



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

September 18, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council
From: *PK* Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Douglas N. Hambleton, Chief of Police

Subject: Quarterly Report: Crime in Berkeley

INTRODUCTION

The City Council has directed the City Manager to provide regular reports on crime in Berkeley. This report will cover the first six months of 2007 and provide some comparisons to other jurisdictions for all of 2006. In addition to this information report, there will be a presentation and question/answer session during the Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

Most law enforcement agencies in the United States report their crime statistics to the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation using standardized reporting methods that were developed in the 1930s. The Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook breaks crime events down into consistent measures that can be used to compare crime statistics from year to year and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The statistics that are used for comparisons are listed as Part I Crimes. These are sometimes listed separately as Part I Violent Crimes: Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault and Part I Property Crimes: Burglary, Theft, Auto Theft and Arson.

The annual statistics are not available for some time after the end of the year. The statistics for nearby local agencies were only released recently which is why they are being included in this report.

Crime Statistics

The overall crime rate has been declining in Berkeley over the past several years. This was a trend that had been consistent throughout the Bay Area. As noted in previous reports, the crime rate for the first half of 2006 was relatively stable. Since mid-2006 there have been two contrasting trends. Violent crime, particularly reports of robberies and aggravated assaults, has been increasing while reported property crimes have declined. For the last quarter of 2006 compared to the last quarter of 2005 violent crime increased by 28.5% while property crime decreased by 9.3%.

The same trend has continued for the first six months of 2007. Violent crime increased by almost 15%, primarily due to the increase in robberies. This represents 41 more

reported violent crimes for the first half of 2007 compared to the first half of 2006. Auto thefts declined by 29% and total property crimes declined by more than 6%. Altogether there was a 5% reduction in total Part I crimes.

PART I CRIMES

FIRST TWO QUARTERS 2004 - 2007

Crime Category	2004 (Jan-Jun)	2005 (Jan-Jun)	2006 (Jan-Jun)	2007 (Jan-Jun)	% Change 2006 to 2007	
Homicide	0	1	3	2		
Rape	9	11	10	13		
Robbery	178	167	171	213		
Agg Assault	72	89	91	88		
Total Violent Crime	259	268	275	316		+14.91%
Burglary	635	594	545	494		
Theft	3145	2603	2730	2723		
Auto Theft	551	688	636	451		
Arson	20	11	13	12		
Total Property Crime	4351	3896	3924	3680		-6.22%
Total Part 1 Crime	4610	4164	4199	3996		-5.17%

While it is important to look at recent statistics, an examination of crime patterns over a longer period shows a more complete view of the long-term trends. The table below displays the previous five-year history of crime in Berkeley and the long-term trend of decreasing crime. Comparing 2006 to 2002, there has been a 22% decline in Part I Property Crimes. The violent crime rate has declined during the five-year period as well, but there were errors in tabulating aggravated assaults prior to 2003, accordingly the change cannot be reliably determined.

For the year 2006 compared to 2005 there were 84 more reported Part I Violent Crimes, a 15.3% increase, and there were 560 fewer Part I Property Crimes, a 6.9% decrease. Altogether there were 476 fewer reported Part I Crimes in 2006, a 5.5% decrease from 2005.

PART I CRIME IN BERKELEY 2002 - 2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Homicide	7	5	4	3	4
Rape	33	19	16	22	21
Robbery	411	411	352	356	411
Agg. Assault	280*	158	155	165	194
Violent Crime	731*	593	527	546	630
Burglary	1450	1240	1377	1227	1146
Theft	6798	6472	6252	5576	5232
Auto Theft	1371	1348	1189	1266	1126
Arson	51	34	46	30	35
Total Prop. Crime	9670	9094	8864	8099	7539
Total	10401	9687	9391	8645	8169

* Aggravated assaults were not classified properly prior to 2003 resulting in an inflated count.

Another way to examine Berkeley's crime is to make comparisons to other local cities. The following two tables show the 2005 and 2006 Part I violent crime and property crime data for selected nearby cities with populations above 100,000. Like Berkeley, all of these cities have been experiencing an increase in violent crime. Unlike Berkeley, most of the others are also experiencing an increase in property crime.

PART I VIOLENT CRIME

	2005	2006	% Change
Berkeley	546	630	+15.38
Concord	508	520	+2.36
Fremont	521	569	+9.21
Hayward	641	776	+21.06
Oakland	5692	7562	+32.85
Richmond	1174	1224	+4.26

PART I PROPERTY CRIME

	2005	2006	% Change
Berkeley	8099	7539	-6.91%
Concord	6248	5386	+16.00%
Fremont	4823	5325	+9.43%
Hayward	5525	5810	+4.91%
Oakland	23293	24279	+4.06%
Richmond	5854	5525	-5.95%

Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues

In early 2007 Council approved an additional \$100,000 for police overtime to be used in addressing problems in the Telegraph and downtown Shattuck business districts. These funds were used for extra patrols and uniformed enforcement as well as undercover narcotics enforcement. The undercover operations resulted in 31 sales cases involving 35 suspects, \$9,000 in seized cash and one recovered handgun. As of the end of August, all but 6 of the suspects had been arrested and these 6 have outstanding arrest warrants as a result of the operation.

Police Staffing

The police hired 8 recruit officers in July and 5 lateral officers were hired in August. At this point there are 2 sworn vacancies and several more openings are projected due to retirements by the end of the year. Human Resources and the Police Department have just concluded a new entry and lateral examination. Applicants will be processed as soon as possible and police staff expects the department will be at or near the authorized level of 186 sworn members within the next few months.

Many of these new officers will require six months of academy training and more than 4 months of field training. Accordingly, it will still be some time before all of these officers are available for field duty.

Crime Reduction Strategies

There are many social causes of crime and the police regularly work in collaboration with other City Departments and local service providers to address crime problems. Social conditions such as the state of the economy, poverty, homelessness, drug abuse, availability of youth programs, educational opportunities, and employment opportunities, particularly youth jobs are some of the factors that impact crime rates. Demographics are another factor that affects crime since many crimes are committed by those between the ages of 14 and 24, sometimes referred to as the crime prone years. These same factors in neighboring communities impact our crime rate since criminals travel throughout the region and many of those arrested in Berkeley reside

elsewhere. As noted in prior reports, close to 50% of those arrested for Part I Crimes reside outside Berkeley. The ability to impact these people's criminal behavior through Berkeley social services is limited.

The Police Department is continuing to pursue the following crime reduction strategies:

- Coordination of services between the police and other city service providers
- Coordination with nearby police agencies, including the University PD
- Crime prevention through community awareness, Neighborhood Watch and improved security measures
- Crime analysis to target crime patterns and serial crime
- Internal coordination and exchange of information
- Selected additional patrols and undercover operations using overtime
- Enforcement of narcotic violations as a means to impact other crimes that are associated with drug use and sales
- Vigorous investigation of serious crime and arrest/prosecution of offenders

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The ability to achieve crime reduction goals is limited in the long-term by available police staffing and overtime for special details such as the recent Telegraph and Shattuck Avenue narcotic enforcement as well as other City resources needed to address the social causes of crime. Due to the cuts in available grant funding and other City budget cuts, the Police Department has reduced staffing from 203 sworn positions in FY-2001 to 186 sworn positions in FY-2008. Other City Departments have had even more significant budget reductions. These reductions may impact the City's ability to respond to the social conditions that result in crime.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

This report does not have any specific funding proposals; however, there could be significant costs depending on the types of future programs that might be considered.

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