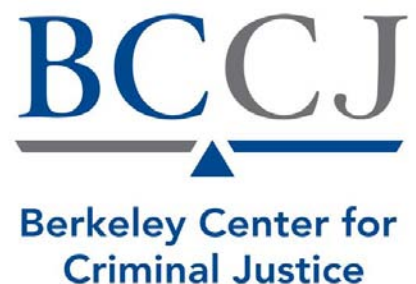


Crime Trends in the City of East Palo Alto

November 2010

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UC Berkeley School of Law*



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About the Berkeley Center for Criminal Justice

Based at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, the Berkeley Center for Criminal Justice (BCCJ) works to enhance public safety and foster a fair and accountable justice system through research, analysis, and collaboration. BCCJ works to increase stakeholder access to timely and relevant information on criminal justice issues, enhance the understanding of those issues among policy-makers, practitioners, scholars, and students, and improve outcomes for individuals involved in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

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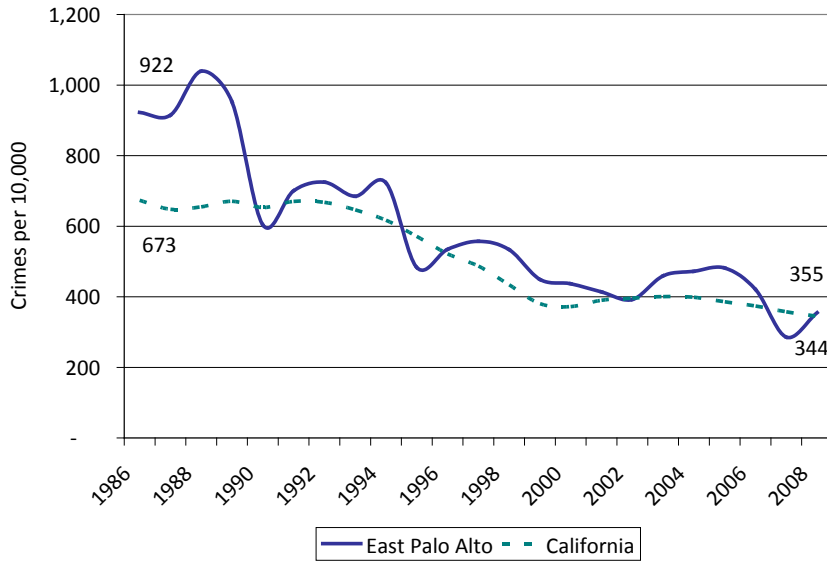
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Report Highlights

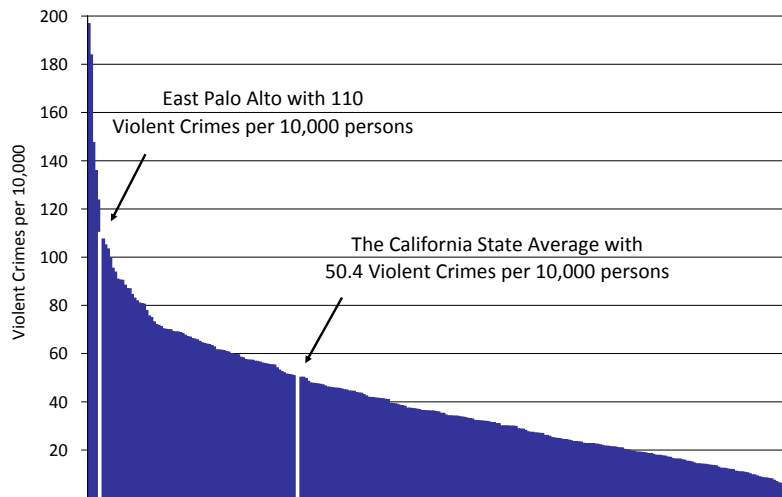
- ◆ East Palo Alto has seen significant improvements in public safety, as the crime rate has decreased in all major categories of crime since the mid 1980's. The drop in crime has been larger than the State overall in percentage terms with the State's total crime rate decreasing by 49% compared to 62% for the City between 1986 and 2008.

Total Crime Rate in East Palo Alto versus California



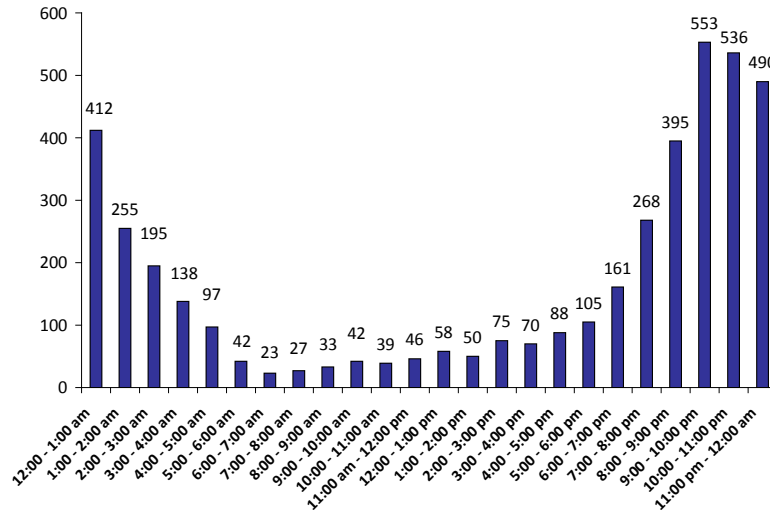
- ◆ Although the reduction in crime has been considerable, the level of violent crime in East Palo Alto remains very high, as East Palo Alto ranks in the top ten among California cities in three of the four categories of violent crime (aggravated assault, homicide, and rape).

City-Level Violent Crime Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest (2008)



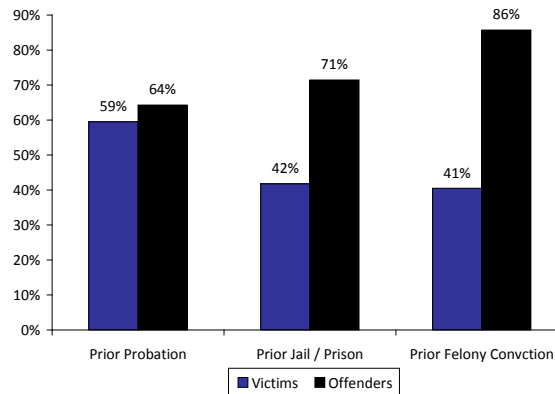
- ◆ Shootings are a fairly common occurrence in the City with more than one shooting incident per day being reported to the police on average. Dispatched calls for service are concentrated during a few hours of the day with 57% of the calls being received between 6:00 pm and midnight.

Dispatched Calls For Service Involving a Firearm (Total for 1997-2007)



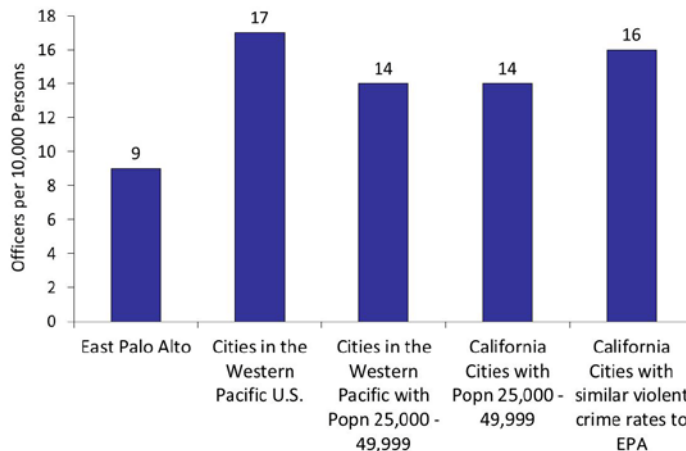
- ◆ Homicide victims and known homicide offenders are well-known to the criminal justice system. Both groups have considerable arrest records, have been arrested for a wide range of offense types, and have high rates of prior convictions and prior periods of incarceration.

Percent of Homicide Victims and Offenders with Prior Criminal Justice Involvement



- ◆ Despite high levels of violence, resources for the East Palo Alto Police Department appear to be lower than other police departments. A look at police officers per capita shows that EPA PD is significantly lower in officers per capita compared to other cities in California with similar violent crime rates and other similarly sized cities in California.

Number of Police Officers per 10,000 people



Introduction

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of crime in East Palo Alto (EPA) to increase knowledge about the scope and nature of crime in the City. The intent is to help City leaders, community groups, and the residents of East Palo Alto make more informed and empirically-based decisions about how to improve public safety.¹ Included in this report are an examination of crime in the City over the last few decades and comparisons between East Palo Alto and California to understand what has happened in the City in the context of what has happened in the rest of the State. A few questions that are addressed in the report include:

- ◆ What have been the overall crime trends in the City since the mid-1980s?
- ◆ What types of crimes have increased during this period? What types of crimes have decreased during this period?
- ◆ How do the trends in the City compare to the rest of the State?
- ◆ What are the demographic profiles and criminal backgrounds of both homicide victims and known homicide victims and how do they compare to one another?
- ◆ Has the level of shootings changed over time?
- ◆ When are shootings most likely to occur?

Data Sources

The analyses presented in this report are based on data from several different sources including the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS), the ShotSpotter Gunshot Location System, the East Palo Alto Police Department, and the San Mateo Public Safety Communications Division.

- ◆ The federal Uniform Crime Reporting Program is the standard and centralized system for collecting crime data and is administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. There are seven "Index Crimes" that measure the prevalence of crime in the United States: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft.² Most of the data are presented as crime rates, which control for population to allow comparison across jurisdictions of different sizes. For the purposes of this report, crime rates are presented per 10,000 persons. The UCR Program also collects data on law enforcement personnel, including the number of sworn police officers. According to the FBI, sworn officer counts are the number of officers that were working in a police force at the time of data reporting and who ordinarily carry a firearm and a badge, have full arrest powers, and are paid from governmental funds set aside specifically to pay sworn law enforcement.³ UCR data for the period 1986 to 2008 are included in this report.
- ◆ The California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System is the system used by law enforcement officials in the State of California that contains records of all persons known to law enforcement and their criminal history information. For the purposes of this report it was used as the source of information on homicide victims and known homicide offenders in East Palo Alto in terms of their demographic characteristics and criminal histories. All data on homicide victims and known offenders presented in this report are anonymous and names or other identifying information are not included. Data on homicide victims from January 1998 to June 2010 and data on known homicide offenders from January 2006 to June 2010 are included in this report.

¹ The City of East Palo Alto was incorporated in 1983 and consistent data collection began in 1986.

² The combination of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault is generally referred to as Violent Crimes and the combination of burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft is generally referred to as Property Crimes.

³ Data Declaration, Uniform Crime Report, Crime in the United States. http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/data/table_78_dd.html

- ◆ The ShotSpotter Gunshot Location System (ShotSpotter) was launched in East Palo Alto in 20% of the city in 2008 and citywide in 2009. ShotSpotter is a gunshot location detection system that employs sensors that use the physics of sound propagation and triangulation to determine the precise location of where a sound originated thereby locating the approximate location of a firearm being discharged. Data from ShotSpotter’s monthly activity reports from January 2009 through June 2010 are included in this report.
- ◆ The San Mateo County Public Safety Communications Division is the dispatch center for calls for service for the City of East Palo Alto. The East Palo Alto Police Department obtained dispatched calls for service data from the Division from the period January 1998 through June 2010. Dispatched calls for service data were used to examine the levels of calls for service for firearms discharged (10-57s) and shootings into dwellings (246s).

The Appendix of this report includes a series of tables with the underlying data for the charts presented below.

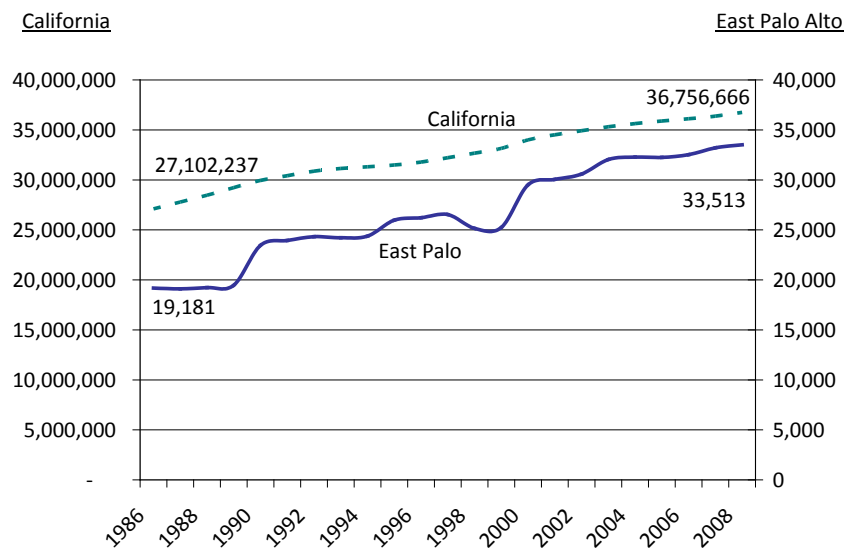
Overview of East Palo Alto

This report begins with an overview of the City of East Palo Alto in terms of population size, age distribution of the residents, and ethnicity distribution of the residents.

Population

The City of East Palo Alto is located in San Mateo County and is approximately 2.5 square miles. As of 2008 the City’s population was 33,513 residents and is the result of significant growth over the last two decades. The chart below (Figure 1) compares population growth in EPA and the State of California as a whole (the left axis shows California’s population and the right axis shows East Palo Alto’s population). Both the population in California and East Palo Alto increased steadily between 1986 and 2008.⁴

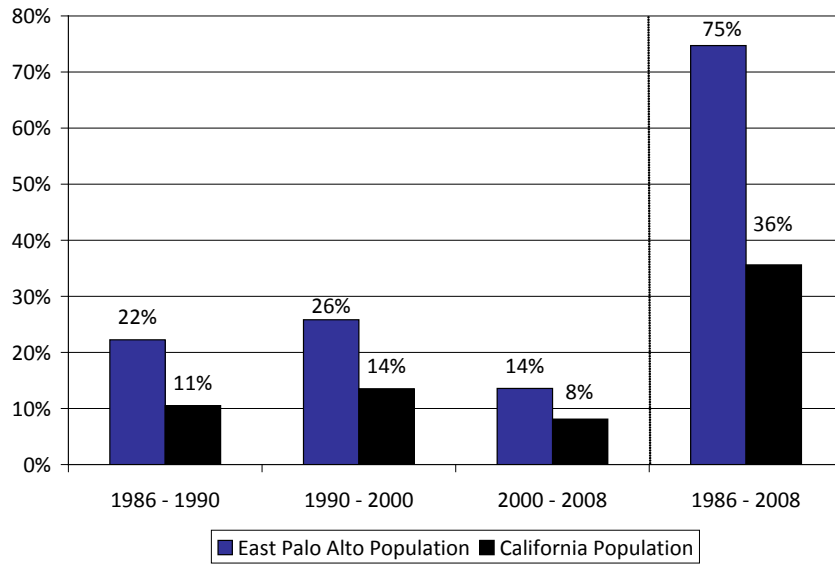
Figure 1. Population
(1986 – 2008)



⁴ The notable increases in the East Palo Alto population in 1991 and 2001 are probably due to recalibration of estimates based on the 1990 and 2000 U.S. decennial censuses.

To understand the magnitude and timing of the population growth, Figure 2 presents the percent change by decade for East Palo Alto and California. The first set of columns shows that from 1986 to 1990, East Palo Alto’s population increased by 22% while California’s population increased by 11%. The second and third sets of columns display the percent change for the periods 1990 to 2000 and 2000 to 2008. The final set of columns shows the total 22-year change in population. East Palo Alto’s population growth was more than double California’s growth, increasing by a remarkable 75% between 1986 and 2008 compared to 36% for the State overall. The higher growth was sustained during this entire time period, as EPA grew faster than the State in each decade.

Figure 2. Percent Change in Population by Decade in East Palo Alto and California



Age

The residents of EPA are generally younger than the State overall. A greater portion of East Palo Alto’s population is younger than 25 years old compared to the State (45% and 36%, respectively). Twenty-five percent of EPA’s population is 45 years and older compared to 35% for the State.

**Age Distribution of East Palo Alto and California Residents
(2006 – 2008)**

	East Palo Alto	California
0 to 14 years	26%	21%
15 to 19 years	11%	8%
20 to 24 years	8%	7%
25 to 34 years	15%	14%
35 to 44 years	14%	15%
45 to 54 years	10%	14%
55 and older	15%	21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Ethnicity

The table below presents the share of East Palo Alto’s population by ethnic group as reported in the City of East Palo Alto’s Housing Element. The largest group is Hispanic or Latino at 55%, followed by African American at 20%.

East Palo Alto Population by Ethnic Group
(2007)

African American	20%
Asian	7%
Caucasian	9%
Hispanic or Latino	55%
Pacific Islander	8%
Other	1%

Source: City of East Palo Alto Housing Element,
December 2009 Draft

East Palo Alto Police Department

The average number of sworn police officers in East Palo Alto between 2002 and 2008 was 34 officers, ranging from 29 officers in 2008 to 37 officers in 2004 and 2005 (Figure 3). Figure 4 compares the number of police officers per 10,000 persons from a few sources. In 2008, East Palo Alto had nine police officers per 10,000 persons. Figure 4 shows that East Palo Alto’s rate is significantly lower compared to the average of all cities in the Western Pacific (17 officers per 10,000), the average of cities of similar size in the Western Pacific (14 officers per 10,000), the average of cities of similar size in California (14 officers per 10,000), and the average of cities with similar crime rates in California (16 officers per 10,000).⁵ In short, whether the comparison is based on geographic location, population size, or violent crime rate, East Palo Alto had a lower number of police officers per capita.

Figure 3. Number of Police Officers in East Palo Alto
(2002 – 2008)

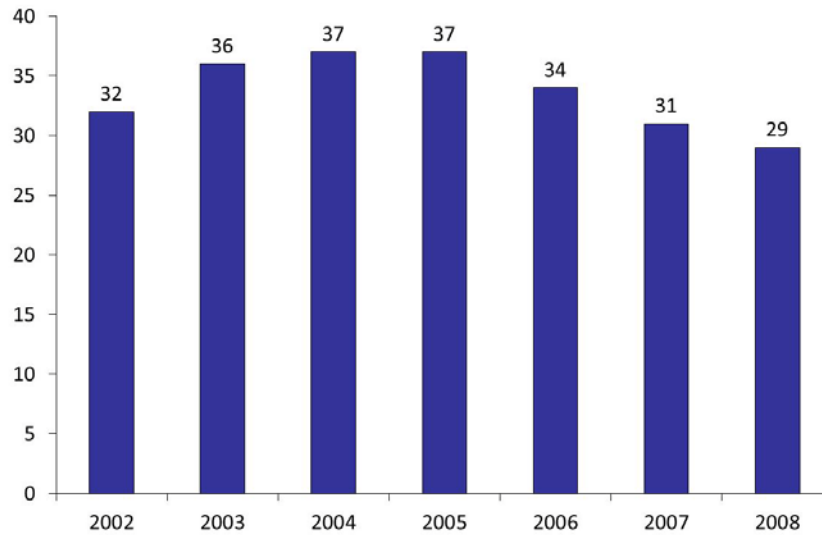
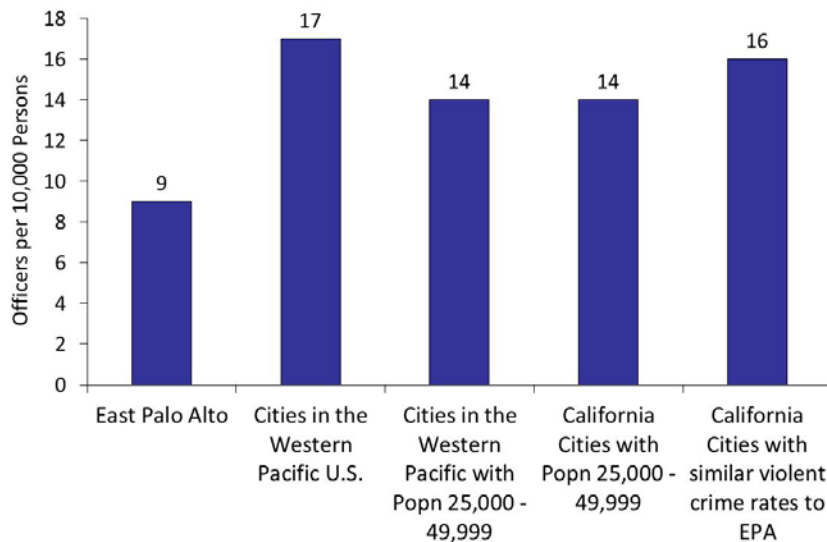


Figure 4. Police Officer Rates (per 10,000 people)
(2008)



⁵ Sources: Cities in the Western Pacific were taken from the FBI Uniform Crime Report 2008, Table 71. The states included in the “Western Pacific” category are: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. Cities in California with populations of 25,000 – 49,000 were taken from the FBI Uniform Crime Report 2008, Table 78. Cities in California with similar violent crime rates to East Palo Alto were taken from the FBI Uniform Crime Report 2008, Table 8 and only included cities that had populations of 20,000 or more and reported their violent crime statistics as well as their officer employment statistics. The following cities were included: Richmond, San Pablo, San Bernardino, Sacramento, Vallejo, Eureka, Huntington Park, Oakland, and Stockton.

Total Crime

Figure 5 compares the number of crimes for the seven major crime types. In 2008 there were 333 reported auto thefts, the highest of the individual crime types in East Palo Alto. Figure 6 shows that over two-thirds of the crimes in East Palo Alto in 2008 were property crimes (69%). The four violent crime types (homicide, rape, robbery, and assault) accounted for 31% of the number of crimes in the City that year.

Figure 5. Number of Crimes by Type in East Palo Alto (2008)

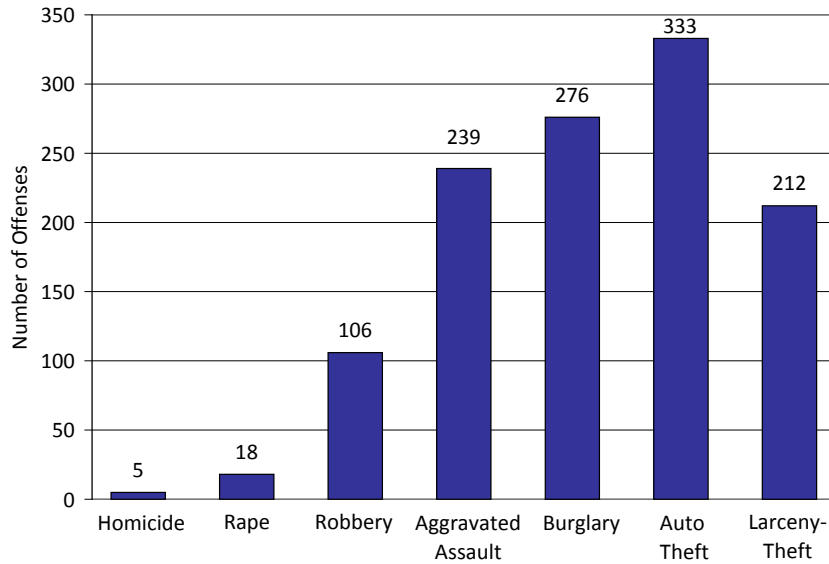
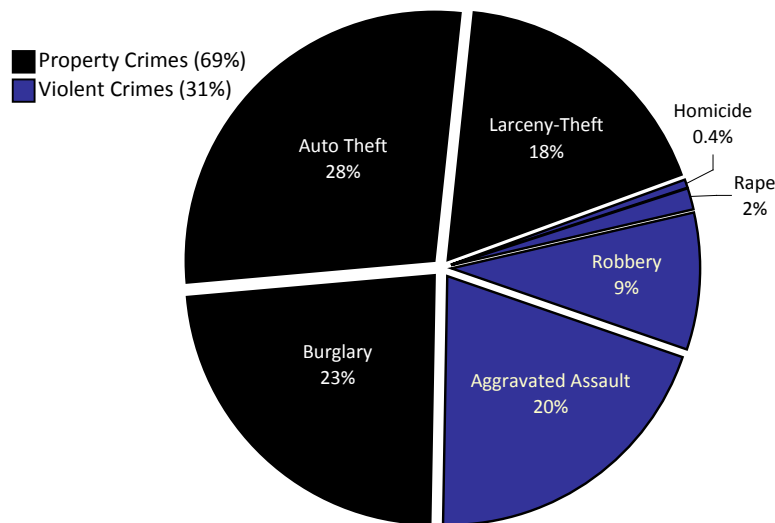
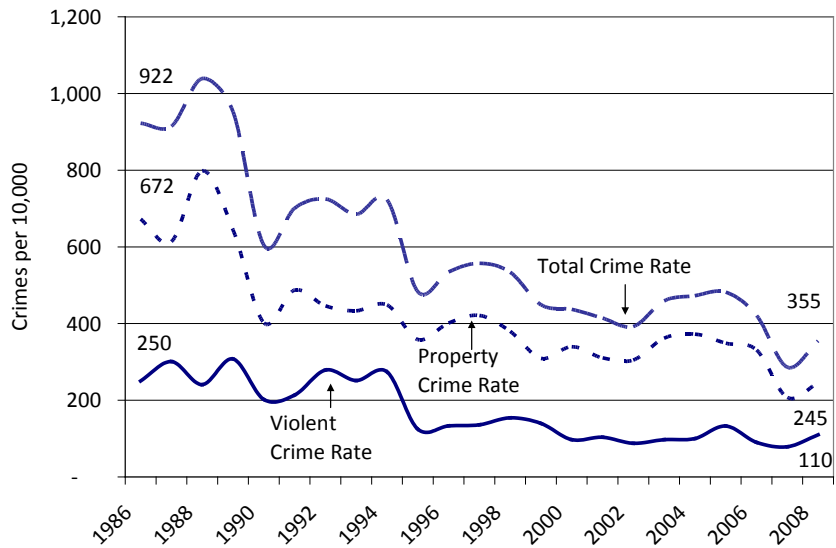


Figure 6. Percent of All Crimes by Crime Type (2008)



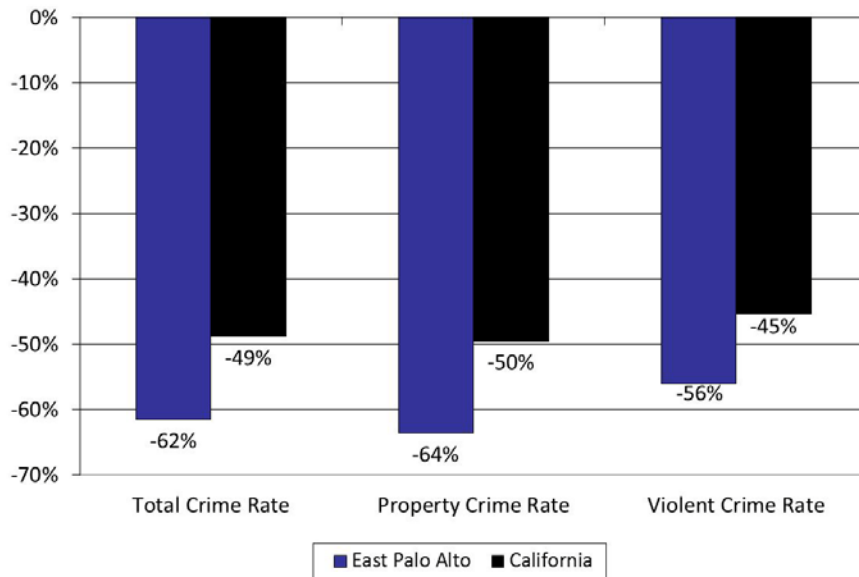
In recent years overall crime in East Palo Alto is significantly lower than it has been for much of the last few decades. The total crime rate in East Palo Alto has generally been on the decline since 1986 when there were 922 crimes per 10,000 persons to 355 crimes per 10,000 persons in 2008. Total crime in the City peaked in 1988 with 1,039 crimes per 10,000 people and was at its lowest in 2007 with 286 crimes per 10,000 people, a remarkable one-fifth of the peak year. Decline in the total crime rate (the combination of the violent crime rate and the property crime rate) was not driven by one type of crime. As shown below in Figure 7, for most of the 22-year period changes in the violent crime rate and property crime rate mirrored one another.

Figure 7. Total, Violent, and Property Crime Rates in East Palo Alto (1986 – 2008)



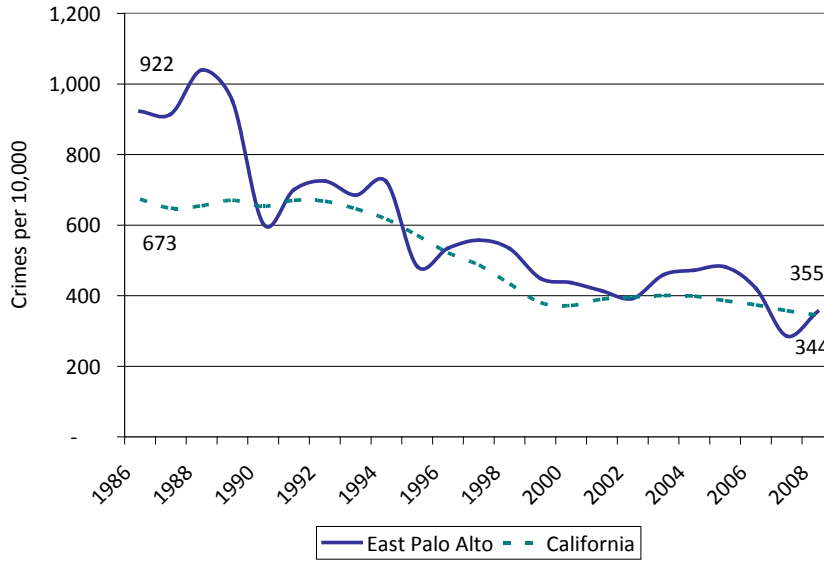
The declines in East Palo Alto’s total crime rate, property crime rate, and violent crime rate were greater than the State overall as shown in Figure 8. East Palo Alto experienced a 62% drop in total crime rate compared to a 49% drop for the State, a 64% drop in property crime rate, and a 56% drop in violent crime rate between 1986 and 2008.

Figure 8. Percent Change in Crime Rates (1986 to 2008)



Despite dramatic decreases locally, EPA’s total crime rate was still higher than California’s total crime rate in all but four years of the 22-year period (1991, 1996, 2003, 2007). Interestingly, the timing of the decline was different in East Palo Alto from the State overall, as EPA started to experience notable reductions before the State overall (Figure 9).

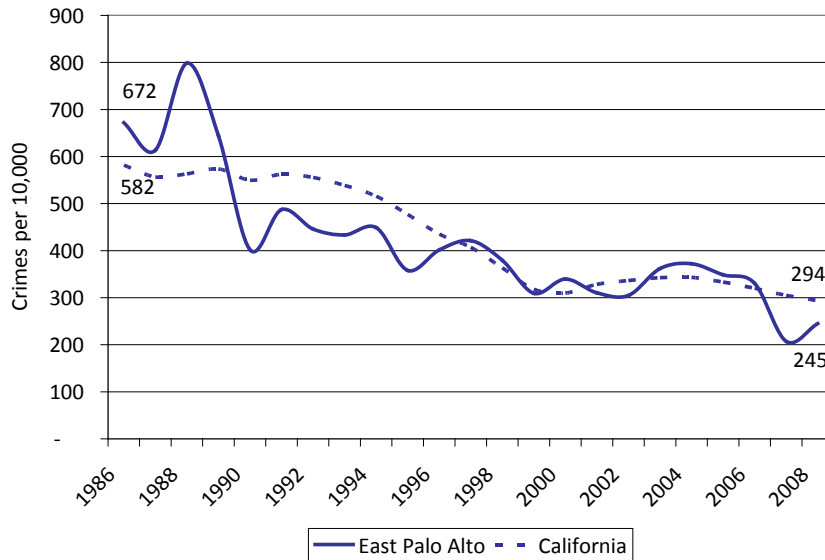
Figure 9. Total Crime Rate
(1986 – 2008)



Property Crime

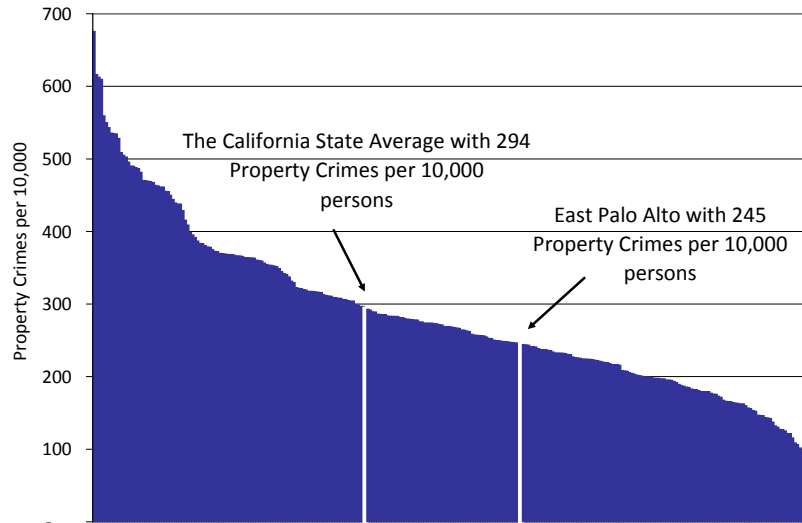
Since 1986, East Palo Alto has experienced a significant decrease in the property crime rate. In 1986 there were 672 property crimes per 10,000 people in East Palo Alto and that decreased to 245 property crimes per 10,000 people by 2008. The property crime rate was the lowest during this 22-year period in 2007 with 207 property crimes per 10,000 people. The property crime rate in California also decreased during this period from 582 per 10,000 to 294 per 10,000 between 1986 and 2008 (Figure 10). East Palo Alto's property crime rate fluctuated when compared to the State average. In approximately half of the years included in Figure 10 EPA's property crime rate was higher than the State and in half of the years it was lower.

Figure 10. Property Crime Rate
(1986 - 2008)



Ranking individual cities based on their property crime rate shows that East Palo Alto ranked 173rd out of 291 California cities in 2008 and was lower than the State average.⁶ The left side of Figure 11 includes cities with higher property crime rates and the right side includes cities with lower property crime rates. The overall State average property crime rate in 2008 was 294 per 10,000 persons.

Figure 11. City-Level Property Crime Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest (2008)



⁶ In 2008, there were 291 cities in California with a population greater than 20,000.

Burglary

The rate of burglary has experienced a significant decline since 1986 with East Palo Alto dropping 69% compared to a 62% drop for the State overall. Since 1996, East Palo Alto's burglary rate has remained consistently higher than the average of California (Figure 12). In 2008, East Palo Alto ranked 61st among 291 California cities in burglary rate (Figure 13).

Figure 12. Burglary Rate
(1986 – 2008)

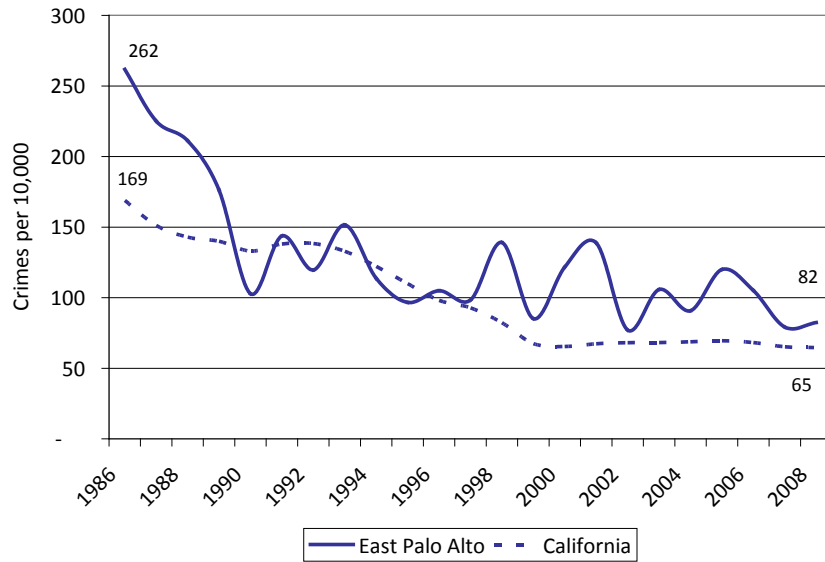
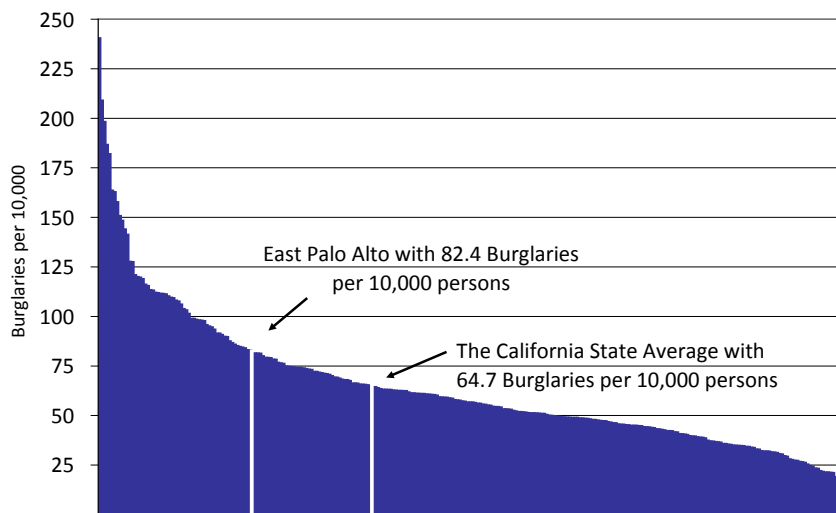


Figure 13. City-Level Burglary Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest
(2008)



Auto Theft

The rate of auto theft in East Palo Alto has increased and decreased several times over the last few decades. In 2008 there were 99 auto thefts per 10,000 people compared to 52 for the State (Figure 14). East Palo Alto was on the high end in terms of the rate of auto thefts ranking 21st out of 291 cities in 2008 (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Auto Theft Rate
(1986 – 2008)

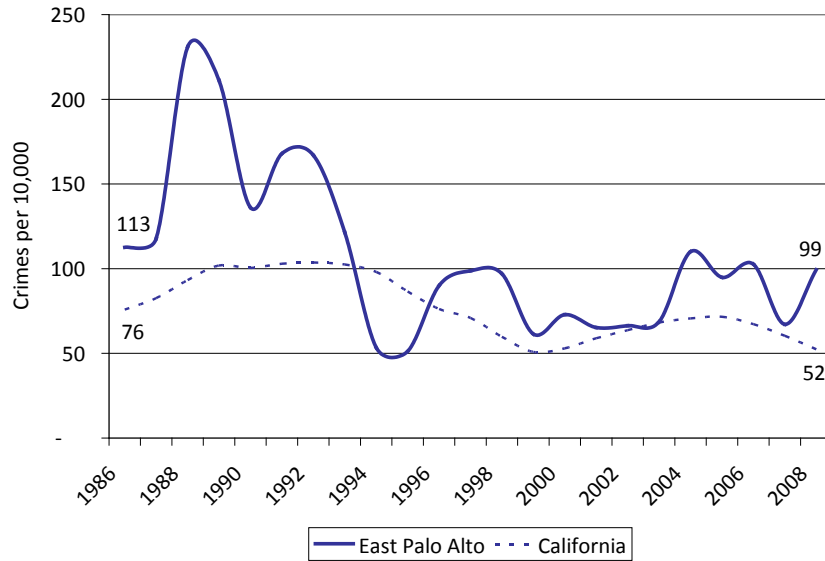
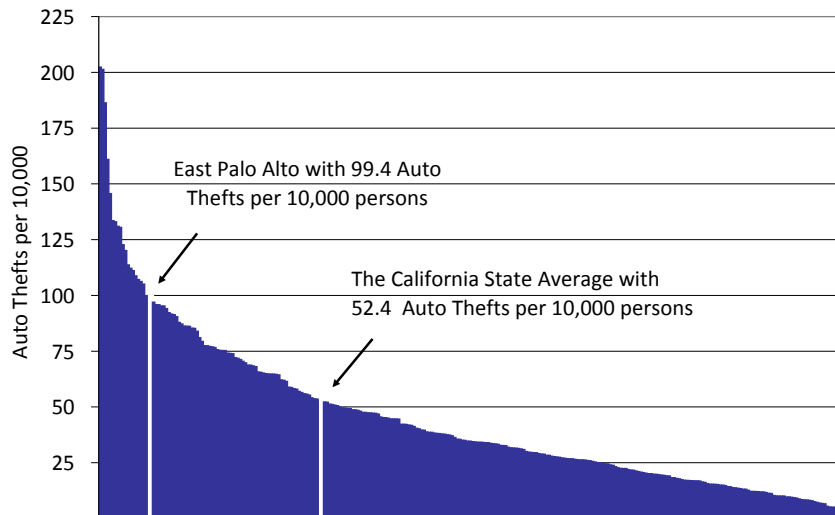


Figure 15. City-Level Auto Theft Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest
(2008)



Larceny-Theft

East Palo Alto has consistently had a lower larceny-theft rate than California overall. East Palo Alto's larceny-theft rate was the lowest in 2007 with 61 per 10,000 people and highest in 1988 with 356 per 10,000, which is over five times higher than it is today (Figure 16). East Palo Alto's larceny-theft rate is one of the lowest in the State. In 2008, East Palo Alto ranked 287th out of 291 in larceny-theft rate (Figure 17).

Figure 16. Larceny-Theft Rate
(1986 – 2008)

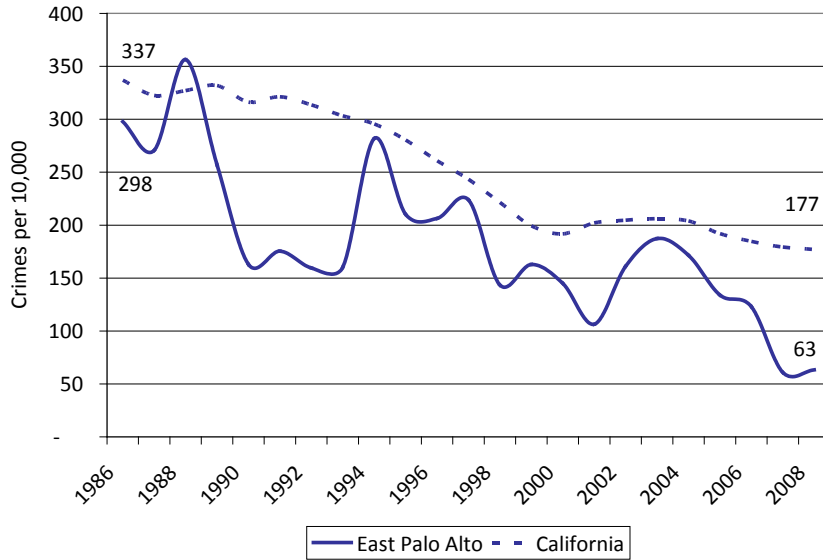
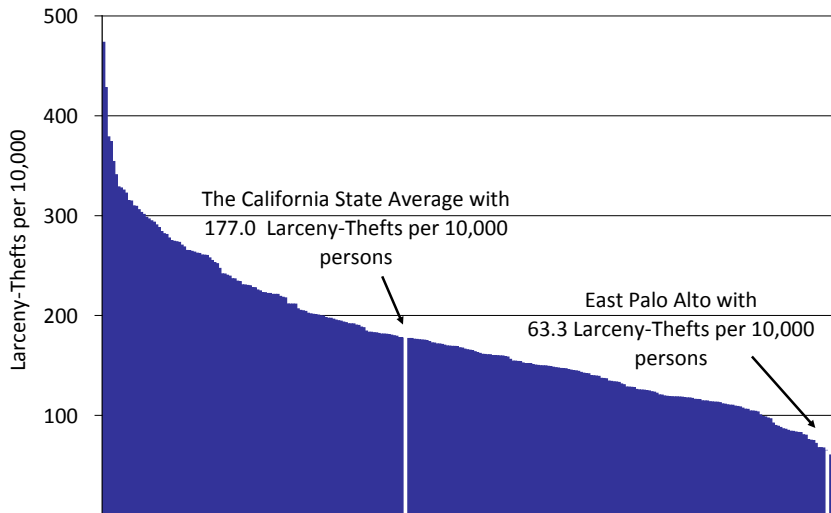


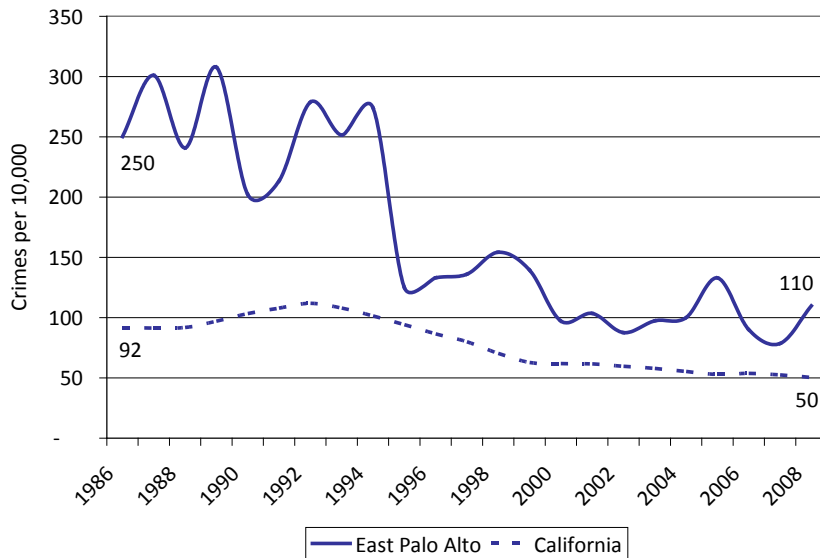
Figure 17. City-Level Larceny-Theft Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest
(2008)



Violent Crime

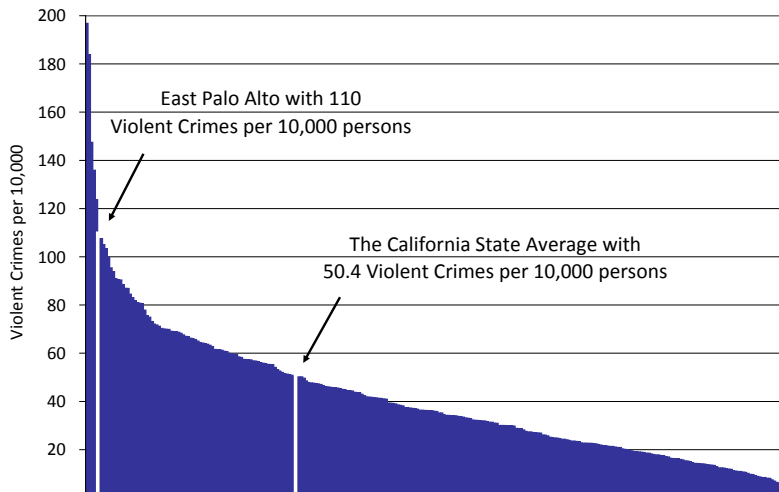
Since 1986, East Palo Alto has experienced a significant decrease in the violent crime rate. In 1986, there were 250 violent crimes reported per 10,000 people in East Palo Alto (a total number of 480 violent crimes reported) and that decreased to 110 crimes reported per 10,000 people by 2008 (a total number of 368 violent crimes reported). Violent crime in East Palo Alto peaked in 1989 with 308 violent crimes per 10,000 persons. East Palo Alto's year of lowest violent crime was 2007 with 79 violent crimes per 10,000 people (Figure 18). Like East Palo Alto, the violent crime rate in California trended downward from 92 per 10,000 to 50 per 10,000 between 1986 and 2008. Despite significant reductions in East Palo Alto's violent crime rate, it has remained consistently higher than the State average during the entire 22-year period (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Violent Crime Rate
(1986 – 2008)



In 2008, East Palo Alto ranked 6th in violent crime rate among the 291 cities in California with a population exceeding 20,000 persons (Figure 19). Said another way, only five cities in California had a higher violent crime rate than East Palo Alto in 2008. They are Barstow, Compton, Desert Hot Springs, Oakland, and Stockton.

Figure 19. City-Level Violent Crime Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest
(2008)



Aggravated Assault

East Palo Alto’s aggravated assault rate decreased by 58% between 1986 and 2008 from 168 assaults per 10,000 to 71 per 10,000 (Figure 20). Aggravated assaults have experienced a series of increases and decreases over the 22-year period but have consistently been higher than the State average. In 2008, East Palo Alto ranked 6th in aggravated assault among 291 California cities (Figure 21). Only Barstow, Compton, Desert Hot Springs, Oakland, and Stockton had higher assault rates in 2008.

Figure 20. Aggravated Assault Rate
(1986 – 2008)

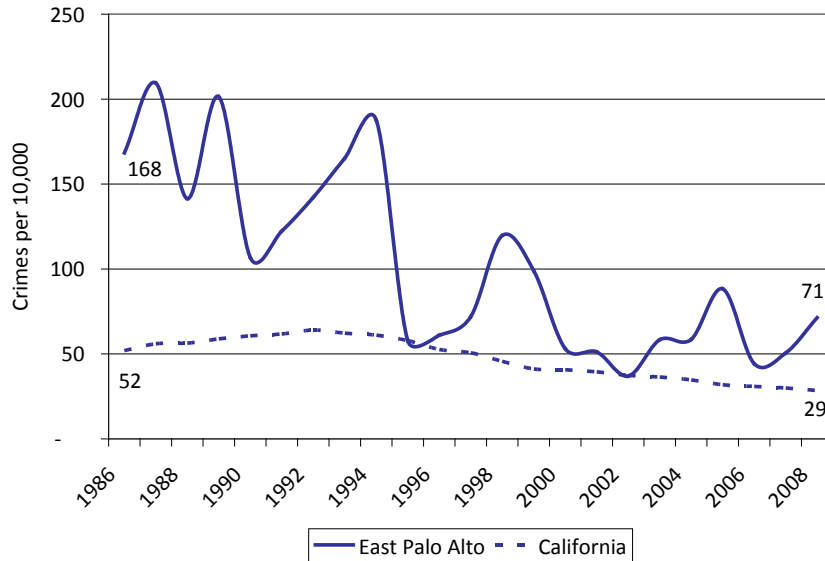
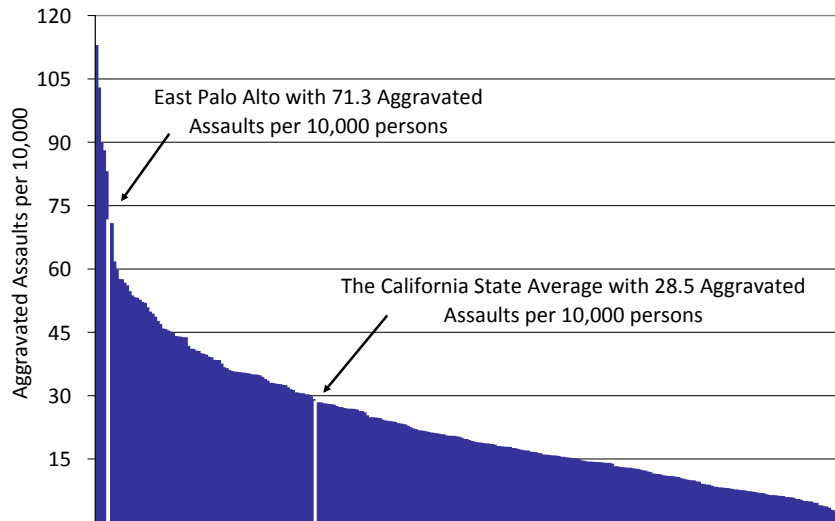


Figure 21. City-Level Aggravated Assault Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest
(2008)



Robbery

East Palo Alto’s robbery rate generally declined since the mid 1980’s with the exception of a spike in robberies in 1992. Since 1986 the decrease in EPA’s robbery rate was larger than California, 54% compared to 45%. However, EPA’s robbery rate has been consistently higher than the state average (Figure 22). In terms of how East Palo Alto compares to other individual cities, in 2008 East Palo Alto ranked 28th in robberies among 291 California cities with populations exceeding 20,000 persons (Figure 23). East Palo Alto had 31.6 robberies per 10,000 persons while the California state average was 18.9 per 10,000 persons.

Figure 22. Robbery Rate
(1986 – 2008)

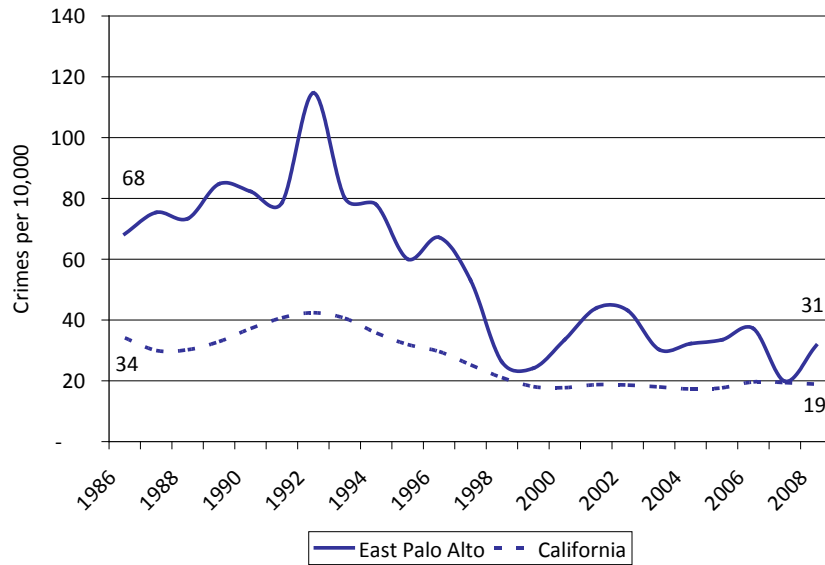
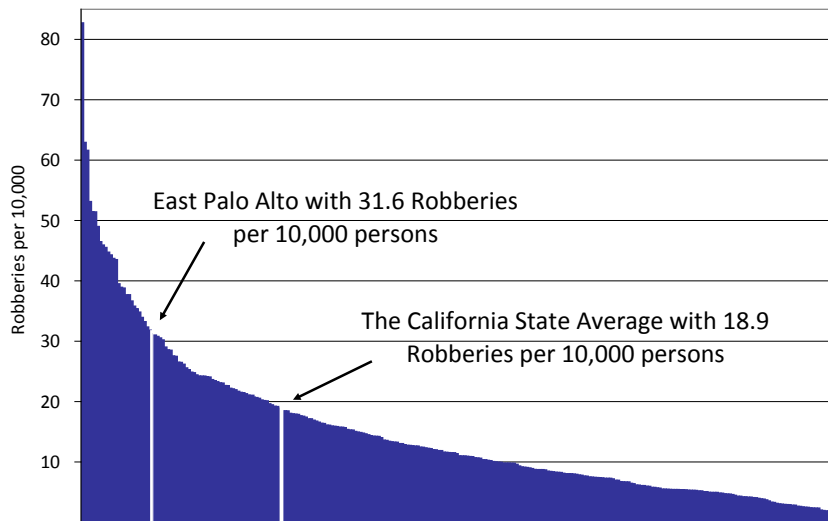


Figure 23. City-Level Robbery Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest
(2008)



Rape

The number of rapes in East Palo Alto declined during the mid 2000's from 23 in 2004 to 18 in 2008 (Figure 24).⁷ The number of rapes per 10,000 has been higher than the state average in 21 of the 22 years included in Figure 25. EPA ranks 8th out of 291 cities in terms of highest number of rapes per 10,000 (Figure 26).

Figure 24. Number of Rapes in East Palo Alto
(1986 – 2008)

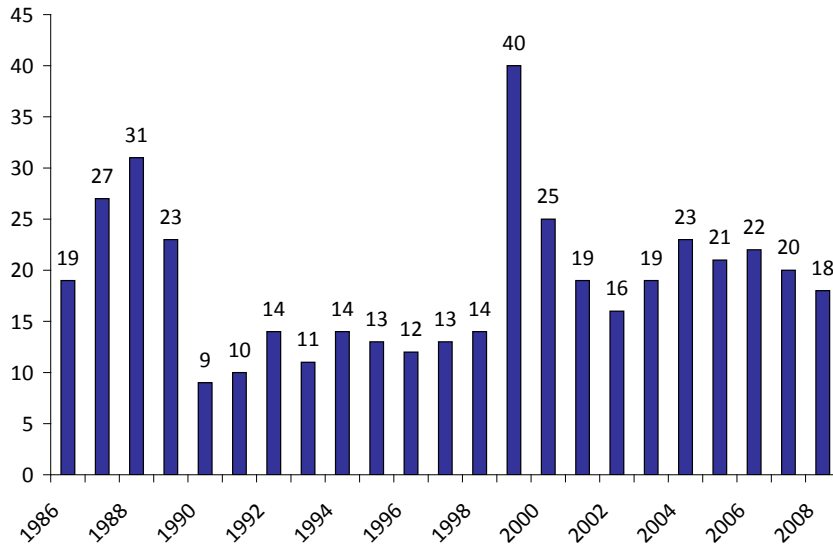
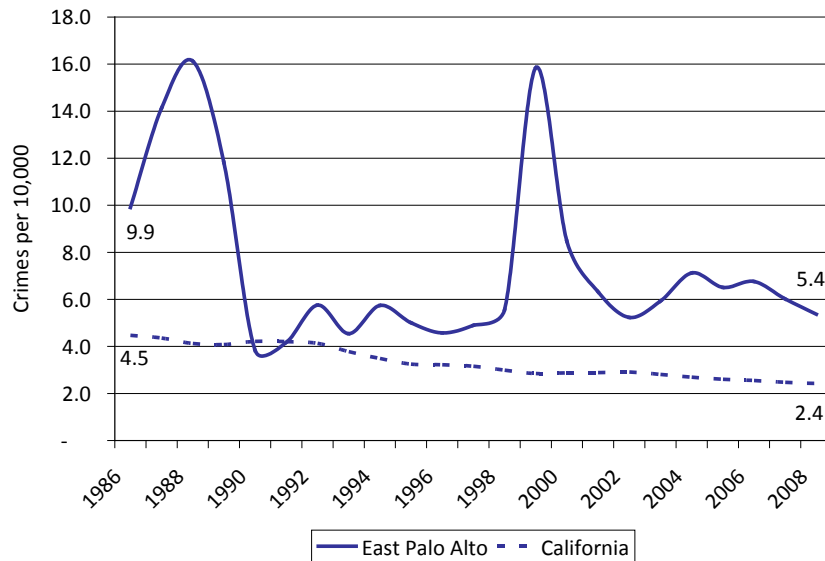
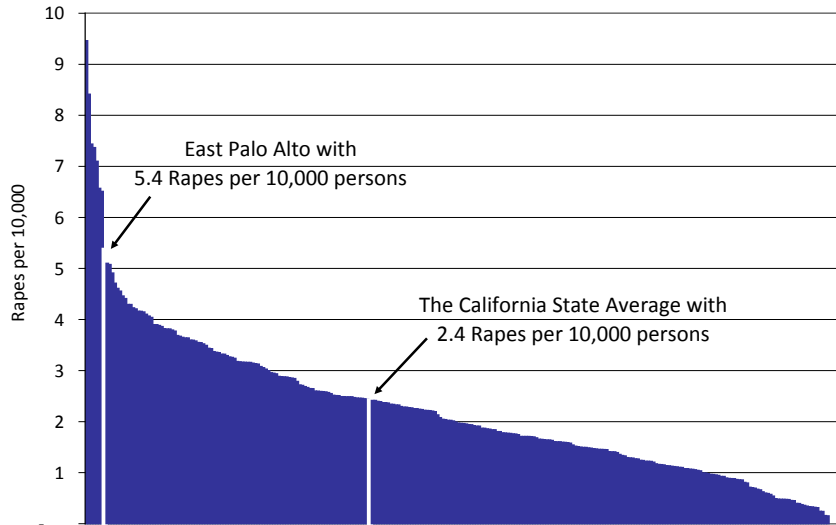


Figure 25. Rape Rate
(1986 - 2008)



⁷ The rate from one year to the next can change significantly because of the relatively small number of crimes and comparisons with state averages should be made with caution.

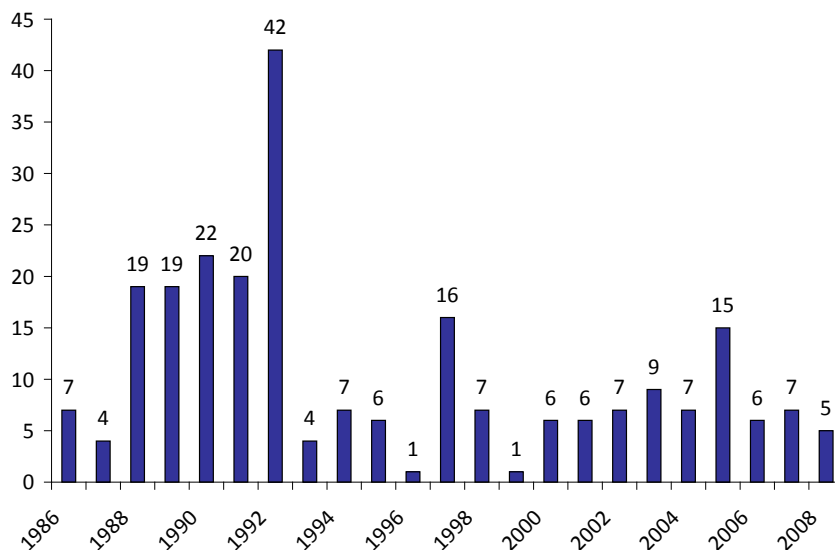
Figure 26. City-Level Rape Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest (2008)



Homicide

The number of homicides per year in East Palo Alto changed significantly over the period 1986 to 2008. Since the dramatic spike in 1992, the number of homicides has been less than 10 per year with the exception of 1997 (16) and 2005 (15) (Figure 27).⁸ However, EPA’s homicide rate has consistently been higher than the State since 2000 (Figure 28). Despite the City having the lowest number of homicides in years in 2008, East Palo Alto still ranked 10th among 291 California cities with a population exceeding 20,000 persons (Figure 29).⁹ The nine cities in California that had a higher homicide rate than East Palo Alto in 2008 were Barstow, Compton, Covina, Desert Hot Springs, Oakland, Richmond, Salinas, San Bernardino, and San Pablo.

Figure 27. Number of Homicides in East Palo Alto (1986 – 2008)



⁸ The homicide rate can change dramatically from year to year so comparisons with the State average should be made with caution.

⁹ Note that the right side of Figure 29 depicts the 87 cities with a population greater than 20,000 that had no homicides in 2008.

Figure 28. Homicide Rate
(1986 - 2008)

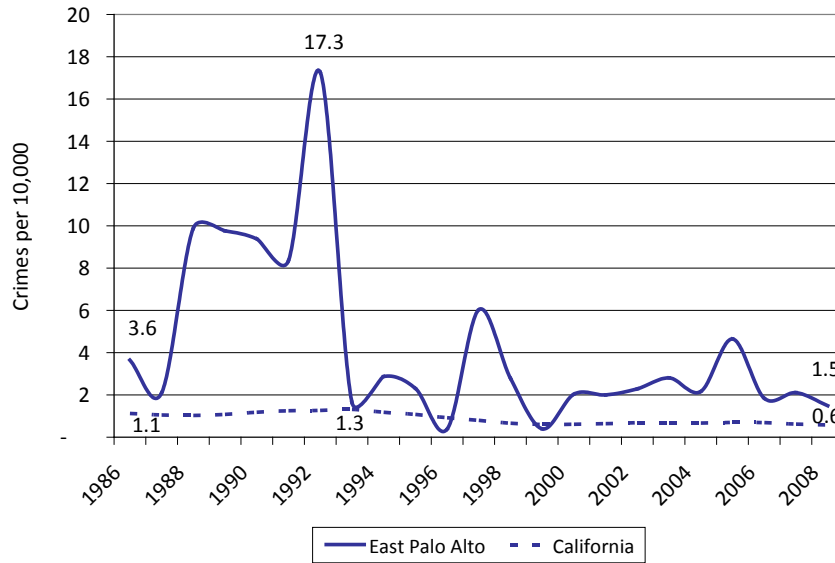
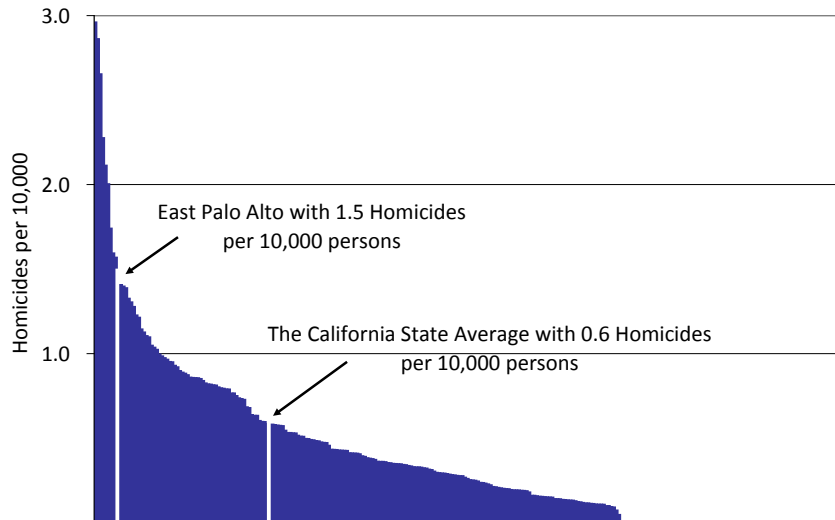


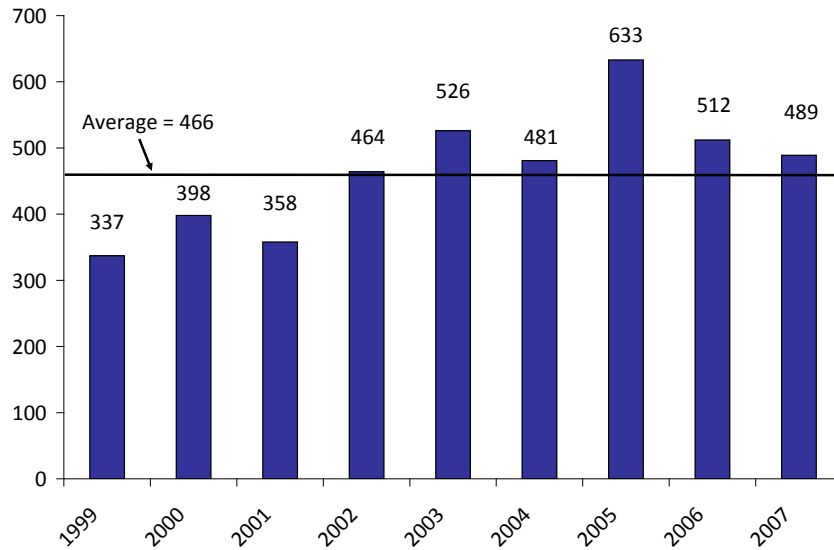
Figure 29. City-Level Homicide Rate Ranked from Highest to Lowest
(2008)



Shootings

East Palo Alto has a serious gun violence problem. In addition to data on violent crimes from the Uniform Crime Reports, data on the level of shootings can help to better understand the problem. The analyses presented in this next section of the report are based on two additional data sources: dispatch data from the San Mateo County Public Safety Communications Division and data from the East Palo Alto Police Department’s ShotSpotter gunshot location system (see section on Data Sources for detail on these two data sources). Between 1999 and 2007 the average number of dispatched calls for service involving a firearm was 466 per year. The number of dispatched calls was lowest in 1999 at 337 and peaked in 2005 at 633 (Figure 30).

Figure 30. Number of Dispatched Calls For Service Involving a Firearm per Year (1999 – 2007)



Comparing the Data Sources

Data Source	What is the unit of analysis?	Period of data
<i>ShotSpotter Gunshot Location System</i>	<i>The number of actual shots fired with precise information about location. The shots are detected and sent to the Police Department in real time.</i>	<i>The ShotSpotter System was launched citywide on January 1, 2009. Eighteen months of data are used in this report: January 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.</i>
<i>Dispatched Calls for Service</i>	<i>The number of shooting incidents as determined by dispatchers based on calls for service for gunshots heard.</i>	<i>Nine years of data are used in this report: January 1, 1999 to December 31, 2007.</i>

A few differences between the two data sources are worth noting:

- ◆ *The ShotSpotter system can record several gunshots for a single “shooting incident.” For example, there can be more than one shooter or several rounds could be fired from a single weapon.*
- ◆ *Dispatchers can receive several calls for shots fired and record it as a single incident.*

Shootings by Time of Year

Figure 31 presents the number of dispatched calls for service by month. The average number of dispatched calls for service in East Palo Alto was 38.9 between 1999 and 2007. The months with the highest number of dispatched calls for service are January, June, July, and December. The peaks during those four months are probably related to increased use of fireworks for New Year’s Day and Fourth of July celebrations. Figure 32 presents the average number of recorded shots by the ShotSpotter system by month. Not surprisingly, the month-to-month trends follow similar patterns across the two data systems. The peaks during the highest months from the ShotSpotter system are more dramatic compared to the peaks from dispatched calls for service because of instances in which many shots were fired in a single incident.

Figure 31. Average Number of Dispatched Calls For Service Involving a Firearm by Month (1999 - 2007)

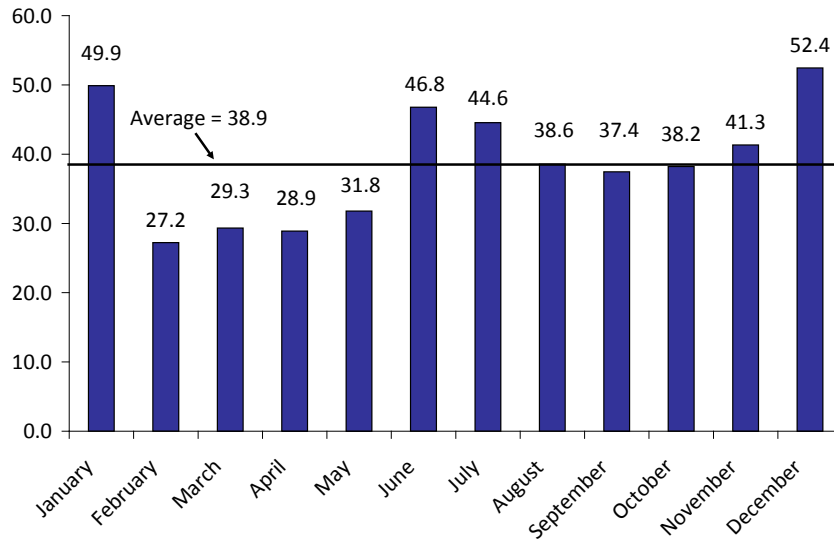
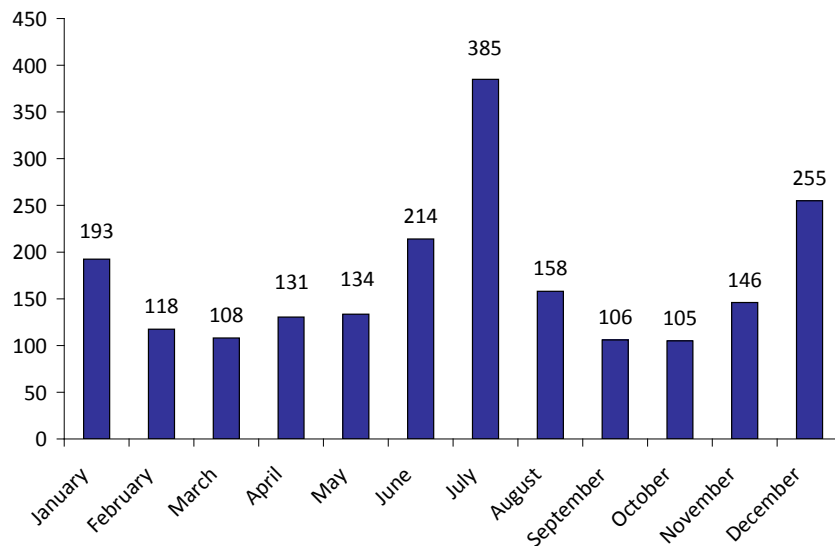


Figure 32. Average Number of ShotSpotter Firearm Activations by Month (January 2009 – June 2010)



Data on shootings are also presented by season. Figures 33 and 34 aggregate monthly data into four seasons.¹⁰ The dispatched calls for service data shows that calls for shots fired are essentially evenly distributed across the four seasons, implying that there are no seasonal fluctuations. However, based on ShotSpotter activation data, more shots are recorded in the summer than in any other season. The share of shots recorded in the summer is over two times those recorded in the fall (37% versus 17%).

Figure 33. Dispatched Calls for Service Involving a Firearm by Season
(1999 - 2007)

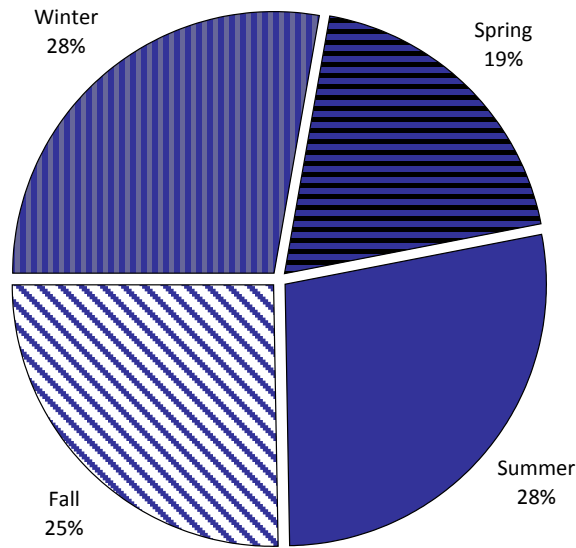
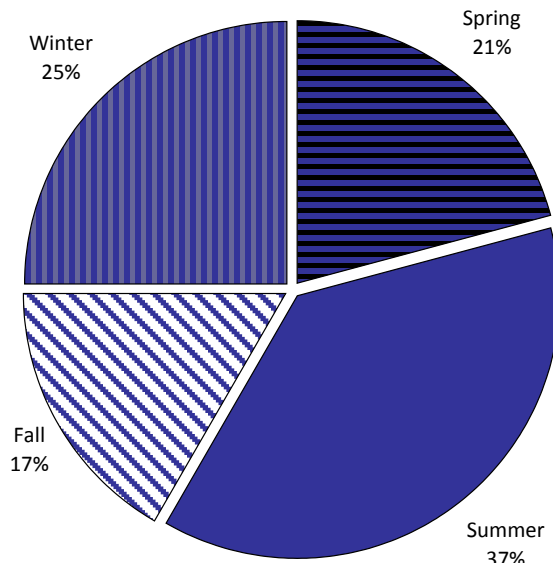


Figure 34. ShotSpotter Firearm Activations by Season
(2009)



¹⁰ March, April, May are spring months; June, July, August are summer months; September, October, November are fall months; December, January, February are winter months.

Shootings by Day of the Week

The frequency of shootings by the day of the week was examined using the two data sources. Again, the two sources show similar patterns. Saturdays have the most shooting incidents and shots recorded, followed by Sundays and Fridays. The number of calls for service is fairly stable Monday through Thursday (Figure 35) but ShotSpotter activations drop on Tuesday and increase as the weekend approaches (Figure 36).

Figure 35. Average Number of Dispatched Calls For Service Involving a Firearm by Day of the Week (1999 - 2007)

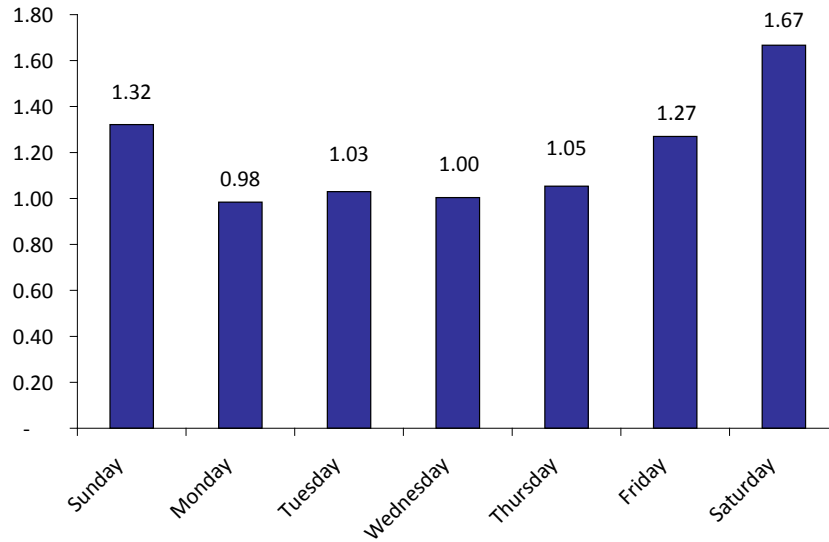
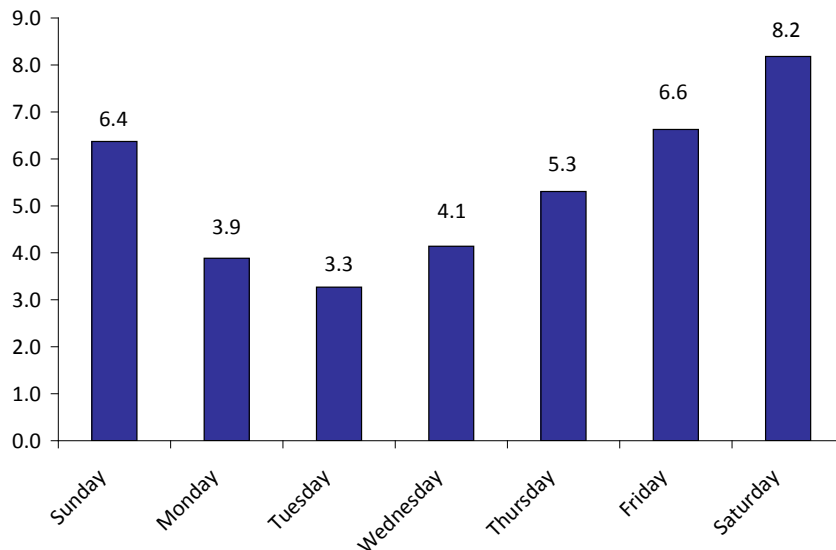


Figure 36. Average Number of ShotSpotter Firearm Activations by Day of the Week (January 2009 – June 2010)



Shootings by Time of Day

The dispatched calls for service by time of day are presented below. As shown in Figure 37, the number of calls for service for gunshots is relatively low between 4:00 am and 7:00 pm and increase significantly after 7:00 pm. The two hour period with the highest number of calls for service for gunshots is between 9:00 pm and 11:00 pm. After 1:00 am the number of calls drops significantly. The pie chart (Figure 38) illustrates how dispatched calls for service for gunshots are concentrated during a few hours of the day. Fifty-seven percent of dispatched calls are received during the six-hour period of 6:00 pm and midnight, while only 16% of calls are received during the 12-hour period 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Figure 37. Number of Dispatched Calls For Service Involving a Firearm by Hour (1999 - 2007)

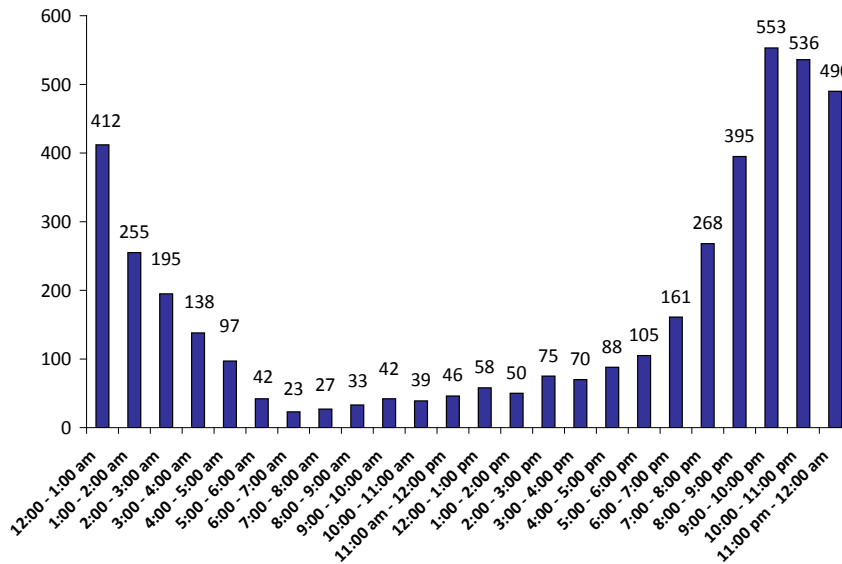
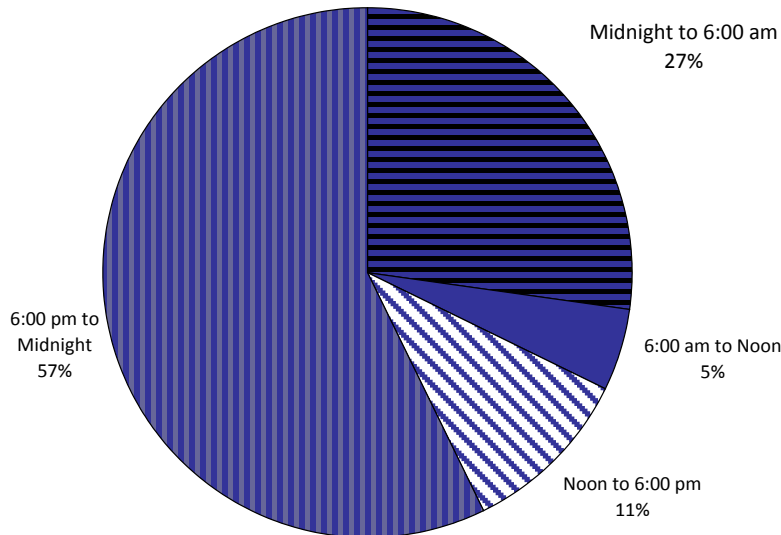


Figure 38. Dispatched Calls For Service Involving a Firearm by Time of Day (1999 - 2007)



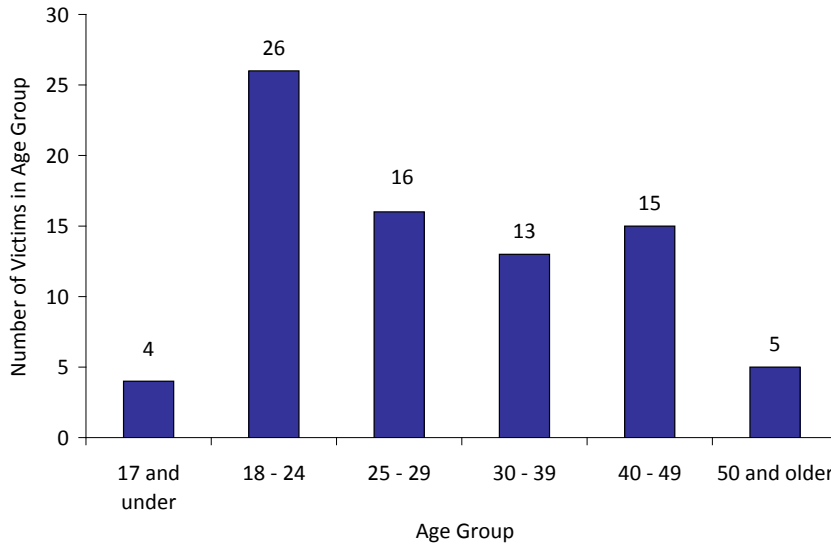
Homicide Victims and Known Homicide Offenders

To better understand the nature and context of homicide in East Palo Alto an analysis of the demographics and criminal histories of homicide victims and known homicide offenders was conducted. The analysis is based on a review of case files from the East Palo Alto Police Department and files from the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS), more commonly referred to as rap sheets.¹¹

Age

Homicide victims are older than offenders on average. The average age of a homicide victim was 30.3 years, ranging from a low of 13 years old to a high of 68 years old. For known homicide offenders, the average age was 20.6 years at the time of the homicide with the youngest known offender from this sample being 15 years old and the oldest being 27 years old. As shown in Figure 39, the age group with the highest number of homicide victims was 18 to 24 years old. Notably, more homicide victims were in their forties compared to their thirties (15 and 13, respectively).

Figure 39. Homicide Victims by Age Group
(January 1998 – June 2010, N = 79)



¹¹ Seventy-nine homicide victims are included from January of 1998 through June of 2010 as well as 14 known offenders from January 2006 to June 2010.

Gender

The large majority of both victims and offenders of homicides in East Palo Alto were male, as 87% of victims were male (Figure 40) and 93% of offenders were male (Figure 41).

Figure 40. Victims of Homicide in East Palo Alto by Gender
(January 1998 – June 2010)

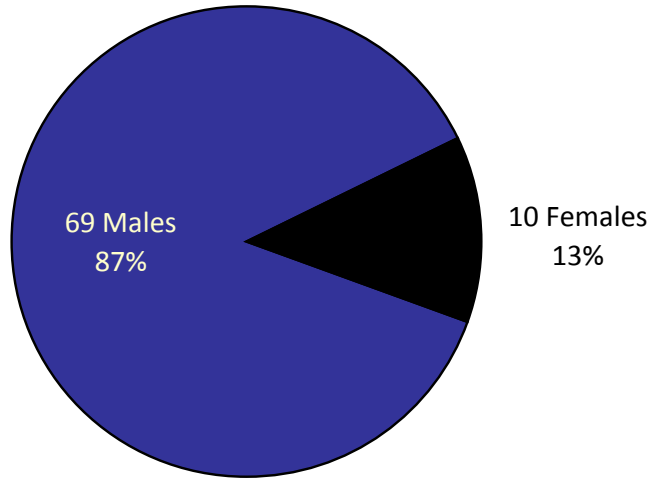
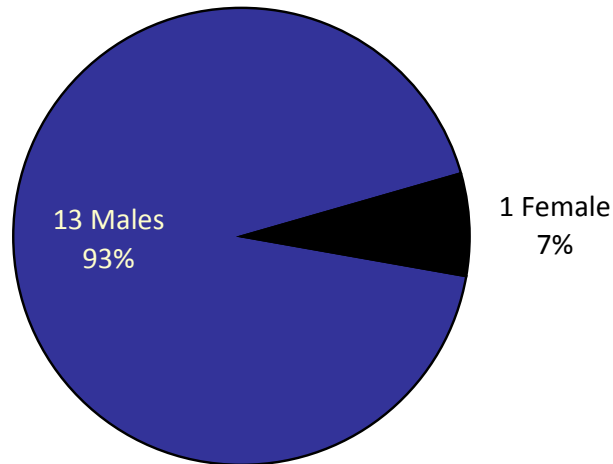


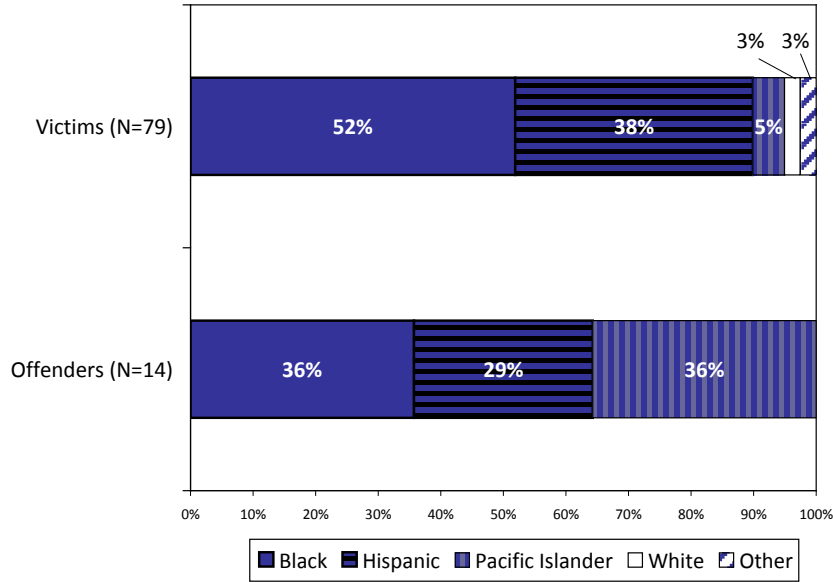
Figure 41. Known Homicide Offenders in East Palo Alto by Gender
(January 2006 – June 2010)



Race / Ethnicity

The large majority of victims of homicides in East Palo Alto were Black (52%) or Hispanic (37%) between 1998 and June 2010. Four victims over this twelve and a half year period were Pacific Islander and two were White. The race/ethnicity of known homicide offenders over the four and a half year period was pretty evenly split across three groups: Black (36%), Hispanic (29%) and Pacific Islander (36%) (Figure 42).

Figure 42. Homicide Victims and Known Homicide Offenders by Race / Ethnicity
 (Victim data: January 1998 – June 2010, Offender data: January 2006 – June 2010)



Prior Arrests

Eighty-one percent of homicide victims had at least one prior arrest and nineteen percent of homicide victims (15 of 79) had never been arrested. For those victims that had an arrest record, on average, they had a higher number of prior arrests than known homicide offenders. Victims with an arrest record on average had 8.5 arrests, and known offenders on average had 7.0 arrests (Figure 43).¹² The highest number of arrests for a victim was 36 and the highest number of arrests for an offender was 17. Both homicide victims and known offenders have many types of arrests. In other words, they did not “specialize” in certain crime types. Seventy percent of victims had an arrest related to violence, 73% for drugs, 53% for property, and 53% for disorderly offenses (Figure 44).

Figure 43. Average Number of Arrests for Homicide Victims and Known Offenders

(Victim data: January 1998 – June 2010, Offender data: January 2006 – June 2010)

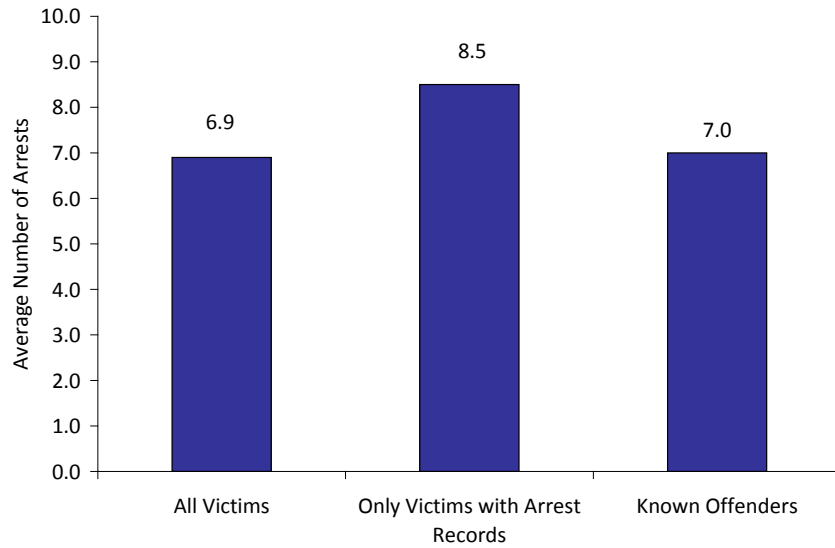
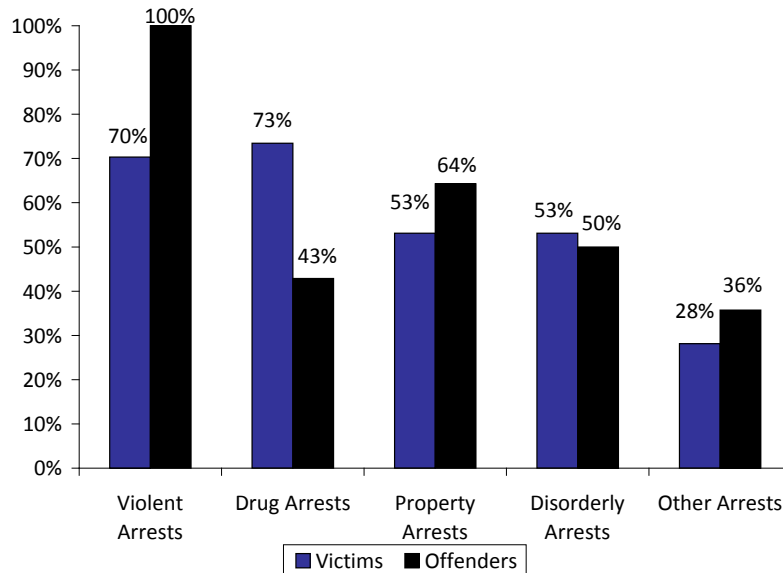


Figure 44. Percent of Homicide Victims and Known Offenders by Type of Arrest

(Victim data: January 1998 – June 2010, Offender data: January 2006 – June 2010)



¹² When the two victims with the highest number of arrests (35 and 36) are taken out, the average number of arrests drops to 7.6 making the victims and offender groups more comparable.

Criminal Histories of Homicide Victims and Known Offenders

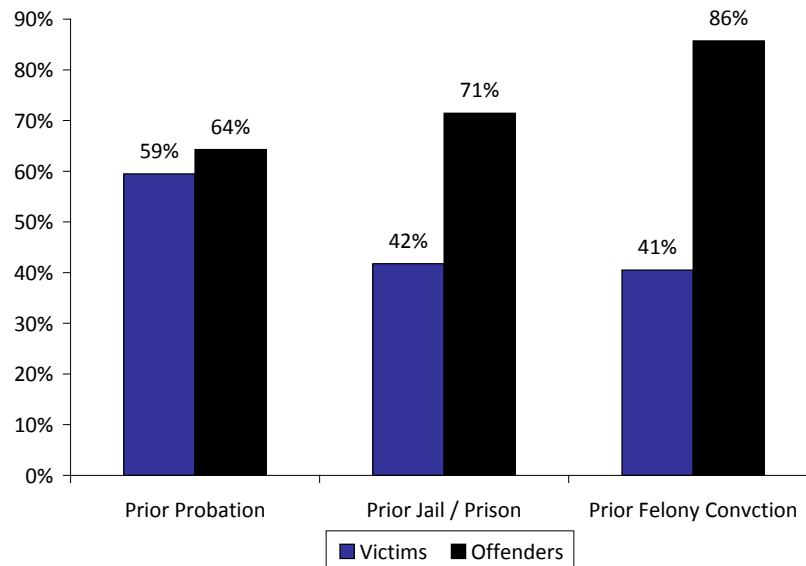
(Victim data: January 1998 – June 2010, Offender data: January 2006 – June 2010)

Victims	Known Offenders
Average age = 30.3 years	Average age = 20.6 years
81% of victims had at least one prior arrest	100% of known offenders had at least one prior arrest
Average number of arrests	Known offenders average 7.0 prior arrests
- 6.9 arrests for all victims	
- 8.5 arrests for victims with at least one prior arrest	
Of 64 victims with at least one prior arrest	Of 14 known offenders
- 70% at least one violent arrest	- 100% at least one violent arrest
- 73% at least one drug arrest	- 43% at least one drug arrest
- 53% at least one property arrest	- 64% at least one property arrest
- 53% at least one disorderly arrest	- 50% at least one disorderly arrest
- 28% at least one "other" arrest	- 36% at least one "other" arrest

Extent of Prior Criminal Justice Involvement

To understand the extent of prior criminal justice involvement of both victims and known offenders the rates of prior probation, prior incarceration, and prior felony conviction were examined.¹³ Known homicide offenders had extensive involvement with the criminal justice system, as did victims although to a lesser extent. The percent that had previously been on probation were comparable between homicide victims and known offenders: 59% and 64%. The disparities are larger for prior prison or jail terms (42% for victims and 71% for offenders) and prior felony convictions (41% for victims and 86% for offenders) (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Percent of Homicide Victims and Offenders with Prior Criminal Justice Involvement
(Victim data: January 1998 – June 2010, Offender data: January 2006 – June 2010)



¹³ For the purpose of this report incarceration meant that they were sentenced to jail or prison for 90 days or more.

Conclusion

East Palo Alto has seen significant population growth over the last few decades, more than the State overall in percentage terms. East Palo Alto has also seen significant improvements in public safety, as the crime rate has decreased in all major categories of crime since the mid 1980's. Again, the change was larger than the State overall in percentage terms with the State's total crime rate decreasing by 49% compared to 62% for the City between 1986 and 2008.

Although the reduction in crime has been considerable, the level of violent crime in East Palo Alto remains very high, as East Palo Alto ranks in the top ten among California cities in three of the four categories of violent crime (aggravated assault, homicide, and rape). Shootings are a fairly common occurrence in the City with more than one shooting incident per day being reported to the police on average.

A review of homicide cases since the late 1990's reveals that the profiles of homicide victims and known homicide offenders are not dramatically different. Both groups have considerable arrest records; both groups have been arrested for a wide range of offense types; and both groups are well-known to the criminal justice system with high rates of prior convictions and prior periods of incarceration. One area in which there appears to be a notable difference is age, as homicide victims are approximately 10 years older than known homicide offenders on average.

Despite high levels of violence, resources for the East Palo Alto Police Department appear to be lower than other police departments. A look at sworn police officers per capita shows that EPA PD is significantly lower in officers per capita compared to other cities in California with similar violent crime rates and other similarly sized cities in California.

The data presented in this report were compiled to inform and educate City leaders, community groups, and the residents of East Palo Alto about crime in the City using a comprehensive approach. While much has been accomplished over the last few decades, serious problems and challenges remain. The hope is that the findings presented here will help the City of East Palo Alto make more-informed decisions, more effectively target resources, and become a safer and more secure community going forward.

Appendix: Raw Data for Tables and Charts

Population and Total Crime Rates

Year	EPA Population	CA Population	EPA Total Crime Rate	CA Total Crime Rate
1986	19,181	27,102,237	922.3	673.2
1987	19,101	27,777,158	914.6	647.8
1988	19,227	28,464,249	1039.2	654.9
1989	19,462	29,218,164	952.1	670.6
1990	23,451	29,950,111	603.8	652.9
1991	23,939	30,414,114	700.5	670.1
1992	24,322	30,875,920	724.9	667.5
1993	24,210	31,147,208	684.8	646.3
1994	24,380	31,317,179	722.7	617.1
1995	25,975	31,493,525	483.2	570.9
1996	26,212	31,780,829	534.5	521.5
1997	26,532	32,217,708	557.1	486.9
1998	25,158	32,682,794	533.8	433.8
1999	25,244	33,145,121	448.8	380.4
2000	29,506	33,998,767	436.9	371.9
2001	30,054	34,507,030	413.9	390.0
2002	30,590	34,916,495	392.3	396.0
2003	32,042	35,307,398	459.1	400.4
2004	32,283	35,629,666	472.4	398.7
2005	32,255	35,885,415	481.8	385.9
2006	32,532	36,121,296	420.8	373.8
2007	33,210	36,377,534	285.8	357.3
2008	33,513	36,756,666	354.8	344.4

Property Crime Rates

Year	EPA Property Crime Total Rate	CA Property Crime Total Rate	EPA Burglary Total Rate	CA Burglary Total Rate	EPA Auto Theft Rate	CA Auto Theft Rate	EPA Larceny-Theft Total Rate	CA Larceny-Theft Total Rate
1986	672.0	581.5	261.7	168.9	112.6	75.9	297.7	336.8
1987	613.6	556.4	225.1	151.1	117.8	82.6	270.7	322.6
1988	798.4	563.1	211.2	142.8	230.9	93.3	356.3	327.1
1989	644.3	573.7	176.2	140.0	211.2	101.9	256.9	331.9
1990	401.7	549.6	102.8	132.9	136.0	100.4	162.9	316.3
1991	487.1	562.2	143.7	138.0	167.9	102.9	175.4	321.2
1992	446.1	555.6	119.6	138.4	166.9	103.6	159.5	313.5
1993	433.3	538.4	151.6	132.8	121.4	102.5	160.3	303.1
1994	448.7	515.7	113.6	122.1	53.3	98.1	281.8	295.6
1995	358.0	476.8	96.6	109.9	51.2	86.6	210.2	280.4
1996	401.3	435.1	104.9	98.1	90.0	76.2	206.4	260.8
1997	421.0	407.0	98.4	92.8	98.7	70.9	223.9	243.3
1998	379.6	363.5	139.1	82.3	97.0	59.8	143.5	221.4
1999	309.4	317.6	85.2	67.5	61.4	50.8	162.8	199.3
2000	339.6	310.0	121.7	65.4	72.9	53.0	145.1	191.7
2001	310.4	328.3	138.8	67.3	65.2	58.9	106.5	202.1
2002	304.7	336.4	77.1	68.1	66.4	63.6	161.2	204.7
2003	361.7	342.4	105.8	68.2	68.7	68.2	187.3	206.0
2004	372.3	343.3	90.8	68.7	110.0	70.7	171.6	203.9
2005	348.8	333.1	120.0	69.5	94.9	71.6	133.9	191.9
2006	330.8	320.0	105.1	68.2	102.7	67.2	123.0	184.6
2007	207.2	304.8	79.2	65.2	67.1	60.3	60.8	179.3
2008	245.0	294.0	82.4	64.7	99.4	52.4	63.3	177.0

Violent Crime Rates

Year	EPA Violent Crime Rate	CA Violent Crime Rate	EPA Homicide Rate	CA Homicide Rate	EPA Rape Rate	CA Rape Rate	EPA Robbery Rate	CA Robbery Rate	EPA Aggravated Assaults Rate	CA Aggravated Assaults Rate
1986	250.2	91.6	3.6	1.1	9.9	4.5	68.3	34.1	168.4	51.9
1987	301.0	91.4	2.1	1.1	14.1	4.4	75.4	30.0	209.4	56.0
1988	240.8	91.8	9.9	1.0	16.1	4.1	73.3	30.2	141.5	56.4
1989	307.8	96.9	9.8	1.1	11.8	4.1	84.8	32.9	201.4	58.9
1990	202.1	103.3	9.4	1.2	3.8	4.2	82.3	37.2	106.6	60.7
1991	213.5	107.9	8.4	1.3	4.2	4.2	78.5	40.7	122.4	61.8
1992	278.8	111.9	17.3	1.3	5.8	4.1	114.7	42.4	142.3	64.1
1993	251.5	107.9	1.7	1.3	4.5	3.8	80.1	40.6	165.2	62.3
1994	274.0	101.4	2.9	1.2	5.7	3.5	77.9	35.7	187.4	61.0
1995	125.1	94.1	2.3	1.1	5.0	3.2	60.1	31.9	57.7	57.9
1996	133.1	86.4	0.4	0.9	4.6	3.2	67.1	29.6	61.0	52.7
1997	136.1	79.9	6.0	0.8	4.9	3.2	53.1	25.3	72.0	50.7
1998	154.2	70.3	2.8	0.7	5.6	3.0	26.2	21.0	119.6	45.6
1999	139.4	62.7	0.4	0.6	15.8	2.8	24.2	18.1	99.0	41.2
2000	97.3	61.9	2.0	0.6	8.5	2.9	33.6	17.7	53.2	40.7
2001	103.5	61.7	2.0	0.6	6.3	2.9	43.9	18.7	51.2	39.4
2002	87.6	59.6	2.3	0.7	5.2	2.9	43.2	18.6	36.9	37.4
2003	97.4	57.9	2.8	0.7	5.9	2.8	30.3	18.0	58.4	36.4
2004	100.1	55.4	2.2	0.7	7.1	2.7	32.2	17.3	58.5	34.8
2005	133.0	52.8	4.7	0.7	6.5	2.6	33.5	17.7	88.4	31.9
2006	90.1	53.7	1.8	0.7	6.8	2.6	37.2	19.6	44.3	30.9
2007	78.6	52.5	2.1	0.6	6.0	2.5	19.9	19.4	50.6	30.0
2008	109.8	50.4	1.5	0.6	5.4	2.4	31.6	18.9	71.3	28.5