PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Safety

This section provides details on the fiscal history and status of the Police and Fire-Rescue Departments in relation to the immediate needs of these departments. A Five-Year Plan for public safety is presented, beginning with Fiscal Year 2005 budget additions, and the strategy for a long range plan to meet continuing needs for public safety is discussed.

Background

The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) and the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) were established in the summer of 1889. Over the last century, the police and Fire Rescue departments have grown from one-person operations to departments with nearly 4,000 employees. The mission of the SDPD is to maintain peace and order by providing the highest quality police service in response to community needs by apprehending criminals, developing partnerships, and respecting individuals. The mission of the SDFD is to improve the quality of life for San Diego area residents and visitors by protecting lives and property through fire suppression, rescue, disaster preparedness, community education, emergency medical care, and lifeguard services. The City of San Diego has continued to hold the goals of the SDPD and SDFD as a high priority in providing public safety services for its residents and visitors.

The fires of October, 2003 demonstrated the outstanding capabilities of both the Fire-Rescue and Police departments as a multitude of houses were saved and no lives were lost within the City of San Diego. However, the fires also demonstrated the importance of addressing all aspects of public safety and the shortfall of resources to adequately fund these needs. Although the City cannot expect to be fully prepared for a disaster with the magnitude of the October fires at all times, the City strives to maintain reasonable response times and low crime rates as the City grows.

San Diego has maintained a high priority for its public safety departments. Over the last ten years, public safety budgets have increased at a greater rate than the General Fund. In Fiscal Year 2004, for example, the budgets for SDPD and SDFD increased by 4.25 percent and 4.00 percent respectively. During the same period the General Fund increased by 1.88 percent. Absent new and unique revenues, these public safety increases were only accomplished through shifting priorities and significant reductions in non-public safety departments.

In Fiscal Year 2005, public safety funded needs will again outpace the increase in the General Fund, thus reinforcing the priority emphasis placed on public safety for the citizens of this City. The budgets for SDPD and SDFD increased by 13.46 percent and 20.55 percent respectively, while the General Fund increased by 10.01 percent.

The majority of additions to both SDPD and SDFD budgets have primarily funded inflationary increases; the provision of competitive compensation and benefits to City staff; deferred maintenance of the City's infrastructure; and equipment, vehicle, and apparatus purchases. This has allowed continued maintenance of effort for public safety, but has not provided many opportunities to enhance programs.

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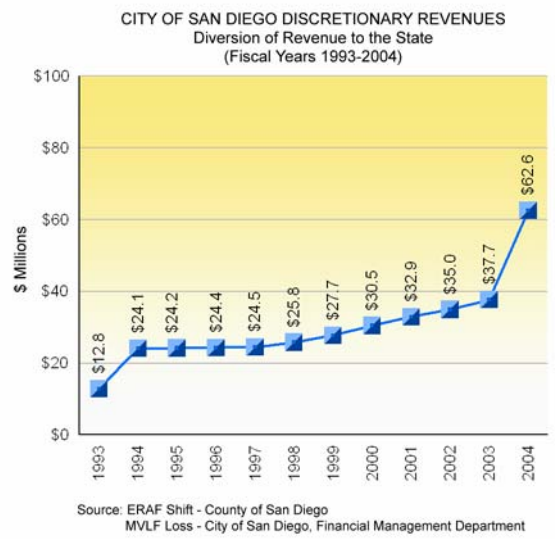
Revenue Requirements

The most pressing fiscal concern for the City of San Diego continues to be the diversion of revenues by the State of California. To provide for the public safety departments in the future without taking significant reductions from other departments, additional revenue should be identified and approved.

In 1992, facing serious budget deficits, the State of California instructed county auditors to shift the allocation of local property tax revenues from local government to "Educational Revenue Augmentation Funds" (ERAFs), directing that specified amounts of city, county and other local agency property taxes be deposited into these funds to support schools.



Since 1993, the State of California has diverted $341 million in Property Tax revenue from the City of San Diego.

Through Fiscal Year 2004, the State of California has diverted $340.8 million in property tax revenue from the City of San Diego to ERAF. In Fiscal Year 2004, the State diverted an additional $21.6 million in Vehicle License Fees, for a total of $362.2 million that has been diverted by the State since 1993. If this revenue had been kept locally, it would have allowed the City to purchase approximately the equivalent of 43 closed cab fire rigs and 484 black and white patrol vehicles each year for the past 12 years (in Fiscal Year 2005 dollars). Although this is not the sole cause of the current fiscal situation, continued diversion of local revenue by the State may only exacerbate the public safety funding challenges the City may face in the future. A low tax base only makes the problem more challenging.

San Diego has historically had a comparatively low tax-related revenue base; the City does not charge for residential refuse collection and has never implemented a Utility User Tax as many California cities, such as Los Angeles, have done. Furthermore, San Diego has comparatively low Business License Fees and a relatively low Transient Occupancy Tax, all of which other cities have used to fund enhanced items, such as public safety services and facilities.

Nearly 50 percent of the City's General Fund revenues are generated by Property Tax and Sales Tax. In 1990, these two revenue sources provided enough revenue to fully fund public safety expenditures; General Fund Property and Sales Tax revenues were $213.7 million, and public safety expenditures were $196.6 million. However, partially as a result of the ERAF shifts, public safety expenditures have grown to be greater than General Fund Property Tax and Sales Tax revenues. In Fiscal Year 2004, for example,

the combined public safety budget was $398.9 million, yet the City projected less than $328 million in General Fund Property Tax, Sales Tax and Safety Sales Tax combined. As a result, the City had to identify and use over $71.2 million from other revenue sources to fund public safety.

To decrease the impact of the ERAF shifts, a half-cent sales tax was implemented at the State level; this Safety Sales Tax is dedicated to funding local public safety including police and fire services. Known as Proposition 172, the Local Public Safety Protection and Improvement Act of 1993 (Safety Sales Tax), this revenue source was crafted to offset the impact of the State revenue diversion to ERAF. In reality, this revenue source has not come close to narrowing the gap for the City; approximately 95 percent of the revenue goes to the County of San Diego. By Fiscal Year 2004, public safety expenditures were $74.6 million greater than General Fund Property and Sales Tax revenues; the General Fund portion of Safety Sales Tax in that same year amounted to $3.4 million.

The City of San Diego's current revenue sources do not provide sufficient funding to achieve the desired level of public safety services in combination with other desired services such as libraries and parks. Cities across the nation face similar challenges to fully fund public safety. A wide variety of options have been implemented by cities to increase revenues that can be used to fund public safety. Los Angeles, for example, has a variety of funding sources such as the Local Public Safety Fund, Anti-Gridlock Fund, Fire Hydrant Install Fund, Targeted-Destination Ambulance Services, and the Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund. Kansas City relies on a mixture of taxes including Local Use Tax, Fire Sales Tax, Public Safety Sales Tax, as well as the Infrastructure and Maintenance Fund, and Hazardous Materials and Police Drug Enforcement revenues. A Public Safety Bond was issued in Omaha to fund public safety departments. Phoenix receives additional revenues to pay for public safety from four funds: Neighborhood Protection, Development Services, Sports Facilities, and Civic Plaza. Currently, the only tax the City of San Diego has that directly supports public safety is the Safety Sales Tax, which is estimated to be $6.7 million in Fiscal Year 2005. The Safety Sales Tax will contribute towards the funding of the $461.5 million operating budget for public safety departments in Fiscal Year 2005 as well as Fire and Lifeguard Facility improvements.

Safety Sales Tax

The Local Public Safety Protection and Improvement Act of 1993 (Safety Sales Tax) was approved by California voters on November 2, 1993. Monies derived from this half-cent Sales Tax must be utilized solely for public safety services. The State Controller's Office allocates these collected taxes back to the County Local Public Safety Fund for distribution. Cities receive five percent of the amount in the Fund based upon their 1993-94 allocation that was derived from their proportional loss of Property Tax revenue to county school districts (ERAF).

Senate Bill 8 changed the allocation system for Proposition 172 revenues and lifted the cap on the share that the City of San Diego can receive, although the net impact only provided an additional 0.4 percent of revenue to be distributed by the County. The County of San Diego receives approximately 95 percent of Safety Sales Tax revenue with the balance allocated to local municipalities.

In June 1994, City Council Policy 500-07 was adopted, and directs the use of Proposition 172 funds to new public safety expenditures, ensuring an increase to existing public safety expenditure levels. Through this policy, these Safety Sales Tax funds are used to augment, not supplant, existing General Fund expenditures for public safety purposes.

Although the Safety Sales Tax was touted as making up for lost ERAF revenues, it has fallen short in recouping the more than $362 million that the State has diverted from the City in property tax and Vehicle

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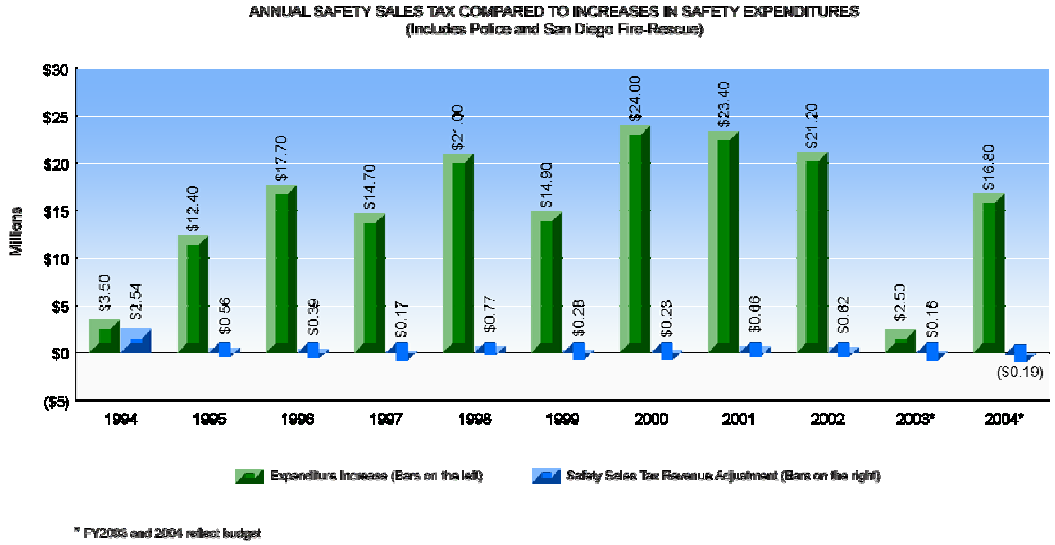
License Fees. From its inception through Fiscal Year 2002, the Safety Sales Tax revenue has only generated $39.2 million. During the same time, the total increase to public safety expenditures in the City of San Diego has been $151.8 million. The following chart depicts the increases to the Police and Fire-Rescue departments that continue to far exceed Safety Sales Tax revenue increases received, ensuring the City's compliance with Council Policy 500-07.



In the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget, the Safety Sales Tax is expected to grow by $530,000, for a total of $6.7 million. The proceeds from the Safety Sales Tax will be used to partially fund increased expenditures for public safety, which total $62.3 million in the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget. Specifically, $2.8 million of Safety Sales Tax revenue is allocated for debt service payments on Fire and Lifeguard Facility improvements. The remaining $3.9 million will be used in the General Fund for the purchase of equipment, supplies, and services and to continue funding salary adjustments that have occurred since the inception of the Safety Sales Tax.

Fiscal Year 2005 Safety Sales Tax Expenditures

Fire and Lifeguard Facility Bond Payments	$ 2.80 million
Sworn salaries	$ 3.58 million
Equipment	$ 0.35 million
Total	**$6.73 million**

Commitment to Public Safety

The Needs Assessment Report compiled by the Police and Fire-Rescue departments in March 2004 estimated public safety funding needs for the next five years to be $478 million, including the Public Safety Communications Project, overtime and negotiated special pay budgets, increased staffing for new

facilities, new vehicles and apparatus, helicopters, information technology upgrades, deferred maintenance, additional academies and equipment outlay.
Of the $478 million in the needs assessment, the departments identified a Fiscal Year 2005 need of $129 million. The $129 million in identified needs are not all critical items that are immediately necessary for the protection of the residents and visitors of San Diego. Rather, these needs encompass a wide variety of requests that would greatly increase the levels of service currently being provided by increasing the number of personnel in each department, and aiming to decrease response times. In order to fund $129 million without new revenue sources, funding currently dedicated to other sources would have to be shifted to fund public safety. As a result, the City would have to reduce an amount of money in the General Fund that would be equivalent to funding the entire General Fund portions of the Park and Recreation Department ($77.3 million) and the Library Department ($35.4 million), and would still have to identify an additional $16.3 million in reductions to provide $129 million in public safety funding.

This option is unrealistic; therefore smaller adjustments were made to the Police and Fire-Rescue budgets. Absent a long-term stable funding source, the business of public safety continues to rely on the current, limited funding sources. Therefore, working closely with the Police and Fire-Rescue departments, the City Manager used the Needs Assessment Report to focus on Fiscal Year 2005 objectives.

The budget plan for Fiscal Year 2005 divided the needs assessed by the Police and Fire-Rescue departments into three categories: critical, essential, and important.

1. Critical needs include requirements that are vital to the immediate safety of the residents of San Diego. Although residents should not be imminently threatened due to critical needs, staffing and support are required to meet vital demands. These would include police officers, firefighters, special pay requirements, vehicles, apparatus, and air support. The Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget addresses some of these critical needs through funding four police academies to support 132.00 police recruits to address department attrition. These critical needs should continue to receive the greatest priority for funding within this plan and in future years.

2. Essential needs include well-maintained facilities, apparatus and current telecommunication systems to continue and improve the efficient and effective operations of the Police and Fire-Rescue departments. These essential needs, which include portable mobile radios, computer aided dispatch systems, repair and maintenance of fire engines, replacement of ladder trucks and brush rigs, and maintenance for police substations and fire stations, should be addressed secondarily to funding critical needs.

3. Important needs are identified as items related to improving neighborhood service, specialized personnel, training, and equipment, which are important in achieving the highest quality of public safety. These important needs should be funded as the needs previously discussed are met.

Critical needs identified in the Public Safety Needs Assessment received the highest priority for addition within the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget.

Five-Year Plan

The following section explains the Public Safety Five-Year Plan, which was developed in conjunction with the Public Safety Funding Plan that was presented in May to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, and the Fire Accreditation process that is currently underway. The Five-Year Plan

is designed to improve the City's ability to provide public safety services by addressing the needs of the Police and Fire-Rescue departments, as well as the Public Safety Communications Project (PSCP) as presented in the Needs Assessment.

The Five-Year Plan begins in Fiscal Year 2005 with additions to Police, Fire-Rescue, and the PSCP, including $7.8 million of discretionary funding, a fire helicopter, and replacement of Mobile Data Terminals. In Fiscal Years 2006 to 2009, it is proposed that $8 to $10 million of discretionary funding be available annually for the most critical public safety needs.

Year One: Fiscal Year 2005 Additions

The City Manager has worked extensively with the Police and Fire-Rescue departments to prioritize the funding available in the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget and has increased discretionary allocations of $5 million in the Police Department and $2.8 million in the Fire-Rescue Department. This $7.8 million will attend to critical needs including fleet replacement, deferred maintenance, and funding for four police academies to replace officers in the Police Department that have been lost to attrition.

The City Manager has increased discretionary allocations of $5 million in Police and $2.8 million in Fire-Rescue, in addition to increases for new facilities, and a fire helicopter.

In addition to the $7.8 million allocation, salary and benefit increases of $35.6 million are included for the Police Department and $15.8 million for the Fire-Rescue Department. Another $2.8 million has been identified to fund a fire helicopter. The City will continue to lease Copter One until a permanent fire-rescue helicopter is purchased through the City's Master Lease Purchase Program. A onetime loan repayment of $3.0 million from the Centre City Development Corporation will be used to purchase fire equipment. Finally, $1.2 million has been appropriated to complete staffing for Fire Station #46. The total addition to public safety for Fiscal Year 2005 is $62.3 million.

The detail of the $62.3 million is summarized below.

Fiscal Year 2005 Public Safety Additions

Public Safety Annualization of FY 2004 and FY 2005 negotiated salaries and benefits	$51,430,685
New Facilities (Fire Station #46)	$1,179,150
Fire Helicopter	$2,760,000
Police Department Discretionary Additions	$5,000,000
Fire-Rescue Department Discretionary Additions	$2,777,000
CCDC Onetime Loan Repayment – Fire equipment	$3,000,000
Firefighter/Paramedic Liability Insurance	$350,000
Non-Discretionary and Information Technology	$501,726
Fire Company Inspection Program Staff	$50,396
Maintain Civilian Vacancies in Police Department	($3,753,517)
Miscellaneous Changes	($1,044,048)
TOTAL	**$62,251,392**

Consistent with direction provided by the Mayor and City Council's Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, the $5.0 million added to the Police budget to address critical needs will be allocated as follows:

Police Department Discretionary Additions

Deferred Maintenance	$200,000
Motive Equipment Outlay – including 150 operation vehicles such as black and whites, motorcycles, command vans, and undercover vehicles	$4,500,000
Police Academies – supplies	$200,000
Digital Cameras	$100,000
Total Discretionary Additions	**$5,000,000**

The Fire-Rescue Department has been granted a one-year waiver by the federal government for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies to purchase fire fighting equipment for non-CDBG eligible areas, due to the challenges faced in fighting the October Cedar Fire with outdated and inadequate equipment. This federal action was originally proposed to provide $1.0 million in CDBG funds, in addition to a General Fund increase of $2.0 million for addressing needs in the Fire-Rescue Department. At the April 26, 2004 City Council meeting, CDBG funding was reduced by $223,000. As a result San Diego Fire-Rescue will receive $777,000 in CDBG funding for fire apparatus purchases. In addition, the Fire-Rescue Department will receive $3.0 million from the repayment of a Centre City Development Corporation loan for equipment purchases.

The $5.8 million added in discretionary and CCDC funding to the Fire-Rescue budget has been allocated approximately as follows:

Fire-Rescue Department Discretionary and CCDC Additions

Deferred Maintenance	$321,000
Supplies and Service Emergency Medical Supply Motive Repair Parts Facilities Maintenance Fire Battalion Chief Promotional Exam Process	$964,000
Equipment Outlay Two Closed Cab Rigs Two Fire Trucks Support Staff Vehicles Surf Rescue Vessels Personal Water Craft Safety and Support Equipment	$3,977,000
Overtime	$400,000
Health Management Programs	$115,000
Total Discretionary Additions	**$5,777,000**

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Following the fires of October, 2003, the imminent importance of funding an annual fire helicopter program was realized. The helicopter program intends to eventually provide the residents and visitors of San Diego County with the safe and timely response of regionally based and locally controlled firefighting and multi-mission-capable helicopters. Program helicopters are dedicated regional resources and should be available to all public safety agencies in San Diego County. The addition of $2.8 million to fund a fire helicopter is expected to be offset by an anticipated $800,000 in revenue from the following sources: Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE), Sunroad Enterprises, Scripps Health, and a golf tournament fundraiser. The City is currently leasing a helicopter and has issued a request for proposal to lease-purchase a helicopter that will be permanently available.

The City Manager further committed to making funding available for grant matching for the Police and Fire-Rescue departments; although this funding has not been specifically increased within their budgets, it is proposed to be identified should grants become available.

Both the Police and Fire-Rescue departments are proposed to receive significant additions within the first year of the Public Safety Five-Year Plan. An additional component of the Five-Year Plan to receive funding within the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget is the Public Safety Communications Project.

Public Safety Communications Project

One of the greatest priorities, for both the Police and Fire-Rescue departments, is the replacement of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) that are included within the Public Safety Communications Project (PSCP). The PSCP is associated with both the Police Department and the Fire-Rescue Department as it will benefit the emergency communication abilities for all public safety needs. The total cost of this project is estimated to be $133 million, with the bulk of the expense required in Fiscal Years 2006 through 2009. Included in the $133 million are short-term requirements through Fiscal Year 2005 that are estimated to be approximately $9 million for MDT migrations for Police and Fire-Rescue and microwave replacement and expansion.

The City's four major public safety wireless communications systems are the 800 MHz Radio Network, the MDT Network, the Microwave Network, and the Paging Network. These systems are now at the end of their service and maintenance lifecycle. They should be replaced in order to ensure that this mission-critical wireless infrastructure will remain reliable, now and in the future.

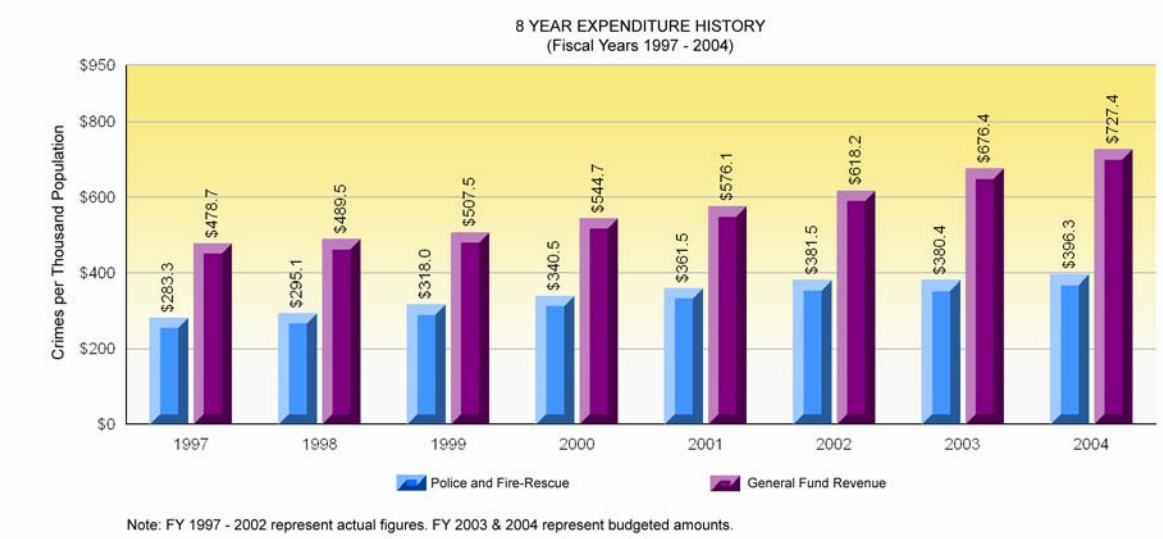
Funding for this essential need was anticipated with proceeds from the proposed Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) increase that appeared on the March 2004 ballot. The voters did not approve the TOT increase; therefore, alternative funding mechanisms have been analyzed for consideration. A viable alternative was determined to be proceeds from federal grants related to Homeland Security appropriations. The City's Chief Information Officer, in conjunction with the Office of Homeland Security Director identified $6.2 million in Homeland Security grant funds and $300,000 in additional grant funds that will cover the MDT conversion needs for Fiscal Year 2005. An additional $1.0 million will be funded through the Information Technology and Communication Department's New Development Fund. Possibilities for long term funding for the PSCP were identified in Tier II of the Public Safety Funding Plan.

Although significant needs, such as the PSCP, will be funded in Fiscal Year 2005, the limited resources available for the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget were not sufficient to meet all needs. A significant effort was required to fund the public safety needs that are met by this budget, but unfunded and partially funded requests remain. Fiscal Year 2005 unfunded and partially funded public safety requests include:

uniformed personnel requests, such as adding 11 new engine companies to improve response times and increase the fire staff per capita ratio; non-uniformed personnel requests including reinstatement of the brush management program; recruitment, training, hiring, and health management personnel; overtime; information technology; supplies and services including fleet and facility maintenance; medical, firefighting, safety, rescue, and training equipment; and apparatus for fire, lifeguards, and support.

Years Two – Five: Fiscal Years 2006 - 2009

The rising costs of public safety, in combination with the diversion of revenues by the State of California, have placed a burden on the General Fund. In recent years, other City services have been reduced to fund public safety. A new revenue source is needed to fully fund public safety without detracting from the remainder of City services provided to the public. The chart below depicts public safety and General Fund expenditures over the past eight years.



A comprehensive Funding Plan that contained a variety of funding options and prioritized purchases was presented to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee in May, 2004. The three tiered Funding Plan may enable the City to greatly enhance public safety without decreasing City services.

Within this Five-Year Plan, it is assumed that the Police and Fire-Rescue departments for Fiscal Year 2006 and beyond would increase their Fiscal Year 2005 budgets at the same rate as the General Fund (an average of 3 – 5 percent) to fund salary and benefit increases. That natural revenue growth constitutes the minimal public safety budget increases.

In addition, it is proposed that approximately $8 to $10 million of discretionary funding annually be provided to fund public safety needs as Tier I of the Funding Plan. This $8 to $10 million would fund the most critical needs and highest priorities. In Fiscal Year 2006, for example, critical needs would be staffing Fire Station #47 (Pacific Highlands) and the Northwestern Police Station.

Other high priorities identified by the Police and Fire-Rescue departments for possible funding in the future include: additional funding for negotiated overtime and special pays, information technology, canine teams, fleet and apparatus maintenance, communications, and deferred maintenance.

The optimal possibility for meeting the majority of public safety funding requirements is to utilize a new and continuous revenue source.

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Tier II of the Funding Plan would fund a Comprehensive Public Safety Communications Plan, including the PSCP in its entirety, through Fiscal Year 2010. The total cost of Tier II is approximately $148.7 million. Funding options reflect the use of a lease revenue type of financing.

Tier III of the Funding Plan includes many of the remaining requirements included in the Needs Assessments prepared by the Fire-Rescue and Police departments, for a total of $356 million.

The approval of a Funding Plan and a new revenue source, which may require voter approval, would allow a specific long-term budgeting plan to be finalized. It could be assumed that the majority of the revenue generated through a new revenue source would be dedicated to non-personnel expense including the PSCP, new facilities, equipment and apparatus. Additional General Fund revenue increases would also be required to fund ongoing personnel and maintenance costs.

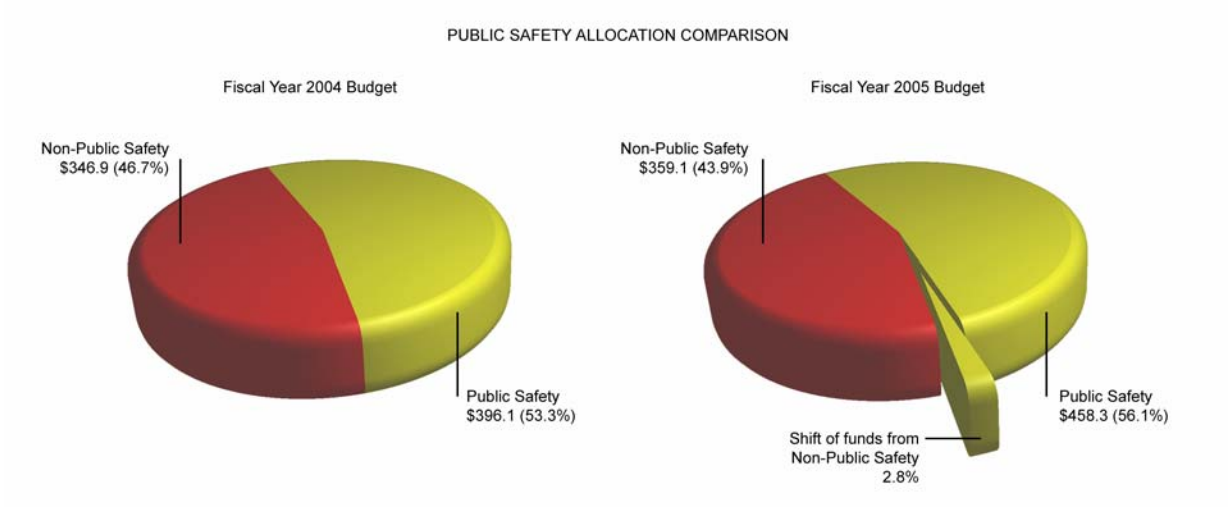
Public Safety Priority

In the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget, non-public safety General Fund departments took programmatic, management, and information technology reductions, which reduced their budgets by between 5.01 percent and 36.85 percent. Examples of the reductions are as follows:

Department	Reduction Percentage
Community and Economic Development	36.85%
Equal Opportunity Contracting	10.57%
General Services	8.31%
Library	8.23%
Neighborhood Code Compliance	8.00%
Park and Recreation	5.01%
Special Projects*	15.34%

* The Special Projects reduction includes the reduction of Community Service Centers. Community Service Centers were budgeted within Special Projects in Fiscal Year 2004 and then partially reinstated within Community and Economic Development in the Annual Fiscal Year 2005 Budget.

Although the total budget for non-public safety departments increased between Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005 due to salary increases, new facilities, and non-discretionary expenses, non-public safety department budgets decreased as a percentage of the General Fund from 46.7 percent to 43.9 percent. The total public safety budget increased by $62.3 million and increased its percentage of the General Fund by 2.8 percent. Public Safety grew from 53.3% of the General Fund in Fiscal Year 2004 to 56.1% in Fiscal Year 2005. This indicates that the non-public safety department budgets were reduced for the benefit of public safety.



When funding is available for public safety, a decision must be made as to whether personnel, non-personnel or some combination thereof should be funded. For example, $76,000 could fund 1.00 firefighter or pay an annual lease payment for a fire apparatus for one year. With the establishment of performance goals through the public safety Five-Year Plan, the items that may be most helpful in achieving those goals should be funded first. The various options for these decisions may be recommended in accordance with the plan as revenue is identified. The greatest challenge is to fund one-time expenses with onetime revenues, which this budget does. In other words, a onetime grant of $1.0 million should not be used to hire police officers as their expense is ongoing. Alternatively, it may be used to fund a onetime deferred maintenance repair or an equipment purchase.

Revenues

The need for ongoing revenues has been discussed throughout this Public Safety Section. Property Tax, Sales Tax and Safety Sales Tax were identified as primary sources of funding for public safety. An immediate need of $129 million and a longer term need of $478 million have been identified to continue providing top rated public safety services to the residents of the City of San Diego. It is important for any new revenue source to be ongoing so that it may fund ongoing needs, such as personnel expense, station operations, and facility and fleet maintenance. Financing options may fund large items such as building facilities or purchasing major apparatus, but are not available to fund operations. A bond may fund a new police station, but not the officers to staff it.

Such large infusions of revenue may be achieved through new additional revenue sources or increases to the rates of existing sources. Options being explored include: public safety omnibus financing, a parcel tax increase, or a transient occupancy tax increase.

San Diego's Public Safety Performance

Both public safety departments have used their funding efficiently to provide San Diego's citizens a safe environment, as evidenced by comparing the City of San Diego to other municipalities. Various comparable performance measures are used to evaluate department performance, provide meaningful information to residents, and allow more informed budgetary and policy decisions. Similar measures are used in Police and Fire departments across the country. Locally, these measures demonstrate the effect of budget constraints over the years for both the SDPD and SDFD.

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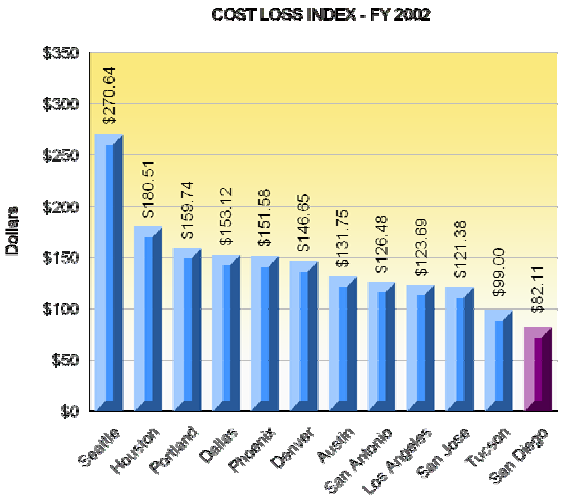
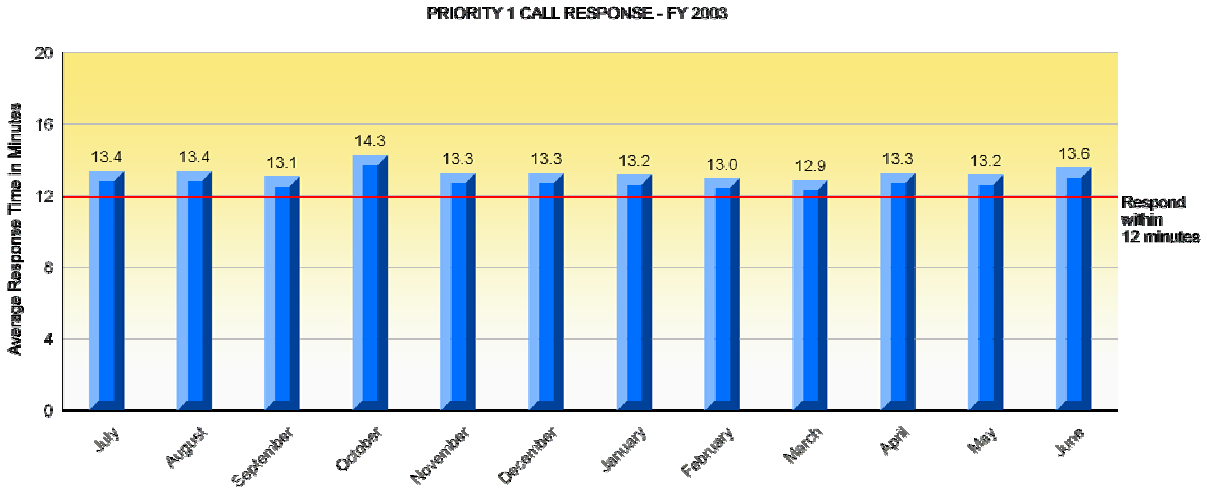


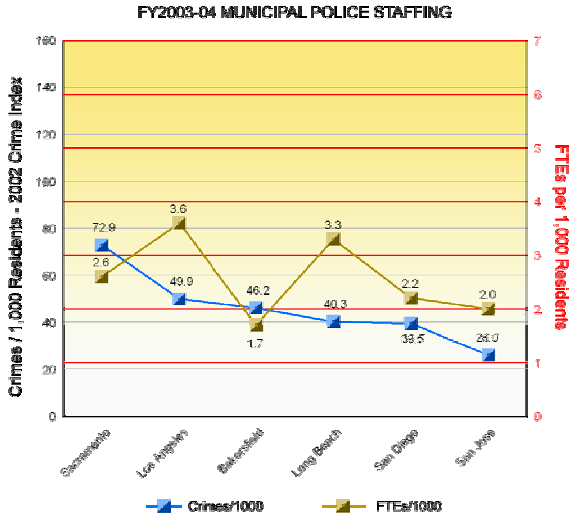
In Fiscal Year 2002, San Diego's cost for fire protection and fire loss was lowest among cities surveyed.

As reflected in the above chart, the Cost Loss Index measures the average cost per City resident for fire protection and fire loss. In Fiscal Year 1994, the City of San Diego's Cost Loss Index was $78. By Fiscal Year 2003 (not shown on the graph), the Cost Loss Index had increased to $105. Although the Cost Loss Index increased as San Diego invested more money in its Fire-Rescue Department, the cost is still comparatively low, indicating that San Diego Fire-Rescue effectively protects from losses as a result of fires. Comparatively, the average response time for an engine company went from five minutes and twenty seconds in Fiscal Year 1994 to five minutes and forty-seven seconds in 2003. Expenses for firefighting services increased by over 25 percent, yet response times were not able to keep pace. The City continues to maintain reliable response times; however, response times could be affected by San Diego growth. As more people move to San Diego and the population density increases, it could be difficult for San Diego Fire-Rescue to respond to calls for help in a timely manner. The Fire and Lifeguard Facilities bond has begun to address this need, as Fire Station #46 opened in Fiscal Year 2004 and an additional new station is scheduled to open in Fiscal Year 2006. However, lengthened response times may need to be revisited after the Fire accreditation process is completed.

The Police Department also tracks response times and has a goal of responding to Priority 1 calls (non-life threatening emergencies) within 12 minutes. In Fiscal Year 1994, the Department was close to achieving that goal with an average response time of 12.2 minutes. The following chart identifies, however, that as funding constraints have continued, the SDPD has not been able to maintain that level of response time; in Fiscal Year 2003, Priority 1 calls were responded to in an average of 13.3 minutes.



A study recently completed by the Government Finance Research Group compared San Diego's Police and Fire-Rescue departments with those of 34 other major US cities (pop. 100,000 to 3 million) using Fiscal Year 2003 budget information. A wide variety of indicators including budgets, staffing, response times, and crime rates were used. The study data indicated that although San Diego has fewer than the average number of police and fire employees per capita compared to the other cities, San Diego also benefits from a lower crime rate and fewer incidents requiring fire-rescue responses. This doesn't diminish the need for enhanced funding for additional staffing and facilities; it does provide insight, however, as to how well the departments have been able to manage current resources.



San Diego had the fifth lowest crime rate of the 35 study cities, based on the 2002 FBI crime index.

On average, there were 3.43 Police total FTEs (sworn and civilian) per 1,000 residents among the cities studied, while San Diego had 2.18. The cities in the study had an average of 67.3 crimes per 1,000 residents, while the City of San Diego had 39.5 crimes reported per 1,000 residents, the fifth lowest crime rate of the 35 study cities, based on the 2002 FBI crime index. As population increases in San Diego and the ratio of Police staffing to population decreases, San Diego's low crime rate could be in jeopardy. It is important for both civilian and sworn police department staffing to increase as the population increases.

For Fire-Rescue, the cities studied had an average of 1.57 Fire-Rescue FTEs/1,000 residents, while the City of San Diego had 1.02 Fire-Rescue FTEs/1,000 residents during Fiscal Year 2003. Comparably, the cities had an average of 113 Fire-Rescue responses per 1,000 residents, while the City of San Diego benefited from only 72 Fire-Rescue responses per 1,000 residents.

In the past, the number of firefighters and sworn police officers per 1,000 population has been used to measure public safety. While the number of sworn personnel is important (only sworn personnel can fight fires and makes arrests), these measures do not provide the most accurate portrayal of the level of service provided, because they do not take civilian staffing into account. Public safety departments have clerical, technical, administrative, and management positions that can be filled by civilian personnel and are critical to the productivity of the department. Since the department cannot function without that support, those positions should be included when measuring the department's performance and in comparisons to other jurisdictions. When civilians are not filling those positions, sworn personnel often must perform the work. When officers and firefighters are working desk jobs, they are not providing direct protection to residents on the street. Furthermore, it is not cost effective to have sworn personnel completing administrative tasks; revising a measure of "sworn per 1,000" to include both sworn and civilian personnel should provide the information to make decisions that may allow the departments to operate more efficiently and cost effectively.

While measuring the number of public safety staff per 1,000 population is a better measure than the number of sworn per 1,000 population, it still portrays an incomplete picture of public safety needs; the demand for public safety services must also be taken into account. It is important to compare not only staffing levels, but the number of calls received, crimes reported, and fire-rescue responses. A city that has 100 fire-rescue responses per year should not need as many staff per 1,000 population as a city with 500 fire-rescue responses per year. Goals should be set using a combination of measures to best represent the levels of service being provided.

These comparisons demonstrate that current staffing levels are appropriate to the number of responses, but this does not address the most critical measurement of response times, or the ongoing fiscal needs for new and updated facilities and equipment. It should be noted that the Fire-Rescue Department is currently participating in the Fire Accreditation process, which includes a detailed risk assessment and analysis of standards of coverage. Information from the accreditation process may be incorporated into the City Manager's Five-Year Plan when the accreditation is completed in the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2005.

Long Term Budget Approach

Good budgeting is a broadly defined process that has political, managerial, planning, communication and financial dimensions, as stated by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), the preeminent authority in governmental budgeting and finance practices. In that context, a good budget should include a long-term perspective, which is the goal in preparing a Public Safety Five-Year Plan. A long-range financial plan allows the policy makers to better understand the fiscal impact of current and proposed policies and approve the most prudent course of action to achieve desired results.

The goal of this long-term perspective is predicated around four principles:

Establish broad goals to guide decision making
Develop realistic approaches to achieve goals
Develop a budget consistent with approaches to achieve goals
Evaluate performance and make adjustments

A long-term plan should not focus on specific line items to be procured in each respective year. A line-item approach diminishes the Mayor and City Council's greatest flexibility in determining priorities throughout the City and specifically public safety. The practice of earmarking revenues is contrary to good budgeting principles and has not been successful in the past. If a policy earmarks a percentage of General Fund revenues for a certain department, and then a greater need arises, the earmarked revenue is unavailable to fund the new need. Furthermore, with the fluctuation of available revenues and costs of items (especially personnel), it is difficult to create an accurate forecast of specific line items that can be funded. Rather than focusing on specific line items, a long-term plan provides an option to meet performance related goals.

Over the next two years, in relation to the Police Department Strategic Plan and the Fire-Rescue Department accreditation process, this long-term plan should establish realistic goals for performance by the public safety departments. A public safety long-term plan needs to account for ongoing personnel and maintenance costs that may not be funded through the funding plan. Until the Fire Accreditation process is complete and a funding plan is finalized, this Five-Year Plan can only lay the groundwork for establishing specific goals.

Through establishing broad goals to guide decision making, the Mayor and City Council may, in effect, be able to provide the necessary equipment and facilities to meet previously indicated unfunded needs. Broad goals may be established for public safety and items that may help achieve those goals should receive the highest funding priorities.

Conclusion

San Diego continues to maintain a high priority for its public safety departments. San Diego's Police and Fire-Rescue departments have performed efficiently and effectively on limited budgets, especially when compared to other jurisdictions. Historically, Property Tax and Sales Tax provided enough revenue to fully fund public safety expenditures. However, due to shifting of revenues by the State, and unfunded needs, additional revenues are needed. Cities across the nation face similar challenges to fully fund public safety and have implemented a wide variety of fees, taxes, and bonds to fund public safety. In recent years, other City services have been reduced to fund public safety. The Funding Plan that was presented to PS&NS contained possibilities that may enable the City to greatly enhance public safety without decreasing other City services.

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2005, a Public Safety Five-Year Plan is proposed by the City Manager to address public safety funding. The Five-Year Plan begins with significant increases for Fiscal Year 2005, prioritizes public safety needs, and proposes a plan to provide approximately $8 - $10 million of discretionary funding each year to fund the most critical public safety needs. The Public Safety Funding Plan proposed an additional two tiers of needs with a variety of funding options. However, new revenues are required to fully fund public safety in the future without shifting funds away from non-public safety programs. Simply increasing public safety budgets will not ensure improved public safety. Rather, budget increases should be carefully considered and provided in the areas where they will improve the crime rates, response times, and service levels that impact the residents and visitors of the City of San Diego.