finance E-4 Population Projections

A comparison of the expenditures of large cities in California shows that the City of San Diego continues to lag behind other large cities.



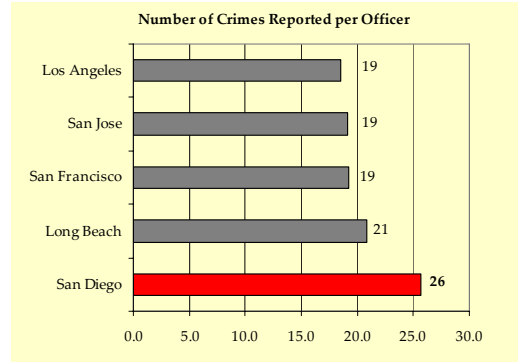
Source: Cities Annual Report 2003-2004, California State Controller's Office

The City spends \$246 per San Diego resident on police protection. In comparison to California's four other largest cities, San Diego spends the least amount on police protection per capita with the exception of San Jose.



Source: Uniform Crime Report 2004, Federal Bureau of Investigations, US Department of Homeland Security

These low expenditures translate into low number of police officers that the City can afford to hire. Among the largest cities in California, San Diego has one of the lowest ratios of sworn police officers in proportion to the population.



Source: Calculated from the Uniform Crime Report 2004, Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Department of Homeland Security; crimes reported include both violent crimes and property crimes.

As a result of the low number of police officers, the number of crimes that an average police officer in the City of San Diego encounters is the highest among all the largest cities in California.

The Center on Policy Initiatives

3727 Camino Del Rio South, Ste 100

San Diego, CA 92108

Telephone: 619-584-5744

Fax: 619-584-5748

www.onlinecpi.org

The Center on Policy Initiatives is a San Diego-based multi-issue think tank and policy action center established in 1997. CPI promotes effective and accountable government, shared economic prosperity, and public policies that create economic security for workers, families and communities.