

Public Safety in Chula Vista

The Police Department budget in the City of Chula Vista: An overview of current and historical expenditures and staffing, and an analysis of proposed reductions for FY 2009-2010.

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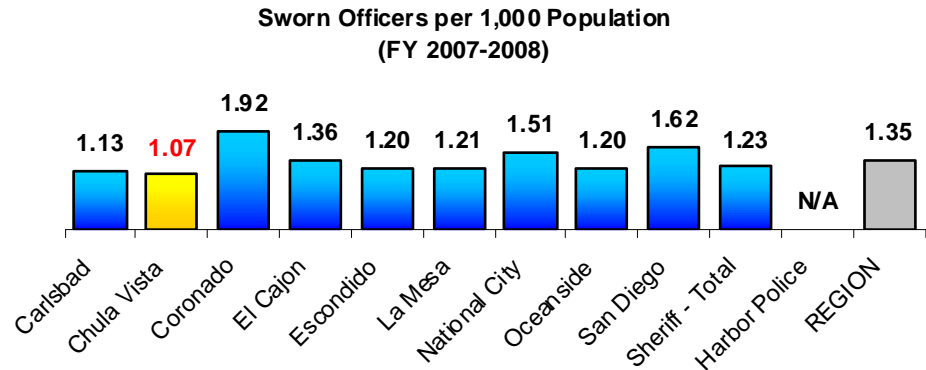


*Chula Vista
Police Officers' Association*

Public Safety in the City of Chula Vista

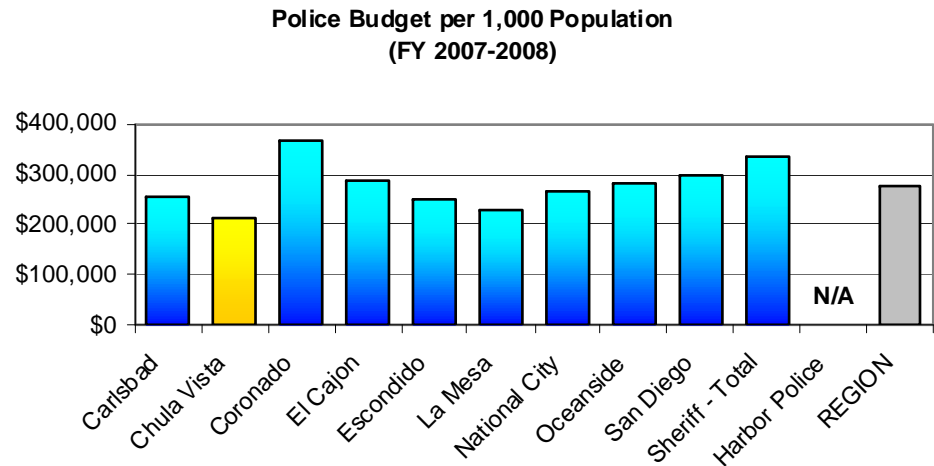
There are fewer peace officers in Chula Vista than in any other jurisdiction in the region.

The City of Chula Vista’s “per capita” police force is the lowest in the county, averaging 1.07 officers for every 1,000 citizens in FY 2007. That measurement, widely accepted by law enforcement professionals as the standard by which to measure police protection, fell to 1.05 in FY 2008¹. This decrease means we have fewer officers protecting our community than any other community in the region. The countywide average is 1.35 officers for every 1,000 citizens² and the national average is 2.3 officers for every 1,000 citizens³. Simply put the City of Chula Vista already maintains the thinnest “blue line” in the county.



The City of Chula Vista spends less on police services than every other jurisdiction in the county.

Not only does the City of Chula Vista maintain the fewest officers per capita in the county, but Chula Vista also spends the least amount of money on police services in the region. During FY 2007 Chula Vista allocated only \$214 per citizen for police services placing it last in law enforcement funding throughout the county. The countywide average for police services is \$278 per citizen⁴. That amount translates to fewer dollars to make our community safe, even though violent crimes are predicted to increase⁵.



Public Safety in the City of Chula Vista

Current budget reduction proposals will result in a 9.4% fewer officers protecting your community.

Even though Chula Vista already boasts the fewest officers per capita in the county, the current proposals call for drastic cuts in police services. These cuts include a 9.4% decrease in the actual number of officers protecting your community. If implemented these cuts would bring the number of officers down to a level not seen since 2001, when the local population was 20% smaller than it is today. Under these proposals the per-capita ratio of law enforcement would drop to the dangerously low level of *less than 1 officer* for every 1,000 citizens⁶.

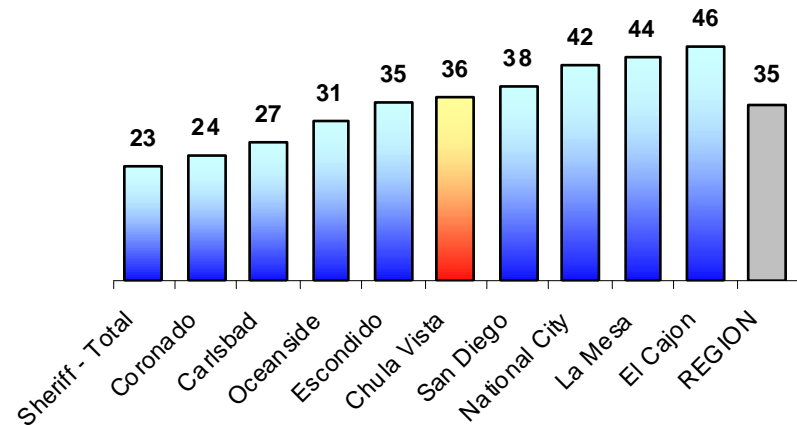
Proposed Reductions in Police Service

	Current	After Cuts	
Sworn Officers, Authorized:	244	221	(-9.43%)
Officers per 1,000 Population:	1.05	0.96	

Although Chula Vista officers have kept crime low, the crime rate is expected to rise as the economy declines.

According to a recent study by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the historically low crime rates are not expected to last. *“Falling wages and high unemployment create an atmosphere in which it may become easier for individuals to make the choice to commit a criminal act. The current economic downturn, combined with the unprecedented number of mortgage foreclosures (which in turn increases the possibilities of blighted neighborhoods) introduces an additional risk factor into the equation. Intensifying this situation is the almost certain decrease in generated revenue that traditionally supports crime reduction efforts (e.g., prevention programs and law enforcement). All of these factors coalesce to create almost a ‘perfect storm’ challenging communities to attend to possible crime increases.”*⁷

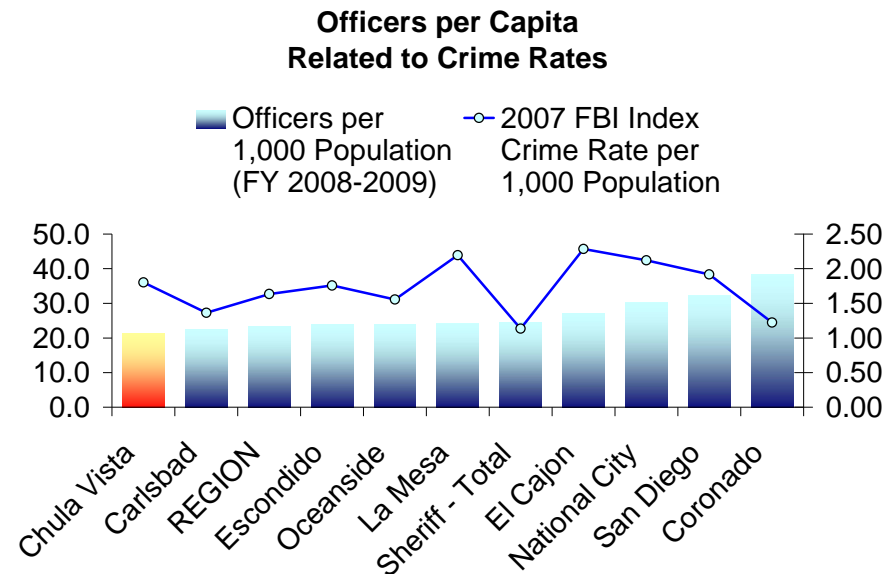
**FBI Index Crime Rates
Per 1,000 Population**



Public Safety in the City of Chula Vista

Stretched the thinnest, your Chula Vista peace officers arguably work harder than nearly every other municipality in the county.

With the fewest officers per capita in the county, and allocated the least per capita funds of any other jurisdiction in the region, Chula Vista officers still managed to handle 140,260 contacts and calls for police services in 2007⁸. A 2004 SANDAG study revealed that Chula Vista receives an average of one call for service from every 2.83 citizens, while San Diego receives one call for service from 2.75 citizens. Chula Vista officers handled 315 calls per officer in 2007, while San Diego officers handled only 218 calls per officer over the same period⁹. Coupled with our local crime rate, officers in Chula Vista are already faced with few officers to combat increasing crime.



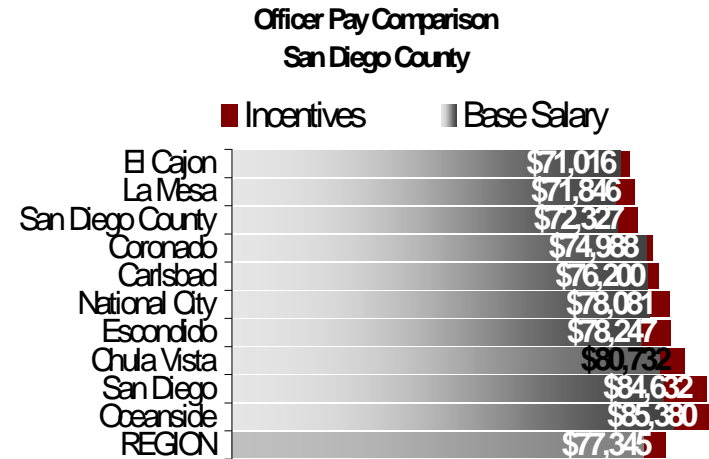
Our officers have sacrificed in the past to remain competitive in the open market of police recruiting throughout the region.

Among the benefit plans adopted by the City of Chula Vista includes planning for the retirement of its employees. Safety employees throughout the region have individually negotiated for benefits that are commensurate with their responsibilities and duties, and competitive with other regional agencies. In order to continue to recruit the best police officers for our community, the City of Chula Vista must maintain benefit plans that can compete with other municipalities in the region. One such benefit plan includes the retirement plan for our safety employees. Throughout the region all 18 municipalities are part of a “3% at 50” retirement plan for safety employees. Of those municipalities, 13 of the 18 municipalities pay 100% of the contribution to the plan¹⁰, including the City of Chula Vista. This retirement contribution is one of many factors that attract bright new employees to work in Chula Vista instead of another local municipality.

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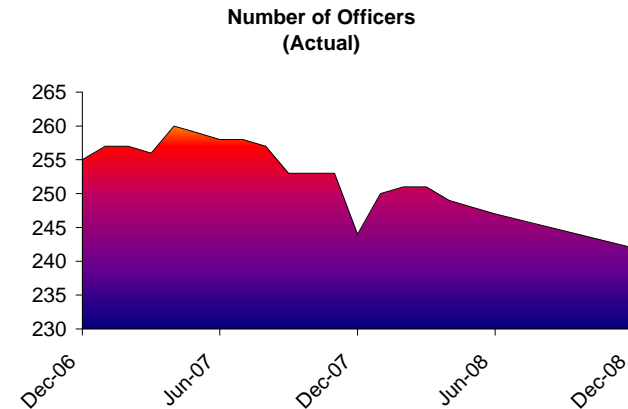
Our community must remain competitive to recruit and retain the best officers to protect our schools and our streets.

According to a recent comparison of the pay rates for 5-year police veterans across the region, Chula Vista officers rank 3rd among local agency pay scales. In a time when recruiting quality officers is becoming more and more difficult the City of Chula Vista must compete against all of the other public safety agencies in the region. Some large agencies, such as the San Diego Police Department and San Diego Sheriff's Department, have significantly greater resources and a greater diversity of opportunities to offer and leverage new employees. With dwindling resources and shrinking police coverage, our community deserves to recruit and retain the best officers in the region. When it comes to recruiting new officers to protect our community we must remain competitive so that we can continue to keep our community safe and secure.



The Chula Vista Police Department has already cut 8% of its personnel and 6% of its budget in the past year alone.

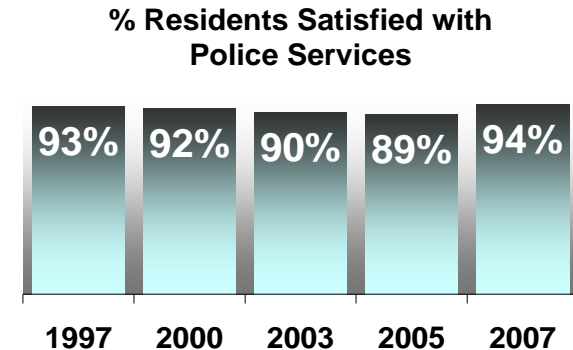
Since FY2007 the Police Department has cut \$4.7M of its budget, 11 police officers, and 19 civilian employees¹¹. These reductions have resulted in 8% fewer police employees protecting our community today, even though our population continues to rise. Although the Police Department strives to minimize the direct impacts to the citizens of Chula Vista, the current budget reduction proposals will result in drastic decreases in services that will directly impact the community. These decreases include such basic services as direct patrol responsiveness, proactive patrol services, investigating crimes, and communication and outreach to the community¹².



Public Safety in the City of Chula Vista

We have some of the best law enforcement professionals in the region who consistently get high marks from their community.

Chula Vista has already stretched public safety to the limits yet the men and women of the police department continue to do their work with passion and professionalism, and serve as an example to the rest of the region. The Chula Vista Police Department maintains a 94% approval rating within our community¹³. Notwithstanding continuing personnel and supply cuts, ongoing budget reductions, limited resources, and a lean and shrinking police force, our police officers continue to maintain a safe community, keeping Chula Vista a great place to live, work, and play.



Our police officers remain committed to the needs of the community, and are working diligently with the City to resolve the current budget shortfalls.

The Chula Vista Police Officers' Association recognizes the unusual and important nature of the current budget shortfall. That recognition is why our officers are actively engaged in dialog with city administration, so that we can work together in a way that resolves the current budget shortfalls but still keeps our community safe. The Chula Vista Police Officers' Association believes that we must be cautious and meticulous with how we reduce the city's expenditures. Now is the time for careful and methodical incisions, rather than carving away safety with a blunt blade. Our police officers continue to work tirelessly to protect our community by doing a job very few would. As the City reels from a struggling economy the officers of the Chula Vista Police Department will continue their practice of doing more with far less, and will strive to work with the city to find fair and *safe* ways to cope with the current fiscal situation.

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- ² *Public Safety Budgets in the San Diego Region: Expenditures and Staffing for Fiscal Year 2008*, July 2008, SANDAG
- ³ Uniform Crime Report: *Crime in the United States, 2007*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice
- ⁴ *Public Safety Budgets in the San Diego Region: Expenditures and Staffing for Fiscal Year 2008*, July 2008, SANDAG
- ⁵ *Distressed Economy and Crime: How the Two Are Related in San Diego County*, October 2008, SANDAG
- ⁶ Memorandum: *Budget Reduction Plan*, December 2008, Office of the City Manager, City of Chula Vista. Current population of 231,305 (Source: Chula Vista Adopted Budget FY 2008-2009).
- ⁷ *Distressed Economy and Crime: How the Two Are Related in San Diego County*, October 2008, SANDAG
- ⁸ 2007 Annual Report of the Chula Vista Police Department
- ⁹ *Non-Criminal Incidents Lead the List of Calls for Service for Police Departments*, October 2005, SANDAG
- ¹⁰ *2007-2009 Mid-Biennium Budget Update*, June 2008, Presentation to La Mesa City Council
- ¹¹ Chula Vista Adopted Budget, FY 2008-2009
- ¹² Memorandum: *Budget Reduction Plan*, December 2008, Office of the City Manager, City of Chula Vista
- ¹³ *2007 Chula Vista Police Department Resident Opinion Survey*, August 2007, SANDAG