




Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR

February 12, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  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. The report for the third quarter of 2007 was postponed due to schedule conflicts. This report has been updated with crime information for both the third and fourth quarters of 2007 and expanded compared to previous reports to include closure rates and some other selected crimes for the first three quarters of the year.

There will also be a presentation during the meeting on February 12, 2008 regarding Crime Reduction Strategies and an opportunity for discussion with Council.

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 State and Federal Departments of Justice release crime statistics for other jurisdictions in semi-annual reports. The most recent releases for 2006 were covered in the quarterly report to Council on September 18, 2007.

Crime Statistics

The overall crime rate has been declining in Berkeley over the past several years. This same trend had been seen throughout the Bay Area. Since mid-2006, there have been two contrasting trends both regionally and nationally. Violent crimes, particularly reports of robberies and aggravated assaults have been increasing, while reported property crimes have declined.

Recently, there have been some declines in the violent crime rate. For the third quarter of 2007 ending September 30, 2007, the Part I violent crime rate went down by 12.43%, compared to the third quarter of 2006. For the fourth quarter of 2007 ending December 31, 2007 the Part I violent crime rate declined by 21.08% compared to the same period in 2006. For the combined third and fourth quarters there was a 16.40% reduction in violent crime. The declines late in the year were offset by increases in early 2007 with the result being only a very slight 1.42% reduction in Part I violent crime for the entire year. At least for the short term, violent crime seems to be returning to the patterns from prior years.

The Part I property crimes rates increased slightly for the combined third and fourth quarters of 2007. Burglaries and auto thefts were up while there was a decline in theft cases. Overall there was a 1.11% increase in property crimes for the last half of the year. Since there had been declines in property crimes during the first half of the year, the result was an overall reduction in Part I property crimes of 3.44% during all of 2007.

The following table shows the Part I crime data for the third and fourth quarters of 2007.

PART I CRIMES

THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTERS 2007

Crime Category	2005 July-Dec	2006 July-Dec	2007 July-Dec	2006 to 2007 Percent Change
Homicide	1	0	3	
Rape	11	12	10	
Robbery	178	244	220	
Aggravated Assault	75	114	76	
Total Violent Crime	265	370	309	-16.48%
Burglary	633	602	671	
Auto Theft	567	486	597	
Theft	2900	2466	2333	
Arson	18	22	15	
Total Property Crime	4118	3576	3616	+1.11%
Total Part 1 Crime	4383	3946	3925	-.53%

The next table shows Part I crimes for the past six years. What is most noteworthy is the significant decline in property crimes over this period. Burglary is down 19.7%, theft is down 25.8% auto theft is down 23.7% and overall Part I property crime is down 24.7% since 2002.

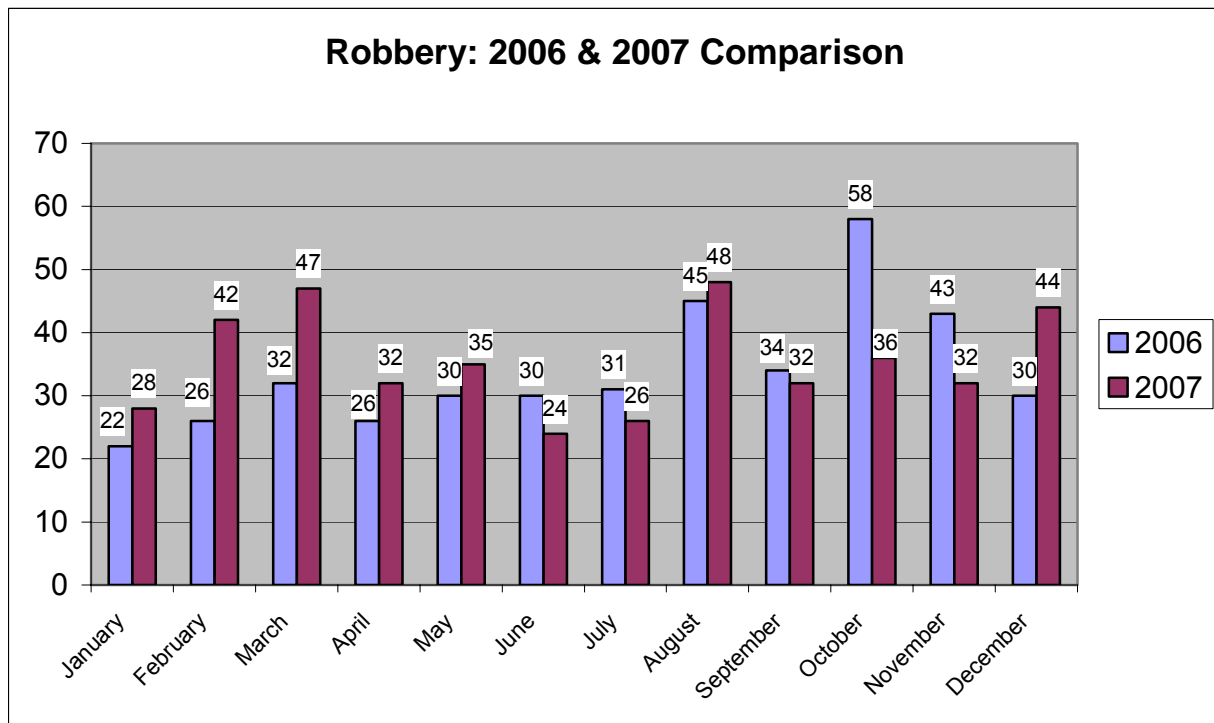
As reported previously, aggravated assaults were not reported properly prior to 2003, so those numbers are not being used for comparison. Since 2003 violent crime has fluctuated up and down. Compared to 2003 violent crime was up 4.7% last year, but it was down 1.4% from the 2006 level.

CRIME IN BERKELEY 2002 - 2007

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Homicide	7	5	4	3	4	5
Rape	33	19	16	22	21	23
Robbery	411	411	352	356	411	432
Agg. Assault	280*	158	155	165	194	161
Violent Crime	731*	593	527	546	630	621
Burglary	1450	1240	1377	1227	1146	1163
Theft	6798	6472	6252	5576	5232	5044
Auto Theft	1371	1348	1189	1266	1126	1045
Arson	51	34	46	30	35	27
Total Prop. Crime	9670	9094	8864	8099	7539	7279
Total	10401*	9687	9391	8645	8169	7900

* Aggravated Assaults were not properly reported prior to 2003.

The robbery rate continues to be a community concern. The following chart shows the number of robberies each month over the past two years.



The Detective Bureau has one sergeant and two officers assigned to investigate robberies and they are also assisted by others when needed. They often work with investigators from other cities because it is not unusual for criminals to commit crimes in multiple jurisdictions. Berkeley officers have closed several robbery series in recent months. For example, in December three suspects were arrested after a robbery in Berkeley. BPD investigators determined they were responsible for a series of several robberies of Radio Shack stores and other businesses in Berkeley and more than 20 robberies throughout the region.

In the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), "clearance rate" or "closed" refers to offenses that have been "cleared by arrest" or solved for crime reporting purposes when at least one person is arrested, charged with the commission of the offense and turned over to the court for prosecution. This method counts the number of offenses only, not the number of people arrested. This masks the actual number of arrests when multiple persons are arrested on one offense or one person is arrested for multiple offenses and "clears" many crimes.

Internally, the means of reporting the closure of cases varies from the Uniform Crime Report since the Detective Bureau counts the number of crimes for which an offender has been identified even though the other elements for charging and prosecution cannot be met. Often an arrest and prosecution in one case results in many other cases being closed, but perhaps not charged by the District Attorney.

The chart below shows the UCR closure rate and the combined UCR and internal BPD closure rate.

PART I CRIME CLOSURE

FIRST THREE QUARTERS 2007

Crime Category	UCR Reported Crime Jan-Sept	UCR Clearance Rate	Total Clearance Rate*
Homicide	4	1	4
Rape	21	10	13
Robbery	321	73	153
Aggravated Assault	132	68	71
Total Violent Crime	478	152	241
Burglary	830	48	145
Theft	3821	231	231
Auto Theft	752	17	80
Arson	19	6	6
Total Property Crime	5422	302	462
Total Part 1 Crime	5900	454	703

* Includes UCR clearance rate and internal BPD cases closed

When reviewing crime statistics, it is important to recognize that the Part I statistics were developed to allow communities to compare criminal activity along the same parameters and adjust to the population of the community. Those statistics alone do not reflect the safety of a community. The quality of life in a community is measured by other criminal activity such as drug and alcohol related events, vandalism, domestic violence and traffic incidents. Some of that crime data is listed below, in addition to these, there were seven hate crimes were reported during the first nine months of 2007. This report was originally prepared for the first three quarters of the year. Staff has not had time to update the following information for the entire year.

**NON PART I CRIMES
FIRST THREE QUARTERS 2007**

Narcotics		Alcohol Related		Other		
Reported Incidents*	SEU Arrests	Public Intoxication	DUI Arrests	Domestic Violence	Misdemeanor Assault/Battery	Vandalism
494	307	336	139	155	374	480

* Includes "THE COPS" anonymous calls

Traffic Issues

Traffic safety is also an important issue that often results in a larger negative impact on community members than crime. Experts rely on the Three "E's" of traffic: Enforcement, Education and Engineering to promote safety.

The purpose of enforcement is to gain compliance with the rules of the road by issuing citations to violators or arresting drivers who are under the influence. The goal of enforcement is to modify the driving of the violator and encourage others to avoid citations or arrests by driving safely. The traffic unit provides monthly information to the beat officers regarding traffic complaints and high frequency collision locations so that the officers can target their enforcement to the problem areas. Motorcycle officers in the traffic unit spend most of their time on enforcement and all beat officers are expected to do some traffic enforcement as part of their patrol duties. Last year Berkeley officers issued 13,553 moving citations. In the past the police have received a grants from the State Office of Traffic Safety for driving under the influence enforcement. Last year they made 188 DUI arrests. The department has applied for another \$175,000 grant for DUI enforcement and a new a new \$270,000 grant in order to target violations related to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Public Education is an effective tool to help change the attitude and behavior of drivers. We use neighborhood meetings to discuss specific issues and increase traffic safety awareness. Through the combined efforts of our Traffic Bureau and City Traffic

Engineering, we regularly deploy three portable radar trailers, one by the Police Department and two by Public Works. These display actual speed versus the posted speed to increase awareness and encourage compliance with the law. Last month officers distributed bicycle and pedestrian safety flyers at some high volume locations to raise public awareness and encourage compliance with traffic laws.

Engineering is the use of signage or structural modification to the roadway to change driving patterns, prohibit certain vehicular movements or cause drivers to slow down. The recent most common method of traffic calming in Berkeley is to install traffic circles. Forty-five traffic circles have been installed and five more have been approved for installation in the city.

TRAFFIC COLLISION STATISTICS

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Collisions	1398	1484	1510	1469	1455
Injury Collisions	520	538	571	586	546
People Injured	698	642	704	732	597
Fatal Collisions	3	4	2	2	5
Ped. Involved	88	95	98	94	88
Bike Involved	93	109	90	120	116

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 by the Berkeley Police Department for Part I Crimes occurring in Berkeley reside outside Berkeley. There is little ability to impact their lives and criminal behavior through City of Berkeley services.

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 law enforcement 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

- Problem solving projects designed to change behavior or correct conditions that result in crime, disorder and calls for police service
- 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 crime suppression details and investigations 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 reductions, 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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