

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

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To: Council President Peters and Members of the City Council

From: Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst

Subject: Police Sworn Officer Attrition

The purpose of this report is to provide a perspective on the City's experience with regard to sworn officer attrition and budget-to-actual sworn staffing levels for Fiscal Year's 2004-2006, and to provide updated information on this issue for the current fiscal year. Using alternative attrition scenarios and assumptions regarding new recruits based on budgeted academy classes, this report also projects sworn staffing levels through Fiscal Year 2008 and Fiscal Year 2009.

This information is provided to Council as a back-drop for upcoming budget deliberations and in response to the Council's ongoing concerns about the high level of sworn officer vacancies. Despite new recruitment efforts and an infusion of 79 new recruits this fiscal year, department vacancies are at the highest point for the longest period of time, in recent history. As of March 13th, 2006, 2108 sworn positions were budgeted. Of these, 1888 are filled, leaving 220 officer vacancies representing 10% of the City's Police force. Of the 1888 filled positions, 159 are on leave status, leaving 1729 available sworn personnel.

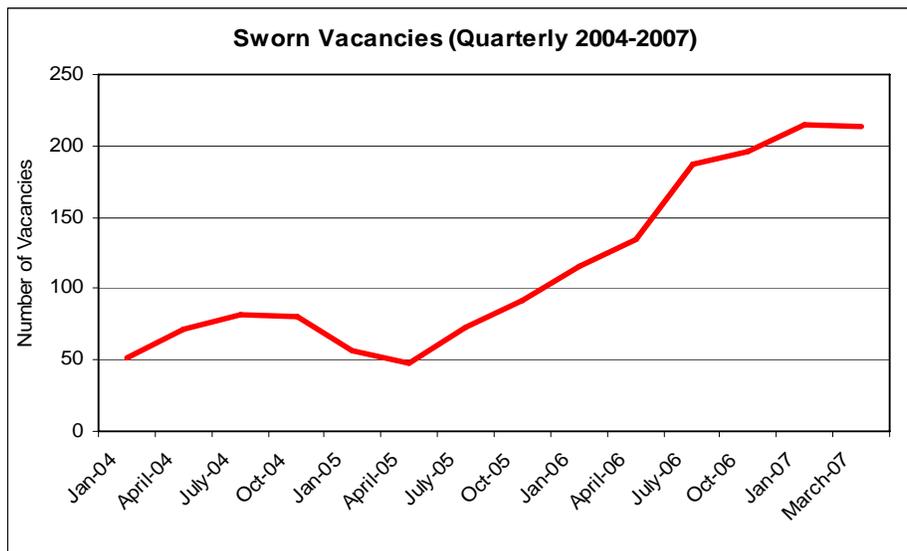
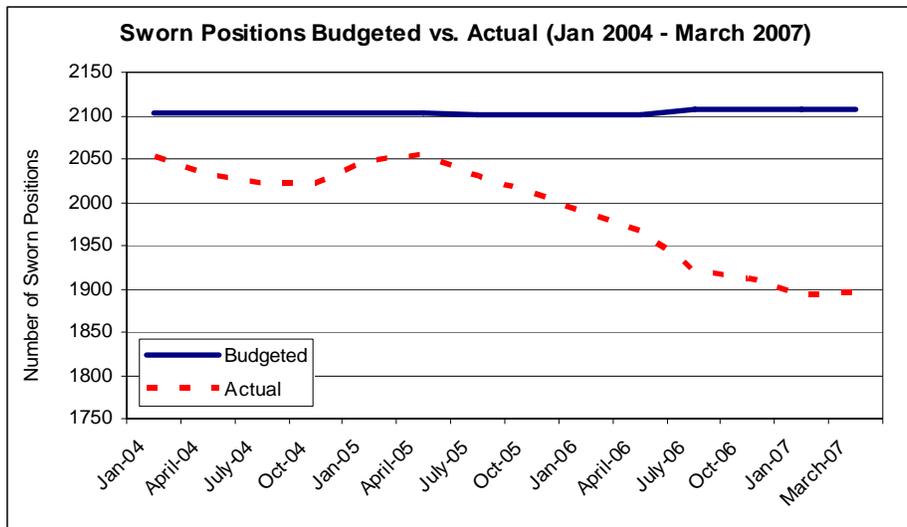
How Did We Get Here? A Review of Fiscal Years 2004-2006

Three watershed factors- budget cuts in academy classes in Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005, followed by unprecedented high attrition levels together with atypical recruitment challenges- one occurring on the heels of the other, led to the situation the department is facing today. In Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005, as a budget reduction measure, the Police Department was directed to forgo five budgeted academy classes which could have resulted in an infusion of 150-175+ new recruits over those two fiscal years. A lower more typical attrition rate at that time helped to offset the absence of new recruits associated with fewer academy classes. As the charts below show, staffing levels from July 2004 (2021) to July 2005 (2029) stayed relatively constant as did the number of vacancies at 72 and 64 respectfully. More importantly, however, during this time the department was not able to "grow" the number of filled sworn positions from one fiscal year to the next. This scenario put the department in a vulnerable position for facing the challenges that lay ahead.

The effects of the five missed academy classes proved to be crucial over the next twelve months, with the department facing unprecedented attrition levels, in addition to having made no headway in "growing" the number of sworn positions over the prior year.

Beginning in July 2005, the department began to experience the highest attrition rates in recent history, with officer departures averaging 18 per month for an entire twelve month period. San Diego Police Department, like departments across the country, also ran into significant recruitment challenges as they worked to increase staffing levels. With fewer individuals attracted to the profession, cities found themselves competing for a smaller pool of qualified applicants.

The graphs below show that while filled positions and vacancies stayed relatively constant from July 2004 to July 2005 as discussed earlier, from July 2005 to July 2006, the department saw a departure of 213 officers. 71 officers went to other law enforcement agencies. Correspondingly, the number of vacant positions had increased from 64 (3% of force) in July 2005 to 187 (9% of force) by July 2006. On July 2006, 1921 of 2108 budgeted sworn positions were filled.



What Has Happened in Fiscal Year 2007?

Since July 2006, an additional 115 officers have left the department – 50 departed to other agencies. However, a bit of good news is that the attrition rate year-to-date has declined from 18 officers per month in Fiscal Year 2006 to 14 officers per month year-to-date. New academy classes have resulted in an infusion of 79 new recruits during this time period, but the new hires are not enough to keep up with the number of officers leaving. Academy classes, which can accommodate up to 60 recruits, have averaged only 22.5 over the past five academies as the department continues to face significant recruitment challenges.

The Police Department has made progress in maximizing their recruiting and hiring systems as recently reported to the Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee, including the addition of personnel in the background and recruitment units, offering three written tests per month vs. one, increasing the minimum age for the written test, increasing outreach, and improving efficiencies. As a result of these improvements the hiring process has reduced from 18 months to approximately 3-6 months. However, they have not yet hired a recruiting consultant, which was requested and authorized in July of 2006.

Despite the lower attrition rate, new recruits and enhanced recruitment strategies, the department is faced with the results of a series of circumstances that caused a sizable vacancy “hole” that has continued to grow over the past 21 months - a hole that will likely take as long, if not longer, to dig out of. As of March 13th, 2007, 220 officer positions or 10% of the force were vacant resulting in 1888 actual sworn positions out of 2108 budget positions. Assuming current attrition rates, 49 officers will depart over the remaining 3.5 months, and another budgeted academy class is expected to result in 35 new recruits. Based on these assumptions, the department will end FY 2007 with 1874 filled positions and 234 vacant positions, representing an unprecedented 11% vacancy rate.

SWORN OFFICER STAFFING July 2006 – March 2007

Budgeted Positions 7/01/06	2108
Actual Positions as of 7/01/06	1921 *
Attrition Year-to-Date	115
New Recruits/Other	82
Actual Positions 3/16/07	1888 *
Vacancies 3/16/07	220
% of Force Vacant	10%

* Includes selective placements, terminal leave, military leave and civil service leave.

Looking Ahead to Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009

The IBA developed two scenarios, for the periods of March 2007- July 2008 and July 2008 - July 2009, using two alternative attrition assumptions. Under both alternatives, it was also assumed that five academy classes would take place during March 2007-July 2008 as currently budgeted and four academy classes would occur during FY 2009. Both scenarios assume successful recruitment efforts will result in 35 recruits per academy class.

Alternative A assumes the current attrition rate of 13 officers per month (this has varied from 13-14 years-to-date) will continue through the remainder of FY 2007 and through FY 2008, and drop to 9 officers per month for all of FY 2009. This 30% reduction in attrition matches the drop that took place from Fiscal Year 2006 to Fiscal Year 2007 year-to-date.

Alternative B assumes a slowdown in attrition to 9 officers per month beginning in March 2007 through July 2008 and a further slowdown for FY 2009 of 6 officers per month.

Fiscal Year 2008

Alternative A results in 1862 actual positions projected for July 2008, 33 fewer than in March 2007. The five budgeted academies of recruits during this time period, assuming 35 recruits per class, will not keep up with expected attrition. **Alternative B**, which assumes a slower rate of attrition for the same time period, and the same number of graduating recruits, results in 1926 actual positions as of July 2008- an increase of 31 officers over the prior year.

SWORN OFFICER PROJECTIONS July 2008

Alternative A		Alternative B	
Budgeted Positions	2131.5 *	Budgeted Positions	2131.5 *
Actual Positions as of (3/07/07)	1895 **	Actual Positions as of (3/07/07)	1895 **
Attrition (16 months x 13 officers)	(208)	Attrition (16 months x 9 officers)	(144)
Academy classes (5 x 35 recruits)	175	Academy classes (5 x 35 recruits)	175
Actual Positions Estimated 7/01/08	1862 **	Actual Positions Estimated 7/01/08	1926.5 **
Vacancies Estimated 7/01/08	269.5	Vacancies Estimated 7/01/08	205
% of Force Vacant 7/01/08	13%	% of Force Vacant 7/01/08	10%

* Assumes the addition of 23.5 sworn positions for Northwest Station on 7/01/07 per the Mayor's Five-Year Outlook.

** Includes selective placements, terminal leave, military leave and civil service leave.

As indicated earlier, **Alternative B** assumed lower attrition levels of 9 officers per month beginning this month rather than continuation of the current 13 officers per month. On a note of caution, this may be an optimistic scenario based on what is known today regarding planned departures. Over the next five years, 251 officers are scheduled to DROP including 25 (6 per month) over the next four months. Unannounced retirements and unplanned departures will increase those known monthly attrition numbers. Some of the largest academy classes of 75 – 100 recruits took place in the 1970's and these officers will all be approaching retirement.

Both alternatives result in over 200 vacant positions at the end of FY 2008.

Fiscal Year 2009

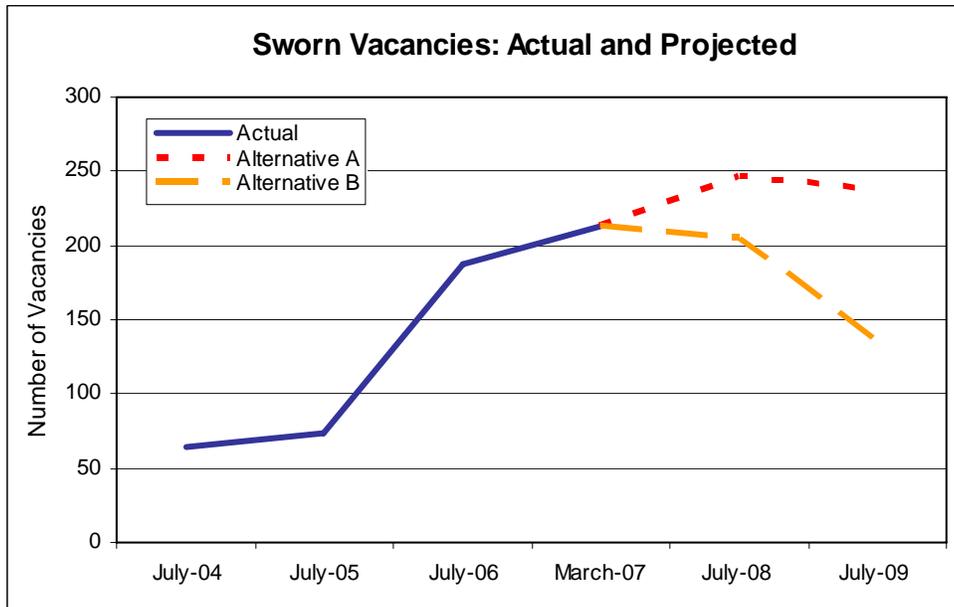
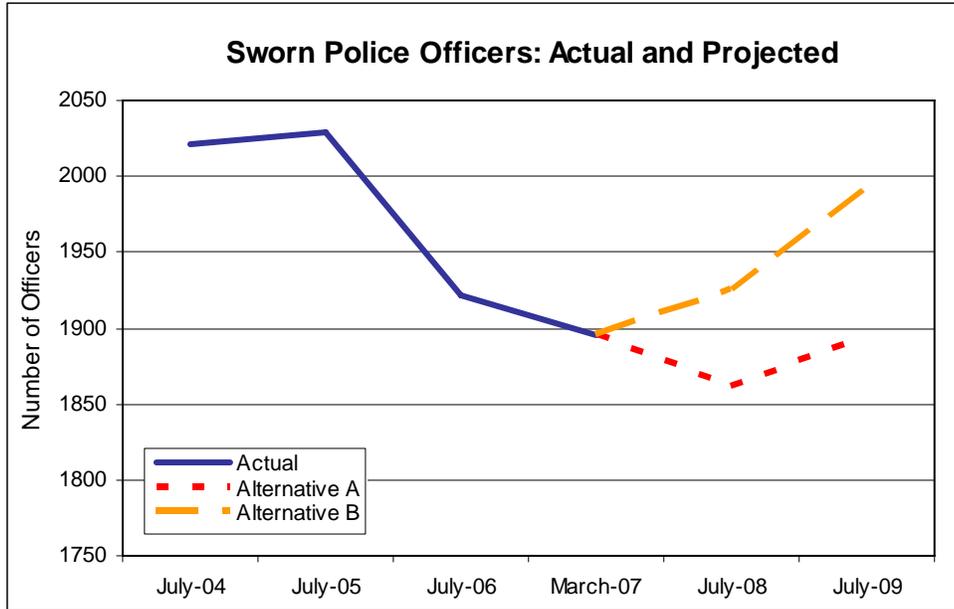
Using the alternative scenarios and attrition assumptions discussed above, **Alternative A** results in 1894 actual positions and 237 vacancies in July of 2009. **Alternative B**, with slower attrition assumptions, would result in 1994 actual positions and 137 vacancies in July of 2009. While more progress in filling positions results under **Alternative B**, it should be noted that prior to the challenges of the last couple of years, typical vacancy levels hovered between 30-60 sworn positions - significantly fewer than under either scenario. Again, **Alternative B** for FY 2009, which assumes 6 departures per month, may be optimistic given that 251 DROP eligible officers will be leaving over the next five years even before assuming unplanned departures.

**SWORN OFFICER PROJECTIONS
July 2009**

Alternative A		Alternative B	
Budgeted Positions	2131.5	Budgeted Positions	2131.5
Actual Positions as of 7/01/08	1862 *	Actual Positions as of 7/01/08	1926.5 *
Projected Attrition FY09 (12 months x 9 officers)	(108)	Projected Attrition FY09 (12 months x 6 officers)	(72)
Academy classes (4 x 35 recruits)	140	Academy classes (4 x 35 recruits)	140
Actual Positions Estimated 7/01/09	1894 *	Actual Positions Estimated 7/01/09	1994.5 *
Vacancies Estimated 7/01/09	237.5	Vacancies Estimated 7/01/09	137
% of Force Vacant 7/01/09	11%	% of Force Vacant 7/01/09	6%

* Includes selective placements, terminal leave, military leave and civil service leave.

The graphs below show budget to actual and vacant positions for Fiscal Years 2004 – 2007 and projections for Fiscal Year 2008 and Fiscal Year 2009 under both alternatives A and B.



What are the Implications of this Analysis?

It is important for decision-makers to be aware of the situation that exists today regarding officer attrition and what it could mean for the next several years. A number of factors and circumstances, not fully known at this time and not all within the City's control, will determine how this actually plays out over the next several months and years. It is realistic to say from this analysis that there will not be a quick fix, and it could take 3-5 years to return to more typical sworn staffing levels. This will depend largely on the City's ability and efforts to recruit new qualified candidates.

In the meantime, this knowledge can be useful in helping to frame issues, identify implications for the community, and shape recruitment strategies. The reality of the situation raises a number of policy issues as well as immediate budget issues for FY 2008 that should be discussed during the budget process.

FY 2008 Budget Issues

The Mayor's budget projections, per the Five Year Outlook, include funding for 23.5 new officers for the new Northwest Station. As a new facility that the City has committed to staff, additional positions should be included in the budget. However, given projected vacancy levels, the funding for these additional positions will likely not be needed in FY 2008. Northwest Station may in actuality have to be staffed by borrowing officers from other areas. From a budgetary perspective, an alternative to consider is to add the positions for FY 2008 to address the commitment, but not add the funding at this time.

What is an appropriate vacancy factor for the Police Department for FY 2008? The department's vacancy factor for the current year is \$18.1 million including an additional \$2 million that was recommended by the IBA, and adopted by the Council, based on a 9% attrition rate at the time of budget adoption. This savings funded a civilianization program in order to put 30 officers performing administrative functions back out to patrol. The mid-year budget review by Financial Management recommends increasing this number by \$4.2 million for Fiscal Year 2007 for a total of \$22.3 million in salary savings for Fiscal Year 2007. Our pending analysis of the mid-year will show an even higher number based on experience. The Police department has also indicated in preliminary budget reviews that an additional \$3 million, over Fiscal Year 2007 budget amount of \$18.1 million, should be included for next fiscal year based on their analysis of projected vacancies for Fiscal Year 2008.

Should additional funds be put toward recruitment efforts? As noted earlier, if qualified candidates are available, academy classes can accommodate up to 60 recruits. The last five classes have averaged 22.5 recruits. Effective recruitment strategies are critical to returning to more traditional staffing levels. How have current year recruitment funds been used to enhance recruitment efforts? In July 2006, as part of their Recruitment and Retention strategy, the Mayor's Office requested \$250,000 in additional funding to hire a recruiting consultant and pay for advertising. The recruiting consultant, which they had planned to

hire immediately at the time of the report, has not yet been hired but interviews have taken place. Once hired, the consultant may have additional effective recruitment ideas that require additional funding. Are other ideas being considered, such as referral bonuses or finder's fees for officers and other employees who identify successful candidates? This idea was raised in the July 2006 IBA report on this matter and this strategy was recently put into place in San Francisco.

Policy Issues

The following are broader policy questions related to the potential impact of low staffing levels:

What specific Police services have been affected by the ongoing high vacancy levels?

How have response times been impacted?

What other impacts have been felt by the community?

What is the status of the civilianization program adopted by the Council as part of the FY 2007 budget in order to put 30 more officers back to patrol?

Is further civilianization possible?

How much of the officer shortage has been made up with officer overtime and what are the related impacts?

CONCLUSION

This report has been provided to facilitate budget and policy discussions relative to the issues of sworn officer attrition levels, recruitment challenges and possible impacts on Police services. It is important to know that it could take several years for the department to return to traditional staffing levels, and to be aware of the related impacts of this. This information may also be helpful to decision-makers in determining budget approaches for FY 2008, identifying additional recruitment strategies and understanding service impacts to the community.

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Andrea Tevlin
Independent Budget Analyst