



Citizens Ad Hoc Committee to Study Public Safety Services

Report of Findings

March 10, 2008

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I. Introduction

In January of 2007, the Carson City Board of Supervisors adopted the following goal:

Establish a citizen committee to discuss and review current public safety related operations and develop recommendations for ensuring quality public safety services can be provided in the future within the City's current and/or future revenue structure.

The Carson City Sheriff, Fire Chief and City Manager invited 34 citizens to participate. Of those, 14 agreed to attend meetings over a 6 month period of time and participate in a review of public safety operations and provide feedback as to service levels and efficiencies of operations. Titled "Citizens Ad Hoc Committee to Study Public Safety Services", committee meetings began in October, with two meetings scheduled per month. The Committee heard presentations from the Fire Chief and Sheriff regarding public safety services, service delivery methods, staffing considerations, training, volunteer services and equipment requirements. After examining the information provided and discussing the current state of public safety services in Carson City, the Committee is pleased to provide this report to the Carson City Board of Supervisors through the Carson City Manager.

The Committee was also provided a presentation detailing the ways in which public safety services were funded and was made aware of the limitations local governments have in raising revenue to enhance these services. The Committee recognizes the limitations the Board of Supervisors faces with regard to additional funding. It is understood that any enhanced or improved level of service over and above the current state may require the voters of Carson City to agree to pay for such services through a voter approved tax override. The method by which such a voter initiative is introduced and presented should be a strategic consideration of the Board of Supervisors and should include a broader view of City services and the funding needed to maintain such services.

This report reviews the current service levels offered to Carson City residents and visitors and provides findings as to their adequacy, efficiency in delivery, and future challenges. Any conclusions made by the Committee in terms of findings are specifically listed along with an estimated fiscal impact. The Committee has also provided their observations regarding funding options and how they may be pursued in the future.

II. Committee Membership

Ernie Adler

Former State Senator, Capital District

Tom Baker

Former USFS Legislative Liaison

Former rural representative for Senator Richard Bryan

Mary Burgoon

Immediate Past President, Carson City Republican Women's Club

Bob Crowell

Former President, Carson City Chamber of Commerce

President, Rotary Club of Carson City

Donna Curtis

Chairperson

Carson City Parks and Recreation Commission

Ronni Hannaman

Executive Director

Carson City Chamber of Commerce

Bruce Kanoff

Former Tahoe Douglas Fire District Fire Chief

Former Douglas County Commissioner

Anne Keast, PhD

Former Director

Western Nevada College Center for Excellence

Glen Martel, P. E.

Immediate Past President, Builders Association of Western Nevada

Bonnie Parnell

Assemblywoman, District 40

Don Quilici, Sr.

Outdoor Editor, Nevada Appeal

Mike Torvinen

Chief Financial Officer

Nevada Department of Health and Human Services

Ed Smith

Natural Resource Specialist

UNR Cooperative Extension

III. Findings of the Committee

A. The Carson City Fire Department

1. Current State

a. Workload

The Carson City Fire Department is a full-service municipal fire department that provides Fire Suppression, Fire Prevention, Emergency Medical, Emergency Management, and Training / Safety Services to the residents of Carson City. Emergency calls for service to the Department have risen by 26% over the past 6 years. Of these calls, an average of 85% were for emergency medical services. Table 1 details the growth in calls for fire and emergency medical services over time. Over this same

Table 1		Carson City Fire Department Calls for Service				
Calls for Service	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Fire	875	830	1,081	1,038	1,104	1,177
% Change		-5%	+30%	-4%	+6%	+7%
Medical	5,298	5,347	5,584	6,048	6,376	6,604
% Change		1%	+4%	+8%	+5%	+4%
Total	6,173	6,177	6,665	7,086	7,480	7,781
% Change		0%	+8%	+6%	+6%	+4%

time period, the number of engine companies and ambulances to respond to these calls have not grown. (See Table 2) This increase in calls without an accompanying

Table 2		Response Resources				
Response Resources	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Engine Companies	3	3	3	3	3	
% Change	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Ambulances	3	3	3	3	3	
% Change	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

Increase in response resources has placed a greater importance on current mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties. The population and commercial growth in those neighboring counties, resources in the region are becoming stretched. In 2003, neighboring counties were called to assist to a much lesser degree. That calendar year, other counties responded 116 times to emergency calls in Carson City. In comparison, in 2007, 246 emergency calls were responded to by non-Carson City personnel. That represents a 112% increase in 3 years. Carson City Fire Department management personnel respond when necessary, and in some cases, all resources are completely depleted and emergency medical calls are prioritized and callers for emergency medical services asked to wait.

The National Fire Protection Association collects data from around the nation and provides benchmarks for emergency response agencies. Table 3 sets forth those benchmarks and compares them with the current state in Carson City.

Table 3 National Fire Protection Association Benchmarks			
	Current Carson City	NFPA Benchmark for Current Call Volume	Additional Units Needed
Advanced Life Support Ambulances	3	4.3	1.3
Engine Companies	3	5	2
Stations	3	5	2

b. Ambulance

Many residents have raised the issues of privatization of ambulance services in Carson City. Many municipal fire departments do not operate an ambulance service. Within the region, REMSA is a non-profit corporation that provides ambulance services for the entities within Washoe County. While this relieves the local governments of the responsibility to provide ambulance transport services, it does not relieve the local governments from providing first responder services. Current protocol requires that emergency response agencies respond to emergency 911 calls. They are charged with stabilizing the patient until an ambulance arrives to transport the patient to an appropriate medical facility. And for this transport service, the patient, and his/her insurance carrier may be billed. The Carson City Fire Department bills \$5.5 million annually for ambulance transport services. Of that amount, roughly one-half, or \$2.4 million is collected. Accounts receivable write-offs for Medicare billings, Medicaid billings, and bad debt are the reason for the lower collection rate. The funds that are collected are used to help offset overhead expenses related to the Fire Department. It is

clear that privatizing the ambulance portion of Fire Department operations would result in a negative fiscal impact.

Another area looked at for privatization is medical transport services. These non-emergency services are currently provided by the Carson City Fire Department on a non-emergency basis. We have seen the number of long term care and other health facilities increase in Carson City, so too have the number of transports between these facilities. However, these transports are a good revenue source to the ambulance service. The staffing to cover them can be scheduled and planned since they are not considered an emergency and therefore, not time sensitive. There are companies that provide this service, but losing this part of the service would negatively impact the revenue stream that is used to support emergency ambulance services.

c. Staffing

Carson City’s Fire Department is the busiest Department in the region in terms of number of calls as compared to staffing. Table 4 compares the number of calls responded to per firefighter/ paramedic (line staff) and line staff per capita for the various Fire Departments in the region, along with the national average.

Table 4 Regional Call Data and Ratio Comparisons			
	Daily Minimum Staffing	Calls per Line staff	Line staff Per Capita
Carson City Fire Dept.	15	124.21	1.01
Reno Fire Department*	96	94.58	1.09
Sparks Fire Department*	29	81.11	1.60
East Fork Fire District	16	78.95	1.34
Tahoe-Douglas Fire District.	16	44.44	6.00
Incline Village Fire Dept.	14	36.79	4.28
National Average			1.30

** Do not operate an Ambulance Service*

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) has mandated that any response to structure fires include at least 4 firefighters. This provides enough staffing for two firefighters to enter a structure and two fire fighters to provide support outside of the structure in such instances. For this reason, there are minimum manning standards that must be applied. For every engine company, three staff persons are assigned per shift. Because this number falls short of OSHA regulations, an ambulance is always

three (3) engines are dispatched in order to provide nine (9) firefighters to fight the fire. This completely depletes all fire fighting resources. Should a second structure fire occur, or other emergency situation, the Carson City Fire Department must hope for resources from other firefighting agencies in the region. Wild land fires also require staffing beyond one engine company. Wild land fires can start small and quickly grow into catastrophic events. For this reason, quick and adequate response is essential. In recent years, resources provided by federal agencies have been reduced which has put additional pressure on Carson City resources. Table 5 demonstrates the decline in available

Table 5		Federal Firefighting Resources		
Federal Resource	1998	2003	2007	
Engines	18	18	14	
Water Tenders / Dozers	4	3	3	
Air Support (Helicopters / Tankers)	4	3	2	

federal resources in this region.

Nevada Administrative Code requires minimum staffing of two (2) paramedics on each ambulance. Currently, six (6) people are assigned to

cover the 24 hour shift for the ambulance. Allowances for sick leave, annual leave, and work related injuries must also be made when determining an adequate staffing level. For this reason, additional staffing is provided in order to cover minimum manning requirements in both the engine companies and ambulances. This additional staffing is not always enough and overtime hours are often required.

d. Overtime

Overtime is often used to cover shifts when manning falls below minimums or when emergency incidents call for additional resources. The table below lists the overtime pay liability over the last 5 years. It's important to note that emergency operations staffing was increased by 14% or eight (8) firefighter / paramedics in 2005 in order to reduce the overtime liability.

Table 6		Overtime History				
Calls for Service	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	
Emergency Overtime	\$346,103	\$339,819	\$148,015	\$ 98,853	\$156,802	
Minimum Manning OT	\$249,715	\$245,862	\$ 88,166	\$ 75,946	\$ 99,888	
Total Overtime	\$595,818	\$585,681	\$236,181	\$174,799	\$256,690	
Line Staffing	49	49	57	57	57	
Overtime per Responder	\$12,160	\$11,953	\$4,144	\$3,066	\$4,503	

The addition of staff in 2005 not only saved money but reduced the number of hours emergency responders were routinely working, thus, providing for a more rested responder force. It is also important to note that some of the overtime accumulated each year is due to mutual aid to other regions. In 2007, Carson City firefighters responded to fires in Southern California and to the Angora Fire at South Lake Tahoe. Carson City is reimbursed the full cost of the overtime, plus costs associated with equipment usage for these fires.

Comparing overtime in the Carson City Fire Department with other agencies in the region, Carson City has done a good job of controlling overtime. Table 7 provides a comparison of overtime liability as a percent of total budget for 5 Fire Departments in the region, including Carson City.

	Operations Staffing	Overtime as a Percentage of Budget		
		07/08 Total Budget	07/08 Overtime Budget	% of Budget
Carson City Fire Dept.	57	\$10,889,816	\$ 230,695	2.12%
Sparks Fire Department*	90	\$16,170,830	\$1,200,000	7.42%
East Fork Fire District	49	\$12,000,000	\$ 524,252	4.37%
Tahoe-Douglas Fire Dist	51	\$10,000,000	\$ 631,000	6.31%
No Lake Tahoe Fire Dist.	45	\$14,690,126	\$ 485,850	3.31%

**The Sparks Fire Department does not operate an ambulance.*

The effective management of overtime has also reduced the stress of excessive overtime on the individual emergency responder. Table 8 provides a comparison of average overtime paid per operations staff person in Fire Departments in the region.

	Operations Staffing	Regional Comparisons of Overtime paid per staff	
		06/07 Overtime Paid*	Average Overtime paid Per Operations Staff
Carson City Fire Dept.*	57	\$ 327,144	\$ 5,739
Sparks Fire Department**	90	\$1,262,451	\$ 14,027
East Fork Fire District	49	\$ 562,667	\$ 11,483
Tahoe-Douglas Fire District.	51	\$ 571,000	\$ 11,196
North Lake Tahoe Fire Dist.	45	\$ 671,875	\$ 14,930

**Includes all overtime—operations + training + fire investigation..*

***The Sparks Fire Department does not operate an ambulance.*

e. Emergency Preparedness

The Carson City Fire Department also provides emergency preparedness services to the residents of Carson City. These programs include wild land fuels reduction activities, organization and training of Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and disaster response training. In the past, a position was funded by a grant to provide many of these services. That grants expired and ultimately, the position was not funded to continue. As a result, additional CERT classes have not been offered. The CERT volunteers are an essential resource in times of emergency. They effectively expand the City's emergency response personnel by providing trained volunteers to compliment line staff as needed. An example of the effective use of the CERT group was the organization of a shelter for victims of the Angora Fire. This group of citizens were able to completely organize the shelter, which included staffing and supplies, in only 3 hours. Without the availability of CERT, paid fire personnel would have been needed to perform this work.

New training requirements associated with disaster mitigation and response have been mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). If all of the minimum training of City personnel does not occur and a declared emergency takes place, Carson City will not qualify for disaster mitigation funds. Carson City has suffered 3 declared emergencies in the past 4 years—the Waterfall Fire (2004), the New Years flood of 2005/2006, and the snow event of 2006. With all three of these declared emergencies, the City was able to obtain mitigation funds from FEMA. These funds were used to reimburse the expense associated with the resources used during the emergency and to make physical improvements designed to limit damage in a future event. With today's mandates, if the minimum training is not provided to City personnel, reimbursements will be not be available. This could have a severe fiscal impact upon the City. This increase in mandated training requirements along with the reduction of one staff person to coordinate these activities will challenge the Department to successfully meet this mandate in the future.

f. Emergency Response Equipment

Emergency response equipment is essential to the operation of the Fire Department. Once a piece of equipment passes its useful life, repair and maintenance costs increase and the dependability of the equipment falls short of what is acceptable for emergency response apparatus. A total of \$ 2,898,000 worth of equipment will require replacement within the next 5 years. Currently, there is no dedicated funding source for public safety related equipment. Funding for Capital Equipment in the General Fund comes from prior year's budgeted expense savings or from revenues received in excess of those budgeted. The table on the next page lists the essential emergency response apparatus, where the equipment is stationed, its age, its useful life, replacement cost, and replacement schedule. Carson City has done a good job keeping equipment

replaced. Recent budgetary restraints have put negative pressure on this trend and some equipment is being kept past its useful life. In terms of ambulances, replacement of the equipment has become problematic as a result of the revenue trends seen in the ambulance service, i.e., lower Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates. With less cash flow into the Ambulance Fund, the availability of working capital to purchase equipment has become strained.

Table 9		Emergency Response Apparatus			
Apparatus	Station Assignment	Year	Useful Life	Replacement Cost*	Replacement Schedule
Aerial Ladder	Station 1	1986	20	\$899,000	2006 (Not replaced)
Structure Engine	Station 3	1993	20	\$405,000	2013
Structure Engine	Station 2	1995	20	\$405,000	2015
Structure Engine	Station 1	1998	20	\$405,000	2018
Structure Engine	Station 3	2002	20	\$405,000	2022
Structure Engine	Station 2	2007	20	\$405,000	2027
Structure Engine	Station 1	2007	20	\$405,000	2027
Ambulance	Station 2	2000	3	\$180,000	2003
Ambulance	Station 3	2000	3	\$180,000	2003
Ambulance	Station 1	2002	3	\$180,000	2005
Ambulance	Station 1	2002	3	\$180,000	2005
Ambulance	Station 2	2002	3	\$180,000	2005
Ambulance	Station 2	2005	3	\$180,000	2008
Brush Engine	Station 2	2001	20	\$289,000	2021
Brush Engine	Station 1	2002	20	\$289,000	2022
Brush Engine	Station 3	2003	20	\$289,000	2023

*Amounts listed reflect 2008 costs.

2. Findings

a. Workload

Based upon call volume, and population, the resources of the Carson City Fire Department are being severely stressed and the situation of dependency on mutual aid for many responses can not continue. Additional resources are needed in order to provide adequate public safety services to residents and visitors. While this Committee has not defined a response time component in this report, our focus has been on ensuring that emergency response personnel are available to adequately handle call volumes.

b. Ambulance

An additional 24 hour ambulance unit is needed to cover emergency medical calls. In addition to this, a 40 hour per week ambulance unit is needed in order to divert medical transport calls away from emergency response ambulance units. Medical transports provide an important funding source for the Ambulance, thus, they should be maintained and supported. Those additions would require the addition of 6 paramedics for the 24 hour ambulance service and 2 for the 40 hour ambulance service. The 2001 Sheriff Services and Fire Protection Master Plan commissioned by the Board of Supervisors noted that an additional ambulance was needed at that time in order to provide adequate staffing for transports.

c. Staffing

In order to meet National Fire Protection Association benchmarks for engine company staffing, an additional 2 engines are required just to meet the population as determined by the number of residents in Carson City. Add visitors and the estimated 7,000 workers that commute into Carson City for their jobs, and it is clear additional firefighting resources are needed. Because the Carson City Fire Department has done an exceptional job of establishing sound mutual aid agreements with other fire departments in the region, only one engine company should be added at this time. This would require the addition of 9 firefighters to provide 24 hour coverage. Once again, the 2001 Sheriff Services and Fire Protection Master Plan noted that additional staffing was needed in order to adequately staff structure fires. Additionally, in order to adequately provide the northwest quadrant of the City with fire suppression and emergency medical response resources, an additional fire station should be built in that part of the City.

The Sierra Forest Fire Protection District is a fire protection district funded by Carson City property taxes and sales taxes, but managed by the Nevada Division of Forestry. This District is only responsible for wild land fire response. The Carson City Fire Department provides emergency response services, including structure fire response, to all

properties within the District. Having two separate fire protection agencies working within the same boundaries may not be efficient. In recent years, Washoe County has assumed this function in place of a similar fire protection district and Douglas County is planning on doing the same. Carson City should evaluate assuming the Sierra Forest Fire Protection District, its operation and its funding. The need for additional staffing for wild land fires during the high fire season was also noted in the 2001 Sheriff Services and Fire Protection Master Plan

d. Overtime

The Carson City Fire Department does a very good job controlling overtime costs. No additional manpower is necessary to offset current overtime liability.

e. Emergency Preparedness

Preparing residents for emergencies is one of the most important services provided by a City. In times of disaster, having a well educated citizenry that understands the importance of being ready and knowing how to respond to certain incidents can make life or death differences. The Citizen Emergency Response Team program teaches residents not only what they can do for themselves in an emergency, but it provides a ready and trained pool of volunteers that can quickly be called into action to assist others in needs. It is unfortunate that funding for the position that coordinated this particular activity was not continued. Added to the CERT teams, having personnel available to oversee the wild land fuels reduction programs, and having someone that can insure that Carson City satisfy all of the training requirements associated with disaster mitigation as mandated by FEMA is essential. The importance of education of citizens was also noted in the 2001 Sheriffs Services and Fire Protection Master Plan. A Community Education Coordinator should be added back into the Fire Departments staff.

f. Emergency Response Equipment

Readiness in any Fire Department can be dependent upon having proper functioning equipment on hand. Although Carson City has done its best to keep up with the recommended replacement schedule for public safety equipment, it must be noted that a dedicated funding source for such equipment does not currently exist. In order to ensure that this equipment can be replaced as needed, funds should be set aside each year for such purposes. A full or partial “funded depreciation” program should be developed and funds set aside according to the depreciation schedules. In that way, accumulated cash could be used to make such purchases rather than using debt financing. With debt financing, a repayment source may not be available at the time of the needed replacement, thus potentially delaying the replacement of critical equipment.

3. Estimated Fiscal Impact

Table 10		Fiscal Impact—Fire Department Findings
Finding	Description	Estimated Annual Cost
Ambulance	24 Hour Ambulance	\$740,000
Ambulance	40 Hr/Week Ambulance	\$250,000
Fire Protection	1 Engine Company	\$980,000
Emergency Preparedness	1 Community Education Coordinator	\$71,000
Total		\$2,041,000

The above table includes only annual operating costs. In terms of capital costs, each ambulance added would cost \$180,000 for a total of \$360,000, the Structure Engine and Brush Truck would cost \$705,000 and a new fire station is estimated to cost \$3.5 million in today's dollars.

III. Findings of the Committee

B. The Carson City Sheriff’s Office

1. Current State

The Carson City Sheriff’s Office provides law enforcement services within the City and County of Carson City, providing both Sheriff’s functions and Police functions through one agency. The services and functions of the Sheriffs Office is divided into four groups, those internal services necessary for the efficient operation of the Sheriff’s Office, those that are associated with police functions. those services required to be provided by the Sheriffs Office per Nevada Revised Statutes and other services provided, but that are not required by law.

Table 11 Services provided by the Carson City Sheriff’s Office			
Internal Functions/Services	Police Operations	Statutorily Required Services	Other Services
Business Office	Patrol	Detention	Communications / Dispatch
Career Development	Detectives	Civil Service	Substance Abuse
Volunteer Programs	CSI Lab / Vault	Coroner’s Office	
	Traffic	District Court Attendance	
	Special Enforcement	Records	
	TriNet (Grant funded)	Search and Rescue	

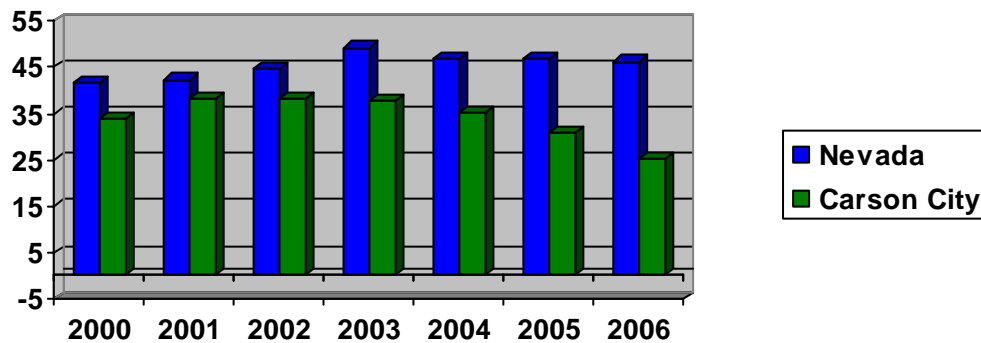
For the purposes of this report, the current state and accompanying workload data will be provided for specific divisions / functions of the Sheriffs Office.

a. Operations

The Operations Division of the Carson City Sheriff’s Office provides all police services to the residents and visitors of Carson City. It includes not only patrol and response activities, but also includes crime scene laboratory services, evidence vault

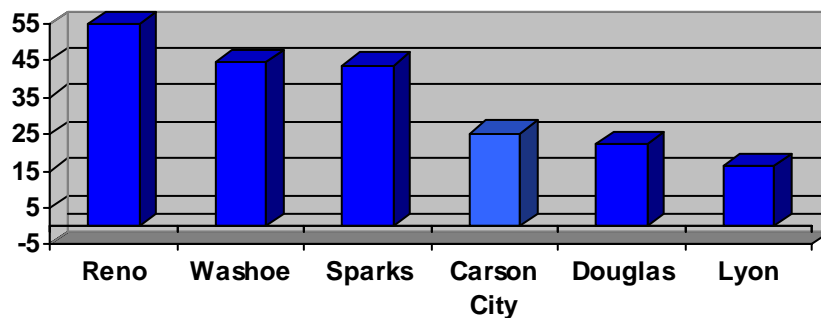
services and support services to insure accurate and timely crime reporting. Carson City is fortunate to enjoy a crime rate lower than that reported for the entire state. The Nevada Crime Rate is based on the occurrence of an “index offense” per 1,000 residents of the state. “Index offenses” include criminal homicide, assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, forcible rape, robbery, larceny theft (except vehicles) and arson. It’s interesting to note that Carson City’s crime rate has always trended below that of the State’s. Between 2004 and 2006, the State’s crime rate went down from 46.99 to 46.26. during that same time period, Carson City’s crime rate went down from 35.12 to 25.20.

Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Index



In terms of crime rates in neighboring jurisdictions, Carson City’s crime rate is 32% below the average crime rate in Western Nevada. Those entities smaller in population than Carson City reflect a lower crime rate. Those with larger populations reflect a higher crime rate.

Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Index



In terms of manpower, the number of law enforcement officers per 1,000 residents are lower in Carson City than the statewide ratio. In 2006, there were 1.98 officers per 1,000 in population statewide. In Carson City, there were 1.69 officers per 1,000 in population. It's important to note that the Carson City Sheriffs Office is unique in that it provides both Police and Sheriff functions. Other jurisdictions enjoy multiple law enforcement jurisdictions, with a City Police Department and an overlapping Sheriffs Office.

In order to provide an accurate benchmark of staffing in Carson City as compared to other jurisdictions, both Counties and Cities in the region were considered. Table 12 compares staffing levels of other counties in the region with those in Carson City. The population numbers used reflect only unincorporated areas for which law enforcement services are provided by the Sheriff's

Table 12 Sheriff Comparative Ratios			
Entity	Total Sworn	Estimated Population	Ratio (per 1,000)
Washoe County	418	106,868	3.91
Storey County	16	4,110	3.90
Churchill County	39	19,072	2.05
Douglas County	104	51,770	2.01
Carson City	95	57,701	1.69
Lyon County	77	50,774	1.51

Office in that County. In Carson City, the Sheriffs Office provides law enforcement services for the entire City, therefore, the entire population was included.

To accurately compare staffing for police functions, data from City Police Departments was collected. City Police Departments do not provide detention, civil service and other statutorily defined services offered by a Sheriffs Office. For the purposes of the comparison in Table 13, only Sheriffs Department staff directly related to Police services were included. Detention related sworn staff was not included.

Table 13 Police Comparative Ratios			
Entity	Total Sworn	Estimated Population	Ratio (per 1,000)
Fallon	19	8,299	2.31
Elko	38	18,183	2.09
Yerington	6	3,257	2.06
Mesquite	34	17,656	1.93
Reno	365	214,371	1.70
Henderson	321	251,321	1.27
Sparks	111	87,846	1.26
Carson City	67	57,701	1.16

In both instances, for Sheriffs Services and for Police Services, Carson City has among the lowest number of sworn officers per 1,000 in population. This demonstrates the efficiency of the Carson City Sheriffs Office as well as the economies experienced as a result of being a consolidated city / county government.

One of the divisions within Operations is the Traffic Division. Currently, staffing consists of five (5) dedicated full time deputies. While this staffing level is sufficient for today, recent agreements and future actions will require additional traffic enforcement staffing. An approved agreement between Carson City and the State of Nevada provides that Carson Street will be transferred to Carson City upon completion of the Carson Freeway. It is currently anticipated that the Carson Freeway will be completed in 2013. And a recently approved agreement with the Department of Transportation transferred the State controlled streets west of Carson Street to Carson City. Patrol of these streets have officially been transferred to the Carson City Sheriff's Office. It is anticipated that all non-federal highways will fall within Carson City's responsibility in terms of traffic enforcement in the future, in particular when the Carson Freeway is complete. The following two tables demonstrate the impact this transfer of ownership will have on the Carson City Sheriff's Office.

Table 14	Traffic Accident Data			
Traffic Accidents Investigated	2004	2005	2006	2007
Fatal Accidents	2	8	4	0
Injury Accidents	257	309	314	239
Property Damage only	1,112	1,028	870	890
Total Accidents	1,371	1,345	1,188	1,129
Accidents / CCSO	787	710	593	582
Accidents / NHP	584	635	595	547

Table provides accident information in Carson City between the Nevada Highway Patrol and Carson City Sheriff's Office. In terms of accidents, the workload to the Carson City Sheriff's Office will nearly double with the transfer of currently State owned roadways to Carson City.

Table 15		Traffic Citation Data		
Traffic Citations	2004	2005	2006	2007
CCSO Citations	5,680	12,010	10,288	10,081
NHP Citations	257	2,287	3,219	3,514
CCSO Stop / Warnings	2,768	2,977	2,869	3,142

In terms of citations, the Carson City Sheriff’s Office could see an increase in workload by 1/3 with the addition of State streets. Before the transfer of these roadways and responsibilities, it will be important to recognize these workload factors and respond accordingly.

The Special Enforcement Team provides proactive focus on particular law enforcement issues in the the City. The Team is able to respond and react to anonymous calls to the Sheriffs office, calls to the Meth Hot-Line and other information. Table 16 shows the number of reports and investigations resulting from reports of drug use or development of sources of information from within the community between July 1 and December 31, 2007. The “Miscellaneous” category includes the number of reports gathered through the work of the team in searching out criminal activity through the use of informants, deputies and citizen reports of criminal activity. The Street Enforcement Team was recently staffed with two dedicated officers through approval of two additional law enforcement officers as part of the Fiscal Year 2007/08 Budget for Carson City. Other officers are used to supplement the Special Enforcement Team where possible. These activities have provided good results during this first year of operations with 32 felony arrests and 15 misdemeanor arrests since July, 2007. Much more could be done to seek out and deter criminal activity before it occurs if additional officers were added to the Team.

Table 16 SET Team Activity	
Trafficking	12
Drugs	26
Information	15
Warrants	13
Miscellaneous	44

Gang activity has become a concern to Carson City residents. Table 17 provides gang related call data between Calendar Year 2003 to Calendar Year 2007.

Table 17		Calls for Police Services related to Gang Activity				
Calls for Service	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Graffiti	210	142	257	543	779	
Shots Fired	33	43	34	34	28	
Fights	316	351	353	326	359	
Gang Field Interviews	131	126	124	204	272	
Homicides	1	2	2	2	0	
Attempted Homicides	3	3	6	3	6	

Many non-profit and private groups have formed to come to the assistance of law enforcement to address gangs. However, these efforts are preventative in nature. And while prevention is critical, the active enforcement of laws in the face of activities undertaken by gangs, including gang drug related activities, has become just as important, if not more so. Currently, a formal “gang” unit is not in place. Activities of gangs must be handled by “beat” deputies. Training to recognize gang members and activities is provided to these deputies,

Gang Activity	Reports	Arrests	Cited
2005 Total Activity = 871	756	115	0
2006 Total Activity = 598	371	207	20
2007 Total Activity = 828	326	327	105

but not in as intense a manner as is desired. Aggressive enforcement by officers twenty four hours a day and seven day a week is needed to control gang activity.

The investigation of crime can not take place without crime scene laboratory and evidence vault services. Evidence must be carefully collected and evaluated by a crime scene laboratory. Any collected evidence must be carefully secured for use by prosecutors. Currently, 2 staff are assigned to the laboratory. This staffing level is adequate. Crime scenes and evidence gathering activities associated with certain crimes, such as homicides, are contracted out to Washoe County when specific evidence analysis capabilities are not available within the Carson City crime scene laboratory. By providing a regional resource for this expertise, all police departments in the region can afford to have a more advanced crime scene laboratory than they would otherwise be able to afford individually. Any property collected as evidence is held by the Property Vault. The Property Vault accounts for all lost / found, seized and safeguarded property. This function is the most critical function in public safety and is required to have the most stringent controlled access and control.

The Property Vault is currently staffed by only one (1) position. This staffing level does not allow for vacation / sick time of this one position. Other positions are called into service when required to cover the Property Vault, however, they do not have the training needed to insure the security and integrity of items tracked and secured in the Property Vault. To date, the Sheriff’s Office has relied on citizen volunteers trained in vault operations to cover periods of employee entitled time off.

With every call for service, a report by the responding officer is generated. Officers complete their reports daily and submit them to a Supervisor for review and approval. If all information is not included in the report, the report is sent back to the Deputy for correction. Once approved by the Supervisor, the report is submitted to the Civil / Records Division where it is made on “official record”. The Courts, District Attorney and private attorney’s are unable to take any action on any incident until an “official” report is produced. Current staffing does not provide for any services being provided by the

Civil / Records Division on the weekends. This means that defendant's can be placed in jail on a weekend day, but the official report is not made available until the following Monday. This in effect, slows the system of justice.

Crime reporting today provides for the gathering of data specific to crimes. And the reporting of such data can be undertaken in such a way as to allow tracking of trends, patterns and common themes. An analysis of this information could provide important information to law enforcement, public officials and community service officials and could improve decisions as to where resources are directed, which could lead to prevention of crime. Yet, there is no staffing in the Sheriff's Office available to provide this service.

The Carson City Sheriff operates a School Resource Officer Program. Through this program, one sworn deputy is assigned to the Carson City School District. This officer's primary focus is Carson High School, where 2,500 students attend school. The School Resource Officer Program not only provides direct law enforcement services to our schools, it also gives students an opportunity to get to know a Sheriff's Deputy. This can help to develop positive relationships between our future residents and our law enforcement officials. It's important to note that there are two (2) middle schools in Carson City with 2,000 students. With only one officer in the School Resource Officer Program, there is very little opportunity to focus on the middle schools, yet, the children in middle school are at the primary age for entering gangs, using alcohol and experimenting with drugs, and experiencing violence beyond traditional "bullying".

b. Detention

The Carson City Sheriff is required by law to operate a detention facility. The Carson City Jail has the capacity to hold 228 prisoners (194 male, 34 female).

Table 19 shows that while jail population has been constant over the past 3 years, the number of inmate incidents have risen by 51%. This surprising lack of increase in jail population can be attributed to the

Table 19	Jail Data			
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Average Population	138	153	154	151
Inmate Incidents	693	586	734	885

work of the Courts and the Alternative Sentencing Department. By having what works as a "County Parole and Probation Office", persons that may otherwise be prisoners in the Carson City Jail are permitted to stay out of jail, stay employed, agree to be monitored and understand that they are subject to visits by the Department of Alternative Sentencing. If any of the terms of the would-be prisoner's release are violated, the person is placed back in the Carson City Jail. Those prisoners that are of little threat to the community and are willing to follow a complete set of rules are given an opportunity to

not be detained in jail. Those prisoners that pose some threat or do not strictly follow release rules are required to serve their time in jail. Its no surprise then that there has been such an increase in inmate incidents. Adequate control in the Jail is essential to the safety of Jail staff, other prisoners and Carson City residents.

Manpower in the Jail is very lean by national standards. The Department of Justice provides recommended levels of staffing for detention facilities throughout the nation. Table 20 lists recommended levels of staffing for jails with prisoner populations equal to

Table 20	Jail Staffing Recommendations	
Position	Dept. of Justice Recommendations	Current Staffing
Lieutenants	1.38	1
Sergeants	7.23	6
Deputies	30.24	21

those in the Carson City Jail and compares them with current staffing levels. It is important to note that these figures include only sworn personnel and do not consider the specific design of the jail.

The Carson City Jail is made up of “pods” where various types of prisoner populations are held or segregated. In the center of these pods is a Control Room where staff controls access in and out of all pods and individual cells. The largest pod holds the male general population and has a maximum capacity of 72. Other pods provide space for special needs prisoners, prisoners that need direct supervision due to suicide threats and violent prisoners that pose a threat to other prisoners. Currently, supervision of prisoners is done “indirectly”. In other words, there is very little interaction between a deputy and the prisoners. Most supervision is accomplished through the Control Room. The Control Room controls all entry, access and monitoring of all security resources throughout the Public Safety Complex. In the event of a full evacuation of the jail, the person in the Control Room secures the Jail then exists through the roof. Therefore, even under emergency conditions, the Control Room operator never has inmate contact. Up until 2003, use of non-sworn personnel in the jail was limited. In 2004, the need for additional staffing in the Jail was recognized. In an effort to control costs, three (3) Support Specialists rather than Deputies were added to the Jail staff. With this introduction of non-sworn personnel, a more formal process of training and utilization of civilians was instituted. A policy was adopted that non-sworn employees in the jail could be used in any support manner that did not cause direct contact with an inmate. Their uses expanded to Booking and the Control Room.

Current basic shift staffing for the Carson City Jail provides for one (1) Sergeant, three (3) Deputies and one (1) Support Specialist (non sworn). On a typical shift, one (1) Sergeant will be on site to supervise one (1) Deputy in Booking, one (1) Deputy in the Control Room, one (1) Deputy assigned to “rove” or “patrol” the pods and one (1) Support Specialist to assist in Booking or the Control Room. Today, six (6) Sergeants,

twenty one (21) Deputies and six (6) Support Specialists are included in the Sheriffs budget. Added to that, one (1) Lieutenant supervises all aspects of jail operations. Table 21 shows staffing levels for the Jail over the past 5 years. Staffing in the jail has increased by a total of six (6) positions over that past 5 years— four (4) Deputies and two (2) Support Specialists.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Sworn	24	26	26	26	28
Non-sworn	4	7	7	7	6
Total	28	33	33	33	34

Several factors have impacted jail operations over the past 5 years. A significant challenge has been in meeting the demands of an expanding court system. Within the last 5 years, two courts have been added — the Drug Court and Mental Health Court each require a deputy to attend. Added to an increasing case load, the Sheriff’s mandate to support the courts has impacted staffing in the jail. Table 22 provides the weekly staffing needed to cover the current court calendar.

Court Staffing	Video	Justice Court I	Justice Court II	District Court I	District Court II	Drug Court	Mental Health Court	Total Hours
Monday	2	3.5	3.5	3		3		15
Tuesday	2	3.5	3.5		3			12
Wednesday	2	3.5	3.5				3	11
Thursday	2	3.5	3.5					9
Friday	2	3.5	3.5					9
Total Hours	10	17.5	17.5	3	3	3	2	56

In order to cover the courts, staffing to cover 56 hours per week are needed. Based upon the current staffing formula that takes into account vacation and sick leave allowances, that equates to two (2) full time positions. Today, staffing for courts comes from the basic staffing of the jail. This means that the Deputies assigned to the Control Room, Rove or Booking are called upon to attend court rather than man their post.

The responsibility of care and custody of inmates includes seeing to their medical needs. Currently, a doctor and/or nurse visits the jail 5 days per week and provides basic medical care. However, in some cases, an inmate must be transferred to an outside medical facility. In the case of a hospital stay, an officer is required to stay with the inmate the entire time he or she is in the hospital. This time can vary from hours to days. It would require three (3) officers to cover each 24 hour period of a hospital stay. Reserve Officers are used wherever possible for situations such as these. Dental needs also must be

provided away from the jail. Over the past 5 years, 657 prisoners required transport to an outside medical facility. That equates to an average 131 transports per year, or 2.5 per week. Anytime a transport is required, a Deputy is taken away from the jail facility and away from his/her post. Other transports to and from the Carson City Jail for non-medical reasons also impacts staffing. There are an average 20.33 transports of prisoners each month. Reserve officers are used wherever possible in order to maintain adequate staffing levels in the Jail. However, regardless of the method used, all transports must be carried out by a POST certified officer.

Volunteers are used extensively in the Jail, specifically to operate the Jail Visitation operation. In 2005, the Sheriff's Volunteer Organization (Volunteers in Police Service—VIPS) assumed the duties and responsibility of Jail Visitation. In doing so, regular jail staff was relieved from a 4 day per week obligation.

Table 23		Visitation Use
Days Available	4 days per week / 4 hours each day	
Booths Available	8 / 32 visits allowed per day	
Total Visits per Year	6,656	
Labor Hours per Year	832	

The ultimate responsibility of this program lies with the sworn staff at the facility, yet there is no sworn staff specifically available to manage the program, it is operated 100% by volunteers. Table 23 provides an overview of the Visitation operation.

c. Public Safety Communications

Although not required to by law, the Carson City Sheriff's Office supervises the operations of the Public Safety Communications Center (Dispatch). This operation serves not only the Sheriff's office, but the Carson City Fire Department and Carson City Public Works Department. Dispatch operations are central to all public safety operations in the city. Without an efficient and effective dispatch operation, the appropriate resources would not reach emergency situations quickly and in time to save life and property. The Center receives all 911 calls in the area and dispatches emergency response resources according to certain protocols. The Center also provides emergency medical dispatch services. These services go beyond simply sending an ambulance, but includes application of specific medical related protocols. Staffing in the Center currently consists of one (1) manager, six (6) supervisors and thirteen (13) operators. Table 24

Table 24	Public Safety Communications Staffing				
Staffing	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Manager	0	0	1	1	1
Supervisors	1	1	0	6	6
Operators	19	19	19	13	13
Total	20	20	20	20	20

These services go beyond simply sending an ambulance, but includes application of specific medical related protocols. Staffing in the Center currently consists of one (1) manager, six (6) supervisors and thirteen (13) operators. Table 24

provides an overview of staffing in the Center since 2003. Total staffing has not changed over the past 5 years, however, the positions have changed. In 2006, the Sheriff mandated that one supervisor be assigned to each shift. National Fire Protection Association Standards calls for the following, “At least one supervisor shall be on duty and available to the telecommunicator when more than two telecommunicators are on duty.” The ideal shift should include one (1) supervisor and three (3) operators, with each operator assigned to Sheriff/Police, Fire/Medical and Local Government/Call Taker respectively. National Fire Protection Association Standards suggest that any communications center that provides emergency medical dispatching have at least two operators on duty at all times. This is due to the extensive time medical calls can take as compared to law enforcement and fire response calls. Currently, staffing levels permit only two operators and one supervisor.

Table 25 provides an overview of calls for service since 2004. On average, about three quarters of all calls are calls for law enforcement services. Emergency calls are not the only types of calls re-

ceived in the Center. In 2007, a total of 196,877 calls were received in the Center, with only 15% of those calls representing calls for emergency services. Over 165,000 calls last year were non-emergency calls. That equates to an average of 459 calls per day, compared to 81 calls per day for emergency services.

Service Calls	2004	2005	2006	2007	% of Total
Sheriff	32,489	31,746	31,191	30,050	77.3%
Fire	1,006	1,017	1,123	1,113	2.9%
Medical	5,267	5,551	5,753	5,979	15.4%
Local Government	2,397	1,675	1,450	1,747	4.5%
Total Calls	41,159	39,986	39,517	38,889	

Many of these calls are from residents passing along general information, making observations or asking questions about emergency activities observed in the community.

Efficiency of operations in the Public Safety Communications Center can be measured by the “time to dispatch”, i.e., the amount of time that passes from the time the call is received until an

emergency response unit is requested to respond. Table 26 provides a history of “time to dispatch”. The time between when a

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Received to Entry	1:09	0:58	1:01	:51	:47
Entry to Dispatch	1:24	1:05	1:08	1:03	:54
Total	2:33	2:03	2:09	1:54	1:41

call is received and when an emergency response unit is asked to report has dropped by almost 1 full minute. While this doesn't appear to be a long period of time, in an emergency situation, it can mean the difference between life and death.

d. Administrative Services

Administrative Services include serving of civil papers, processing of garnishments, evictions/lockouts, processing of fingerprints for certain state required work permits, sex offender registration, concealed weapons permits, warrants and criminal records. This division of the Sheriff's Office processes almost \$2 million annually in garnishments. The amount has increased by 16% in just the past year. Of this amount, approximately 26% come from the State. As the State Capital, all garnishments of state employees are processed by the Carson City Sheriff's Office. Staffing for Administrative Services includes one (1) manager, two (2) Supervisors, six and three-quarters (6.75) Support Specialists and one and one-half (1.5) Field Support Specialist. Field Support Specialists serve all Court related documents. These two employees serve over 14,500 documents each year. With 260 working days per year, over 55 documents are being served each day. After making allowances for vacation leave and sick leave, there will be some days that many more documents will require service.

e. Administration

The Business Office is responsible for administering all grants for the Sheriffs Office. Since 2004, the annual dollar volume of grants has increased by 41%. Grants have increased in importance to the operations of public safety agencies. The Carson City Sheriff's Office aggressively seeks out grants for all types of law enforcement activities, from drug enforcement, to gang activity control to officer training. The reporting required as part of grant expenditures has become more intensive in recent years. The Federal Office of Management and Budget requires line item detail and Justification for all grants received. Additionally, Carson City is subject to Single Audit of all grants by their independent auditor due to the amount of grants received by the City each year. It's imperative that all records of grant awards and expenditures be maintained and balanced to the penny in order to avoid a "finding" through the audit process, which could put future grants at risk. Table 27 details the number and value of grants received by the Sheriffs Office since 2004.

Table 27		Grants Processed by the Business Office			
Grants	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
#	14	8	9	14	18
\$\$	\$485,787	\$263,716	\$349,078	\$334,495	\$686,700

The Business Office processes all budget expenditures originating in the Sheriffs Office. Accounts Payable and Payroll transactions are processed in the Business Office, then submitted to Finance for payment. Bail transactions in the Jail are also processed by the Business Office. Staffing in the Business Office has been reduced from 3 persons to 2 persons. The elimination of one position took place in an effort to assist with budget shortfalls projected in FY 2007.

f. Coroner

Coroner services are required by law to be provided by the Sheriff’s Office. When a death occurs in Carson City, the Coroner is called upon to make next of kin notification and handle all personal effects where necessary. The number of deaths requiring a coroner has increased by 5%

since 2003, but can vary as much as 15% each year. Currently, the Sheriffs Office includes only one (1) full time coroner. The workload requires more than this one position, which is currently provided through contracts with individuals trained and willing

Table 28		Deaths in Carson City				
Coroner Cases	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Hospice	227	185	190	173	176	
Coroner Cases	347	355	313	324	365	
Non Coroner Cases	135	145	154	226	196	
Total	709	6685	657	723	737	

to provide coroner services. For each death asked to respond to, a contract coroner will receive compensation of \$70.

g. Substance Abuse Program

Substance abuse education is a preventative activity important to the future of Carson City. It has been noted that drug use in children is being reported at very early ages. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Studies...indicate that some children are already abusing drugs at age 12 or 13, which likely means that some begin even earlier”. And the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Treatment Episode Data Set reports that more than one-third of the patients in treatment centers reported they first used alcohol prior to age 12. This group was more likely to have had 5 or more prior substance abuse treatment episodes. Based upon these observations, providing substance abuse education to children is imperative. The Sheriff’s Office currently has one half-time Substance Abuse Counselor. This position operates the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program offered to students in Carson City Schools. Other grants besides those associated with DARE are also being pursued. Table 29 on the next page tracks Drug Related Grants since 2004. In terms of grants for drug education and prevention, the amount of grant awards has sharply increased. This increase in grant funds has provided an opportunity to rapidly expand the drug education programs

Table 29	Drug Related Grants			
Grants	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Active Grants	0	1	4	5
Total Grant Award	0	\$41,485	\$72,555	\$188,718
Education / Prevention	0	\$15,000	\$33,935	\$66,769

in schools. Table 30 provides a 4 year history of drug education activities. These programs are touching the lives of more students each year. It is becoming exceedingly difficult for one half-time Drug Education Coordinator to provide this level of services.

Table 30	Drug Education Activities			
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total People Served	1,800	8,165	22,780	27,000
Student Related Contacts	300	5,500	14,483	16,707
Programs / Events	3	5	19	43

2. Findings

a. Operations

With Carson City assuming responsibility of additional State controlled streets, additional staff will be needed to handle the increased workload. An additional supervisor and two (2) deputies will be needed in order to provide adequate traffic unit coverage.

The Special Enforcement Team has proven successful in being a proactive force against crime in the community. Additional staffing should be provided in order to allow the Special Enforcement Team to operate during two complete shifts. An additional two (2) deputies are needed to accomplish this.

With the rapid increase in gang related criminal activity, a fully staffed gang unit is needed. One (1) Sergeant and five (5) Deputies are needed to create a gang unit capable of operating 3 shifts.

In order to adequately provide security for the Property Vault, an additional position is needed.

Arrests take place 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The reports regarding these reports are critical to the prosecuting attorney, the defending attorney and the Courts. An additional staff person should be added in order to include reports are converted to Official Records 7 days per week. The 2001 Sheriff Services and Fire Protection Master Plan commissioned by the Board of Supervisors noted the need for this function to be operational 7 days per week.

Data related to law enforcement reports is gathered, however, no staff is available to review and analyze that data. A Crime Analyst should be added in order to provide a dedicated resource that could develop trends, patterns and other crime forecasting tools.

Having a School Resource Officer (Deputy) working at the high school has proven successful. With current trends reflecting younger children getting involved with drugs, alcohol, and violence, an additional Officer is needed to provide service to Carson City's middle schools.

b. Detention

Staffing in the Carson City Jail should be increased in order to provide adequate coverage for Courts, medical services, inmate transports and supervision of inmates. Minimum staffing levels recently approved through a collective bargaining agreement mandate that 4 deputies be on duty at all times. In order to provide this level of coverage, six (6) Deputies are needed to provide an additional Rove / Patrol deputy to serve the Jail. The 2001 Sheriff Services and Fire Protection Master Plan also recognized that additional staffing was needed at that time to adequately provide security for the Courts. Also, with the time requirements associated with medical and non-medical transports an additional two (2) Deputies are also needed.

Visitation services are currently provided by volunteers. With 32 visitors to the jail per day, 4 days per week, a paid staff person should be added to manage this function.

c. Public Safety Communications

In order to meet national standards and the increased workload associated with emergency medical dispatch, three (3) operators should be on staff at all times. The 2001 Sheriff Services and Fire Protection Master Plan set out this level of staffing as an objective. An additional five (5) operators should be added to provide this level of staffing.

d. Administrative Services

Based on the volume of documents that are required to be served each day, the half-time Field Support Specialist should be moved to full time.

e. Administration

An Accounting Technician was given up in response to Carson City's budget challenges. At the same time, the volume of grants received by the Carson City Sheriff's Office sharply increased. The Accounting Technician should be added back in order to bring the total staffing in the Business Office to three (3).

f. Coroner

The use of Contract Coroners is working well in Carson City. It provides for flexibility in staffing and allows for funds to be expended only when deaths occur.

g. Substance Abuse Program

Drug education in our schools is extremely important to the future of Carson City. One half-time Substance Abuse Coordinator is not sufficient to provide the expanding drug education programs now available through various granting agencies. This position should be moved to full-time.

3. Estimated Fiscal Impact

Table 31		Fiscal Impact—Sheriffs Office Findings	
Finding	Description	Estimated Annual Cost	
Operations	Expand Traffic Unit 1 Supervisor, 2 Deputies	\$258,000	
Operations	Add additional shift to the Special Enforcement Team 2 Deputies	\$158,000	
Operations	Create a Gang Unit— 1 Supervisor, 5 Deputies	\$574,000	
Operations	1 Property Vault staff	\$46,000	
Operations	1 Support Specialist	\$44,000	
Operations	1 Crime Analyst	\$44,000	
Operations	1 School Resource Officer	\$79,000	
Detention	6 Rove / Patrol Deputies	\$475,000	
Detention	2 Deputies / Court	\$158,000	
Detention	2 Deputies / Transports	\$158,000	
Detention	1 Support Specialist for Visitation Program	\$46,000	
Public Safety Communications	5 Operators	\$250,000	
Administrative Services	Move half time position to full time	\$23,000	
Administration	1 Accounting Technician	\$46,000	
Substance Abuse Program	Move half time position to full time	\$43,000	
Total		\$2,402,000	

The above table includes only annual operating costs. In terms of capital costs, a total of six (6) vehicles would be needed in order to support the additional staffing. In general terms, one vehicle is needed for every two (2) patrol deputies.

III. Findings of the Committee

C. Funding Observations and Findings.

The committee reviewed and discussed possible funding options. The Nevada State Legislature has effectively removed any ability for the Board of Supervisors to levy taxes without the support and approval of our voters. Other sources of revenues besides property taxes and sales taxes were also discussed.

The Committee recognizes that Ambulance services are a current franchise within the limits of Carson City, and as such, its costs are paid through service fees. As a fee based service, the Board of Supervisors can take actions to levy these fees upon the citizens of Carson City. The establishment of a general fee on every household and business in Carson City to support the operation of the ambulance should be researched. In exchange for the fee paid, residents of Carson City could access ambulance services without being charged for them personally. Medical insurance would be billed, but any co-pay would be waived for a Carson City resident or an employee of a Carson City business.

One of the Committee's findings was to look into the transfer of the operations of the Sierra Forest Fire Protection District to the Carson City Fire Department. With this transfer of operations comes a transfer of property and sales tax funding in the amount of \$420,000 annually. It is expected that efficiencies could be gained and these funds stretched further by eliminating duplications of administration and overhead.

City staff has also studied using the formation and expansion of Fire Districts to serve the entire incorporated boundaries of Carson City. Due to the property tax cap, any move to a District would not net additional revenues. An additional tax rate levied for a District would simply transfer property tax revenues from the City's general fund to the District.

The Committee had lengthy discussion regarding funding from sales taxes and property taxes. When funding for local government was shifted from property taxes to sales taxes in 1981, the Nevada State Legislature provided the ability of local governments to levy additional property taxes in times of declining sales taxes. The various property tax formula's limiting property taxes levy's since up until 2005 provided for an increase in the available property tax rate when sales taxes were projected to decline. With the passage of the "tax caps" in 2005, this ability was removed. Therefore, when sales taxes decline, local governments have no ability to provide additional revenues to offset those losses. The result is likely to be a reduction in services.

Public Safety related services are essential to any community. It is problematic to fund these essential services through sales taxes. Reductions of public safety services

during times of economic decline is not wise nor widely accepted by the public. During tough economic times, crime rates often increase, thus, to reduce the presence of law enforcement would not be prudent. For this reason, funding for public safety services should be primarily accomplished through property taxes. If a tax override were to be pursued, it should be a property tax override rather than a sales tax override.

Based upon economic impact numbers presented in this report, and based upon the finding of this committee that enhanced revenues for the ambulance service should be fee based, the annual revenue needed from non-fee sources equals \$3,453,000. Currently, each \$0.01 of property tax rate produces \$150,000. This means that this increase in revenue would necessitate a \$0.23 property tax rate increase. Carson City has the lowest property tax rate of any “full-service” City in the region. The average tax rate of cities in the region is \$3.46, as compared to Carson City’s tax rate of \$3.03. (See Table 32)

Table 32		City Tax Rates in the Region	
County	City / Town	Combined 2006/2007 Tax Rate	
Carson City	Carson City	\$3.03	
Washoe	Sparks	\$ 3.62	
Washoe	Reno	\$ 3.65	
Douglas	Minden	\$ 3.51	
Douglas	Gardnerville	\$ 3.55	
Lyon	Yerington	\$ 3.60	
Churchill	Fallon	\$3.55	

Even with the increase in the property tax rate of \$0.23, Carson City’s tax rate would remain one of the lowest in the region. If the ambulance were funded from property tax rather than through guaranteed service fees, an addition \$0.07 would be needed.

Timing is an important consideration in terms of preparing to recruit additional staffing and in terms of fiscal impact to Carson City residents. In today’s labor market, the recruitment of trained and qualified law enforcement professionals can be difficult. Because of this, a phased approach to both the funding and implementation of increases would be a prudent consideration. If the implementation of the annual operating increases set forth in this report were to take place over a three years period, time could be provided for recruitment efforts and the impact to Carson City residents could be spread over a longer period. As an example, the voters could be asked to approve a measure

that would increase the property tax rate by \$0.09 the first year, \$0.07 the second year and \$0.07 the third year. This would generate \$1,350,000 the first year and \$1,050,000 in the second and third years.

Table 33 sets out the impact a phased approach to funding public safety would have on a owner of a house valued at \$250,000.

Table 33	Impact of Phased Tax Increase	
	Annual	Monthly
Current Property Tax	\$ 2,651	\$221
With first year increase of \$0.09	\$ 2,730	\$228
Increase	\$ 79	\$ 7
With second year increase of \$0.07	\$ 2,791	\$233
Increase	\$ 61	\$ 5
With third year increase of \$0.07	\$ 2,853	\$238
Increase	\$ 61	\$ 5
Total Increase	\$201	\$17
Property tax on a home valued at \$250,000 in the region	\$ 3,028	\$252
Difference	\$ 175	\$ 14

By phasing the increases, the monthly impact to the homeowner would be seven dollars (\$7), five dollars (\$5) and five dollars (\$5) respectively. And after all of the increases are put into place, the tax liability in Carson City would still be lower than that in any full-service city in the region for a home of similar value.

In terms of which elements of this report should be implemented first, the Committee understands that decisions of priority are properly made by the Board of Supervisors after consultation with the Sheriff and Fire Chief. This Committee has not placed any of the findings in priority order.

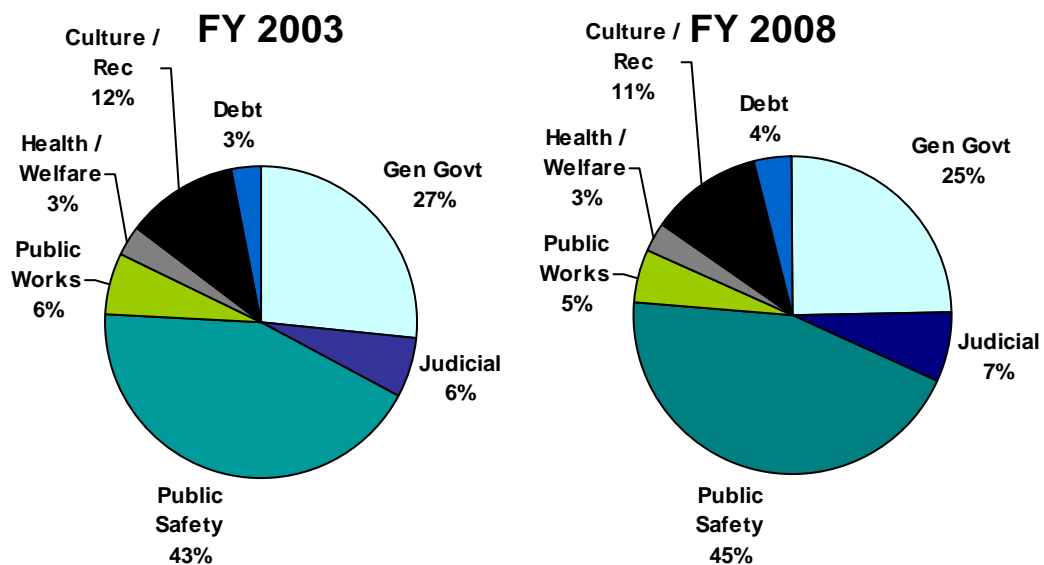
III. Findings of the Committee

D. A Balanced Approach

It is clear to this Committee that there are varied and competing demands on the City's limited resources, a situation further exaggerated by the changing and varied funding sources available to the Board of Supervisors. Providing for a safe City, ensuring that mandated and emergency services are available are necessary funding priorities for a City. Carson City must continue to provide a satisfying quality of life, safe community and friendly business environment to ensure that Nevada's capital remains vibrant and economically viable into the future.

As emphasized by the Sheriff a safe community can only be maintained through a balanced approach, not only policing activities. This balanced approach includes recreational and cultural opportunities, great libraries, updated public infrastructure and a downtown area that encourages positive activities. Specific programs such as Cops 'n Kids, DARE, Sheriffs Citizens Academy, National Night Out, Car Seat Inspections, CPR / First Aid Training, and Juvenile Fire Setter Counseling Program are critical components of the balanced approach. These preventative actions create a more positive environment and allow citizens to fully experience Carson City and create a pride of citizenship. Removing any of these individual pieces creates a need for additional negative reinforcement and would further divert law enforcement.

Historically the Board of Supervisors has done a good job of balancing the competing funding requirements. As shown below in Fiscal Year 2003, Public Safety services were



43% of the General Fund, Fiscal Year 2008 shows an increase of 2% to 45%. During the same timeframe Culture and Recreation appropriations dropped from 12% to 11% of the General Fund. In light of the recent declines in sales tax revenue and the restrictions placed on property tax by the State Legislature the budget balancing required will only get more difficult.

It is clear to this Committee that the Sheriff and Fire Departments have done an exceptional job of prioritizing, reducing and streamlining to accomplish the necessary activities within a challenging budget environment. This Committee recommends that the current level of service established and maintained by the Sheriff and Fire Department not be allowed to decline and that a balanced approach to Carson City's resources continue.