

Spring Lake Park Police Department



2023 Staffing Study

Spring Lake Park Police Department

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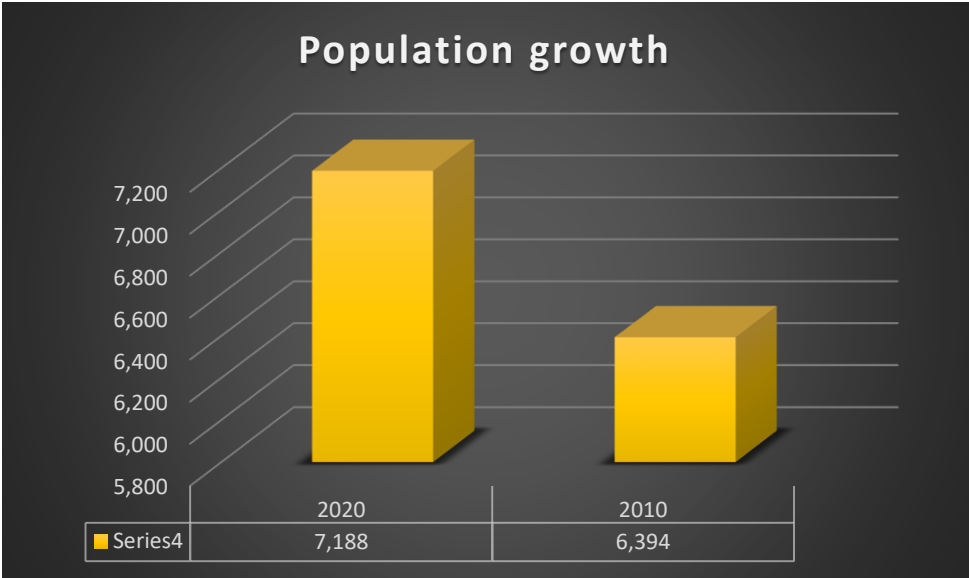
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Background

Staffing a police department is a complex, challenge. Many variables must be considered when trying to determine a department’s needs. Some of those variables include the amount of time it takes to handle a given call for service the distribution of calls, the nature of the calls, officer-initiated activities, and the expectations of the community. As the Chief of Police, it is my responsibility to look at all of these variables and ensure the Spring Lake Park City Council and our residents are aware of the Department’s staffing needs.

The following study is intended to provide the Spring Lake Park City Council with an evaluation of the Department’s staffing needs, both current and future. Although there are many ways to conduct a staffing study, there is no industry standard. This is because the process can be somewhat complicated and can include a wide variety of factors. To my knowledge, the Spring Lake Park Police Department has never completed a full staffing analysis. Given my conversation with previous Chief Dave Toth and my knowledge of the police department since 2003, we found that there has not been an addition to the current staffing level since the mid to late 1990’s when the school and city added an SRO to the staffing at the police department. Since that time, the City has grown steadily. This has resulted in ever-increasing demands on the Police Department to provide critical services to our residents and those who work, visit or travel through our city.

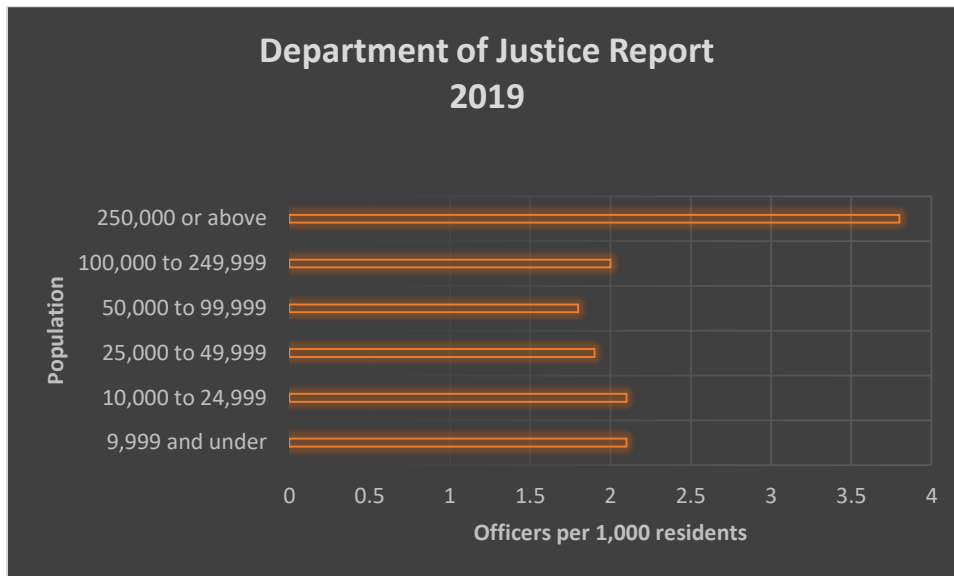
U.S. Census Bureau data 2020:



The Met Council’s estimated 2040 population for Spring Lake Park is 7,400 residents, predicting steady and stable growth over several decades in the City.

This report includes details on the staffing study we conducted, which utilizes national averages. Before your review of the staffing study, it is important to address one of the most commonly discussed methods for determining staffing levels for law enforcement agencies. This method utilizes basic formula that compares a ratio of population to the number of officers a department needs.

On a periodic basis the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) publishes a “Local Police Departments Report”. One aspect of this report is the average ratio of full-time officers per 1,000 residents. The latest BJS report from 2019 shows the following ratios for the Midwest region:



Minnesota’s average officer per 1,000 has been steady at 1.8 since 2018.

The analysis of officers per capita, as specified in the graph above, utilizes the average ratio as a way to determine how many officers are needed. According to the chart depicted above, jurisdictions that are comparable in size to Spring Lake Park have an average of about 2.1 officers per 1,000 residents. Utilizing this data only, and using 2020 US Census data population of 7,188 residents, the national per capita method indicates we should employ 15 full time sworn officers. If we utilize the Minnesota per capita average of 1.8 officers per 1,000 residents we should employ 13 full time sworn officers.

Although this is an accepted average ratio of officers recognized by BJS, I feel there are more accurate and complete comparisons for determining staffing needs. This is because there are many other factors that should be considered before determining what staffing level is required and appropriate to meet a specific community’s needs.

In respond to the BJS analysis, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) states: “Ratios, such as officers-per-thousand population, are totally inappropriate as a basis for staffing decisions. Accordingly, they have no place in the IACP methodology. Defining patrol staffing allocation and deployment requirements is a complex endeavor which requires consideration of an extensive series of factors and sizeable body of reliable, current data.”

Since a lot of people try to use the BJS model as justification for personnel, I thought it would be important to provide this information as an attempt to answer any questions that may arise about the ratio of officers-per-thousand to population.

The staffing study detailed in the remainder of this analysis is a formula that has been used and applied throughout the country and has been found to be very reliable. This formula is based on several averages. For example, the formula also considers the amount of time an officer is actually available for duty. It does this by averaging scheduled days off, holidays, vacation, sick time, etc. The formula also assumes that one third of a police officer's time should be utilized handling calls for service.

Finally, it is important to note that this formula calculates the staffing needs for officers on the street handling calls for service. It does not include administrators or specialists (such as the Investigator position). An important note on our School Resource Officer is that they do help cover the patrol schedule during the summer months from mid-June to the end of August. The majority of the year they are in the school and only assist on patrol when needed. I have included our Sergeants in this formula, but it is important to remember that our Sergeants have many administrative duties on top of assisting with calls for service. Due to their administrative duties, the study counts the two Sergeants as one full-time responding officer on patrol.

Analysis

The following formula utilized to calculate staffing needs is recognized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP):

Step 1:

Determine the number of complaints or incidents received and responded to in a year by the Spring Lake Park Police Department. Complaints include all forms of police activity when an officer responded and/or took an official action. Our formula will not include self-initiated traffic stops. Although these calls take up a portion of an officer's day as well as help to enhance the quality of life of our community, they can fluctuate throughout the year. The total calls for service generated by the Spring Lake Park Police Department during the 2022 calendar year were 8,595 calls which includes approximately 2,000 self-initiated traffic stops. These calls for service were taken from the Anoka County Dispatch CAD system.

Utilizing 2022 numbers obtained from an analysis of our Records Management System (RMS) the Spring Lake Park Police Department handled an estimated 7,952 complaints or incidents in 2022. As you can see there is a difference between CAD calls and the RMS system calls. The reason behind this is that the RMS system only records calls for service that an officer spent a specific amount of time on and CAD records all generated calls for service no matter how much time the officer spent on the call. At times, officers will generate a call and close it right away which will not record time spent on the call. The information from the RMS calls we don't see is the time the officer did spend on that dispatch generated CAD call. Examples of

these types of calls are follow ups, child and adult protection calls, officer complaints, etc. For this study I will be using the calls for service from CAD and will be subtracting approximately 2,000 self-initiated traffic stops, bringing our calls for service to 6,500 for the year 2022.

Step 2:

Multiply the total complaints or incidents by .75 (45 minutes). It is generally accepted that 45 minutes is the average time necessary to handle a complaint or incident. This includes administrative duties related to that call.

$$6,500 \times .75 = 4,875$$

Step 3:

Multiply by three to add a buffer and time preventative patrol. General experience has shown that about one-third of an officer's time should be spent handling requests for service. Other requirements for servicing police vehicles, personal relief, eating and supervision must be considered. Time for preventative patrol and community policing opportunities must also be taken into consideration. Multiplying by three makes up the unknowns.

$$4,875 \times 3 = 14,625$$

Step 4:

Divide the product by 3,193.75- the number of hours necessary to staff one basic patrol unit for one year (8.75hoursX365=3,193.75).

$$14,625 / 3,193.75 = 4.58$$

According to the application of the IACP formula, it takes 4.58 patrol elements to handle the estimated 6,500 complaints or incidents.

Since officers do not work every day of the year without time off, it is necessary to determine the amount of time an officer is actually on duty. This will allow a determination of the number of officers that are required to staff the patrol elements. A review of the department's benefits, including regular days off, holidays, bereavement, vacation and training days shows an officer is unavailable for patrol duties approximately 48% of the time, we come up with an average of 1,500 hours (see chart below) in which an officer is off duty during this specific time frame.

Leave Time for SLPPD Patrol Shifts	
Category	Time Off (Hours)
Holiday	80
Sick Time	96
Vacation	104
Training	100
Regular Days Off	1,120
Total	1,500

Since there are 3,193.75 hours necessary to staff one basic officer, this gives an available duty time of 1,693.75 hours. Therefore, to determine how many officers are necessary to staff one patrol element, divide 3,193.75 hours needed for one year, by the number of hours available (3,193.75/1,693.75=1.9). This means that 1.9 officers are required to fill each patrol element. By multiplying the available factor (1.9) by the number of patrol elements, you have the number of patrol officers needed.

$$1.9 \times 4.58 = 9 \text{ (8.7)}$$

The calculations indicate that 9 (8.7) patrol officers are needed to respond to the number of incidents in the City of Spring Lake Park. As a reminder, this number indicates the number of patrol officers needed. It does not include the Chief or any other sworn personnel assigned to duties other than patrol. This would include myself, Investigator Bennek and School Resource Officer Imig. This does include Sergeant Kramer and Sergeant Fiske since they are assigned to patrol division. As stated above due to both of the Sergeants administrative duties I am only counting them as one patrol officer.

Since we are currently allotted a full-time complement of 8 officers (7 if the Sergeants are not counted as 2 patrol officers) within the Patrol Division this study would indicate we need to hire approximately 2 officers to meet a staffing level of 9 officers within the Patrol Division.

Financing

As you recall, long time Records Technician Lori Brahs retired in November 2022. Since Lori's retirement staff has been evaluating the work load of our full-time records staff. Although at times our records staff can be very busy with work, we have found that the two full-time records technician positions we have is meeting our administrative needs in the Police Department and will for the foreseeable future. We have been able to streamline many

processes in the police department making the transition easier and bringing their overall workload down.

During the 2023 budget process, staff kept the salary and benefits of the Records Technician in the budget, pending the outcome of the staffing study. Based on the outcome of the staffing study, Administrator Buchholtz and I agree that the salary for, a third full-time records technician in the police budget would be better utilized for an additional police officer. We are requesting that the city council authorize the use of the budgeted records tech salary for an additional full-time police officer. The current records tech salary is \$92,880.21 with benefits and a full-time police officer salary at 3 years is \$107,909.55 with benefits. As you can see the difference is \$15,029.34 or a 15% increase for the officer's salary.

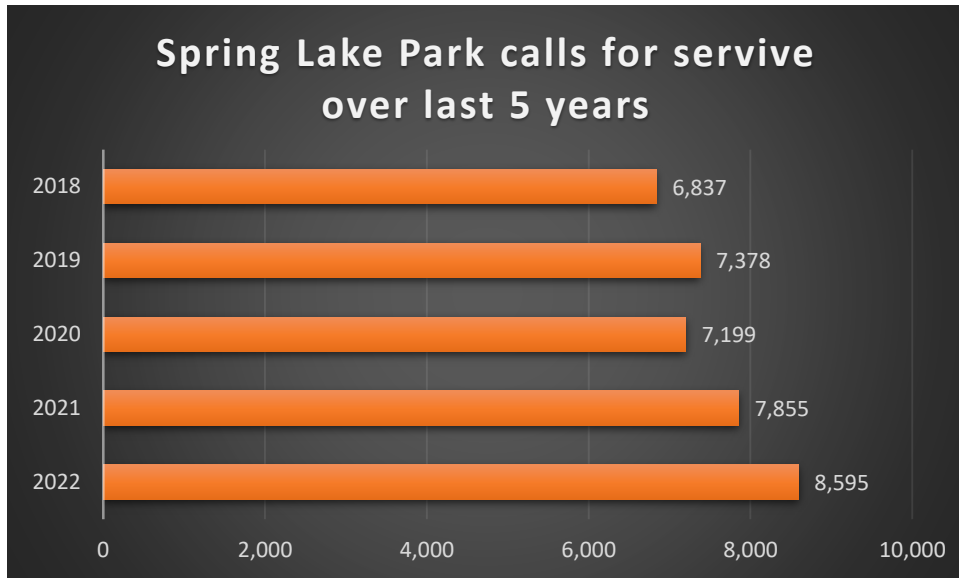
There is a possible funding option in the Governor's public safety spending bill, but as of this date that bill is still making its way through the Legislature. We will keep you informed if any funding from the bill is made available to the City of Spring Lake Park.

Conclusion

Included in this analysis are two methods of determining the current staffing needs of the Spring Lake Park Police Department. As detailed in the first section of this report, the ratio provided by the BJS indicates that the Spring Lake Park Police Department needs a staffing compliment of 13 full-time patrol officers (using the 1.8 ratio); we are currently authorized for 11 full-time positions including the non-patrol sworn officers. It is, however, important to note that although this ratio is accepted by the BJS, we feel as though it is not the most accurate means of determining appropriate staffing levels.

As a result, included in this report is a detailed analysis of the formula utilized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which is a recognized professional body representing law enforcement professionals across the county. The results of this formulation indicate that the Spring Lake Park Police Department needs a staffing level of 9 (8.7) full time police officers within the Patrol Division in order to meet service demands.

The last increase in our compliment of full-time police officers was in the mid to late 1990's for an SRO position. To site a simple example of our growth and increase in service, the Spring Lake Park Police Department handled approximately 5,112 calls for service in 2003. In comparison, the Spring Lake Park Police Department handled 8,595 calls for service in 2022 (including traffic stops), which constitutes an approximate increase of 50% in calls for service in that twenty-year time period. Although calls for service will fluctuate from year-to-year, the chart below clearly shows an increase in calls over the last 5 years since 2018.



The benefits of adding an officer are much more significant than just responding to calls for service. An additional officer would help with proactive law enforcement and community outreach, and adds a critical office safety component. Currently, our morning, afternoon, and night officer work a period alone during their shift. With the addition of another officer, the Department will evaluate new schedules that minimize or eliminate officers working alone, keeping our officers and the City safer.

We are respectfully asking for authorization to add one full-time police officer position, thereby increasing our staffing level to 12 full-time police officers' positions including non-patrol divisions.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the proposal to add an additional patrol officer to the Spring Lake Park Police Department. It has and always will be our goal to provide the best public safety services to the City of Spring Lake Park and its residents.

With the compilation of this staffing study, I also recommend that a plan be implemented to conduct an updated staffing study every three years.

Sincerely,

Joshua Antoine

Chief of Police

Resources and Thanks:

I want to thank the Hollis NH Police Department, Blaine Police Department, Coon Rapids Police Department, Wyoming Police Department and the Ramsey Police Department for sharing their studies and expertise during this process.

For our analysis we relied upon two main sources for direction and research:

- 1.) ***A Performance-Based Approach to Police Staffing and Allocation*** by Jeremy M. Wilson and Alexander Weiss of Michigan State University working with the US Department of Justice – Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, August, 2012

- 2.) ***Budgeting and Staffing*** by Hugo McPhee of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Management and Staffing, April, 2019.