

**Performance Audit  
Police Department  
Sworn Staffing**

**July 2008**

**City Auditor's Office  
City of Atlanta**





## CITY OF ATLANTA

City Auditor's Office  
Leslie Ward, City Auditor  
404.330.6452

July 2008

# Performance Audit:

## Police Department Sworn Staffing

### **Why We Did This Audit**

The Atlanta Police Department has a high public profile and comprises about 30% of the general fund budget. Vacancies and attrition have hindered the department's ability to reach its goal of 2,000 sworn officers. Problems with its system to track the allocation of personnel could also limit the department's ability to make the best use of available staff.

### **What We Recommended**

Our recommendations are intended to clarify the allocation of police officers and aid the department's retention efforts.

The Chief of Police should:

- Budget separately for sworn officers, recruits, and civilian assistants.
- Focus retention efforts on personnel with 5 years or less experience through the use of information collected from restructured exit interviews.
- Update the personnel database on a regular basis to reflect actual officer locations, including officers on temporary assignments.
- Use the workload analysis to make staffing decisions as required by police standard operating procedures.
- Link budgeted cost centers to actual activities to identify where vacancies are and what areas may be underserved

For more information regarding this report, please contact Eric Palmer at 404.330.6455 or [epalmer@atlantaga.gov](mailto:epalmer@atlantaga.gov).

### **What We Found**

The city is making progress in reaching its goal of 2,000 police officers, but faces constraints that hinder its ability to increase the number of officers on the streets. The city has authorized an additional 204 sworn positions in the Police Department since 2003. However, actual sworn staff has grown more slowly, partially due to drops in recruitment in 2005 and 2006. The department had, on average, 201 fewer police officers than authorized each month between 2004 and 2007. About half of the vacant officer positions have been filled by recruits and some others by civilian assistants. The department's vacancy reports do not identify where in the department the sworn vacancies are actually carried.

Part of the department's difficulty in filling sworn positions arises from increased employee turnover. Police management and the officers we talked to believe that attrition in the department is a problem. While some level of attrition is normal, we were unable to find a benchmark. Management's expectation of attrition of 3% or less may be unrealistic. The department's attrition increased from 4.6% in 2004 to 6.2% in 2007. Exit interviews are inconclusive about the primary reasons why officers left the force, but the largest category of non-retirement separations occurred within the first year of service, suggesting problems with recruitment and hiring. Impending retirements by department veterans will also put pressure to fill vacancies. One third (33%) of officers on the force as of December 2007 had 15 or more years of service, while 18% had 20 or more years of service.

Data inconsistencies between the city and the police department, as well as within the department's personnel database, make it difficult to track vacancies and know where officers are actually deployed.

By December 2007, the police department had about 140 more officers than in early 2004. However, the proportion of officers with patrol duties in the city's 6 zones hasn't increased. We analyzed police rosters for one day in August 2007. About 75% of officers scheduled for patrol were available, but each of the six zones had at least one beat uncovered during a shift. The chief contends that other divisions augment gaps in patrol, but analysis of 911 calls shows that these divisions are rarely dispatched. Gaps in patrol coverage could be caused by the department's failure to use its workload analysis to allocate officers within the zones.

## Management Responses to Audit Recommendations

### Summary of Management Responses

**Recommendation:** 1. The Chief of Police should budget separately for sworn officers, recruits, and police office assistants.

**Response:** This would impact the budget adversely because you would have to fully fund the police officer position and an unspecified number of recruit positions. The current practice does not impact the budget.

**Proposed Action:** The APD will consult with DHR and Budget concerning budgeting separately for recruits and sworn officers.

**Timeframe:** FY 09 – FY 10

**Recommendation:** 2. The Chief of Police should focus retention efforts on personnel with 5 years or less experience through the use of information collected from restructured exit interviews.

**Response:** Steps taken by APD to promote retention include promotions after 3 years, job rotation, tuition reimbursement, educational incentives for officers receiving degrees, retention bonus, award and recognition program, and training opportunities. Our recommendations for the revised exit interview were sent to DHR in April.

**Proposed Action:** The APD will continue to explore other viable alternatives relative to focused retention of officers with 5 years or less experience.

**Timeframe:** FY 09

**Recommendation:** 3. The Chief of Police should update the personnel database on a regular basis to reflect actual officer locations, including officers on temporary assignments.

**Response:** APD needs access to Oracle or its own human resources information system to properly track employees. Currently, the APD HR database is updated immediately after new employees are hired, after transfers occur within the agency and twice each calendar year via a data scrub. According to DIT, the Access database is not stable enough and is subject to frequent crashes that result in lost data.

**Proposed Action:** The APD management will consult with the Management Support Office concerning employee tracking requirements.

**Timeframe:** June 2008

**Recommendation:** 4. The Chief of Police should use the workload analysis to make staffing decisions as required by police standard operating procedures.

**Response:** The APD workload analysis is considered along with other factors when sworn personnel are assigned to the zones. The chief can deviate from the analysis to ensure that appropriate manpower is assigned to a particular work unit. In managing attrition, vacancies in field operations (zones) are staffed first.

**Proposed Action:** The APD will require the appropriate signature to be affixed to the workload analysis document.

**Timeframe:** June 2008

**Recommendation:** 5. The Chief of Police should link budgeted cost centers to actual activities to identify where vacancies are and what areas may be underserved.

**Response:**

**Proposed Action:** The Field Operations Division will support the cost centers for all zones and SOS and the Airport-2009 budget. APD will implement the final strategy after outsourced law enforcement consultants provide their recommendations.

**Timeframe:** FY 09



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July 29, 2008

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

We included police staffing in our 2007 audit plan due to the Atlanta Police Department's high public profile and its large share of the general fund budget. Vacancies and attrition have hindered the department's ability to reach its goal of 2,000 officers. Problems with the system used to track the locations of personnel could also limit the department's ability to make the best use of its staff.

This audit focused on how officers are allocated and the department's basis for its current and future officer allocations. We found that the city is progressing towards its goal of 2,000 police officers but faces constraints on increasing the number of officers on the streets. Although an additional 204 sworn positions have been authorized since 2003, the actual number of police officers has averaged 201 fewer than authorized. About half of the vacant officer positions have been filled by recruits, some are filled by civilian assistants, and the rest remain vacant. Part of the difficulty with filling vacancies has been increased employee turnover, primarily within the first year of service. Personnel data inconsistencies also make it difficult to track vacancies and know where officers are actually deployed.

Our recommendations urge the department to clarify the number and allocation of officers and make the information more transparent by budgeting separately for sworn officers, recruits and civilian assistants; linking budgeted cost centers to actual activities; and improving the use of its workload analysis and personnel data to allocate officers and track their assignments. We also recommend that the department focus its retention efforts on personnel with 5 years or less experience. The police department declined to indicate whether it agreed or disagreed but has outlined actions consistent with our recommendations. Their full response is appended to the report.

The Audit Committee has reviewed this report and is releasing it in accordance with Article 2, Chapter 6 of the City Charter. We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation of the

Atlanta Police Department and other city staff throughout the audit. The team for this project was Dawn Williams, Brandon Haynes, Craig Timmons, and Eric Palmer.



Leslie Ward  
City Auditor



Fred Williams  
Audit Committee Chair





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# Police Department Sworn Staffing

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Background.....	2
Audit Objectives .....	6
Scope and Methodology.....	6
Findings and Analysis.....	9
City Is Making Progress toward Its Goal of 2,000 Police Officers But Faces Constraints ....	9
City Has Added 204 Sworn Positions since 2003, But Staffing Lags Budgeted Increases .....	9
Newly Hired Recruits and Officers Leave in the First Year .....	12
Number of Officers Eligible to Retire Will Put Pressure on the Department.....	16
Department Faces Additional Constraints.....	17
More Officers in Patrol Zones than in 2004, But Beats Can Be Uncovered.....	19
Number of Officers on Patrol Has Increased Slightly since 2004 .....	20
APD Does Not Use Workload Analysis to Allocate Officers within Zones .....	23
Recommendations .....	25
Appendices.....	27
Source Data for Exhibits.....	29
Roster Analysis - Beat Coverage .....	33
Management’s Review and Response to Audit Recommendations .....	35

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## List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1	Sworn Officers and Recruits by Rank.....	2
Exhibit 2	Police Department Organizational Chart with the Number of Filled Sworn Positions (December 2007).....	3
Exhibit 3	Map of APD Zones.....	4
Exhibit 4	Budgeted Increases in Sworn Personnel Authorization (Fiscal Years 2003-2008).....	9
Exhibit 5	Authorized and Actual Sworn Personnel by Month (March 2004 – December 2007).....	10
Exhibit 6	Police Recruits per Month (March 2004 – December 2007).....	11
Exhibit 7	Non-Retirement Annual Attrition Rate (2004 - 2007).....	13
Exhibit 8	Officer and Recruit Separations by Years of Service (2004 - 2007).....	14
Exhibit 9	Annual Retirement Rate (2004 - 2007).....	16
Exhibit 10	Sworn Officer Retirements by Years of Service (2004 - 2007).....	17
Exhibit 11	Results from APD Database Analysis.....	19
Exhibit 12	Percentage of Officers Working on August 1, 2007.....	21
Exhibit 13	Percentage of Patrol Officers Working on August 1, 2007.....	21
Exhibit 14	Reasons for Officer Absences August 1, 2007.....	22

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# Introduction

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We conducted this performance audit of sworn staffing levels in the police department pursuant to Chapter 6 of the Atlanta City Charter which establishes the City of Atlanta Audit Committee and the City Auditor's Office, and outlines the City Auditor's Office primary duties. The Audit Committee reviewed our audit scope in September 2007.

A performance audit is an objective, systematic examination of evidence to assess independently the performance of an organization, program, activity, or function. The purpose of a performance audit is to provide information to improve public accountability and facilitate decision-making. Performance audits encompass a wide variety of objectives, including those related to assessing program effectiveness and results; economy and efficiency; internal control; compliance with legal or other requirements; and objectives related to providing prospective analyses, guidance, or summary information.<sup>1</sup>

This report provides an overview of how sworn staff is allocated within the police department and discusses factors that affect staffing levels. It is the second of three reports related to police staffing. The first report, released April 2008, assessed the reliability of the police department's computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. Government Auditing Standards require us to assess the reliability of data used as audit evidence, and an earlier consultant report found problems with the number of dispatched calls and missing reports. We plan to use the CAD data in our third report, which will compare on-duty staffing levels to calls for service and response times.

We included police department staffing in our 2007 audit plan because the Atlanta Police Department has a high public profile and represents about 30% of the city's general fund budget. Personnel costs accounted for 93% of the department's fiscal year 2008 general fund budget. While the city has added sworn positions in recent years, including 50 new positions in fiscal year 2008, vacancies and attrition have hindered the department's ability to be fully staffed.

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<sup>1</sup> Comptroller General of the United States, *Government Auditing Standards*, Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office, 2003, p. 21.

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## Background

The department released a reorganization plan in 2004 intended to help reduce crime in the city. The report, *Fragile Momentum: Plan of Action for Rebuilding the Atlanta Police Department to Help Secure Atlanta's Position as Capital of the New South*, established a goal of 2,000 officers and identified areas where officers should be added.<sup>2</sup> According to the report, the department had 1,453 sworn officers in 2003, 740 of which were assigned to zones. The report proposed adding 250 patrol officers, 200 narcotics officers, 96 investigators, staffing the fugitive unit, and adding a new audit and compliance unit.

Department records showed there were 1,592 sworn officers and 128 recruits as of December 7, 2007. About 61% of these positions were police officers or senior police officers. Another 15% were investigators. Command staff and supervisors made up about 17% of the force, and the remaining 7% were recruits (see Exhibit 1).

**Exhibit 1**  
**Sworn Officers and Recruits by Rank (December 2007)**

Title	#	% of Force
Chief	1	0.06%
Assistant Chief	1	0.06%
Deputy Chief	3	0.17%
Assistant Commander	1	0.06%
Captain	1	0.06%
Major	17	0.99%
Lieutenant	75	4.36%
Sergeant	199	11.57%
Investigator	250	14.53%
Sr. Police Officer	112	6.51%
Police Officer	932	54.19%
Police Officer Recruit	128	7.44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,720</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Police Department personnel database as of December 7, 2007

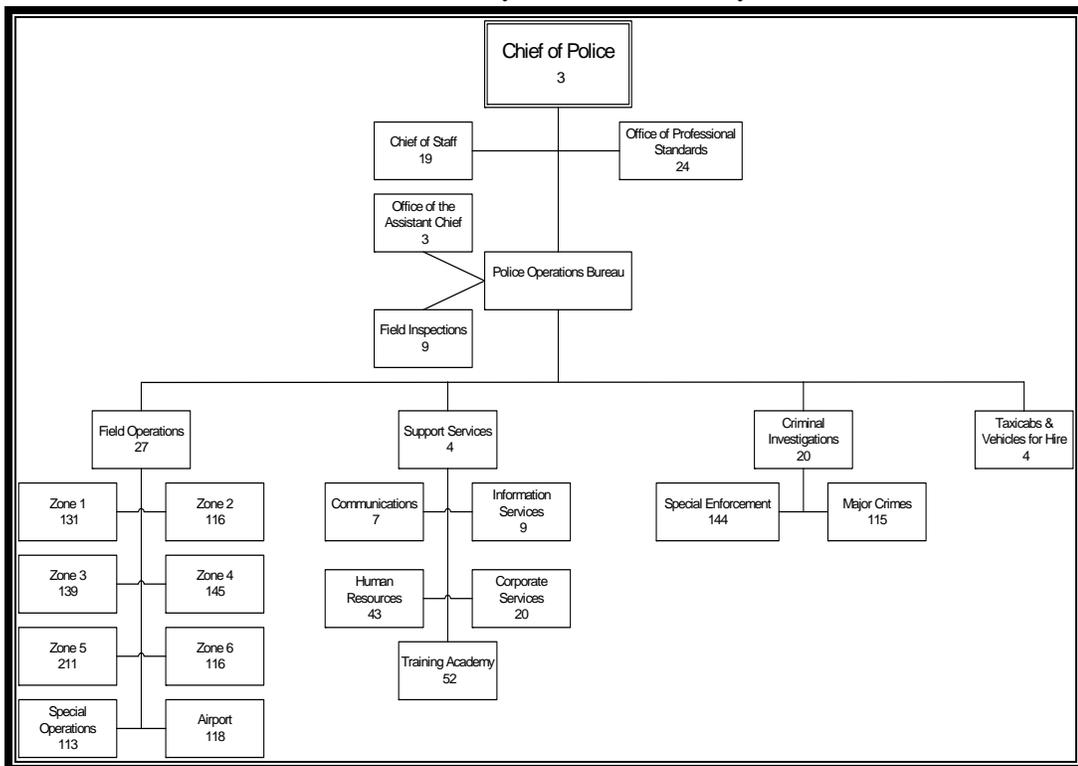
**Organizational Structure.** The department is organized into the Police Operations Bureau and three divisions: Field Operations, Criminal Investigations, and Support Services. Most officers (70%) are assigned to the Field Operations Division, which includes the city's

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<sup>2</sup> The report was prepared for the department by Linder and Associates, Inc, and is often referred to as the Linder report.

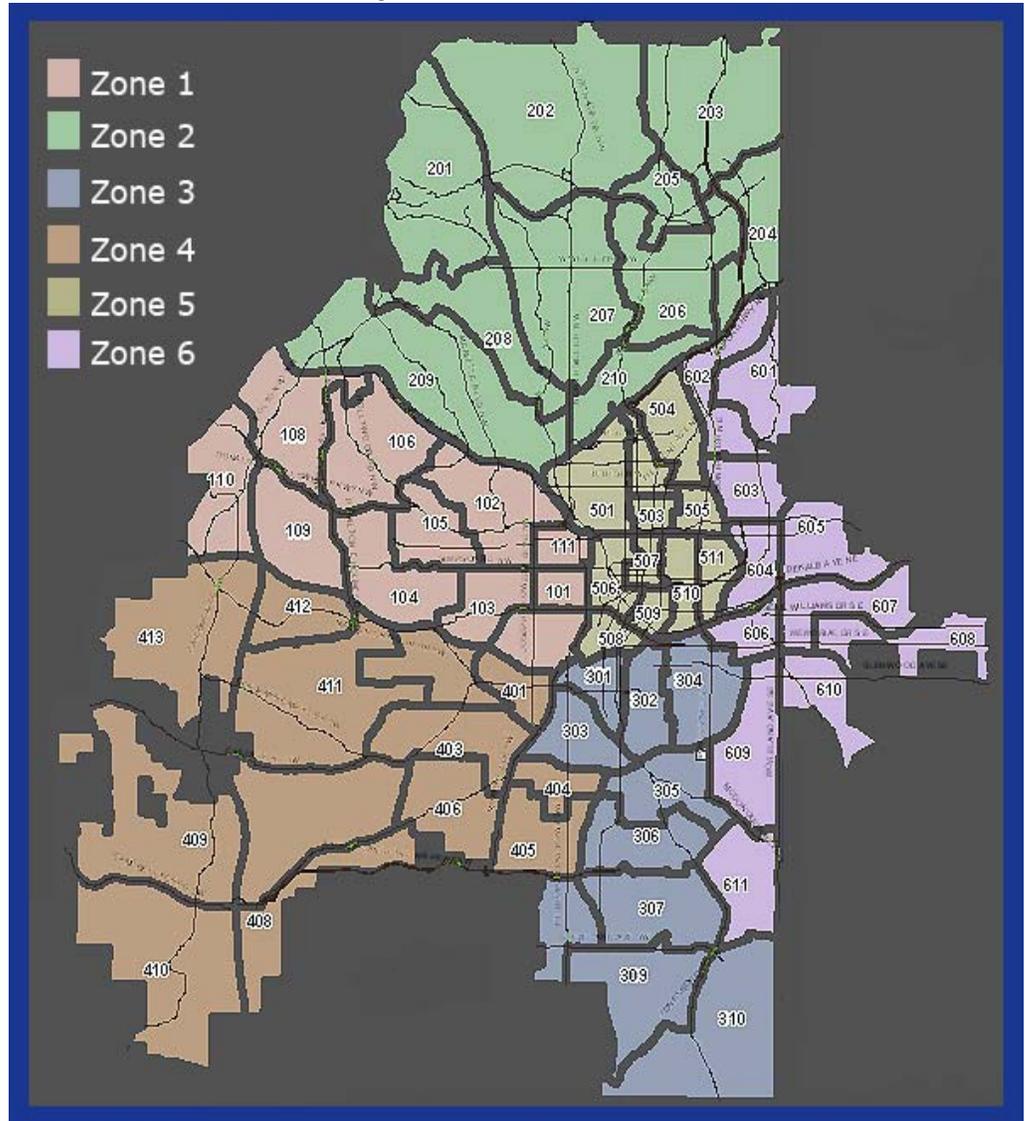
six patrol zones, the airport unit, the crime analysis unit, community services unit, special operations section, and police athletic league. Officers assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division (about 18%) investigate personal and property crimes, as well as specific types of crimes handled by special enforcement units, such as vice, narcotics, and cyber crimes units. The Support Services Division comprises information services (identification unit and police records), the training academy, human resources, corporate services (fleet management, property control, financial management), and the communications section (911-call center and dispatch) (see Exhibit 2). Support services, the office of the police chief, and taxicab regulation comprise 12% of the department's sworn officers.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Police Department Organizational Chart with the Number of Filled Sworn Positions (December 2007)**



**Source:** Police Department personnel database as of December 7, 2007. Numbers include officers listed as inactive or military inactive. Human Resources carried the largest number (15 total) while other areas had only a few. The numbers do not reflect loans of personnel from one unit to another, nor do they include recruits.

### Exhibit 3 Map of APD Zones



Source: Police Department

**Patrol zones.** The city is divided into six geographic patrol zones:

- Zone 1 - West Atlanta
- Zone 2 – North Atlanta/Buckhead
- Zone 3 - Southeast Atlanta
- Zone 4 - Southwest Atlanta
- Zone 5 – Downtown/Midtown
- Zone 6 - East Atlanta

Each zone is further divided into 10-13 beats. Patrol officers are assigned to cover a particular beat. The zones are also broken into sectors — groups of beats supervised by a sergeant— and have additional “umbrella cars” to answer calls. An umbrella car is a patrol unit not assigned to a particular beat and able to cover any area within the zone as needed.

The department last re-drew zone and beat boundaries in 2004. The department plans to reorganize the beats to respond to demographic changes by the end of 2008. New development, population growth, the public’s changing expectations of law enforcement, lack of code enforcement for abandoned properties, homelessness, zone size, tourism and special events have all been mentioned by department staff as constraints on officers’ ability to effectively patrol and deter crime.

**Patrol Watches.** The workday is broken up into three 8-hour shifts called watches: the day watch (7 a.m. to 3 p.m.), the evening (3 p.m. to 11 p.m.), and the morning watch (11 p.m. to 7 a.m.). Officers usually report to their watch in two roll calls to stagger the transition of officers on duty; one is 30 minutes before the shift begins, with the second about 15 minutes later. Officers may be delayed coming back from patrol due to answering late calls.

The department’s standard operating procedures call for the assignment of patrol officers to zones based on the operational needs of the department. Patrol officers work a five day workweek, scheduled by their respective watch lieutenants. The lead time for schedules varies by zone and ranges from a few days ahead to through the end of the year. More experienced officers are usually assigned to a specific beat and a specific watch. Roustabouts, usually newer officers, fill in on those beats when the regularly-assigned officer is scheduled off or on leave. Supervising commanders select officers for special assignments, such as vice units. This temporary assignment is usually for no more than 90 days; the commanders can extend or make them permanent if needed.

**Measures of patrol effectiveness.** Although the department compiles data on the number of calls for service and measures average response times for higher priority calls, it primarily measures its effectiveness in terms of the crime rate and number of arrests. The crime analysis unit within the Field Operations Division tracks and analyzes crime statistics for the department. Commanders hold

weekly meetings to review crime rate trends in the zones and actions the zones are taking.

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## Audit Objectives

This audit addresses the following objectives:

- How are sworn officers allocated in the Atlanta Police Department?
  - What is the department's basis for current and future sworn staff allocations?
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## Scope and Methodology

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Our audit scope covered sworn staffing levels from 2004 through 2007 and officer assignments in December 2007. We conducted our audit fieldwork from July 2007, to January 2008.

Audit methods included:

- Analyzing attrition data and reviewing exit interview methodology and results to identify trends and reasons for departmental attrition;
- Reviewing city and police department personnel records and assessing their reliability;
- Verifying assignments of a sample of 98 sworn employees;
- Reviewing standard operating procedures and other information on staff assignments;
- Reviewing rosters for August 1, 2007, to assess beat coverage and identify reasons for absences. We selected this date during our fieldwork period because we wanted to look at a typical day (not on weekends or holidays when there are more calls); and
- Interviewing department personnel to identify the basis for current and future staff allocations

**Data reliability.** We compared data on authorized positions and actual sworn officers from the police department, the budget office in

the Department of Finance, and the Department of Human Resources. We concluded the police department's data on authorized positions agreed with the budget office and with adopted legislation during the audit period. We could not reconcile authorized position data from the human resources department to the other two sources, so we did not use it. We concluded that automated data from the city's human resources information system (during the audit period, PeopleSoft) was reliable for payroll-related transactions such as separations and retirements, and we used that data for analysis of attrition. Small discrepancies may remain between the vacancy analysis based on police department vacancy reports and the attrition analysis based on PeopleSoft data. In our judgment, each data source is sufficiently reliable to support the conclusions based on it. We did not assess whether the goal of 2,000 sworn officers, as outlined in the Linder report, is reasonable.



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## Findings and Analysis

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### City Is Making Progress toward Its Goal of 2,000 Police Officers But Faces Constraints

The city is making progress in reaching its goal of 2,000 police officers, but faces constraints that hinder its ability to increase the number of officers on the streets. While the Mayor and City Council have added funding for an additional 204 officers since 2003, bringing total authorized sworn positions up to 1,836 in fiscal year 2008, staffing has lagged funding. The department had, on average, 201 fewer police officers than authorized each month between 2004 and 2007. About half of the vacant officer positions were filled by recruits and others by civilian assistants. Part of the department's difficulty in filling the vacant positions arises from increased employee turnover.

### City Has Added 204 Sworn Positions since 2003, But Staffing Lags Budgeted Increases

The Mayor and City Council have increased the number of authorized sworn positions in the police department over the last four years. Since 2003, the city has added 204 sworn positions (see Exhibit 4). Most of the positions added were in the general fund; positions in the airport unit also increased by six and grant positions by four. The total number of sworn positions authorized in the department increased from 1,632 in fiscal year 2003 to 1,836 in fiscal year 2008.

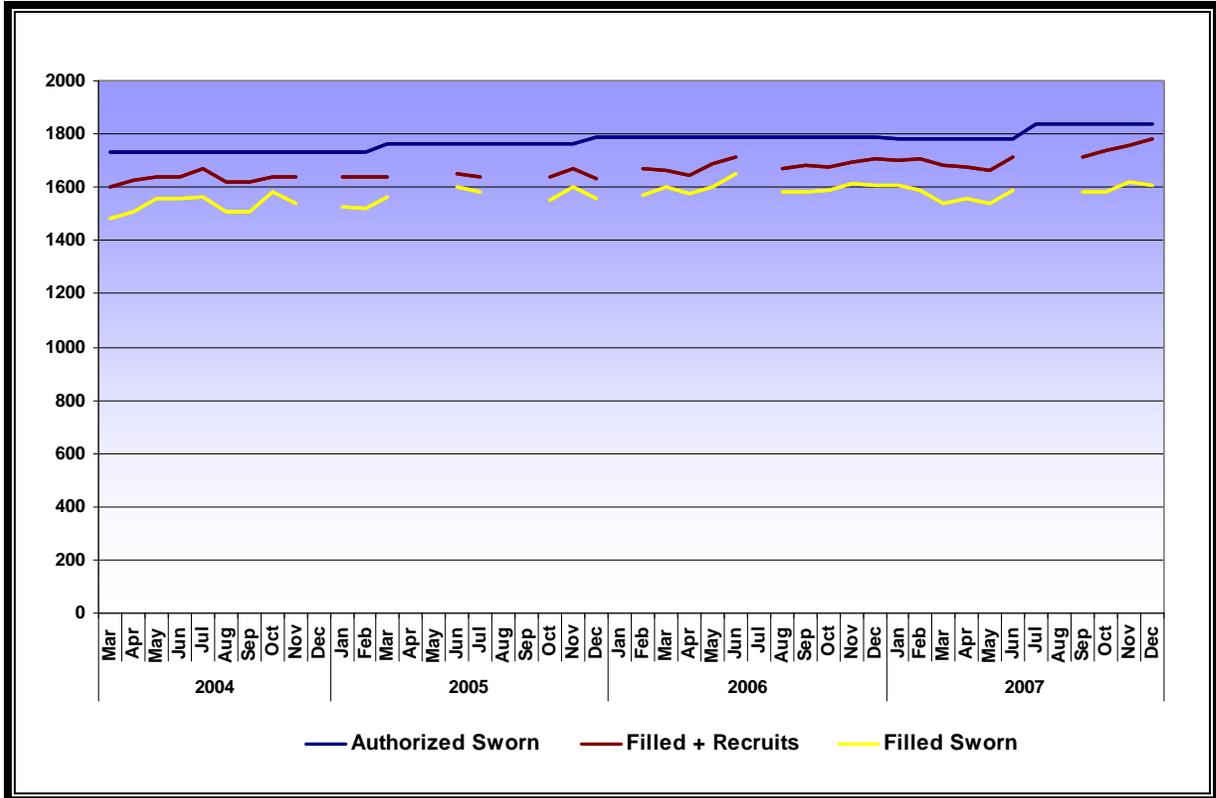
**Exhibit 4**  
**Budgeted Increases in Authorized Sworn Personnel**  
**(Fiscal Years 2003 – 2008)**

<b>Authorized Sworn Personnel</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<i>General Fund</i>	1,505	1,606	1,634	1,653	1,703
<i>Aviation</i>	127	127	127	133	133
<i>Total</i>	1,632	1,733	1,761	1,786	1,836
<i>Budgeted Increase</i>		101	28	25	50

**Source:** Department vacancy reports; Personnel papers; Mayor's FY 2008 budget letter.  
**Note:** Fiscal year 2007 covers the 18-month period beginning January 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2007.

**Actual staffing levels have grown more slowly.** As shown in Exhibit 5 below, the number of officers on the force lagged the number authorized by an average of 201 per month between 2004 and 2007. This lag can be explained in part by a drop in officer recruitment in 2005 and 2006.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Authorized and Actual Sworn Personnel by Month (March 2004 – December 2007)**



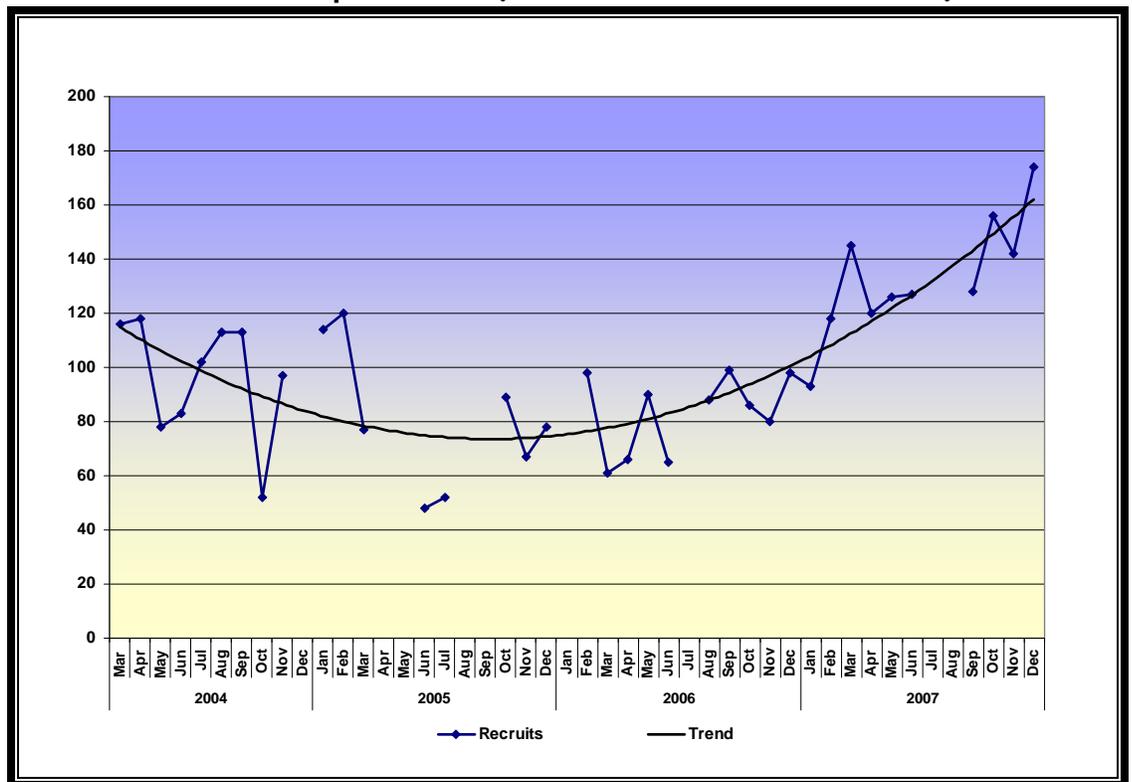
**Source:** Police Department monthly vacancy reports March 2004 through December 2007. Nine of the reports were missing, which is indicated by breaks in the lines showing filled positions.

The top line on the graph shows authorized sworn positions. The bottom line on the graph shows actual sworn officers increasing from 1485 in March 2004 to 1606 in December 2007, with a high of 1648 in June 2006. The gap between these two lines shows the number of sworn positions that were vacant each month. About half of these positions were filled by recruits, indicated by the red line on the graph (see Appendix 1 for the numbers used in the graph).

**Recruitment was down in 2005 and 2006.** From 2004 through 2007, the number of recruits on the payroll each month usually fluctuated between about 60 and 120, increasing to a high of 174 at the end of December 2007 (see Exhibit 6). The number of recruits

per month was lowest in 2005 and 2006 (see Appendix 1 for the number of recruits). The department recruits continuously throughout the year. When new recruits are hired, they may perform administrative functions within the department before training begins. Recruits train at the academy for 22 weeks, followed by 12 weeks of field training (6 weeks on a rotating basis and 6 weeks in the zone to which they will be assigned after completing training). Recruits are sworn in as officers after completing the academy and field training.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Police Recruits per Month (March 2004 – December 2007)**



**Source:** Police Department monthly vacancy reports March 2004 through December 2007. Nine of the reports were missing, indicated by breaks in the line.

**Some vacant sworn positions were filled by civilians.** In addition to recruits, some of the department’s vacant sworn positions – usually ranging from 20 to 60 per month – were filled by civilian police officer assistants who perform administrative duties. We did not include police officer assistants in our analysis because although they are filling sworn positions, they do not add to the department’s sworn strength.

**Unclear where vacancies are carried.** Most vacancies are at the police officer rank, but the department's vacancy reports do not identify where the vacant positions are within the organization. Neither the city's budget office, human resources department, nor the police department track budgeted personnel strength by organizational unit. Sworn personnel vacancies are only tracked by fund. This pool of vacancies provides the chief flexibility to deploy officers where needed but creates a lack of historical information to track changes and evaluate results.

We used the department's monthly vacancy reports to analyze actual staffing levels because these provided the most accurate historical personnel data. We obtained reports from 2002 through 2007. However, reports before March 2004 generally did not separately identify recruits and police officer assistants. Also, the department's vacancy reports inconsistently calculated the number of sworn vacancies in the time period we reviewed. The reports generally understated sworn vacancies by treating positions filled by recruits and civilian police officer assistants as filled. While these positions are filled from a budgetary standpoint, they are not adding to sworn strength.

The police department should budget separately for police officer assistants and recruits rather than use funds set aside to fill sworn positions. Recruit positions and sworn officer positions should be budgeted at realistic levels for the number of officers the department expects to hire, train and maintain.

We also recommend that budgeted personnel strength be tied to organizational units. Doing this would allow the department to know where its vacancies are and assess what functions may be underserved.

### **Newly Hired Recruits and Officers Leave in the First Year**

Police management and the officers we talked to believe that attrition in the department is a problem. While some level of attrition is normal, we were unable to find a benchmark for acceptable attrition in public safety agencies. Management's expectation of attrition of 3% or less may be unrealistic, and the department's attrition has increased since 2004. As the city has expanded the size of the police force, officers have been leaving the force in proportionately greater numbers — resulting in continued vacancies. Exit interviews are

inconclusive about the primary reasons why officers left the force, but the largest category of non-retirement separations occurred within the first year of service, suggesting problems with recruitment and hiring.

**Non-retirement attrition increased faster than the size of the force.** The department's rate of non-retirement attrition rose from 4.6% in 2004 to 6.2% in 2007. We calculated the annual attrition rate as the number of officers leaving employment for reasons other than retirement as a percentage of the average number of officers on the force throughout the year (see Exhibit 7). We considered retirements separately because factors affecting retirement are different from those related to other separations.

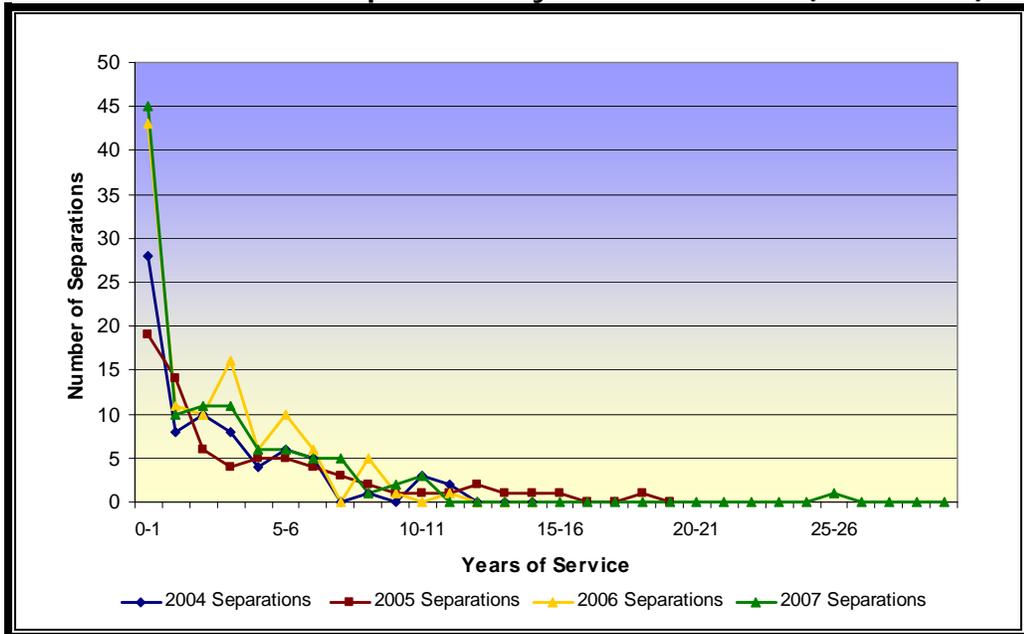
**Exhibit 7  
Non-Retirement Annual Attrition Rate (2004-2007)**

Recruits and Sworn Officers			Attrition Calculation		
Year	Date	Number	Average	Separated	Attrition Rate
2004	1-Jan-04	1580	1615	75	4.64%
	31-Dec-04	1650			
2005	1-Jan-05	1650	1648	71	4.31%
	31-Dec-05	1646			
2006	1-Jan-06	1646	1660	109	6.57%
	31-Dec-06	1674			
2007	1-Jan-07	1674	1705	106	6.21%
	31-Dec-07	1736			

Source: City's Human Resources information system

**The largest number of separations occurred during the first year of service.** More than one-third of recruits and officers who left the force between 2004 and 2007 for reasons other than retirement had been on the force for one year or less (see Exhibit 8 on the next page). Departmental management stated that, due to the length of academy and field training, people who leave in the first year likely are not yet sworn officers, and many recruits leave before completing the academy. The number of separations by years of service declined in each subsequent year and was minimal after five years of service (see Appendix 1 for the numbers used in the graph). From 2004 to 2007, three quarters of the officers who left employment for reasons other than retirement had served for five years or less.

**Exhibit 8  
Officer and Recruit Separations by Years of Service (2004-2007)**



Source: City's Human Resources information system

**Department perceives attrition to be a significant problem caused by lack of step increases.** Command staff and officers we talked to think attrition is a serious problem and cite the lack of annual salary step increases as the primary reason for the attrition. Department staff told us that they expect to see an attrition rate of about 3%. We were unable to find a benchmark for police department attrition rates through research and interviews. Current human resources literature describes increased mobility as an effect of generational shifts in the workforce. Based on the current trend, the department's expectations may not be realistic. Nevertheless, a number of officers told us they were promised step increases in addition to cost of living increases when they started on the force. They described themselves as behind on pay because the city stopped giving step increases.

We reviewed exit interview data for calendar year 2006. Although the majority of respondents cited pay as a factor in their decision to leave, exit interviews are inconclusive because most respondents indicated more than one reason for leaving. The interviews do not identify the position the employee vacated, whether they were sworn or civilian, or how long they worked for the department; furthermore, not all employees completed an exit interview.

The 70 departmental exit interviews revealed the following:

- Fifty percent (50%) of respondents left the department for lateral or lower-paying positions with another employer.
- Forty-two percent (42%) of respondents did not rate the department as a "good" or "excellent" place to work.
- Fifty percent (50%) of respondents noted that the "potential for career advancement" was a reason they began working with the department. However, 19% of respondents indicated that a lack of "career advancement opportunities" was a reason they resigned.
- Forty-one percent (41%) of respondents noted that "training and development opportunities" were reasons they began working with the department. However, 13% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with "training and development opportunities" as a reason they resigned.
- Thirty-three percent (33%) of exit survey respondents noted that "benefits" were a reason they began working with the department. However, 21% of respondents indicated that dissatisfaction with "benefits" was a reason they resigned.
- Pay (61%), career advancement (49%), training opportunities (33%), benefits (46%), work hours (39%), job stability (33%), and high-quality equipment (31%) were factors that respondents noted as positive factors in their new jobs.
- Nearly two-thirds of exit survey respondents noted a low to average level of satisfaction with "tools and equipment" provided to them and with "disciplinary policies," while approximately half of respondents noted a low to average level of satisfaction with teamwork among units in the department and among different departments.

**Human resources literature attributes retention problems within the first year to problems with recruiting and hiring.**

The distribution of non-retirement separations by years of service does not support the department's belief that a lack of step increases is driving attrition. The city stopped budgeting for annual step increases in 2001. Yet in each of the years for which we reviewed

separations (calendar years 2004 through 2007), the majority of recruits and officers who left did so during the first few years of employment, with 30% to 40% leaving in the first year. It is unlikely that pay is the primary reason, since new employees usually consider the pay rate when deciding to accept a job. According to human resources literature, early attrition suggests problems with recruiting or hiring practices. Command staff also said that newly trained officers are attractive candidates for jobs in other jurisdictions.

We recommend that the department focus its efforts on retaining officers. These efforts should target officers within the first five years of service. The department should make exit interviews a priority and restructure them to provide the information needed to address retention problems.

### **Number of Officers Eligible to Retire Will Put Pressure on the Department**

Impending retirements by department veterans will also put pressure on management to fill vacancies. One third (33%) of officers on the force as of December 2007 had 15 or more years of service, while 18% had 20 or more years of service. Past retirements have contributed to the difficulty of increasing staffing levels. Since 2003, the department has lost 224 officers due to retirement. The average sworn retirement rate during this period was 3.4% (see Exhibit 9).

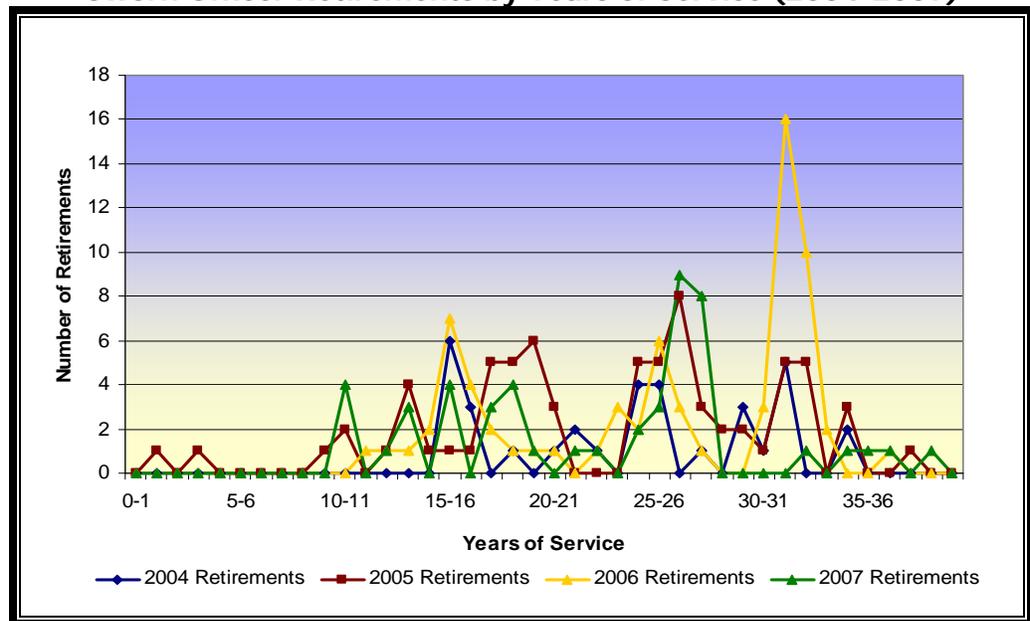
**Exhibit 9  
Annual Retirement Rate (2004-2007)**

Sworn Officers			Retirement Rate Calculation		
Year	Date	Number*	Average	Retired	Retirement Rate
2004	1-Jan-04	1580	1615	34	2.11%
	31-Dec-04	1650			
2005	1-Jan-05	1650	1648	69	4.19%
	31-Dec-05	1646			
2006	1-Jan-06	1646	1660	72	4.34%
	31-Dec-06	1674			
2007	1-Jan-07	1674	1705	49	2.87%
	31-Dec-07	1736			

Source: City's Human Resources information system

Attrition through retirement adds to vacant positions that need to be filled and creates a younger, less experienced police force. Exhibit 10 shows retirements by years of service. Changes in the city's police retirement system in 2001 and 2005 made it easier for officers to retire early. In 2001, the percentage of salary for each year of service was increased from 2 to 3%. In 2005, the vesting period was reduced from 15 to 10 years. It's not uncommon for officers to retire with 15 to 20 years on the force. The department lost several officers with over 30 years of experience in 2006.

**Exhibit 10  
Sworn Officer Retirements by Years of Service (2004-2007)**



Source: City's Human Resources information system

### Department Faces Additional Constraints

Additional constraints affect the department's deployment of sworn staff. Early in 2008, the department had 30 officers it could not redeploy due to pending officer investigations by the district attorney. The chief perceives that filling vacancies at the airport is a priority. Finally, data inconsistencies between the city and the police department, as well as within the department's personnel database, make it difficult to track vacancies and know where officers are actually deployed.

**Thirty officers cannot be deployed due to pending investigations.** According to the department, 30 officers could not be given assignments due to pending investigations as of January

2008. When the department finds that the district attorney's office is starting an investigation of an officer, it stops any internal investigation. However, the district attorney's office has not notified the department that any of the investigations have been dropped. The department is working with the district attorney's office to identify which cases are still active.

**According to the Chief of Police, the department must keep Aviation staffed.** The chief told us that keeping the airport fully staffed was a priority and a requirement. While these positions are paid from the airport fund and do not affect the city's general fund budget, the need to keep these positions filled can take away from efforts to fill sworn vacancies throughout the rest of the city.

**City lacks readily available personnel information.** Neither the city's budget office, human resources department, nor the police department track budgeted personnel strength by organizational unit. The different departments provided us with different numbers of filled positions and vacancies and cannot provide historical information on officer deployment. It appears that the departments rely on one another to gather current information on an as needed basis. The police department maintains a database of current officer assignments, but questions its reliability. The budget office noted problems with personnel data in the city's human resources information system, including employees listed in abolished position numbers, multiple employees listed under one position number, and employees listed under incorrect account centers. The human resources department recommended we rely on police department records rather than the human resources information system data.

**The department's database appears complete but does not reflect officer loans, leave, or accurate locations in some cases.** We randomly sampled 98 police officers from payroll records and conducted site visits to confirm the officers' assignments to assess the accuracy of the police department's personnel database. Of the 98 site visits we conducted, about 82% of officers (about 4 out of 5) were working in the location listed in the database. Nine officers were working at a location different from the one listed in the database, while eight were on administrative leave. We could not confirm the location of one officer in the Police Athletic League, although we were able to contact him by phone (see Exhibit 11 on the next page).

**Exhibit 11**  
**Results from APD Database Analysis**

<b>Results</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Confirmed at the location listed in the database	80	81.6%
Confirmed at a location different from the one listed in the database	9	9.2%
Did not confirm location	1	1.0%
Staff reported officer was on administrative leave	8	8.2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Source:** Police Department personnel database and site visits

The police department's employee database is their record for the locations of officers. Management uses the location records for deployment purposes. Its accuracy is important for management to get a clear picture of where their current resources are and where they need to add officers.

We recommend that the police department update its personnel database on a regular basis. This update should include noting when officers are on temporary assignments.

## **More Officers in Patrol Zones than in 2004, But Beats Can Be Uncovered**

Since 2004, the police department has made progress on deploying additional officers to the patrol zones. However, the proportion of officers with patrol duties in the zones has not increased. The number of officers on duty for any given shift is affected by scheduled and unscheduled time off, compensatory time, vacation and sick days, training and other absences. We analyzed police rosters for one day in August 2007. About 75% of officers scheduled for patrol were available, but each of the six zones had at least one beat uncovered during a shift. The chief contends that other divisions augment gaps in patrol, but analysis of 911 calls shows that these divisions are rarely dispatched. Gaps in patrol coverage could be caused by the department's failure to use its workload analysis to allocate officers within the zones.

## **Number of Officers on Patrol Has Increased Slightly since 2004**

The 2004 Linder report recommended adding 250 officers to patrol Atlanta's streets and to respond to 911 calls and noted that only 590 officers--about 40% of the force at the time--were assigned to patrol duties. The department has increased the number of police officers since 2004, but only a small number have been added to patrol in the zones. The department's personnel database shows that the department had 139 more officers in December 2007 than the Linder estimate in January 2004, but the number with patrol duties had increased only to 623, about 39% of the force.

Despite some progress, zone commanders told us they are often short-staffed due to "loans" of officers to other sections of department and other absences. We analyzed roll call rosters from each of the six zones for August 1, 2007, to review the effect of scheduled and unscheduled absences on patrol strength. We also reviewed rosters for the airport and special operations unit at the chief's request because these divisions can augment patrol staffing to answer calls for service.

**About 75% of zone officers were available for patrol on our one day analysis.** The rosters listed 873 officers scheduled to work August 1, 2007. Of these 669 (77%) were marked as present for roll call (see Exhibit 12 on the next page). Within just the patrol zones and excluding supervisors and investigators, 75% of the zone officers scheduled to patrol beats reported for duty (see Exhibit 13 on the next page).

**Exhibit 12**  
**Percentage of Officers Working on August 1, 2007**

<b>Roster Totals</b>				
	<b>On Roster</b>	<b>On Shift</b>	<b>% On Shift</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Zone 1	103	78	75.73%	25
Zone 2	88	64	72.73%	24
Zone 3	109	87	79.82%	22
Zone 4	115	85	73.91%	30
Zone 5	158	134	84.81%	24
Zone 6	100	77	77.00%	23
<b>Zone Totals</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>78.01%</b>	<b>148</b>
SOS	102	63	61.76%	39
Airport	98	81	82.65%	17
<b>APD Total</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>76.63%</b>	<b>204</b>

Source: Police Department roster sheets - August 1, 2007

**Exhibit 13**  
**Percentage of Patrol Officers Working on August 1, 2007**

<b>Officers on Patrol</b>				
	<b>On Roster</b>	<b>On Shift</b>	<b>% On Shift</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Zone 1	57	41	71.93%	16
Zone 2	48	31	64.58%	17
Zone 3	50	40	80.00%	10
Zone 4	62	47	75.81%	15
Zone 5	39	33	84.62%	6
Zone 6	57	43	75.44%	14
<b>Zone Totals</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>75.08%</b>	<b>78</b>

Source: Police Department roster sheets - August 1, 2007. Figures do not include investigators and supervisors.

**Vacation, comp time, and training made up most officer absences on the day we reviewed.** Comp time and vacation together accounted for about half of the 204 absences in the zones, airport, and special operations on the day we reviewed (see Exhibit 14 on the next page). About 21% of the officers were attending training. Sick leave accounted for 11% of the absences. Although officers on loan to other units within the department only accounted for about 7% of the total absences, they represented 15 officers who could not be scheduled for patrol by the zones.

**Exhibit 14**  
**Reasons for Officer Absences August 1, 2007**

Zone Absence Distribution	Total	% of Total
Comp Time	51	25.0%
Vacation	48	23.5%
Training	43	21.1%
Sick	23	11.3%
On Loan	15	7.4%
Police Funeral	7	3.4%
Military Duty	5	2.5%
Admin Leave	4	2.0%
Injured Off	3	1.5%
Light Duty	2	1.0%
Detail	2	1.0%
Family Leave	1	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Source:** Police Department roster sheets - August 1, 2007

**Except for the Airport, each zone had at least one beat uncovered for an eight-hour shift.** On the day we reviewed, 85% of all beats in the six zones were covered. All of the zones had one or more beats uncovered for at least part of the day. Zone 5 had the most beats uncovered, with 3 beats unmanned during both the day and evening watches and a total of 8 beats uncovered for the entire day. If a beat is unmanned, another officer on a nearby beat has to cover it, which could increase response times.

Zones use umbrella cars and wagons to provide more coverage for answering calls and to give officers the ability to continue patrolling even after making an arrest. Several of the zones had shifts with neither an umbrella car nor a wagon (see Appendix 2). When an umbrella car is pulled from a zone, response time increases and the ability to provide back-up is reduced. Without a wagon, officers have to leave their beats to bring a perpetrator to the station, leaving the beat either uncovered or manned by another officer on patrol.

**Use of other divisions to augment patrol is unlikely.** According to the chief, other units within the Field Operations Division can be used to augment patrol staffing and answer calls for service. We analyzed dispatch data for 18 months, January 10, 2006 through July 20, 2007, to see how often units outside of the zones and airport were dispatched to answer calls for service. These units accounted for roughly 10% of the dispatch incidents in the database. Of these, only 5%, or one-half of one percent of all calls in the database, were

dispatched through the 911 system, while 95% of the records were either self-initiated or received via another medium. Consequently, if units outside the zones and airport are answering calls, it may not be at a frequency that aids patrol officers except in extraordinary circumstances.

### **APD Does Not Use Workload Analysis to Allocate Officers within Zones**

APD's Planning and Research Unit prepared a staff allocation model for the department to allocate officers among the patrol zones based on calls for service, calls requiring multiple officers, traffic accidents, the proportion of calls received by each zone, and other factors. However, the department does not use the model, even though it is required in its standard operating procedures. Department staff have told us that where officers are allocated is ultimately the chief's decision. The chief said he takes several factors into consideration for staffing the zones, such as population, the number of crimes, and traffic accidents. His decisions are based on what he considers to be the needs for service.

Based on these perceptions, patrol zones may not be staffed to adequately respond to calls for service. We recommend that the department use its workload analysis to match the number of officers to documented demands.



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## Recommendations

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Our recommendations identify improvements that will clarify the allocation of police officers and help with the department's retention efforts. The chief of police should:

1. Budget separately for sworn officers, recruits, and police officer assistants.
2. Focus retention efforts on personnel with 5 years or less experience through the use of information collected from restructured exit interviews.
3. Update the personnel database on a regular basis to reflect actual officer locations, including officers on temporary assignments.
4. Use the workload analysis to make staffing decisions as required by police standard operating procedures.
5. Link budgeted cost centers to actual activities to identify where vacancies are and what areas may be underserved.



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## Appendices

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**Source Data for Exhibits**

Source Data for Exhibits 5 and 6 (p.10 & 11)  
Authorized and Actual Sworn Personnel and Recruits by Month  
(March 2004 to December 2007)

Date	Total Authorized	Filled Sworn	Recruits	Filled Sworn & Recruits
March 2004	1733	1485	116	1601
April 2004	1733	1510	118	1628
May 2004	1733	1559	78	1637
June 2004	1733	1558	83	1641
July 2004	1733	1565	102	1667
August 2004	1733	1508	113	1621
September 2004	1733	1508	113	1621
October 2004	1733	1585	52	1637
November 2004	1733	1540	97	1637
December 2004	1733			
January 2005	1733	1527	114	1641
February 2005	1733	1521	120	1641
March 2005	1761	1564	77	1641
April 2005	1761			
May 2005	1761			
June 2005	1761	1600	48	1648
July 2005	1761	1584	52	1636
August 2005	1761			
September 2005	1761			
October 2005	1761	1549	89	1638
November 2005	1761	1602	67	1669
December 2005	1786	1557	78	1635
January 2006	1786			
February 2006	1786	1572	98	1670
March 2006	1786	1600	61	1661
April 2006	1786	1579	66	1645
May 2006	1786	1601	90	1691
June 2006	1786	1648	65	1713
July 2006	1786			
August 2006	1786	1581	88	1669
September 2006	1786	1585	99	1684
October 2006	1786	1590	86	1676
November 2006	1786	1615	80	1695
December 2006	1786	1607	98	1705
January 2007	1783	1607	93	1700
February 2007	1783	1591	118	1709
March 2007	1783	1539	145	1684
April 2007	1783	1556	120	1676
May 2007	1783	1538	126	1664
June 2007	1783	1588	127	1715

July 2007	1836			
August 2007	1836			
September 2007	1836	1583	128	1711
October 2007	1837	1581	156	1737
November 2007	1837	1617	142	1759
December 2007	1836	1606	174	1780

**Source:** Police Department's monthly vacancy reports. Blanks indicate missing reports.

Source Data for Exhibit 8 (p. 14)  
 Separations of Sworn Officers by Years of Service 2004-2007

Years of Service	2004	2005	2006	2007
0-1	28	19	43	45
1-2	8	14	11	10
2-3	10	6	10	11
3-4	8	4	16	11
4-5	4	5	6	6
5-6	6	5	10	6
6-7	5	4	6	5
7-8	0	3	0	5
8-9	1	2	5	1
9-10	0	1	1	2
10-11	3	1	0	3
11-12	2	1	1	0
12-13	0	2	0	0
13-14	0	1	0	0
14-15	0	1	0	0
15-16	0	1	0	0
16-17	0	0	0	0
17-18	0	0	0	0
18-19	0	1	0	0
19-20	0	0	0	0
20-21	0	0	0	0
21-22	0	0	0	0
22-23	0	0	0	0
23-24	0	0	0	0
24-25	0	0	0	0
25-26	0	0	0	1
26-27	0	0	0	0
27-28	0	0	0	0
28-29	0	0	0	0
29-30	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>106</b>

Source: City's Human Resources information system

Source Data for Exhibit 10 (p. 17)  
Sworn Officer Retirements by Years of Service (2004-2007)

Years of Service	2004	2005	2006	2007
0-1	0	0	0	0
1-2	0	0	1	0
2-3	0	0	0	0
3-4	0	0	1	0
4-5	0	0	0	0
5-6	0	0	0	0
6-7	0	0	0	0
7-8	0	0	0	0
8-9	0	0	0	0
9-10	0	0	1	0
10-11	0	0	2	4
11-12	0	1	0	0
12-13	0	1	1	1
13-14	0	1	4	3
14-15	0	2	1	0
15-16	6	7	1	4
16-17	3	4	1	0
17-18	0	2	5	3
18-19	1	1	5	4
19-20	0	1	6	1
20-21	1	1	3	0
21-22	2	0	0	1
22-23	1	1	0	1
23-24	0	3	0	0
24-25	4	2	5	2
25-26	4	6	5	3
26-27	0	3	8	9
27-28	1	1	3	8
28-29	0	0	2	0
29-30	3	0	2	0
30-31	1	3	1	0
31-32	5	16	5	0
32-33	0	10	5	1
33-34	0	2	0	0
34-35	2	0	3	1
35-36	0	0	0	1
36-37	0	1	0	1
37-38	0	0	1	0
38-39	0	0	0	1
39-40	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>49</b>

Source: City's Human Resources information system

APPENDIX 2

Roster Analysis - Beat Coverage

	Day Watch		Evening Watch		Morning	
Zone 1	Beats	11	Beats	11	Beats	11
	Beats Covered	8	Beats Covered	11	Beats Covered	8
	Wagon	1	Wagon	2	Wagon	0
	Umbrella	2	Umbrella	1	Umbrella	0
Zone 2	Beats	10	Beats	10	Beats	10
	Beats Covered	10	Beats Covered	9	Beats Covered	9
	Wagon	1	Wagon	0	Wagon	0
	Umbrella	1	Umbrella	0	Umbrella	0
Zone 3	Beats	10	Beats	10	Beats	10
	Beats Covered	8	Beats Covered	9	Beats Covered	9
	Wagon	0	Wagon	0	Wagon	0
	Umbrella	0	Umbrella	0	Umbrella	2
Zone 4	Beats	13	Beats	13	Beats	13
	Beats Covered	12	Beats Covered	12	Beats Covered	12
	Wagon	1	Wagon	1	Wagon	1
	Umbrella	1	Umbrella	1	Umbrella	1
Zone 5	Beats	11	Beats	11	Beats	11
	Beats Covered	8	Beats Covered	8	Beats Covered	9
	Wagon	1	Wagon	0	Wagon	1
	Umbrella	2	Umbrella	1	Umbrella	1
Zone 6	Beats	13	Beats	13	Beats	13
	Beats Covered	11	Beats Covered	11	Beats Covered	10
	Wagon	1	Wagon	0	Wagon	0
	Umbrella	2	Umbrella	0	Umbrella	0
Airport	Beats	5	Beats	5	Beats	5
	Beats Covered	5	Beats Covered	5	Beats Covered	5
	Wagon	0	Wagon	0	Wagon	0
	Umbrella	1	Umbrella	1	Umbrella	1
SOS	Beats	NA	Beats	NA	Beats	NA
	Beats Covered	NA	Beats Covered	NA	Beats Covered	NA
	Wagon	NA	Wagon	NA	Wagon	NA
	Umbrella	NA	Umbrella	NA	Umbrella	NA

Source: Police Department roster sheets - August 1, 2007



**APPENDIX 3**  
**Management's Review and Response to Audit Recommendations**

<b>Report # 07.04b</b>	<b>Report Title: Police Department Sworn Staffing</b>	<b>Date: 06/02/08</b>
<b>Recommendation Responses</b>		
<b>Rec. # 1</b>	Budget separately for sworn officers, recruits, and police officer assistants.	
<p><b><u>Proposed Action:</u></b> The APD will consult DHR and budget concerning budgeting separately for recruits and sworn officers.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Timeframe:</u></b> FY09-10</p> <p><b><u>Comments:</u></b> This would impact the budget adversely, not only would you have to fully fund the police officer position (P2/step 1-18.91), you would have to fund an unspecified number of recruit positions (P1/step 1-16.70). The current practice does not impact the budget. Moreover, if you budget fewer positions than existing vacancies, some would not be filled. In relation to the position of Police Office Assistant, HR Code 1.10 specified, "the department must have funds in its budget to hire extra help". This is not a position that required budgeting. In fact, the classified position Office Support Assistant Sr. already exists. Notwithstanding, 22 of the Office Support Assistant positions were vacant at least one-year and abolished in the 2009 budget.</p> <p><b><u>Responsible Person:</u></b> DHR, Council, APD</p>		
<b>Rec. # 2</b>	Focus retention efforts on personnel with 5 years or less experience through the use of information collected from restructured exit interviews.	
<p><b><u>Proposed Action:</u></b> The APD will continue to explore other viable alternatives relative to focused retention for officers with 5 years or less experience.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Timeframe:</u></b> FY09</p> <p><b><u>Comments:</u></b> 3 year promotion; job rotation; tuition reimbursement; educational incentive-associate and bachelors degrees; retention bonus; award and recognition program; training opportunities, etc. Our recommendations for the revised exit interview were sent to DHR in April.</p> <p><b><u>Responsible Person:</u></b> APD, DHR</p>		
<b>Rec. # 3</b>	Update the personnel database on a regular basis to reflect actual officer locations, including officers on temporary assignments.	
<p><b><u>Proposed Action:</u></b> The APD management will consult with the Management Support Office concerning employee tracking requirements.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Timeframe:</u></b> June 2008</p> <p><b><u>Comments:</u></b> Access to Oracle could possibly resolve this matter or the purchase of a human resources information system. Currently, the APD HR database is updated immediately after new employees are hired, after transfers occur within the agency and twice each calendar year via a data scrub. According to DIT, the access database is not stable enough to support the enormous data input and it is subject to frequent crashes that result in lost data.</p> <p><b><u>Responsible Person:</u></b> DHR, DIT, MSO</p>		

<b>Rec. # 4</b>	Use the workload analysis to make staffing decisions as required by police standard operating procedures.	
<p><b><u>Proposed Action:</u></b> The APD will require the appropriate signature to be affixed to the workload analysis document.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Timeframe:</u></b> June 2008</p> <p><b><u>Comments:</u></b> The IACP provides the best insight on the workload analysis. In keeping with the research of the IACP, the chief can deviate from the analysis to ensure that appropriate manpower is assigned to a particular work unit. Notwithstanding, the APD workload analysis is considered along with other factors when sworn personnel are assigned to the zones. An agency the size of APD has several specializations that support the field officer; consideration to such positions must not be overlooked when assignments are made. In managing attrition, vacancies in field operations (zones) are staffed first.</p> <p><b><u>Responsible Person:</u></b> Chief of Police</p>		
<b>Rec. # 5</b>	Link budgeted cost centers to actual activities to identify where vacancies are and what areas may be underserved.	
<p><b><u>Proposed Action:</u></b> The Field Operations Division will support the cost centers for all zones and SOS and the Airport (FY 09 budget). Will implement the final strategy after the outsourced law enforcement consultants provide their recommendations.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Timeframe:</u></b> FY09</p> <p><b><u>Comments:</u></b> TBD</p> <p><b><u>Responsible Person:</u></b> MSO, DHR, Budget Office</p>		