

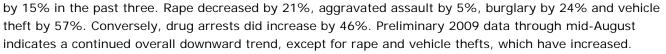
A Vision for Boston: Questions for the 2009 Mayoral Candidates

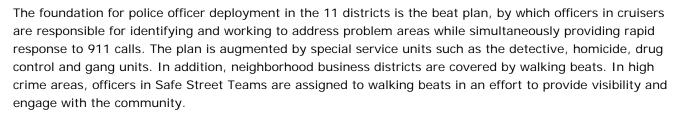
DAY 10: PUBLIC SAFETY

Is Boston safer than it was four years ago? How will you maintain neighborhood policing in Boston in a tight fiscal environment?

With a fiscal 2010 budget of \$278.2 million and 2,983 employees, the Boston Police Department (BPD) is the city's second largest department. Neighborhood policing is its stated mission. District police officers work with residents, community and faith-based leaders, and other local and federal law enforcement agencies to address crime and the fear of crime in Boston.

A comparison of statistics from 2004 through 2008 indicates an overall decline in most categories of crime in the City. Violent crime was down 4% and property crime down 19%. Homicides increased by one case, or 2%, over four years, but decreased





Neighborhood policing is labor intensive. As of August 2009, the number of sworn officers in BPD totaled 2,191. This represents an increase of 199 officers since January 2004. However, the total has declined slightly this year and is expected to continue to decline through attrition as the BPD budget does not provide for a fall class at the Academy. Further, officers who are pension eligible and receive Quinn Bill benefits may decide to retire before the reductions in Quinn Bill payments kick in next year.

The BPD is facing tight fiscal times. Its budget increased by just over 1% last year and decreased by 2.4% this year, due primarily to the reduction in state Quinn Bill payments. Officer layoffs were avoided only with the help of federal stimulus funds. The staffing requirements for neighborhood policing have been achieved, in part, by greater use of overtime, which has contributed to total police overtime spending being more than double what was budgeted in recent years.

Do you believe Boston is safer now than it was four years ago? Are you committed to the neighborhood policing program and if so, with finances tight, how will you ensure the level of sworn officers needed to maintain it? Would you suggest any changes to the current strategy?

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