



# Memorandum

**TO:** PSFSS Committee

**FROM:** Christopher M. Moore

**SUBJECT:** Maximizing the Number  
of Police Officers on Patrol

**DATE:** January 17, 2012

Approved

Date

1/20/12

## BACKGROUND

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Mayor and City Council with an update on the efforts made by the Police Department to maximize the number of police officers participating in the basic patrol function, the backbone of all police operations.

## ANALYSIS

In the June 2011 Budget Message, the City Manager was directed to issue a plan that would analyze and discuss the current state of the Police Department. This plan was to include and discuss significant organizational changes already implemented and discuss their effects. This plan was also to discuss strategies on how to maximize the number of officers working in a patrol capacity based on the 2010 audit conducted by the City Auditor (10-13 Police Department Staffing: Opportunities to Maximize the Number of Police Officers on Patrol.)

**Over the past two years the Police Department has lost 300 positions.** This has caused a significant change in the way we provide service to the community. Many difficult decisions were made in an effort to provide the best service with our reduced workforce.

The following represents the strategies and steps taken by the Police Department to maximize the number of police officers on patrol:

### **Staffing Reductions**

- Within the Special Operations Division, we consolidated the Violent Crimes Enforcement Team (VCET) and returned one lieutenant, five sergeants, and 25 officers to the basic patrol function. This was an overall reduction of 31 Special Operations officers. Canine officers were also returned to the basic beat function, collaterally working a beat and supporting the canine handler responsibilities.
- The Pre-Processing Center (PPC) was restructured to only be staffed by one sergeant per shift as minimally required by law. The 11 officers previously assigned to PPC were returned to the patrol structure. Officers are now required to process their own arrests under the supervision of the PPC sergeant.

- The deepest cuts were made to the Bureau of Investigations, with staffing changes made to virtually every investigative unit. Units responsible for property crime follow-up were hit the hardest, including 15 officers from Burglary/Financial Crimes/High Tech, five from the Vice Unit, and three from Auto Theft reallocated back to patrol. The Day Detective position was completely eliminated, adding an additional three officers to patrol. Additionally, the monetary loss that serves as the threshold for determining whether or not follow-up investigation will be conducted on fraud, extortion, or other types of theft cases was significantly increased. All totaled, the reallocations from the Bureau of Investigations resulted in three lieutenants, 18 sergeants and 33 officers reassigned to patrol for an overall reduction of 54 investigators.

### **Service Delivery Changes**

- In January of 2012, the Department instituted a Verified Response Program. The Department had long maintained the practice of responding to reports of audible alarms reported both by alarm companies and residents. As the number of installed residential alarms has grown throughout the years, the demand placed on police resources dedicated to alarm responses has grown commensurately. In 2010, the Department responded to over 16,000 alarm calls throughout the City in which over 98% were determined to be false. Alarm calls represented the second highest call for service behind only disturbances. Verified Response is a program that has been successfully utilized by many cities across the nation to maximize the availability of patrol officers for increased investigative time of actual crimes in progress, as well as time to conduct community policing efforts.
- The Department also evaluated the types of calls to which officers respond to determine if police response is necessary or if the Department is the best City entity to handle these calls. Consequently, several types of lower priority calls were identified as calls that would not require a police response absent another type of criminal behavior associated to it. These calls include: non-injury accidents; anonymous loud noise/music complaints; theft of recyclables; fruit vendor violations; and parking violations, with the exception of blocked driveways.
- Police Reserve Officers are being held more accountable to their minimum required hours of patrol time each month, which has correlated to approximately 1,000 hours per month. This allows a level one reserve to function as a second officer in the patrol car, thus allowing that unit to function as a two person car.

### **Span of Control**

The Department has been in consultation with the Police Executive Research Foundation (PERF) regarding span of control at the sergeant level. An internal committee was formed, data was collected and outreach was done with Craig Frazier of PERF.

In the early discussions, PERF was hesitant to take on this evaluation project. Concerns were raised about contacting other agencies to evaluate their span of control compared to ours. This evaluation might put PERF in position to explain to other agencies how PERF's findings might

pit agencies against each other. There are many variables associated to staffing models used by different agencies. Quantifying and determining the importance of these variables becomes very difficult. What works in another city may not necessarily work in San Jose and vice versa, as demographics, political climate, and crime rates differ dramatically. At the end of the day, the Department's staffing model works for our city's needs and allows us to function at a desired level.

The Department maintains that the Sergeant position is a key position with regard to a police department's success or failure. It has been shown that the ability to have a sergeant on scene at critical incidents, as soon as possible, prevents poor performance and creates faster solutions. With that said, our current sergeant to officer ratio by Bureau is outlined below:

### **Bureau of Field Operations**

No two days are alike within the patrol structure. At full strength, the Department's patrol shift staffing model employs 91 sergeants to 523 officers (91:523) = (1:5.7). It is important to note, this does not take into consideration regular and authorized absences, which include training, vacation time, days off, sick leave, or funeral leave. As is the case with other agencies and even internal city departments, the police department does not backfill a sergeant when he/she is absent. Based on conversations with PERF, the needed detail to evaluate all 1,095 shifts would be a tremendous project requiring extraordinary amounts of staff time. With this in mind, a random evaluation of sergeant to officer staffing within our patrol division provided the following detail:

Sunday (10/2/11) Dayshift  
13:59 = 1 to 4.53 (\*six teams sharing three sergeants)  
Monday (10/10/11) Swingshift  
10:86 = 1 to 8.6 (\*12 teams sharing six sergeants)  
Tuesday (10/18/11) Midnights  
11:66 = 1 to 6 (\*ten teams sharing a five sergeants)  
Wednesday (10/26/11) Dayshift  
14:88 = 1 to 6.28 (\*four teams sharing two sergeants)  
Thursday (11/3/11) Swingshift  
11:87 = 1 to 7.9 (\*ten teams sharing five sergeants)  
Friday (11/11/11) Midnights  
9:73 = 1 to 8.1 (\*twelve teams sharing six sergeants)

\*We currently have 16 police districts. At full strength, each district would have their own sergeant. If less than 16 sergeants are present, two teams must share one sergeant for each number of sergeants below 16. This widens the span of control for those teams that are affected by the sharing of a sergeant. For example, Sunday, 10/2/11, dayshift was short three sergeants, thus, the three teams short a sergeant for that shift reported to the adjoining sergeant, increasing the span of control from 1:4.53 to 1:9.06 for those affected teams.

Other factors that must be considered when evaluating span of control for patrol include:

- One sergeant is assigned to the Main Lobby and Pre-processing Center. Those sergeants are provided by the Bureau of Field Operations, but removed from the data above.
- Patrol sergeants have become first responders as a result of the reduced patrol staffing model
- As we add officers back into the patrol model, these ratios will increase

The above Bureau of Field Operations span of control does not include Special Operations, which has a span of control of 25:111 or 1 to 4.8, when at full staffing.

The following sergeant assignments utilize sergeants in a working capacity that augments the supervisory responsibilities. Their spans of control fluctuate based on the nature of their specialized assignments.

### **Bureau of Investigations**

Investigations I and II  
32:135 = 1 to 4.21

Sergeants in investigative assignments both supervise staff and carry a caseload. Investigative sergeants create a superior dynamic when arriving at a crime scene. A BOI sergeant brings the ability to manage a scene, supervise staff, *and* investigate a serious crime. The initial investigative response to serious crimes such as homicide, rape, kidnapping, etc., is crucial. The ability to immediately interview key witnesses and victims, process evidence, and follow up on leads is the most crucial element of solvability. Working investigative sergeants have the best ability to triage and direct appropriate patrol and investigative actions. Additionally, sergeants possess a breadth of expertise associated to their rank and tenure that creates a larger pool of qualified investigators for higher profile investigative work.

The Homicide Unit typified this approach to staffing where virtually all of the assigned investigators were sergeants. The approach has been successful as indicated by the 80% or higher solve rate the Department has enjoyed. However, within the restructure of the Bureau of Investigations, it was necessary to remove the two sergeant Homicide Unit team dynamic and replace that team dynamic with one sergeant and one officer. This allowed the Police Department to maintain the desired Sergeant ratio in patrol.

In 2011, the Homicide Unit solve rate dropped below 80%. The primary cause of this is unknown but most likely attributed to the dramatic increase in homicides citywide, the reduction in patrol officer staff and/or the realignment of Homicide Unit investigators. We will continue to evaluate with the primary goal of returning to and exceeding the 80% solve rate.

### **Bureau of Administration**

Personnel, Training, Range, Permits/SEU  
6:3 = 1 to 0.5

These sergeants conduct a wide range of tasks beyond supervision including teaching classes, processing requests and conducting background investigations. Personnel sergeants actively participate in recruiting and backgrounding sworn and civilian staff. The Training sergeants teach classes and research and purchase equipment. The Range sergeant coordinates mandatory range training and oversees all weapon issues. The Permits/SEU sergeants plan and manage regulatory City requirements and supervise large scale public events.

### **Bureau of Technical Services**

Project Development  
1:4 = 1 to 4

There is only one sergeant assigned to this Bureau. He supervises technology projects and people related to those projects. He also provides law enforcement expertise to all the other functions associated to this bureau including Communications and Records.

### **Office of the Chief**

Press Information, Criminal Intelligence, Research/Development, Internal Affairs  
10:13 = 1.3

All of the sergeants assigned to the Office of the Chief have functional duties. Supervision is only a small part of their day to day activities. The Press Information Sergeant retains on-call responsibilities, manages press conferences and assists in media related public records requests. The Intelligence sergeants assist in special and sensitive investigations. The Research and Development sergeants draft policy and conduct executive level research. The Internal Affairs (IA) sergeants all investigate officer involved complaints. Only one IA sergeant is responsible for supervising the officers assigned to that Unit.

### **Benefits of a Narrow Span of Control**

SJPD has overall low staffing compared to other cities comparable in size and even smaller than San Jose. We attribute our success in policing with a smaller officer to citizen ratio to the strong first line supervision we employ. We did significantly decrease the span of control at the Lieutenant level from 1:4.7 in 2010 to 1:5.4 in 2011, an overall 15% reduction. A greater savings was achieved, and we were able to effect the cuts by maintaining our first line supervision within the basic patrol structure. Some of the benefits of a narrow span of control include:

- Properly supervised investigations done at the front end of an event, which greatly aids the Department's ability to identify critical issues, validate issues of training, and correct improper behavior

- A proper staffing model allows one sergeant to handle a critical event, while allowing another sergeant to maintain a practical span of control and cover the responsibilities of both sergeants
- Increased contacts between the sergeant and their officers. A wide span of control limits those important contacts in a working relationship
- Increased opportunities for small scale team training
- Greater team camaraderie with increased personal relationships among a smaller team dynamic
- Focused problem solving policing – specialized response to certain problems using the community involvement and interaction model
- Supervisors able to respond to critical events faster by covering smaller geographic area
- Greater coordination between patrol officers and detectives, as the on scene sergeant drives investigations between both bureaus
- Greater oversight as an early warning system to potential personnel problems and litigation issues

### **Civilianization**

Many assignments have been civilized throughout the Department. In Research and Development, two sergeants were returned to the patrol function and civilian staff now manages several Department functions including fleet and building maintenance. Permit Unit functions, once done by a sworn officer, are now handled by civilian staff. A School Safety sergeant was returned to the patrol function and replaced by a civilian program manager. This is an on-going process and additional civilianization opportunities will be evaluated.

As we look into the future, increased civilian support of patrol is being evaluated. We hope to add Crime Prevention Specialists to our current program to support the high demand of public requests for information and training at the neighborhood level. We have begun to evaluate the use of Community Service Officers (CSO). These CSOs would augment patrol officers and respond to non-emergency calls that require assistance, but do not require a police officer. Some of these events would include; non-injury accidents, cold burglary investigations and auto theft reports. Additionally, we are exploring outsourcing our background investigations of potential new hires.

Several assignments have been made collateral in nature to provide dual capabilities. Horse Mounted Unit (HMU) officers primarily work a patrol function and are scheduled for HMU duty as needed for a special event. Canine handlers work on patrol teams assigned to a district and support the patrol structure. When needed in a canine capacity, they are removed from their team

for the duration of that event. AIR2 personnel have also been returned to the patrol function. When air support is needed, these officers respond to the hangar and fly as needed.

**SUMMARY**

By restructuring Special Operations and BOI, the Department continues to make Patrol the priority of the organization. We continue to evaluate the possibility of redistricting and shift change lengths.

Much thought was given to the above actions, and tough choices made. We believe the cuts made and the services retained are necessary in order to remain proactive and function at the high level expected by our citizenry. Our overall mission continues to be a proactive police department that is reactive to the needs of our community.



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Chief of Police

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