



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

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Financial Impacts of Fully Staffing the San Diego Police Department

INTRODUCTION

On March 24, 2021, our Office received a memorandum from Councilmember LaCava requesting an analysis of the financial impacts of fully staffing the San Diego Police Department. Specifically, we were asked to: (1) define “full staffing” for the Department; (2) estimate the costs to the General Fund associated with full staffing; and (3) identify the potential impacts to the Department’s use of overtime. Subsequent to our receipt of the request, we received further clarification that our analysis should focus on the Department’s sworn staffing.

While this report is responsive to the request, it should be noted that the notion of fully staffing the Department is premature given existing circumstances. There are longstanding and varied issues surrounding the topic of Police sworn staffing which continue to challenge the Department in its efforts to fill existing vacancies. While recruiting efforts and associated academy sizes have improved, overall attrition rates are only marginally better (12 officers lost per month thus far in FY 2021 compared to a rate of 13 per month in FY 2020 and FY 2019). Practically speaking, our Office would advise that the Department have a plan and reasonable trajectory towards filling existing vacancies before the Council considers meaningfully adding additional sworn positions.

FISCAL/POLICY DISCUSSION

A. Defining Full Staffing

In FY 2013, the Department developed a Five-Year Plan with the intent of restoring service levels that were adversely impacted by budget reductions that were experienced following the Great Recession. Central to the Five-Year Plan was the Department’s goal of returning to FY 2009 budgeted sworn staffing levels of 2,128 officers from the then current level of 1,970. According to the Department at the time, both crime rates and officer response times were beginning to trend upward, while officer proactive time was decreasing. In the years that followed the Five-Year Plan, the Department’s budget increased as its budgeted sworn staffing level increased up to 2,036

officers in FY 2016 where it has remained relatively constant to this day. The Department continues to maintain the sworn staffing goal identified within the Five-Year Plan of 2,128 officers and deems this to be the level where it would be fully staffed with respect to sworn officers.

B. Full Staffing Costs

The Department’s FY 2021 Budget includes 2,036 full-time sworn officers which represents a difference of 92 officers compared to its sworn staffing goal (2,128 officers). Conservatively assuming that all 92 of these positions were to be added within the rank of Police Officer II via the Police Academy, we estimate the total cost to be \$13.2 million. This is based on FY 2021 average salaries and post-Prop. B fringe¹ amounts (approximately \$92,000 and \$52,000, respectively) for current Police Officer IIs.

In addition to the costs of adding budgeted positions, we must also factor in the cost of filling existing vacancies. This is due to the fact that vacancy savings have been accounted for within the Department’s budget through the use of a Budgeted Vacancy Factor.² In other words, the Department’s budget does not have sufficient funding to fill these positions. To illustrate this fact, we note that the Department is projected to exceed its overall budget for Salaries and Wages by approximately \$737,000 in FY 2021 despite existing vacancies. As of March 29, 2021, there are 106 existing sworn positions currently vacant, primarily within the Sergeant and Detective ranks. The net cost associated with filling these vacancies is estimated to total \$26.9 million.

Taken together, the total estimated cost to hypothetically fully staff the Department (2,128 officers) is approximately \$40.1 million based on FY 2021 salary and fringe amounts, as reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Estimated Cost to Fully Staff the Police Department (2,128 Sworn Positions)

Estimated Cost to Increase Budgeted Sworn Positions					
Position	Avg. Salary	Fringe* (Post Prop. B)	Total	Add'l FTEs	Aggregate Cost
Police Officer II	\$ 91,616	\$ 51,864	\$ 143,480	92.00	\$ 13,200,167
Subtotal				92.00	\$ 13,200,167
Estimated Costs of Filling Existing Vacancies					
Position	Avg. Salary	Avg. Fringe	Total	Vacancies	Aggregate Cost
Sergeant	\$ 118,007	\$ 179,314	\$ 297,321	19.00	\$ 5,649,099
Detective	102,170	136,882	239,052	92.00	21,992,784
Police Officer III	103,170	155,652	258,822	1.00	258,822
Police Officer II	91,616	81,878	173,494	(6.00)	(1,040,964)
Subtotal				106.00	\$ 26,859,741
Total					\$ 40,059,908

* Estimated fringe amounts assume post-Prop pension costs for new budgeted sworn positions (92.00 FTEs) given the likelihood that they will be filled with new hires; for existing vacancies (106.00 FTEs), an average fringe cost is assumed given the likelihood that they will be filled via the promotion of existing officers.

¹ Reflects average pension costs for sworn officers within the post-Prop. B pension tier (i.e., hired on or after July 1, 2013); these costs may change given the recent invalidation of Prop. B.

² The Department of Finance intends to refer to this as “Estimated Personnel Expenditure Savings” beginning in FY 2022.

C. Overtime Impacts Assuming Full Staffing

The Department’s overtime budget for FY 2021 totals \$38.1 million of which \$33.7 million is budgeted in the General Fund and \$4.4 million is budgeted in the Seized Assets Fund. Of this budgeted amount, overtime that is specifically related to sworn staffing shortfalls is a relatively small subset. To illustrate this, Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the categories and subcategories³ by which the Department budgets and track overtime.

Table 2: Breakdown of FY 2021 Overtime Budget

Category	Subcategory	General Fund	Seized Assets Fund	Total Expenditures	Total Revenue
Extension of Shift	Extension of Shift (General)	\$ 3,921,137		\$ 3,921,137	
	Reports	\$ 1,214,838		\$ 1,214,838	
	Training & Support	\$ 874,667		\$ 874,667	
	Emergency Calls	\$ 23,867		\$ 23,867	
	Patrol Staffing Backfill	\$ 3,261,396		\$ 3,261,396	
	Community Policing	\$ 423,898		\$ 423,898	
	Communications Staffing	\$ 2,333,440		\$ 2,333,440	
Call Back	Call Back	\$ 1,418,177		\$ 1,418,177	
Court	Court	\$ 2,084,808		\$ 2,084,808	
Holidays	Holiday Worked Premium Pay	\$ 4,292,865		\$ 4,292,865	
Special Events	Special Events Commercial	\$ 1,183,328		\$ 1,183,328	\$ 1,183,328
	Special Events - Non-Profit	\$ 1,150,955		\$ 1,150,955	\$ 690,573
	July 4th Holiday Support	\$ 196,857		\$ 196,857	
	Ballpark Events	\$ 1,376,894		\$ 1,376,894	\$ 1,376,894
	Stadium Events	\$ 229,451		\$ 229,451	\$ 229,451
	Other Special Events	\$ 426,451		\$ 426,451	\$ 426,451
Grants/Task Forces	Grants/Task Forces	\$ 2,521,300		\$ 2,521,300	\$ 2,521,300
Other Events	Presidential/Dignitary Visits	\$ 72,394		\$ 72,394	
	Protests & Other Events	\$ 156,400		\$ 156,400	
	Neighborhood Policing		\$ 4,389,792	\$ 4,389,792	
	Clean SD	\$ 3,549,407		\$ 3,549,407	
	Other	\$ 2,077,665		\$ 2,077,665	
Miscellaneous	FLSA Overtime (Flores)	\$ 924,827		\$ 924,827	
TOTAL		\$ 33,715,021	\$ 4,389,792	\$ 38,104,813	\$ 6,427,996

Highlighted are the two specific subcategories that are utilized for purposes of meeting sworn staffing needs: “Patrol Staffing Backfill” and “Extension of Shift (General).”

Patrol Staffing Backfill, budgeted at \$3.3 million, is the primary and most significant. An example of this type of overtime is when an officer works at a different patrol area command than he/she is

³ For descriptions of each overtime subcategory, see IBA Report 20-21: Analysis of the Police Department’s Fiscal Year 2021 Budget, Pages 8-10 (<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/iba-report-20-21.pdf>)

assigned to address their staffing needs. It should be noted that a staffing need requiring the use of Patrol Staffing Backfill overtime may arise due to a cause other than vacancies, such as sick, vacation, military, or other leave. For this reason, it is difficult to determine how much of \$3.3 million budget for Patrol Staffing Backfill would be impacted (i.e., reduced) assuming full staffing given that some portion of this budget would need to be maintained to backfill staffing for non-vacancy-related leave.

The “Extension of Shift (General)” subcategory, budgeted at \$3.9 million, is a catch-all for any type of “Extension of Shift” overtime (i.e., when an officer’s shift is extended beyond its normal start/end time) that does not have its own specific subcategory (e.g., Reports, Training & Support, Emergency Calls, etc.). While uses for this type of overtime includes staffing needs (i.e., to address both vacancies and various leave types), it may also be utilized for operational purposes, such as significant investigations (e.g., homicide) or to address a specific cause of crime increase. Therefore, while some reduction could be expected, it is difficult to determine the extent that full staffing would impact the \$3.9 million budget for this subcategory.

In addition to the two overtime categories discussed above that would likely see funding reductions as a result of full staffing, there are others that may require funding increases. These principally include “Holiday Worked Premium Pay,” which is overtime compensation for when an officer works on a City-observed holiday, and “Court Pay,” when an officer is required to appear in Court during non-duty hours; the amounts to which they may increase are unknown.

Clean SD and Neighborhood Policing Overtime

Subsequent to the development of the Five-Year Plan, new service programs associated with the Department’s Neighborhood Policing Division (NPD) have been added to the Department’s overall responsibilities. These consist of: “Clean SD” – a Citywide waste and debris abatement program whereby NPD officers accompany Environmental Services Department staff during abatement efforts; and the “Neighborhood Policing” initiative which is intended to address homelessness and quality of life issues, including Community Impact Strategy activities around homeless facilities. Both Clean SD and Neighborhood Policing are funded using overtime (\$3.5 million and \$4.4 million, respectively), though the later was budgeted outside of the General Fund in FY 2021 using Seized Asset Funds. It is unclear whether the practice of using Seized Asset Funds will continue after FY2021.

Though it is not being advocated by the Department, they have advised our Office that an additional 56 sworn positions would be required above the Five-Year Plan’s staffing goal, should the Mayor and Council intend to convert these to ongoing programs using regular/standard-time rather than overtime. For Neighborhood Policing, this would include 4.00 Sergeants and 28.00 Police Officer IIs at an estimated cost \$5.2 million; for Clean SD, 4.00 Sergeants and 20.00 Police Officer IIs at an estimated cost \$4.1 million. Taken together, this would represent a net increase of \$1.3 million associated with transitioning these overtime programs to regular time. In addition, doing so would decrease the City’s flexibility to adjust and/or eliminate the service levels associated with the programs in future years.

CONCLUSION

The Department continues to maintain the sworn staffing goal of 2,128 officers that was first outlined in FY 2013 within it’s Five-Year Plan. To reach this full staffing goal, the Department

would need to fill 106 existing sworn positions currently vacant as of March 29, 2021 and increase budgeted sworn positions by 92; we estimate the associated cost to the General fund to be approximately \$40.1 million, based on FY 2021 salary and fringe amounts. Impacts to the Department's \$38.1 million overtime budget (of which \$33.7 million is budgeted in the General Fund) associated with full staffing are likely to be nominal, though we were unable to specifically quantify them.

While recent recruiting results have made incremental improvements to overall sworn staffing levels, vacancies continue to be elevated. For this reason, our Office would advise that the Department have a plan and reasonable trajectory towards filling existing vacancies before the Council considers adding additional sworn positions.



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