

City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



Agenda Item Number: B 229-14

Department Source: City Manager

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: July 21, 2014

Re: Calling a special election relating to an increase in the general property tax rate for the purpose of funding police and fire operations, personnel and associated equipment and other related expenses provided by the City of Columbia Police Department and Fire Department.

Documents Included With This Agenda Item

Council memo, Resolution/Ordinance, Exhibits to Resolution/Ordinance

Supporting documentation includes: Research Documents

Executive Summary

If passed this legislation will place a proposition on the 2014 November 4th ballot for a \$0.30 increase to the general property tax rate for the purpose of increasing funding for police and fire staff and expenses related to staffing (equipment, training, etc.). This increase would be phased in over 5 years. The increase in staffing will enable the Police and Fire Departments to better keep up with growth and engage in more proactive methods (community policing).

Discussion

The proposed ballot is an effort to address the public safety staffing needs to serve a growing population, begin implementing more community policing activities, and provide enough fire personnel for staffing a future fire station. Public safety has consistently been marked as Columbia residents' top priority in the Citywide Survey. As Columbia's population has increased, the growth in sales tax has been unable to provide enough funds to maintain past staffing levels for public safety. This disparity has increased the workload for public safety personnel, affected response and travel times for calls for service, and reduced the time public safety officers have to spend on proactive methods such as community policing.

A good metric for the need for more police officers is the the number of calls for service per 1000 population. While the number of calls for service and the City's population have increased the number of officers per 1000 population has remained stagnant and/or declined. This means that the vast majority of an officer's time is consumed with responding to and prioritizing calls for service and not engaging in proactive policing methods. Proactive methods include: investigating suspicious activity, saturation operations, following up on citizen interactions, and engaging residents and neighborhoods to create trust. These methods have been shown to have a desired effect on crime and safety in both Columbia and other cities.

The Columbia Fire Department has experienced the same staffing issues as the Police Department in regards to population growth. The Fire Department is also greatly affected by the physical growth

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of Columbia and its road network. Maintaining the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) recommended 4 minute travel time for responding to a call is becoming more challenging. Calls from outside the estimated 4 minute travel time area have increased from 8.5% in 2009 to 12.6% in 2013. This means that as the City grows in area more and more calls are coming from locations that are beyond an estimated 4 minutes of travel from a fire station. Besides the need for personnel to keep up with calls for service, the Fire Department will need additional staff to man a future fire station to keep growing areas of the city within the estimated 4 minute travel time area.

Once fully implemented the \$0.30 increase to the general property tax rate would raise approximately \$6 million and fund approximately 60 new public safety personnel positions.

The decision to use property tax was based on the City's low rate and the stability of funding public safety with a property tax. While Columbia's overall property tax rate is on par with other cities, the City's proportion of the rate is much lower when compared to almost any group of cities. Property taxes provide a more stable funding mechanism than sales taxes, insuring funds for needed public safety personnel are available despite economic swings.

The research, staffing levels, trends, and analysis for staffing needs are attached and were presented to Council during the 7/7/14 Pre-council meeting.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The cost of placing a proposition on the ballot will depend on number of other entities using the ballot.

Long-Term Impact: If passed the full implementation of the \$0.30 increase will yield approximately \$6 million annually.

Vision, Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Vision Impact: Community Facilities and Services

Strategic Plan Impact: Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Comprehensive Plan Impact: Not Applicable

Suggested Council Action

Staff recommends the passage of this bill if Council wishes to see this proposition on the 2014 November ballot.

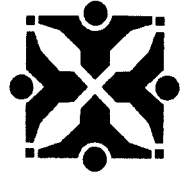
Legislative History

During the March 18th and 19th Council Retreats Council discussed upcoming ballots and their timing.

During the 7/7/14 Pre-council Meeting the proposed ballot was discussed and Council agreed to

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have place it on the Council Agenda for a vote.



Department Approved



City Manager Approved

Introduced by _____

First Reading _____

Second Reading _____

Ordinance No. _____

Council Bill No. B 229-14

AN ORDINANCE

calling a special election in the City of Columbia, Missouri, to be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, on the question whether to increase the general property tax rate by \$0.30 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation solely for the purpose of funding an increase in staffing and operations of the police and fire departments of the City; providing such increase shall be phased in over a period of five years; providing such funds shall be segregated from other general property tax revenues of the City; directing notification of the election authority; describing the form of the notice of election; and fixing the time when this ordinance shall become effective.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Columbia, Missouri has determined that it would be in the best interest of the City of Columbia, Missouri to increase the general property tax rate for staffing and operations provided by the police department and fire department of the City, and to submit such issue to the voters of the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. That the general property tax rate of the City be increased by \$0.30 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation solely for the purpose of funding an increase in staffing and operations of the police and fire departments of the City of Columbia, Missouri. Such increase shall be phased in over a period of five years in the amount of \$0.06 per year for five consecutive years.

SECTION 2. That such property tax increase is hereby imposed, levied, and submitted to the voters and shall be collected if approved by said voters, and all such property tax received by the City of Columbia, Missouri shall be segregated from the other general property tax revenues and used solely to increase existing police department and fire department staffing and operations, including, but not limited to personnel and associated equipment and other related expenses. The intent of these funds is to enhance the capacity of City's police department and fire department to serve the community and not to supplant existing resources.

SECTION 3. That such property tax increase is to be effective with the assessed valuation as determined for the year beginning January 1, 2015, which is due by

December 31, 2015.

SECTION 4. That such property tax increase shall not be effective unless approved by a majority of the votes cast of the qualified voters voting thereon at an election to be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

SECTION 5. A special election is hereby ordered to be held in the City of Columbia, Missouri, on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, on the following question:

PROPOSITION 1

Shall the City of Columbia, Missouri increase the general property tax rate of the City by \$0.30 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation for the sole purpose of funding an increase in staffing and operations of the police and fire departments of the City? The increase would be phased in over a period of five years.

YES ()

NO ()

If authorized by the voters, the increase in the general property tax rate received by the City of Columbia, Missouri shall be segregated from the other general property tax revenues and used solely for police and fire department staffing and operations, including, but not limited to personnel and associated equipment and other related expenses.

SECTION 6. The form of the notice of election shall be substantially as set forth on "Exhibit A" attached hereto and made a part hereof as fully as if set forth herein verbatim.

SECTION 7. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to notify the Clerk of the County Commission of Boone County, Missouri, of the adoption of this ordinance no later than 5 o'clock p.m. on August 26, 2014, and to include in the notification all of the terms and provisions required by Chapter 115, RSMo. as amended.

SECTION 8. The election shall be held and conducted, and the results thereof canvassed and returned, in all respects in accordance with the laws of the State of Missouri and the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Columbia, Missouri.

SECTION 9. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2014

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor and Presiding Officer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Counselor

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION
City of Columbia, Missouri

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of the City of Columbia, Missouri, that the City Council of the City has called an election to be held in the City on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, commencing at six o'clock a.m. and closing at seven o'clock p.m., on the question contained in the following sample ballot:

OFFICIAL BALLOT
Special Election
City of Columbia, Missouri
Tuesday, November 4, 2014

PROPOSITION 1

Shall the City of Columbia, Missouri increase the general property tax rate of the City by \$0.30 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation for the sole purpose of funding an increase in staffing and operations of the police and fire departments of the City? The increase would be phased in over a period of five years.

☐ YES

☐ NO

If authorized by the voters, the increase in the general property tax rate received by the City of Columbia, Missouri shall be segregated from the other general property tax revenues and used solely for police and fire department staffing and operations, including, but not limited to personnel and associated equipment and other related expenses.

If you are in favor of the question, place an "X" in the box opposite "Yes". If you are opposed to the question, place an "X" in the box opposite "No".

The election will be held at the following polling places in the City:

[polling places to be added by election authority]

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2014.

Wendy Noren
Clerk of the County Commission



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS INCLUDED WITH THIS AGENDA ITEM ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Research Documents

Public Safety Ballot Initiative

I. Draft Ballot Language

Shall the City of Columbia, Missouri increase the property tax rate thirty cents per one hundred dollars of assessed value for the purpose of increasing police and fire department staffing and operations? If approved by the voters, the increase will be phased in over a period of five (5) years.

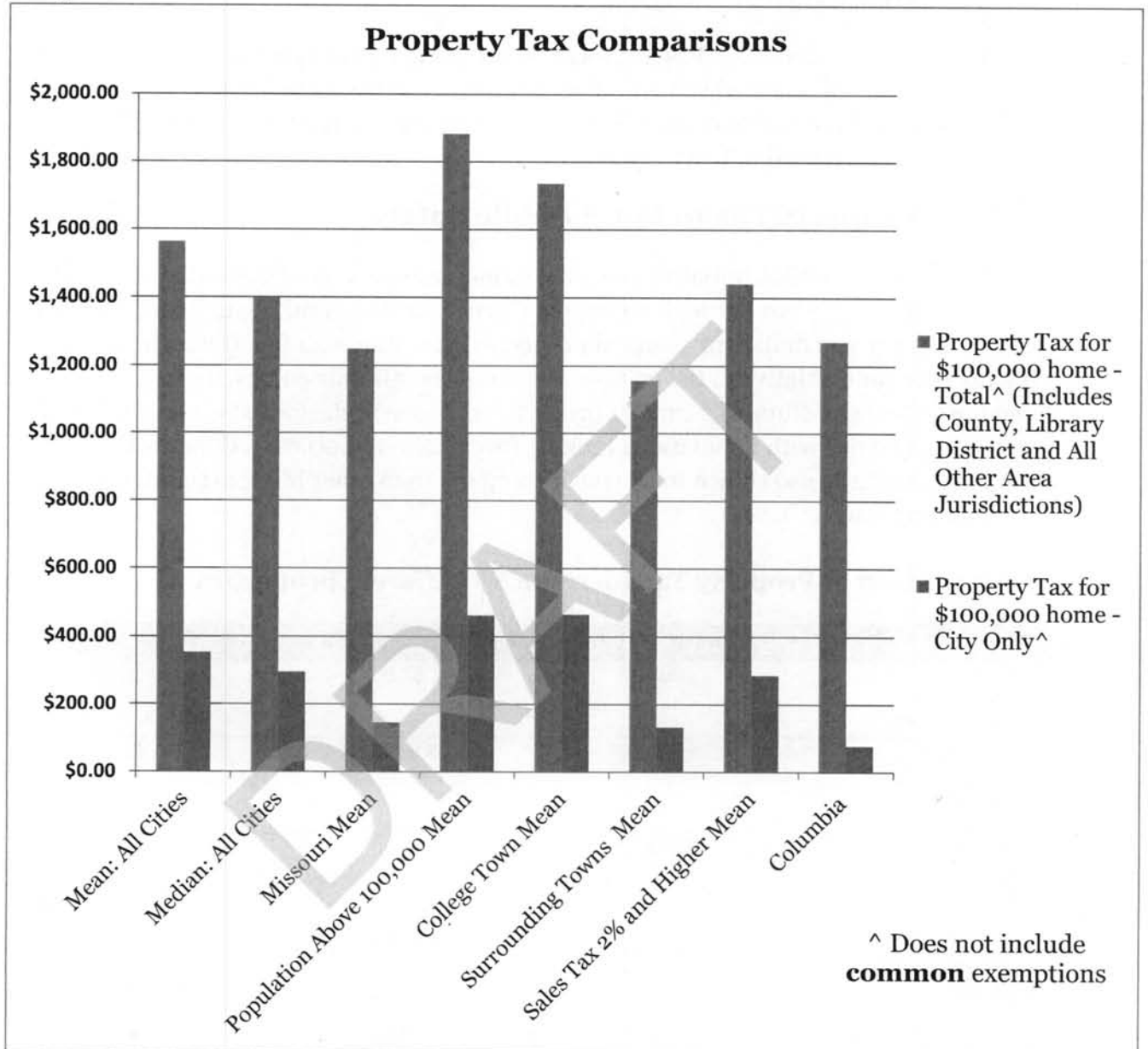
II. Property Tax to Fund Public Safety

The Public Safety Ballot Initiative proposes to increase the City of Columbia's property tax over the next 5 years through an annual 6 cent increase, resulting in a total increase of 30 cents per 100 dollars of assessed property value. Table 2.1 illustrates the cost of the tax over time, relative to the value of the property. Graphs on pgs. 2 and 3 demonstrate that Columbia's current property tax is one of the lowest when compared with 86 peer cities with populations ranging from 1,000 to 900,000. Columbia's property taxes are also shown to be low in comparison to other Missouri cities and surrounding towns.

Table 2.1 Cost of Property Tax Increase for different properties

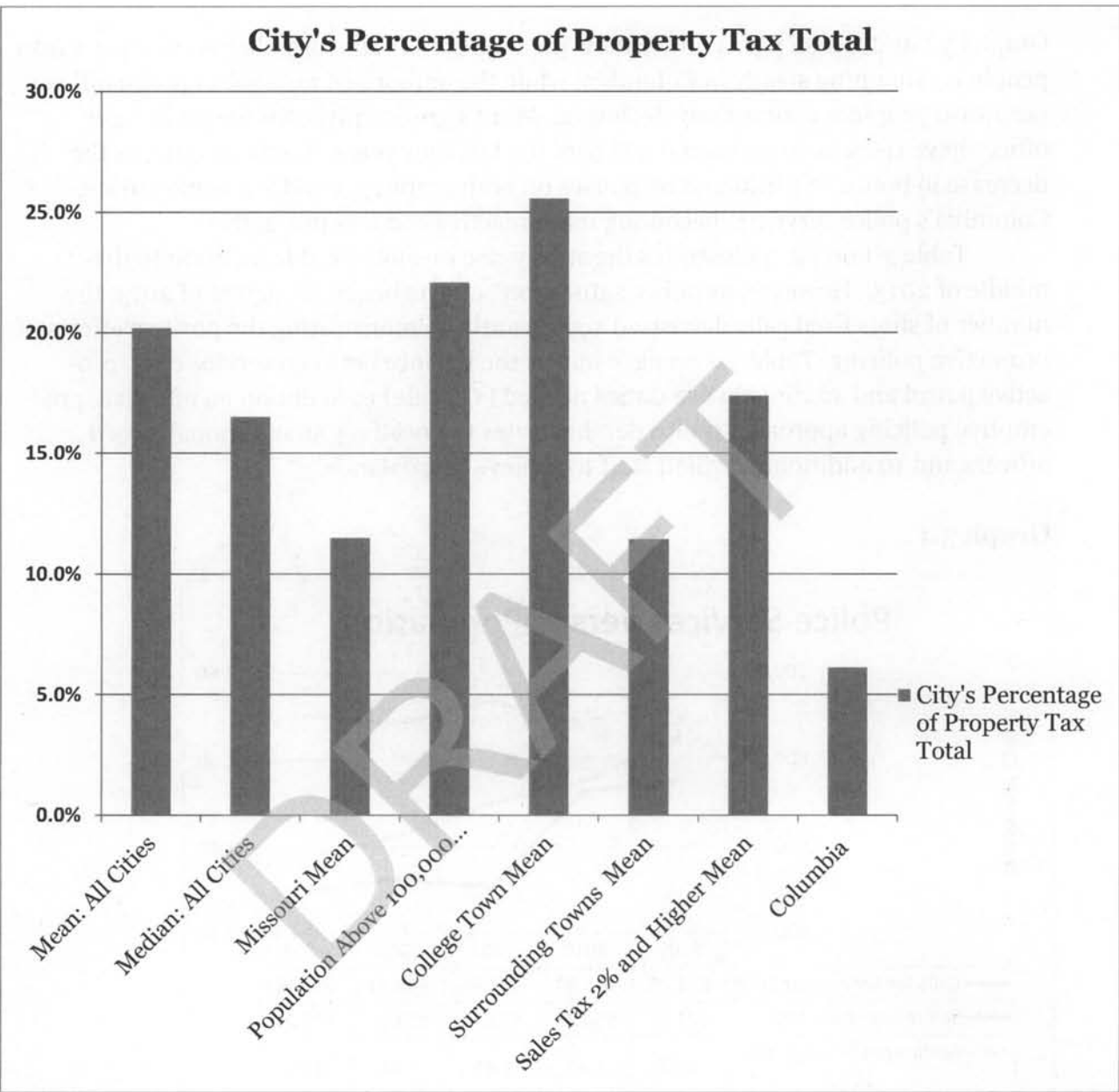
| | Year | Month | Day |
|---|----------|---------|--------|
| Cost for Median Homeowner** | \$95.82 | \$7.99 | \$0.26 |
| Commercial Appraised \$200,000 | \$192.00 | \$16.00 | \$0.53 |
| Commercial Appraised \$250,000 | \$240.00 | \$20.00 | \$0.66 |
| Commercial Appraised \$300,000 | \$288.00 | \$24.00 | \$0.79 |
| Commercial Appraised \$400,000 | \$384.00 | \$32.00 | \$1.05 |
| Commercial Appraised \$500,000 | \$480.00 | \$40.00 | \$1.32 |
| *Public Safety Increase equals an additional \$.30/\$100 of assessed value. Increase will be phased in over 5 years. | | | |
| **\$168,100 - 2012 American Community Survey | | | |

Graph 2.1



Graph 1.1 compares the estimated City property taxes collected to the total (county, schools, etc.) amount collected for a \$100,000 home. These numbers illustrate that Columbia's total property tax is on par with other averages, but the City's portion of property taxes is far less than all the categories presented.

Graph 2.2



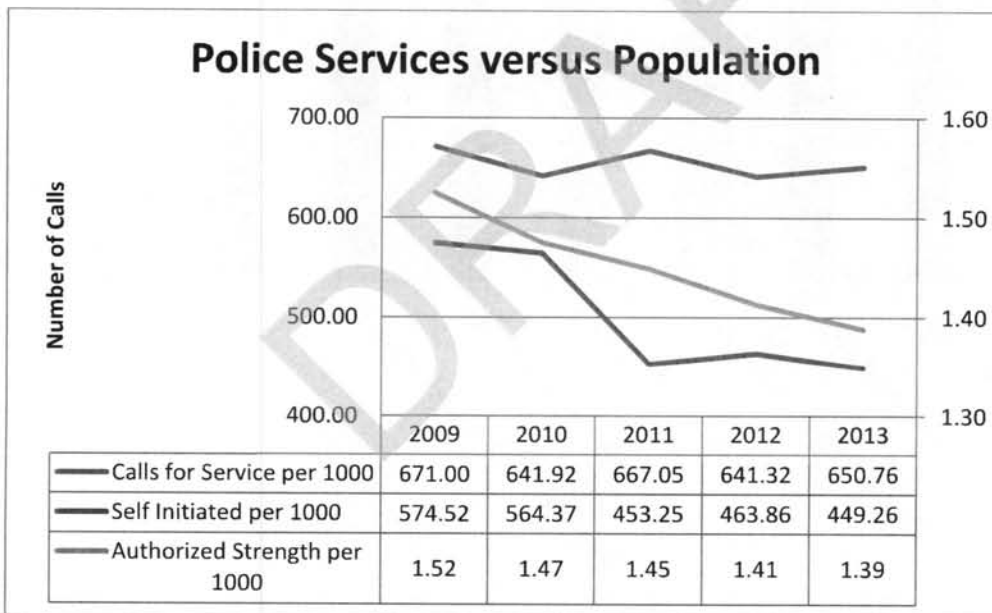
Graph 1.2 illustrates the City of Columbia's percentage of property taxes versus total (county, schools, etc.) property taxes, in relation to a range of other American cities. These numbers show that Columbia's percentage of total property taxes is much lower than other Missouri cities, college towns, cities of similar size, and even cities with higher sales taxes.

III. Need for Public Safety Ballot Funds: Police Department

Graphs 3.1 and 3.2 on pgs. 4 and 5 show the number of calls for police service per 1,000 people is remaining steady in Columbia, while the authorized number of police officers per 1,000 people is consistently declining. More significantly, calls for service per officer have risen by more than 6.5 % over the last four years. Consequently, as the decrease in police self-initiated responses on both graphs 3.1 and 3.2 demonstrate, Columbia's police service is becoming more reactive and less pro-active.

Table 3.1 on pg. 5 illustrates the steady rise in shots fired from 2009 to the middle of 2013. However, as police saturation* efforts began in August of 2013, the number of shots fired calls decreased significantly, demonstrating the positive effects of pro-active policing. Table 3.2 on pg. 6 shows the balance between service calls, pro-active patrol and administrative duties needed (1/3 rule) to maintain an effective, pre-emptive policing approach. It also demonstrates the need for 50 additional sworn officers and 10 additional civilian staff to achieve this balance.

Graph 3.1



* Note - Population Numbers are annual Census estimates

** Authorized strength is the total number of officers that have been authorized to keep the peace and protect the public

Graph 3.2

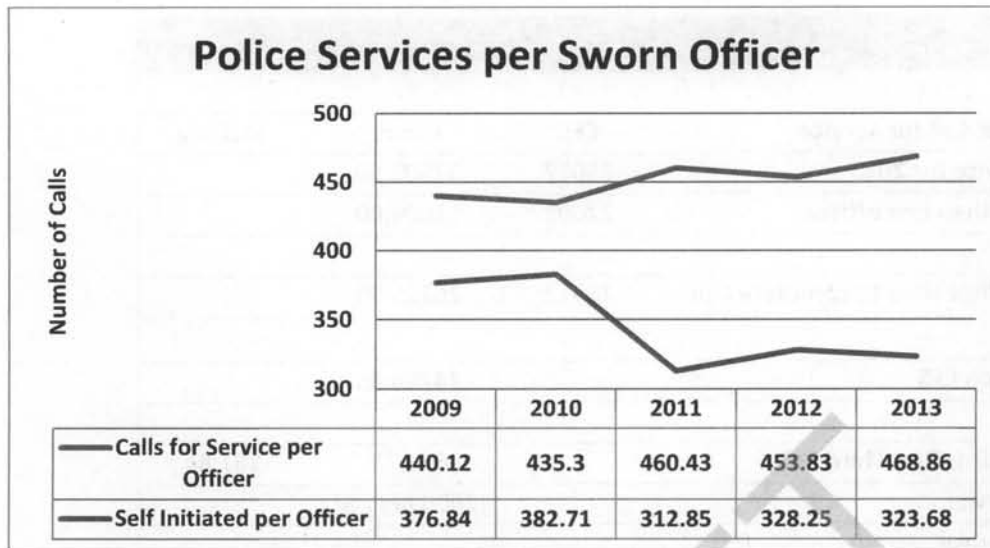


Table 3.1 *Saturation dates represent an increased concentration of officers focusing attention to specific community violence challenges.

| Shots Fired Calls | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Jan | 33 | 19 | 20 | 40 | 33 | 36 |
| Feb | 19 | 16 | 21 | 32 | 22 | 18 |
| Mar | 22 | 13 | 27 | 43 | 23 | 21 |
| Apr | 36 | 31 | 38 | 42 | 27 | 27 |
| May | 31 | 22 | 39 | 30 | 45 | 27 |
| Jun | 40 | 27 | 24 | 39 | 42 | 24 |
| Jul | 47 | 42 | 34 | 35 | 49 | |
| Aug | 41 | 25 | 27 | 38 | 17 | |
| Sep | 40 | 30 | 39 | 53 | 23 | |
| Oct | 26 | 45 | 48 | 35 | 25 | |
| Nov | 32 | 40 | 58 | 64 | 26 | |
| Dec | 19 | 34 | 45 | 35 | 31 | |
| Grand Total | 386 | 344 | 420 | 486 | 363 | 153 |

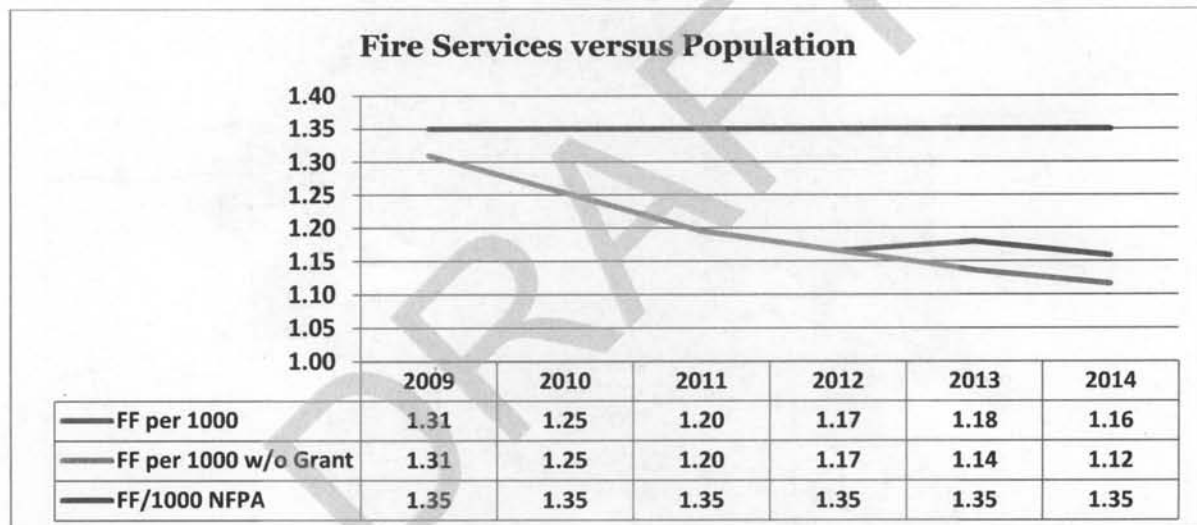
Table 3.2

| Patrol Staffing Calculations | | | |
|--|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| Average 30 min per Call for Service | CFS | Hours | Staffing |
| CPS Call For Service for 2013 | 75017 | 37508.50 | |
| Calls with more than one officer | 22008 | 11004.00 | |
| Average 21 min Office time to complete Call | 75017 | 26255.95 | |
| Total hours spent on CFS | | 74768.45 | |
| One-Third, One-Third, One-Third Rule | | 693.33 | 107.84 |
| 33% Calls for Service | | (2080 hrs / 3) | |
| 33% Proactive Patrol | | | |
| 33% Administrative/Misc. | | | |
| Patrol Supervisors | | | |
| Current (1 AC, 3 LTs, 13 SGTs) | | | 17 |
| Additional to cover increase (3 SGTs) | | | 3 |
| Projected Patrol Staffing | | | 127.84 |
| Total number of Sworn needed (Rule of 60) | | | 213.07 |
| 60% of Sworn Officers in Patrol | | | |
| Current Authorized Strength | | | 163.00 |
| Minimum Additional Sworn positions needed | | | 50.07 |
| Current Civilian Staffing | | | 31 |
| Total Civilian Staffing | | | 40.52 |
| Maintain ratio of Civilian to Sworn | | | |
| Minimum Additional Civilian positions needed | | | 9.52 |
| Additional Staffing needed | | | |
| Sworn | | | 50 |
| Civilian | | | 10 |

IV. Need for Public Safety Ballot Funds: Fire Department

Over the past 5 years, the number of firefighters relative to the number Columbia citizens has gone from a ratio of 1.31 firefighters per 1000 people to a ratio of 1.16 per 1,000. Additionally, without the fire department's current grant funding, the proportion of firefighters to citizens would be even lower, at a ratio of 1.12. To meet the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) estimated median number of firefighters per 1,000 people, the fire department will need to hire 22 new firefighters; and without current grant funding, it would need to hire 27 new firefighters. Table 4.1 demonstrates Columbia's fire services per population, while images on pgs. 8 and 9 show the rising number of fire department responses that fall outside of the estimated 4 minute response (travel time) from a fire station.

Table 4.1



| NFPA Median for Midwest and Population Size is 1.35 FF/Thousand* | FF Per Thousand | Est FF Per Thousand | Current (FY14) | FF's Needed |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Current | 1.16 | 158 | 136 | 22 |
| Without Grant | 1.12 | 158 | 131 | 27 |
| 2009 FF/Thousand Level | 1.31 | 154 | 136 | 18 |
| 2009 FF/Thousand Level w/o Grant | 1.31 | 154 | 131 | 23 |

*Based on NFPA's Median Rates of Firefighters per Thousand by Midwest Region and for our population range (NFPA 100,000 to 249,999)

Image 4.1: City areas within an estimated four minute travel time from a Columbia Fire Station

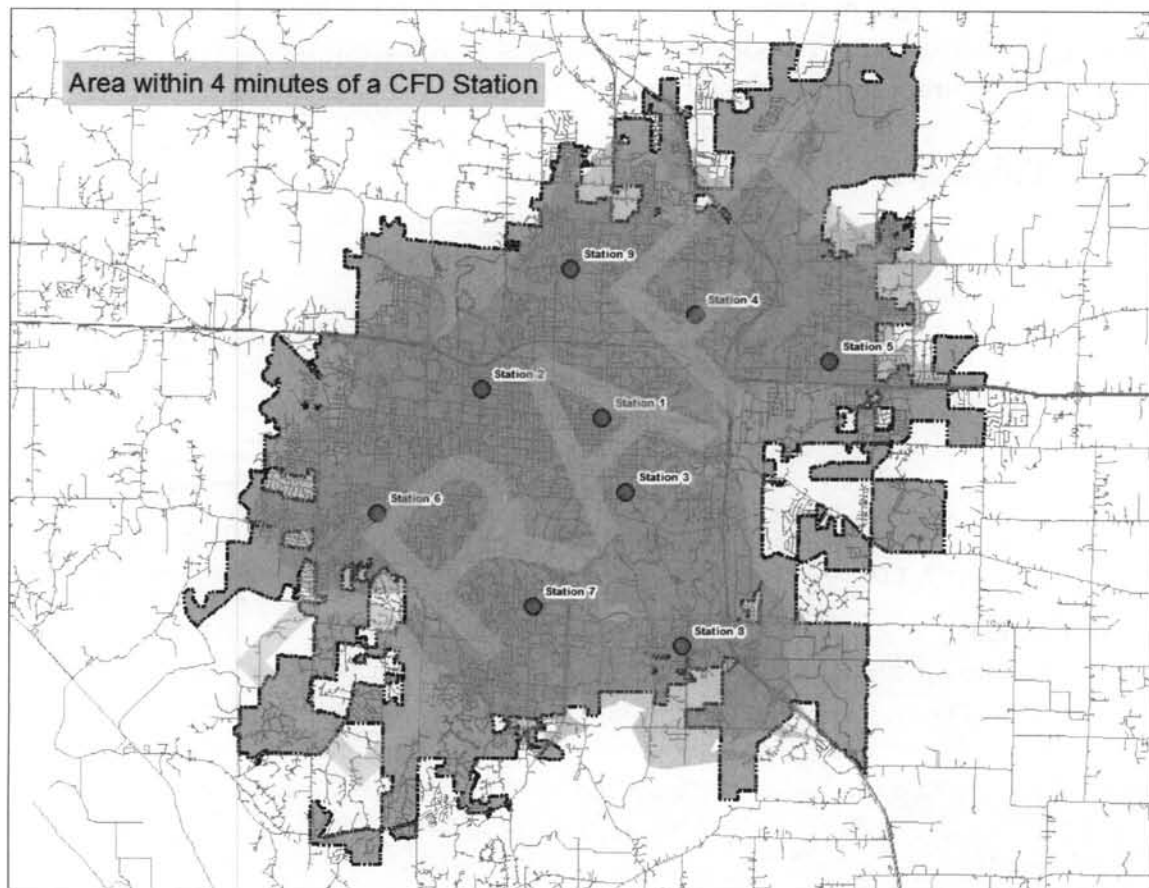


Image 4.2: 2013 Service calls

*In 2009 only 8.5% of calls fell outside of the estimated 4 minute response (travel time) from a fire station. This percentage increased to 12.6% by 2013.

