



POLICE FORCE STRENGTH: A MAJOR CITY COMPARISON

Recommendations for the City of Atlanta

February 2009

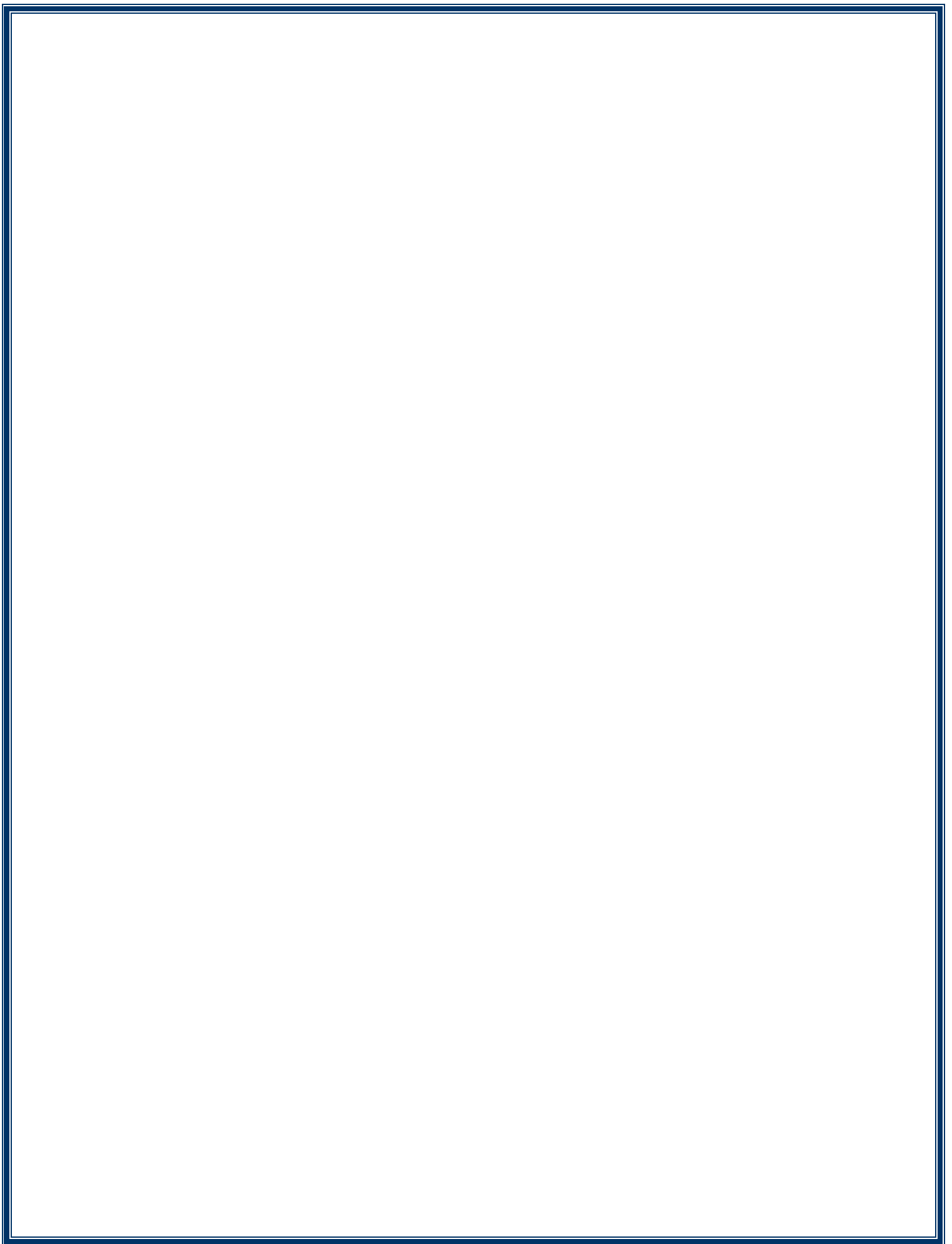
This report is a product of the Atlanta Police Foundation. A comprehensive list of data sources and citations can be obtained by contacting the Atlanta Police Foundation.



Special thanks to Dr. Robbie Friedmann, Professor and Distinguished Chair of Public Safety Partnerships, Department of Criminal Justice, Georgia State University for review and input.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	5
Data	9
Officers per Square Mile	10
Officers per 100,000 Residents	11
Crime Ranking	12
Population Growth	13
Conclusion	14
Recommended Plan of Action	15
About the Atlanta Police Foundation	17



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The city of Atlanta is at a critical juncture in maintaining its envied position as the Southeast's economic engine. A safe city is a vibrant city, where its citizens feel comfortable working, living and spending their money – day or night. Since 2002 tremendous progress has been made in creating a safer city with a 39% reduction in violent crime and a 23% reduction in overall crime. However, recent events have caused Atlantans to question the City's commitment to maintaining an adequately-staffed police force. The city's political, business, civic, and neighborhood leaders can choose to move forward and demand a greater police presence on Atlanta's streets – a proven and effective crime-fighting tool. Or we – collectively - can allow the city to reverse the progress it has made in the past few years to boost the ranks of its police force and reduce crime.

The Atlanta Police Foundation (APF), which has made significant progress in achieving its top priority of improving police visibility in the city of Atlanta, believes now is the time to act swiftly and decisively to move the city forward. Superior police performance and a comprehensive strategy to address social and economic factors are keys to a successful crime reduction plan. However, police visibility must be at the forefront of any plan.

This report, using FBI Uniform Crime Report numbers, U.S. Census figures, and data from other relevant sources, illustrates Atlanta's standing on police staffing versus 10 comparable cities. It shows Atlanta is behind many cities in terms of police officers per square mile and officers per 100,000 residents.

The APF is recommending that bold actions be carried out immediately by the city's elected leadership, and is urging those who live, work, and play in Atlanta to support these moves to increase the size of the police force.

THE APF RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING IMMEDIATE ACTIONS BE TAKEN BY CITY LEADERS

- Continue efforts to find a solution to end the hiring freeze and furloughs for the Atlanta Police Department (APD); and commit to reaching full staffing levels (1,784) by June 30, 2009.
- Identify fiscal means to increase APD's budget to accommodate staffing of 2,000 officers by 2010.
- Increase APD's force strength to a minimum of 2,500 officers (the bottom of the acceptable range) by 2014.
- Support the APD recruiting goal of 2,500 officers by 2014, and commit to funding appropriate staffing levels in the long term.
 - City leaders should formally commit, through a City Council Resolution, to reaching and sustaining the goal of at least 2,500 officers by 2014.
 - The Atlanta Police Foundation will commit the support necessary to reach APD recruiting and hiring goals through its Recruitment Program.

In 2002, after Mayor Shirley Franklin took office, the Atlanta Police Department and the Atlanta Police Foundation commissioned Linder & Associates, a national consulting firm, to conduct an organizational review of APD, and to make recommendations that would improve safety in the city of Atlanta. The primary recommendation made in the 2004 Linder Report, entitled *Fragile Momentum*, was to enhance police visibility by increasing the number of officers to 2000. Subsequently, the Atlanta Police Department grew from 1,433 officers in 2002 to 1,784 in July of 2008. The City of Atlanta was well on its way to reaching the goal of 2,000 officers, but recent budget cuts, resulting in the loss of 52 authorized positions¹, a hiring freeze, and furloughs have threatened to erode this progress. As of January 1, 2009, the APD had only 1,723 police officer positions filled out of the 1,784 authorized, and it is anticipated the department could lose approximately 15-20 officers per month to attrition and retirement. If this sustained loss occurs, APD could be operating at 2002 levels, when we were ranked the third most violent city in America, by July of this year². As the public discourse on police staffing grows, it is now time to recalibrate and recommit to the goal of ensuring that Atlanta has the officers needed to keep our city safe and secure our position as a leader in the global economy.

A strong, well-staffed police force in the city of Atlanta can be achieved. In 2003, the City of Atlanta, the Atlanta Police Department, and the Atlanta Police Foundation committed to a force of 2,000 police officers by 2010. Since that time, force strength increased significantly, adding 351 officers to the ranks of APD. During that same time period, the violent crime rate³ decreased 39 percent, the overall Part I⁴ crime rate went down 23 percent⁵, and Atlanta dropped from the third most violent city in America to sixteenth⁶. The results speak for themselves. With a renewed commitment to increasing the force strength of APD, Atlanta can have a first-in-class police force and can count itself among the safest large cities in America.

There are many social and economic factors involved in reducing crime and a balanced approach is always needed. However, the most effective tool in the fight against crime is police visibility. Statistics show more officers on the streets means a safer community. A recent study by the Rand Corporation estimates that a 10% increase in the police force reduces homicide, robbery, and motor vehicle theft by about 10%, and reduces aggravated assault and burglary by about 5%.⁷ Virtually all crime prevention methods - including foot patrols, community policing and the saturation of hot spots - rely on police visibility. In addition to police visibility, increased force strength enables better crowd control, quicker

¹ In July of 2008, APD's staffing level was cut from 1836 to 1784 authorized positions.

² Assumes a loss of 20 officers per month over the next 6 months, and a 10% reduction in force strength due to the furloughs. $[(1723 - 120) - 10\% \text{ reduction of staff time from furloughs}] = 1443$

³ Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Crime Rate = violent crimes per 100,000 population

⁴ Part I crimes include homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary theft from motor vehicle, and motor vehicle theft. Rate = violent crimes per 100,000 population

⁵ http://www.fbi.gov/filelink.html?file=/ucr/cius_01/xl/01tbl08.xls

⁶ "2008 City Crime Rankings". Congressional Quarterly Press.

http://os.cqpress.com/citycrime/CityCrime2008_Rank_Rev.pdf retrieved 12/7/08

⁷ Heaton, Paul. "Crime Costs and Public Policy Presentation." Published by RAND Corporation, Infrastructure, Safety and Environment – Safety and Justice Program. January 2009.

response times, and more time dedicated to investigations. Further, and just as importantly, when force strength is high, citizens, workers and visitors feel safer. Simply put, police visibility creates a more inviting city for homeowners, tourists, conventioners, and current and prospective businesses.

This report is intended to be a brief comparison of Atlanta's police force strength with 10 similar major U.S. cities. Although studies have been conducted across the country, no national standard for the appropriate number of officers has been established. Differences in population demographics, caseloads, tourism and other factors impact crime and lead to variations in decisions about the appropriate number of officers necessary. For example, APD is one of few cities that also provide police services to a large international airport, rather than having a dedicated airport police department. Because of Atlanta's status as the financial and business hub of the South, its metropolitan characteristics, and its large convention and tourism market, APD force strength should be at least equivalent to those of other major cities.

Therefore, using the same 10 comparable U.S. cities previously benchmarked in the 2004 *Fragile Momentum* Report, we have collected recent relevant data focusing on four key measures for the city of Atlanta. These measures include:

- Number of officers per square mile;
- Number of officers per 100,000 residents;
- The city's crime rank among 385 major cities; and
- Atlanta's growth potential.

The data shows:

- Atlanta crime statistics show that the number of Part I crimes⁸ is inversely related to the number of officers on the street. As the number of officers patrolling the streets increases, the number of Part I crimes decreases. Since 2003, APD increased its force strength by 351 officers. During the same time period, the violent crime rate⁹ in Atlanta has decreased 39 percent, the overall Part I¹⁰ crime rate has gone down 23 percent¹¹, and Atlanta has dropped from the third most violent city in America to sixteenth¹².
- Atlanta's projected population growth (25 percent) is well above all other comparison cities.
- Atlanta's force strength (13 officers per square mile) is the weakest among the 10 cities, is well below the next weakest (21), and significantly below the average (46).

⁸ Part I crimes include homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary and motor vehicle theft.

⁹ Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Crime Rate = violent crimes per 100,000 population

¹⁰ Part I crimes include homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary theft from motor vehicle, and motor vehicle theft. Rate = violent crimes per 100,000 population

¹¹ http://www.fbi.gov/filelink.html?file=/ucr/cius_01/xl/01tbl08.xls

¹² "2008 City Crime Rankings". Congressional Quarterly Press.

http://os.cqpress.com/citycrime/CityCrime2008_Rank_Rev.pdf retrieved 12/7/08

- Of the 10 cities reviewed, the six cities that have less than the average number of officers per square mile (which includes Atlanta) are also ranked among the 16 most dangerous cities in the U.S.
- With the exception of one city (Los Angeles, which is in the process of hiring 1,000 additional officers), Atlanta has the lowest number of officers per 100,000 residents (332), and is well below the average (423).
- Of the six cities that have less than the average number of officers per 100,000 residents, four consistently appear in the top 16 most dangerous cities.
- With its current population, Atlanta needs between 2,000 and 2,250 officers to approach the average officers per square mile and officers per 100,000 residents.

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, the Atlanta Police Foundation has made improving the safety of Atlanta, through increased police visibility in the city, a priority. The Foundation, along with its Board, supporters, and donors, believe that a tangible image of a safer Atlanta begins with police visibility because:

- It is a critical component to drive down the city's crime rate
- It promotes an improved perception of the city's safety

Law enforcement executives and many crime prevention experts cite police visibility as the most critical component in preventing crime. Police departments across the country use police visibility as a primary crime prevention patrol tactic. As the City of Atlanta has seen, an investment in crime reduction is an investment in the city's social and economic stability. A recent study by the Rand Corporation estimates that a 10% increase in the police force reduces homicide, robbery and motor vehicle theft by about 10%, and reduces aggravated assault and burglary by about 5%.¹³ (The study reported no noticeable change in rape.) More officers means more foot patrols, better community policing, and an ability to saturate areas of high crime with prominent police presence to deter criminal activity. In addition, increased force strength enables better crowd control, quicker response times, and more time dedicated to investigations.

Police departments across the country work to keep force strength at an adequate level because prevention and response to crime helps bring revenue into the city through increased tourism and taxes, as well as increased property values. It also saves city expenses by decreasing the investigation, the prosecution and the adjudication of crime. Recent studies estimate the societal cost of a single homicide to be approximately \$8 million. Cities whose leaders understand this have been successful in making the investments necessary to keep crime at bay, and have reaped the rewards of watching their cities thrive.

For example, Bill Bratton, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Chief of Police continuously – even in the wake of the city's recent budget shortfalls - makes the case that spending on his department returns at least as much in financial rewards for the city. Based on crime reduction and cost savings in Los Angeles, Bratton makes a strong argument for adding 1,000 officers to the LAPD this year to push his ranks to more than 10,000 officers. He says, "The idea of being seen as an investment is that if you make it safe, they will come."¹⁴ Like other departments across the U.S., Los Angeles is facing severe budget challenges. Still, they have committed to Chief Bratton's plan and have chosen to generate the additional tax revenue needed by more than tripling fees associated with trash collection (from \$12 per household to \$38).

Citizens and businesses of Atlanta would benefit from a similar approach. Using the RAND Corporation's crime cost estimates, the total cost of Part I crimes in Atlanta in 2008 was a staggering \$1.9 billion.

¹³ Heaton, Paul. "Crime Costs and Public Policy Presentation." Published by RAND Corporation, Infrastructure, Safety and Environment – Safety and Justice Program. January 2009.

¹⁴ Kahn, Gabriel. "Top Cop in Los Angeles Says Cutting Crime Pays." *The Wall Street Journal*. November 29, 2008.

Conversely, if Atlanta was to increase its police force by just 10% (from 1723 to 1895), a societal benefit¹⁵ of approximately \$163,294,750 could be realized. The below chart shows the cost break down by crime type.

Potential Benefits of Police Expansion in Atlanta					
<u>Crime Type</u>	<u>Cost Per Crime</u> ¹⁶	<u>Number of Crimes in 2008</u> ¹⁷	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>% Reduction in Crime from a 10% Increase in Officers</u>	<u>Societal Benefit</u>
Murder	\$8,000,000	127	\$1,016,000,000	10%	\$101,600,000
Rape	\$200,000	140	\$28,000,000	0%	\$0
Robbery	\$100,000	3558	\$355,800,000	10%	\$35,580,000
Assault	\$75,000	4249	\$318,675,000	5%	\$15,933,750
MV Theft	\$7,000	7028	\$49,196,000	10%	\$4,919,600
Burglary	\$12,000	8769	\$105,228,000	5%	\$5,261,400
Larceny	\$1,000	20306	\$20,306,000	0%	\$0
Aggregate Cost of Crime in Atlanta (2008)			\$1,893,205,000		\$163,294,750

Statistics have already shown that the Part I crime rate in Atlanta is inversely related to the number of APD officers on the street. As the number of officers patrolling the streets increases, the number of Part I crimes decreases. Atlanta increased the total number of officers from 1,433 in 2002 to 1,772 in 2007. During that same time period, the violent crime rate decreased 39 percent, and the overall Part I crime rate went down 23 percent¹⁸. Below is a look at the decreasing crime trend in Atlanta as the number of APD officers increased from 2002 to 2008¹⁹.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
Total Crime Rate (Number of Violent Crimes Per 100,000 Residents)	11,161	10,219	8,712	7,929	7,916	8,543	8,619
Number of Police Officers	1433	1592	1653	1653	1699	1722	1723

¹⁵ Societal Benefits – Reduction in costs of crime to include police budgets, incarceration costs, private security expenditures, medical treatment for crime-related injuries, property losses, claims processing costs, lost productivity, etc.

¹⁶ Heaton, Paul. “Crime Costs and Public Policy Presentation.” Published by RAND Corporation, Infrastructure, Safety and Environment – Safety and Justice Program. January 2009.

¹⁷ APD Weekly COBRA Report 2008, Week #52. Atlanta Police Department.

¹⁸ http://www.fbi.gov/filelink.html?file=/ucr/cius_01/xl/01tbl08.xls

¹⁹ Source: Part I Crime: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Report Data.

<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm> and APD COBRA Reports. Number of Officers: Atlanta Police Foundation Recruitment Statistics.

The need for an increased number of APD officers has been an ongoing challenge for Atlanta. In 2002, after Mayor Shirley Franklin took office, the Atlanta Police Department and APF commissioned Linder & Associates, a national consulting firm, to conduct an organizational review of APD in an effort to build a best-in-class police department, and to make recommendations that would improve safety in the city of Atlanta. The primary recommendation made in the 2004 Linder Report, entitled *Fragile Momentum*, was to increase police visibility by increasing the number of officers on the APD force to 2,000. Using *Fragile Momentum* as a guide, Atlanta city leaders committed to improving APD's force strength to 2,000 officers. However, the city's economic barriers have repeatedly prevented the department from reaching this potential. Currently, the department stands at an authorized strength of 1,784 officers with little hope of reaching 2,000 officers in the near future. This consistent shortfall leads to decreased morale on the part of APD officers, lack of confidence in city leaders' commitment to public safety in Atlanta, and decreased perception of Atlanta's safety by its residents, business owners, and visitors.

Not only has the city failed to reach 2,000 APD officers, but the recent budget shortfall has begun to erode the progress made over the past 7 years. In July of 2008, APD was authorized at 1836 officers and they were well on their way to achieving that number when budget cuts resulted in the loss of 52 positions. In late Fall, a 10 percent furlough of Atlanta Police Officers further resulted in a reduction of police visibility and created a climate of low morale and likely increased attrition within the department. In addition, the city of Atlanta has mandated a hiring freeze until the budget challenges ease. As of January 1, 2009, the APD had only 1,723 police officer positions filled out of the 1,784 authorized. It is anticipated the department could lose 15-20 officers per month to attrition and retirement. If this sustained loss occurs, APD could be operating at pre-2003 levels with only 1,443 officers on the streets by July of this year²⁰. It will take time to turn this trend around, to re-establish the department's trust in the city's commitment to public safety, and to rebuild APD's force strength.

However, given sustained commitment, leadership, and financial support by City of Atlanta leaders, the ability to recruit and hire large numbers of officers is not an unattainable goal. In 2006, APF kicked off their Recruitment Program - which pooled resources from Atlanta's business community and provided financial and strategic support to APD to strengthen and increase police recruiting. The program proved to be an enormous success, increasing recruitment by 82 percent between 2005 (before the inception of the program) and 2007.

Today, not only is reaching the goal of 2,000 officers critical, but it is time for city and community leaders to identify a force strength goal that will propel the APD to 2010, 2014, and beyond. While the goal of 2,000 officers may have been appropriate five years ago, growth in the city, as well as increased responsibilities for homeland security, now require a re-evaluation of this goal to prepare the city for the near and distant

²⁰ Assumes a loss of 20 officers per month over the next 6 months, and a 10% reduction in force strength due to the furloughs. [(1723 - 120) - 10% reduction of staff time from furloughs = 1443]

future. It is vitally important the city does not regress, and APD must be able to continue progress in creating a safer city.

This report will use the same ten comparison cities previously benchmarked by Linder & Associates in 2004 (Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Washington D.C.) to review the current number of APD officers in comparison with other major U.S. cities.

DATA

DATA SHEET										
City	# of Officers	Area in mi ² ²¹	Officers per mi ²	US Census Population Projections (2007) ²²	Officers per 100,000 citizens (Using 2007 pop projections)	Most Dangerous City Ranking (2008) ²³	US Census Population (2000) ²⁴	US Census Population Projections (2007) ²⁵	US Census Projected Population Change	Projected Population (2014)
Atlanta	1723	131.7	13	519,145	332	16	416,474	519,145	25%	648,931
Cleveland	1615	77.6	21	438,042	369	11	478,403	438,042	-8%	443,360
Los Angeles	9832	469.1	21	3,834,340	256	158	3,694,820	3,834,340	4%	3,987,714
St. Louis	1334	61.9	22	350,759	380	4	348,189	350,759	1%	354,267
Detroit	3068	138.8	22	916,952	335	3	951,270	916,952	-4%	880,274
Baltimore	3111	80.8	39	637,455	488	12	651,154	637,455	-2%	624,706
Boston	2218	48.4	46	599,351	370	100	589,141	599,351	2%	611,338
Philadelphia	6700	135.1	50	1,449,634	462	22	1,517,550	1,449,634	-4%	1,391,649
Chicago	13400	227.1	59	2,836,658	472	N/A	2,896,016	2,836,658	-2%	2,779,925
Washington D.C.	3900	61.4	64	588,292	663	21	572,059	588,292	3%	605,941
New York City	36000	303.3	119	8,274,527	435	259	8,008,278	8,274,527	3%	8,522,763
Average (excluding ATL)			46		423				-1%	

²¹ "The World Almanac Book of Facts 2008". Published by World Almanac Books, 2008.

²² "US Fact Finder. Population Finder". Published by the United States Census Bureau.
http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation?_submenuId=population_0&_sse=on

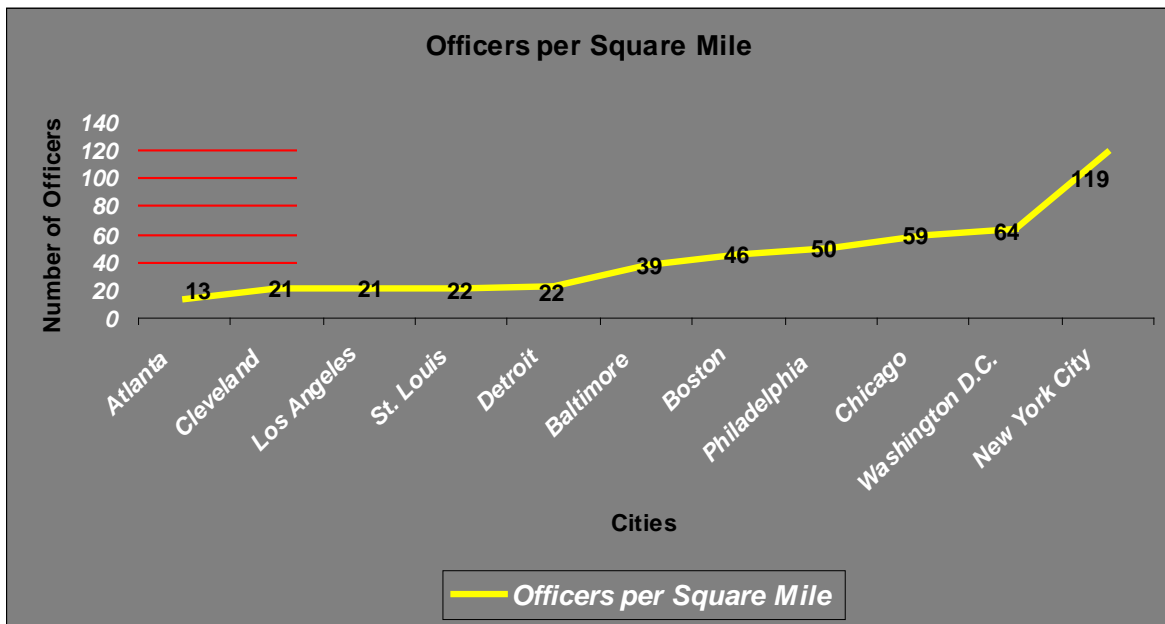
²³ "2008 City Crime " Published by Congressional Quarterly Press.
http://os.cqpress.com/citycrime/CityCrime2008_Rank_Rev.pdf retrieved 12/7/08. Based on FBI's Crime in the U.S.

²⁴ "US Fact Finder. Population Finder". Published by the United States Census Bureau.
http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation?_submenuId=population_0&_sse=on

²⁵ US Fact Finder. Population Finder". Published by the United States Census Bureau.
http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation?_submenuId=population_0&_sse=on

OFFICERS PER SQUARE MILE

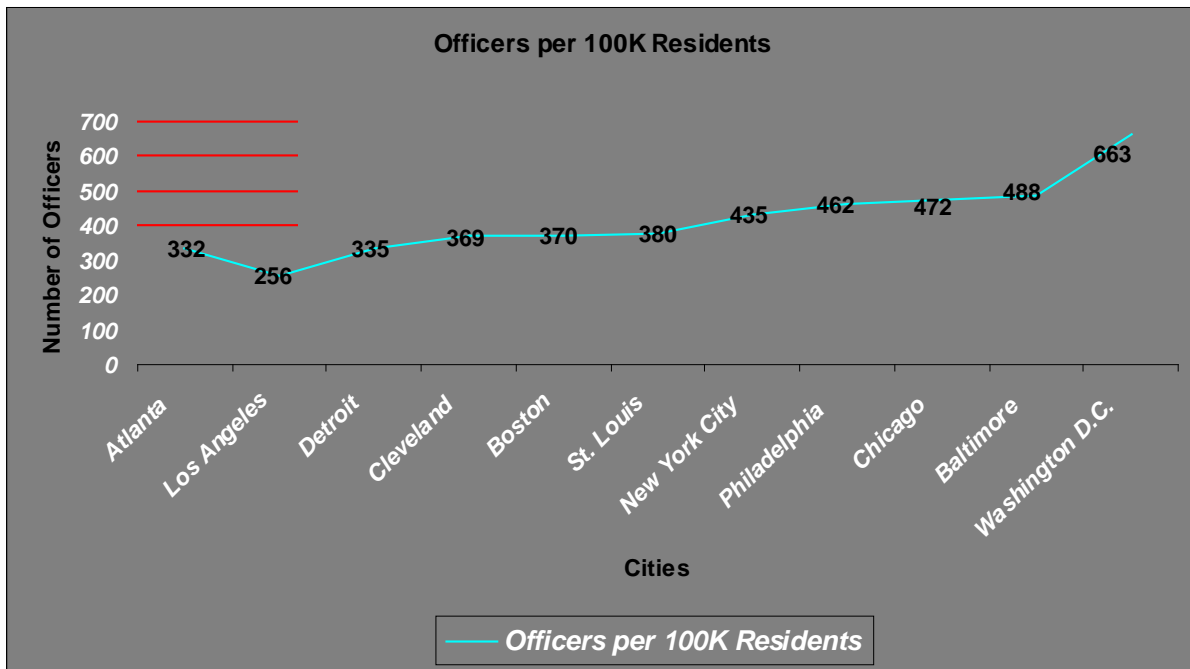
When comparing the number of officers per square mile among the group, Atlanta has by far the lowest number of officers, and is well below the average of 46 officers per square mile. Currently, Atlanta operates with only 13 officers per square mile. Not only is Atlanta lower than the average, but it ranks well below even the closest comparison cities of Cleveland and Los Angeles, both of which have 21 officers per square mile. In order to bring Atlanta up to the average of 46 officers per square mile, it would need to increase its force to approximately 6,000 officers. In order to reach its closest comparison city with 21 officers per square mile, APD would need to increase its force to approximately 2,700 officers.



It is important to mention that, with the exception of Los Angeles, all six cities that have less than the average number of officers per square mile (46) are ranked among the 16 most dangerous cities in the U.S.

OFFICERS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS

The next measure of comparison reviews the number of officers per 100,000 residents. Again, with the exception of Los Angeles, Atlanta has the lowest number of officers per 100,000 residents, and sits well below the average of the 10 comparison cities at 332 officers per 100,000 residents, or approximately 3.3 officers per 1,000 residents. The average of the 10 comparison cities is 423 officers per 100,000 residents. At the high end, Washington D.C. has 663 officers per 100,000 residents.



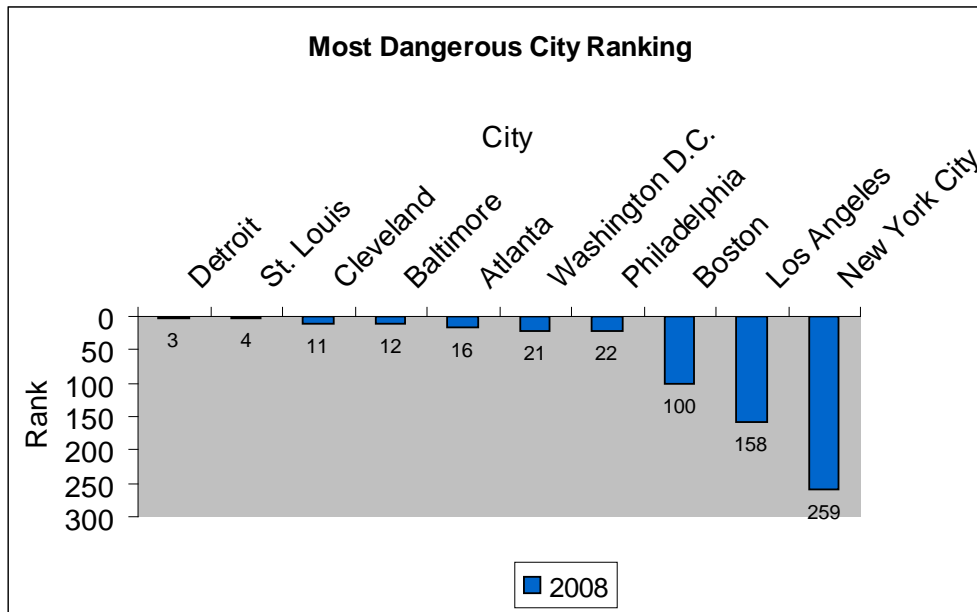
Using the officers per 100,000 residents measure, a theme begins to emerge. By this measure, four of the six cities that have below the average number of officers per 100,000 residents (423) consistently appear in the top 16 most dangerous cities.

The below chart shows projected numbers of APD officers per 100,000 residents as Atlanta increases force strength, at the 2007 and 2014 projected populations. As you can see by the 2007 population projection column, Atlanta would currently need between 2,000 and 2,250 officers to approach the average according to the comparison group (423). Using 2014 population projections, Atlanta would need 2,750 officers on the force to reach the average number of officers per 100,000 residents.

Atlanta's Force Strength (Using 2007 Population Projections)			Atlanta's Force Strength (Using 2014 Population Projections)		
<u>Number of Officers</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Officers per 100K Residents</u>	<u>Number of Officers</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Officers per 100K Residents</u>
1,723	519,145	332	1,723	648,931	266
1,750	519,145	337	1,750	648,931	270
2,000	519,145	385	2,000	648,931	308
2,250	519,145	433	2,250	648,931	347
2,500	519,145	482	2,500	648,931	385
2,750	519,145	530	2,750	648,931	424
3,000	519,145	578	3,000	648,931	462
4,000	519,145	770	4,000	648,931	616
5,000	519,145	963	5,000	648,931	770

CRIME RANKING

Another measure of comparison is the ranking of cities based on their crime rates. Below are the 2008 crime rankings of our 10 comparison cities.



In 2008,²⁶ Atlanta was ranked as the 16th most dangerous city in the U.S. out of 385 cities ranked. Although tremendous progress has been made (ranked #3 in 2002), it is not surprising that Atlanta is still ranked in the top 20 given a force strength well below that of similar major cities. In fact, the city should

²⁶ "2008 City Crime Ranking." Published by Congressional Quarterly Press.
http://os.cqpress.com/citycrime/CityCrime2008_Rank_Rev.pdf retrieved 12/7/08. Rankings based on FBI Crime in the U.S. 2007 data

rank much higher given the low number of officers. Some of the safer major cities (like Boston and New York City) tend to have increased police visibility by having a force strength that ranks close to the average of the 10 comparison cities. Conversely, the top three most dangerous of the comparison cities (Detroit, St. Louis, and Cleveland) also have the lowest numbers of officers per square mile.

POPULATION GROWTH

The final measure of analysis in identifying the appropriate number of APD officers is projected population growth for the city. According to U.S. Census data, while many cities were projected to decrease in population, projected growth for Atlanta between 2000 and 2007 was 25 percent - by far the highest of all of the comparison cities. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the 2007 population at more than 518,000 residents. If the 25 percent growth projection was to be extrapolated out over the next seven years (2007-2014), the city's population would be 648,931 by 2014. Atlanta's projected growth between now and 2014 is significantly higher than that of any of the comparison cities. Atlanta's deficiency in police visibility will continue to grow exponentially if this point is not considered when determining APD force strength needs.

The below table shows projected population growth for comparison cities:

<u>City</u>	<u>US Census Population (2000)</u>	<u>US Census Population Projections (2007)</u>	<u>US Census Projected Population Change</u>	<u>Projected Population (2014)</u>
Atlanta	416,474	519,145	25%	648,931
Cleveland	478,403	438,042	-8%	443,360
Los Angeles	3,694,820	3,834,340	4%	3,987,714
St. Louis	348,189	350,759	1%	354,267
Detroit	951,270	916,952	-4%	880,274
Baltimore	651,154	637,455	-2%	624,706
Boston	589,141	599,351	2%	611,338
Philadelphia	1,517,550	1,449,634	-4%	1,391,649
Chicago	2,896,016	2,836,658	-2%	2,779,925
Washington D.C.	572,059	588,292	3%	605,941
New York City	8,008,278	8,274,527	3%	8,522,763

CONCLUSION

While no one point can provide a total picture of the necessary force strength level for the Atlanta Police Department, it is apparent that the department is well below comparison cities in each analysis.

Based on the data collected for this report, the following points should be highlighted:

- Statistics show that the number of Part I crimes²⁷ is inversely related to the number of officers on the street. As the number of officers patrolling the streets increases, the number of Part I crimes decreases. Since 2003, APD increased its force strength by 351 officers. During the same time period, the violent crime rate²⁸ in Atlanta has decreased 39 percent, the overall Part I²⁹ crime rate has gone down 23 percent³⁰, and Atlanta has dropped from the third most violent city in America to sixteenth³¹.
- Atlanta's projected population growth (25 percent) is well above all other comparison cities.
- Atlanta's force strength (13 officers per square mile) is the weakest among the 10 cities, is well below the next weakest (21), and significantly below the average (46).
- Of the 10 cities reviewed, the six cities that have less than the average number of officers per square mile (which includes Atlanta) are also ranked among the 16 most dangerous cities in the U.S.
- With the exception of one city (Los Angeles, which is in the process of hiring 1,000 additional officers), Atlanta has the lowest number of officers per 100,000 residents (332), and is well below the average (423).
- Of the six cities that have less than the average number of officers per 100,000 residents, four consistently appear in the top 16 most dangerous cities.
- With its current population, Atlanta currently needs at least 2,000 officers to approach the average officers per square mile and officers per 100,000 residents.
- Based on future population projections, Atlanta would need to reach 2,750 officers by 2014 (assuming the projected population of 648,941). If APD were to reach this goal, it would boast:
 - Approximately 21 officers per square mile;
 - Approximately 424 officers per 100,000 residents; and
 - The potential to increase safety in Atlanta, and to be ranked among the safest major cities in the U.S. (Outside of the 50 most dangerous cities).

Thus, it is imperative that city and community leaders take immediate action to correct the deficiencies in Atlanta's police staffing. It is time to place priority on the safety of Atlanta's citizens, businesses and visitors in an effort to move the city forward.

²⁷ Part I crimes include homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary and motor vehicle theft.

²⁸ Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Crime Rate = violent crimes per 100,000 population

²⁹ Part I crimes include homicide, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary theft from motor vehicle, and motor vehicle theft. Rate = violent crimes per 100,000 population

³⁰ http://www.fbi.gov/filelink.html?file=/ucr/cius_01/xl/01tbl08.xls

³¹ "2008 City Crime Rankings". Congressional Quarterly Press.

http://os.cqpress.com/citycrime/CityCrime2008_Rank_Rev.pdf retrieved 12/7/08

RECOMMENDED PLAN OF ACTION

In order to reverse these trends and improve Atlanta's standing as a safe city that invites business and visitors, we make the following recommendations:

1. **Continue efforts to find a solution to end the hiring freeze and furloughs for APD immediately, and commit to reaching full staffing levels (1784) by June 30, 2009.** In order to improve APD morale, stem attrition, and expeditiously restore police staffing to 2008 levels, rebuilding must begin today. The department must begin to rebuild its ranks with the commitment the City will provide sustained support.
2. **Recommit to the goal of 2,000 police officers by 2010 (end of calendar year).** This effort will take a detailed plan and continuous focus on hiring and retaining the best and brightest APD officers to serve the citizens of Atlanta.
3. **Increase Atlanta's force strength to a minimum of 2,500 officers by 2014.** This number of officers would simply bring Atlanta up to an acceptable range as compared to the major cities reviewed in this report, and would provide Atlanta the opportunity to reach its potential as a city that stands outside of the Top 50 Most Dangerous Cities in the U.S. While the target of 2,500 officers in five years could be open to significant differences in approach, this report clearly provides a warning that more police officers will be needed.

If Atlanta is able to reach the goal of 2,500 officers by 2014 (assuming the projected population of 648,941), APD would boast:

- Approximately 19 officers per square mile;
- Approximately 385 officer per 100,000 residents; and
- The potential to increase safety in Atlanta, and to be ranked among some of the safest major cities in the U.S. (outside of the 50 most dangerous cities).

Reaching the goal of 2,500 officers by 2014 will require a sustained, tiered effort over the next six years. An example of a set of hiring milestones to reach this goal may look something like the following:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Suggested Authorized Strength</u>	<u>Increase from previous year</u>
2009	1784	
2010	2000	216
2011	2150	150
2012	2300	150
2013	2400	100
2014	2500	100

- 4. City leaders should formally commit to the recruiting goal of 2,500 officers by 2014, and commit to funding appropriate staffing levels in the long term.** City of Atlanta leaders should make a formalized commitment through a City Council Resolution to develop and implement a plan to reach 2,500 APD officers by 2014. Just as importantly, City leaders should publicly reject the notion of reducing APD staffing levels as a means to accommodate future budget deficits. This formalized commitment would confirm Atlanta's dedication to creating a safe city through a best-in-class police department. **APF will commit the support necessary to reach APD recruiting and hiring goals through its Recruitment Program.**

The city of Atlanta, its residents, business owners, and visitors deserve a place where adequate police protection and visibility ensures their safety every day. The APF, its donors, and supporters, have a proven record of successfully providing financial and strategic assistance to APD in reaching unprecedented recruiting and hiring goals given a city budget that can sustain the force strength. In 2006, APF kicked off their Recruitment Program, which pooled resources from Atlanta's business community and provided assistance to APD to strengthen and increase police recruiting. Through the APF Recruitment Program, APD repeatedly met or exceeded recruiting goals, and implemented recruiting tools that will enable them to compete with other law enforcement agencies for the best talent. The program proved to be an enormous success, increasing recruitment by 82 percent between 2005 (before the inception of the program) and 2007. APF and its donors once again stand ready to assist in reaching the goal of at least 2,000 officers by 2010 and 2,500 officers by 2014.

ABOUT THE ATLANTA POLICE FOUNDATION

The Atlanta Police Foundation, established in 2003, brings together the public and private sectors in the shared goal of making the city a safer place to live, work and play. The Foundation, a 501(c) 3, provides a vehicle for individuals, communities, and businesses to engage, and contribute donations and resources to, the Atlanta Police Department – with the ultimate goal of preventing and reducing crime. The Foundation's programs address the need for more police visibility and enhanced training and include Crime Stoppers Atlanta, recruitment, scholarships, training, housing, Operation Shield, and the mounted patrol.