

2007
Community Survey
Holden Police Department



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A Message from the Chief of Police

It is again my pleasure to present the results of our community survey to the residents of the Town of Holden. For the past fifteen years, the Holden Police Department has embraced a philosophy of community policing, and we continue to implement a proactive public safety strategy for our town. Within the constraints of limited resources, we have provided effective public safety services to all of our citizens.

Comparisons of public safety data from 1996 to 2006 clearly indicate that the community policing efforts and proactive public safety strategies of the Holden Police have proven their value. While **reported crimes dropped by 29%** for that ten year period, **arrests increased by 59%**. The major categories of arrests were as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| ▪ Assault | up 78% |
| ▪ Drugs | up 288% |
| ▪ Family offenses | up 400% |
| ▪ OUI | up 133% |
| ▪ Traffic offenses | up 141% |

Thanks to the professionalism, courage, and hard work of our officers; a proactive public safety strategy, and — to be very candid — good fortune, the town has always been and remains a very safe place for people to reside, raise families, and run businesses. I ask that you continue to support our department in this most worthwhile effort.

During my tenure as Chief of Police, one of my goals has been to monitor residents' needs, attitudes, and concerns, so that we may tailor our department assets to address them. As a result, the Police Department periodically conducts surveys of the town residents. I am proud to present the results of this latest survey research and data to you. Some interesting highlights from the survey respondents include:

| | |
|---|-----|
| ▪ Quality of life in my neighborhood is good to excellent | 98% |
| ▪ Crime has stayed the same or decreased | 93% |
| ▪ Police respond in a timely manner * | 82% |
| ▪ When called, the police were found to be helpful | 89% |

* The majority of the remaining 16% said they had never called

In addition to our residents' survey, we also analyze data from surrounding Central Massachusetts towns on an annual basis. The conclusions drawn from that study show that, to its credit, the Holden Police Department "does more with less". Collected from 29 towns, the 2007 data indicates that we have:

| | Holden | Average |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| ▪ lowest public safety cost per resident | \$102.21 | \$138.95 |
| ▪ highest population per officer | 947 | 662 |
| ▪ above average number of square miles per officer | 1.91 | 1.42 |
| ▪ above average number of road miles per officer | 6.0 | 5.39 |

As our town continues to evolve and grow, your Holden Police Department constantly strives to keep pace through community policing and a proactive public safety strategy which includes **increasing staffing to appropriate levels** and a **addressing our significant need for a modern public safety facility**. I am grateful for the support that taxpayers have provided but am very mindful that continued limited resources will only significantly increase the Department's challenges.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

George R. Sherrill
Chief of Police

2007

Community Survey

Holden Police Department



Citizen Survey

Goal

To get a sense of how the citizens of the Town of Holden perceive various issues related to public safety and to obtain an appreciation of any related concerns that they may have.

Method

Surveys were distributed randomly to town residents as they left elections in the Fall of 2006. Of the two hundred and forty surveys distributed, eighty-eight were completed and returned. This was roughly a 37% response rate. Given the method of research and the type of instrument, it was considered a significant response rate, which produced meaningful data.

Results

Demographics

Average number of years living in Holden: 14.3

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------|-------|--------|-----|
| Gender: | Male | 53% | Female | 47% |
| Age: | 26→61 | * 98% | <26 | 2% |
| Marital Status: | Married: | 91% | Other: | 9% |
| Children: | Yes: | 86% | No: | 14% |

* This was to be expected, since the survey was distributed to voters after a recent election

Substantive Questions

| | |
|--|-----|
| Quality of life in their neighborhood is good to excellent | 98% |
| Crime has stayed the same or decreased | 93% |
| Litter is a moderate to serious problem | 14% |
| "Dogs running loose" is a problem | 21% |
| "Youth hanging around" is a moderate to serious problem | 15% |
| Noise is a moderate to serious problem | 7% |
| Police respond in a timely manner (most others never called) | 82% |
| Believe that police are known in the community | 84% |
| Know them by face | 15% |
| Know them by face & name | 34% |
| Believe there is a need for a new police station | 49% |
| Would pay more for separate police & fire facilities | 26% |
| Were helped when they called for police assistance | 89% |
| See an officer around town once a week or more often | 82% |
| Riding in patrol cars | 44% |
| At construction details | 31% |
| Writing parking tickets | 8% |
| Other times (crime scenes, schools, stores, etc.) | 17% |

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Community Survey

Holden Police Department



Area Towns Survey

Goal

To gather pertinent public safety data from surrounding central Massachusetts towns in order to establish base lines for comparison.

Method

Specific information from surrounding Central Massachusetts towns was provided through a survey of the Chiefs of Police of each town. Refer to the attached chart for a list of participating towns.

Research

Currently, the Town of Holden has a population of about 18,000 people with a Police Department comprised of 19 full-time officers. These officers patrol 36 square miles containing roughly 114 miles of roads. The fiscal year 2006-2007 budget for the Police Department is \$1,839,732.

For Holden, this means that the average cost per resident for each officer is \$102.21 per year. The number of officers per 1,000 town residents is 1.21. Like all ratios, these have relevance only when compared to other towns and departments.

The statistics (see attached charts) from other comparable towns become much more pertinent when the Town of Holden and its Police Department is compared to other towns in Central Massachusetts. For example, when looking at other towns with similar size populations, land areas, and road distances, the data shows that the Holden Police Department falls below the averages in all areas.

Results

Holden has:

- the lowest public safety cost per resident

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Holden | Average | Low | High |
| \$102.21 | \$138.96 | 102.21 | \$214.33 |

- the highest population per officer

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Holden | Average | Low | High |
| 947 | 662 | 413 | 947 |

- a higher than average number of square miles per officer

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Holden | Average | Low | High |
| 1.91 | 1.43 | .25 | 3.36 |

- a higher than average number of road miles per officer

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Holden | Average | Low | High |
| 6.0 | 5.4 | 1.21 | 12.5 |

2007

Area Towns Survey (continued)

Conclusions

The Town of Holden can afford to add patrol officers and public safety infrastructure and still maintain its very efficient use of town resources. Lower ratios of number of residents, square miles, and road miles per officer increases the potential for public safety. Additional officers and adequate infrastructure would lower the average population, square miles, and road miles per officer, resulting in superior public safety.

Summary

Statistics from 1996 through 2006 show an overall **modest decline in crime and arrests** of 29% for that period.

However, at the same time, it shows a **dramatic increase in arrests for particular crimes**, such as assault, drugs, family offenses, operating under the influence, and traffic offenses.

Town residents report **high levels of satisfaction** with quality of life, relative crime levels, and public safety service.

Comparisons of data from a survey of 29 Central Massachusetts towns indicate that the Town of Holden ranks as follows in relation to other localities:

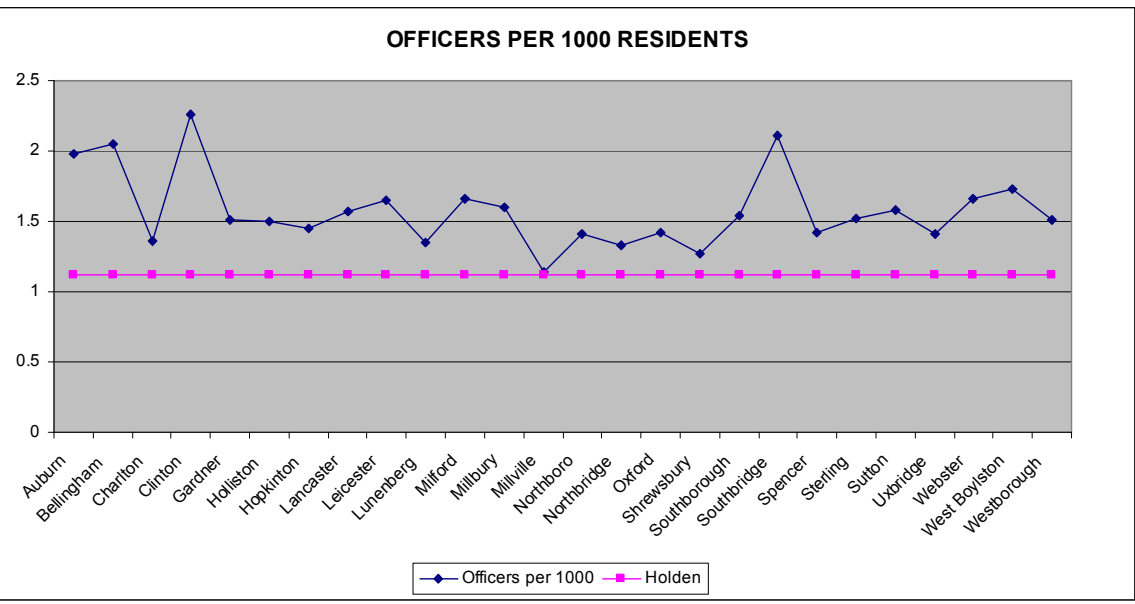
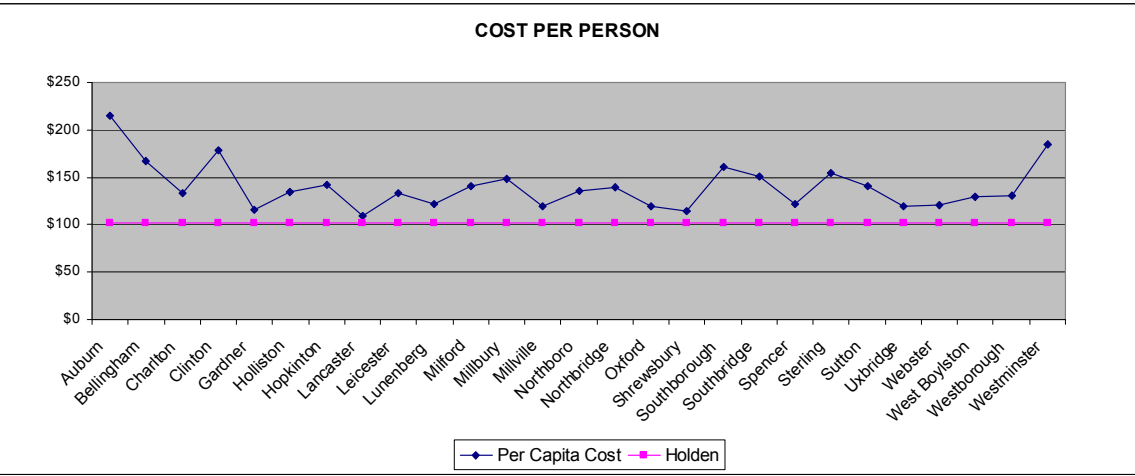
- | | |
|--|---------------|
| ▪ Public safety cost per Town resident | Lowest |
| ▪ Population per officer | Highest |
| ▪ Square miles per officer | Above average |
| ▪ Road miles per officer | Above average |

Please review the attached charts for detailed data.

**2006 Comparison of
Central Massachusetts Police Departments**

| TOWN | POPULATION | FULL TIME OFCS | FULL TIME DISP | FY 06-07 BUDGET | PER CAPITA COST | OFCS PER 1,000 | PART TIME OFCS | SEC/ ADM ASST | SQ. MILES | ROAD MILES |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| ASHBURNHAM | 5,900 | 8 | 4 | 870,958 | 147.62 | 1.37 | 5 | 1 | 41.00 | 100+ |
| AUBURN | 15,690 | 38 | 8 | 3,362,861 | 214.33 | 1.98 | 0 | 2 | 16.40 | 130 |
| BELLINGHAM | 15,075 | 31 | 5 | 2,517,997 | 167.03 | 2.05 | 2 | 2 | 8.54 | 90 |
| CHARLTON | 13,901 | 19 | 3 | 1,857,754 | 133.64 | 1.36 | 0 | 1 | 43.95 | 170 |
| CLINTON | 13,250 | 29 | 4 | 2,364,000 | 178.41 | 2.26 | 0 | 1 | 7.29 | 35 |
| GARDNER | 20,500 | 32 | 5 | 2,371,287 | 115.67 | 1.51 | 0 | 2 | 22.84 | 100 |
| HOLDEN | 18,000 | 19 | 4 | 1,839,732 | 102.21 | 1.12 | 6 | 1.5 | 36.20 | 114 |
| HOLLISTON | 14,979 | 24 | 0 | 2,016,000 | 134.59 | 1.50 | 0 | 1 | 19.00 | 100 |
| HOPKINTON | 14,500 | 21 | 4 | 2,067,150 | 142.56 | 1.45 | 0 | 1 | 28 | 125 |
| LANCASTER | 7,000 | 11 | 4 | 766,800 | 109.54 | 1.57 | 7 | 1 | 28.20 | 69 |
| LEICESTER | 10,904 | 18 | 4 | 1,455,648 | 133.49 | 1.65 | 5 | 1 | 24.68 | 100 |
| LUNENBURG | 9,600 | 13 | 4 | 1,171,626 | 122.04 | 1.35 | 15 | 1 | 29.00 | 116 |
| MILFORD | 26,800 | 45 | 4 | 3,776,120 | 140.90 | 1.66 | 0 | 2 | 14.87 | 110 |
| MILLBURY | 12,500 | 20 | 4 | 1,855,536 | 148.44 | 1.6 | 4 | 1 | 16.39 | 65 |
| MILLVILLE | 3,500 | 4 | 3 | 416,990 | 119.14 | 1.14 | 9 | 0 | 5 | 24 |
| NORTHBORO | 14,600 | 20 | 6 | 1,974,977 | 135.27 | 1.41 | 0 | 1 | 18.76 | 80 |
| NORTHBRIDGE | 14,600 | 18 | 4 | 2,032,611 | 139.22 | 1.33 | 4 | 1 | 18.80 | 70 |
| OXFORD | 13,488 | 19 | 4 | 1,601,295 | 118.72 | 1.42 | 4 | 1 | 27.39 | 110 |
| SHREWSBURY | 33,000 | 44 | 8 | 3,764,900 | 114.08 | 1.27 | 0 | 7 | 21.83 | 130 |
| SOUTHBOROUGH | 9,700 | 15 | 5 | 1,565,000 | 161.34 | 1.54 | 6 | 1 | 15.66 | 73.7 |
| <i>SOUTHBRIDGE (05-06)</i> | <i>18,500</i> | <i>36</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>2,790,000</i> | <i>150.81</i> | <i>2.11</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>20.74</i> | <i>97</i> |
| SPENCER | 11,988 | 17 | 4 | 1,461,750 | 121.93 | 1.42 | 0 | 0 | 33.15 | 94.33 |
| STERLING | 8,500 | 13 | 4 | 1,313,620 | 154.54 | 1.52 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 100 |
| SUTTON | 9,503 | 15 | 4 | 1,335,020 | 140.48 | 1.58 | 4 | 1 | 34.70 | 140 |
| UXBRIDGE | 12,702 | 18 | 4 | 1,514,250 | 119.21 | 1.41 | 8 | 1 | 29.29 | 120 |
| <i>WEBSTER (05-06)</i> | <i>16,800</i> | <i>28</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>2,023,628</i> | <i>120.45</i> | <i>1.66</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>14.50</i> | <i>121</i> |
| WEST BOYLSTON | 7,481 | 13 | 4 | 965,572 | 129.07 | 1.73 | 0 | 1 | 13.9 | 61.23 |
| WESTBOROUGH | 18,500 | 28 | 4 | 2,415,332 | 130.55 | 1.51 | 0 | 3 | 21.57 | 100+ |
| WESTMINSTER | 7,750 | 11 | 4 | 1,430,000 | 184.51 | 1.42 | 4 | 1.5 | 37 | 105 |

**2006 Comparisons of
Central Massachusetts Police Departments**



1994 - 2006 Statistics
Holden Police Department

| Arrests | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Murder | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Assault | 9 | 8 | 14 | 26 | 15 | 12 | 16 | 27 | 36 | 29 | 19 | 25 | 25 |
| Breaking & Entering | 10 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 3 |
| Arson | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Vandalism | 8 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Drugs | 15 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 32 | 41 | 71 | 58 | 56 | 37 | 35 |
| Family Offenses | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| O.U.I. | 20 | 23 | 15 | 24 | 32 | 12 | 15 | 21 | 23 | 22 | 12 | 16 | 35 |
| Disorderly | 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 13 | 7 | 12 | 17 | 14 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| Traffic Offenses | 52 | 40 | 32 | 39 | 60 | 54 | 27 | 75 | 111 | 75 | 96 | 54 | 77 |
| Protective Custody | 43 | 33 | 42 | 31 | 52 | 42 | 14 | 35 | 48 | 42 | 32 | 26 | 45 |
| Other | 60 | 50 | 75 | 44 | 51 | 27 | 51 | 108 | 91 | 150 | 45 | 75 | 81 |
| Total | 225 | 180 | 196 | 205 | 235 | 173 | 182 | 338 | 412 | 387 | 281 | 258 | 311 |

| Crimes Reported | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Homicide | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rape | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Robbery | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Assault | 40 | 51 | 50 | 55 | 50 | 33 | 46 | 68 | 50 | 63 | 60 | 42 | 56 |
| Breaking & Entering | 58 | 30 | 35 | 31 | 16 | 21 | 25 | 23 | 22 | 10 | 18 | 18 | 7 |
| Larceny | 107 | 105 | 106 | 78 | 78 | 52 | 46 | 55 | 69 | 73 | 78 | 72 | 77 |
| Motor Vehicle Theft | 15 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Total | 226 | 197 | 206 | 171 | 147 | 116 | 120 | 150 | 144 | 150 | 164 | 140 | 146 |

| Other Data | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Citations | 2601 | 2060 | 2600 | 2402 | 2569 | 2948 | 3167 | 3101 | 2784 | 3715 | 4086 | 5129 | 6160 |
| Accidents | 194 | 219 | 213 | 241 | 245 | 198 | 223 | 263 | 240 | 250 | 278 | 288 | 251 |
| Fatal Accidents | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Calls for Service | 7553 | 7116 | 7873 | 7160 | 7377 | 8217 | 9115 | 10391 | 11002 | 12177 | 11089 | 11953 | 15200 |
| Incident Reports Taken | 811 | 934 | 1030 | 956 | 926 | 814 | 907 | 835 | 950 | 1352 | 1151 | 1013 | 1077 |