

# Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

January 17, 2020

- 1) **Public Safety Forum #2** – Last night from 6:30- 8:00 pm the City hosted its second Public Safety Forum in the library community room. Ninety-four (94) citizens attended last night's forum, bringing our total attendance to 156 between the two (2) forums. The purpose for the forums was to provide a brief summary of our public safety challenges, share our strategies for solutions and receive community feedback. Chiefs St. John & Rash, along with Wyeth Friday and I kept our presentation to 45 minutes providing 45 minutes of dialogue. Both forums were live broadcasted and will be replayed on Channel 7. A document capturing the dialogue and any of the written comments citizens provided will be shared with the Council (likely in the January 24<sup>th</sup> Weekly report). The Public Safety Forum presentation is attached.
- 2) **City Check Payment Approval Process** – Some council members have asked for a refresher how the City processes checks. Every invoice for payment is entered into the city's accounting system and the backup documentation is scanned in and attached (physical invoices, additional e-mails explaining payments, bids, contracts, etc.). Each invoice goes through a multi-step approval process depending upon the amount of the payment. First, invoices are entered by the department requesting the payment and the department director or designee must perform an initial review and approval of the purchase. The number of approvals within the department can vary based upon the size of the department, but no less than one approver within each department must verify the payment. Second, all payments, regardless of size, must be approved by the Purchasing Agent. The Purchasing Agent will review the payment to ensure purchasing procedures are followed and appropriate documentation is attached. If the payment is greater than \$1,000, then it must be approved by the Finance Director. If that payment is greater than \$10,000, then it must be approved by the City Administrator or Assistant City Administrator. Once all approvals are completed, the payment is able to be made and the Accounts Payable Clerk can print the check. After all checks are printed, a list of all checks in excess of \$2,500 is generated and placed on the next City Council meeting for review. You will notice, that this same explanation is now being included in the City Council Agenda memo to help our citizens and elected officials understand the process.
- 3) **Code Enforcement thank you letter – (This email was received Wednesday)**

Dear All:

This email is intended to make *specific high level recognition* for the individuals named below who provided INVALUABLE assistance to me and performed their duties above and beyond the call.

In short, Code Enforcement and BPD did an outstanding job driving a process forward to CLEAN Billings and make it a SAFER place to live. My property at 1415 First Street was taken over by

individuals who would NOT move out and who also hoarded and made the property a terrible mess inside and out.

This lovely property was a horrendous eyesore to the neighborhood and resulted in many neighbors feeling unsafe. There were numerous police calls, code calls and upsets resulting from the ongoing process of trying to CLEAN the property and EXTRACT the people living there.

Driving the entire process and helping with all the moving parts was **Tanya Punt**. Neighbors cannot say enough about her and neither can I. Her commitment, professionalism, diligence and perseverance were remarkable. She was assisted by **Todd Morgan** and **Officer Dave Punt**. This trio deserves more credit than I can give. That is why I'm asking you to recognize them.

Support was provided by many City employees whose names I do not know. The few I did speak with routinely were:

Christina Fox, Bobbi Boss, Sonny (who drove the big roll offs) and two or three others in Solid Waste whose names I do not know.

I have spread the word that the Good People of the City of Billings are working Hard for us and our Community.

I would personally request that you recognize Tanya, Todd and Dave specifically and wish to hear what you have done for them. Look forward to your response and thank you for hiring these amazing people!

Deb Vreeland

#### **4) Presentations:**

- a. Last evening Public Safety Forum PowerPoint is attached
- b. Tuesday's Project Re-Code PowerPoint was not ready prior to sending out the Weekly. I've asked our staff to send it to the Council as soon as it is completed prior to Tuesday's presentation.

#### **5) Next Week's Meetings/Task Forces/Presentations etc.**

- a. Martin Luther King Day – city offices closed
- b. WestEnd Task Force, 7:00 pm Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at Faith Evangelical Church, 3145 Sweet Water Drive, Room 130/131
- c. Pioneer Park Task Force, 7:00 pm Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at McKinley School, North Door Entrance
- d. Southwest Corridor Task Force, Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at Amend Park Community Room, 5101 King Avenue East

Have a good weekend!

# Billings Public Safety Analysis

## Defining Challenges and Solutions

# Meeting Purpose

Present Challenges

Present Strategies for Solutions

Receive Feedback

Billings Vision: A diverse  
welcoming community where  
people prosper and business  
succeeds

- We have strong healthy neighborhoods & business districts
- We have weak unhealthy neighborhoods & business districts

# Safety is 1 Key to a Healthy City

## 5 key strategies to improve Billings

- 1) Strengthen Organization Health
- 2) Improve Safety
- 3) Improve our Built Environment
- 4) Continue Investments in Infrastructure
- 5) Increase Investments in quality of life amenities

# Define the Problem

**Billings has too much crime - driven largely by addiction and mental illness**

- Violent crime rates > 100% increase in 12 years to 600/100,000
- Property crimes are too frequent > 5,500/100,000

**Fire department response times are too slow**

# City Responsibilities & Partners

- Billings provides code and law enforcement
- Billings prosecutes crimes and provides victim advocacy
- Billings operates municipal courts

**We depend on partners to provide social services, prosecute felonies and incarcerate criminals**

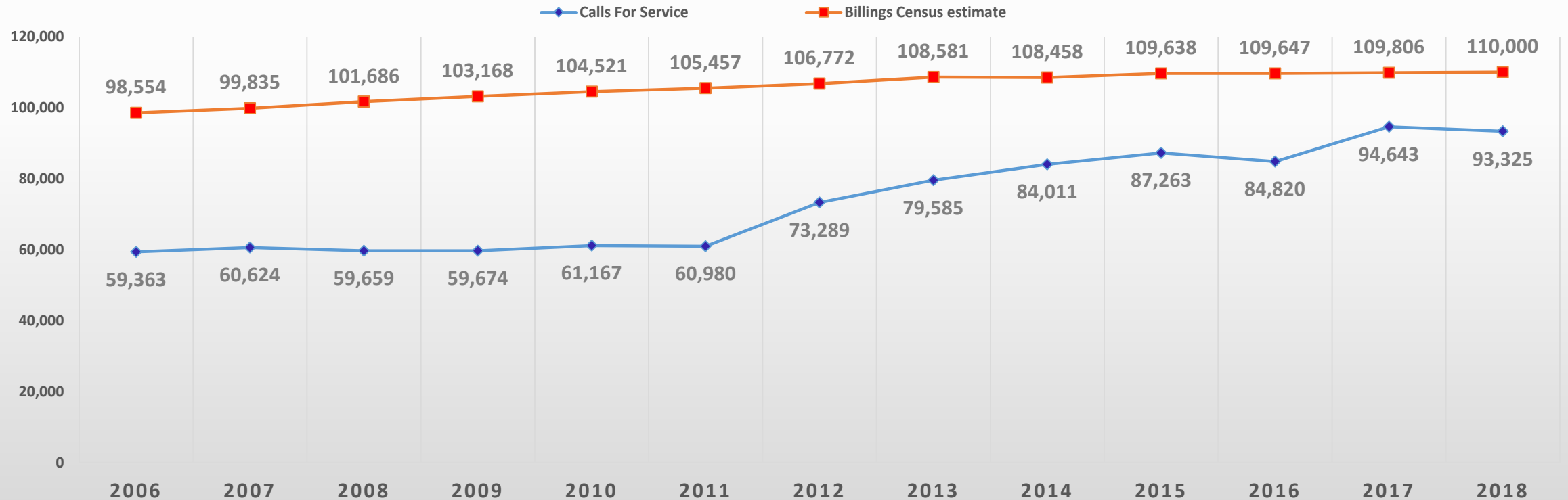
- Yellowstone Substance Abuse Connect Coalition
- The Continuum of Care partners
- Yellowstone County Attorney & Sherriff offices
- State of Montana District Courts



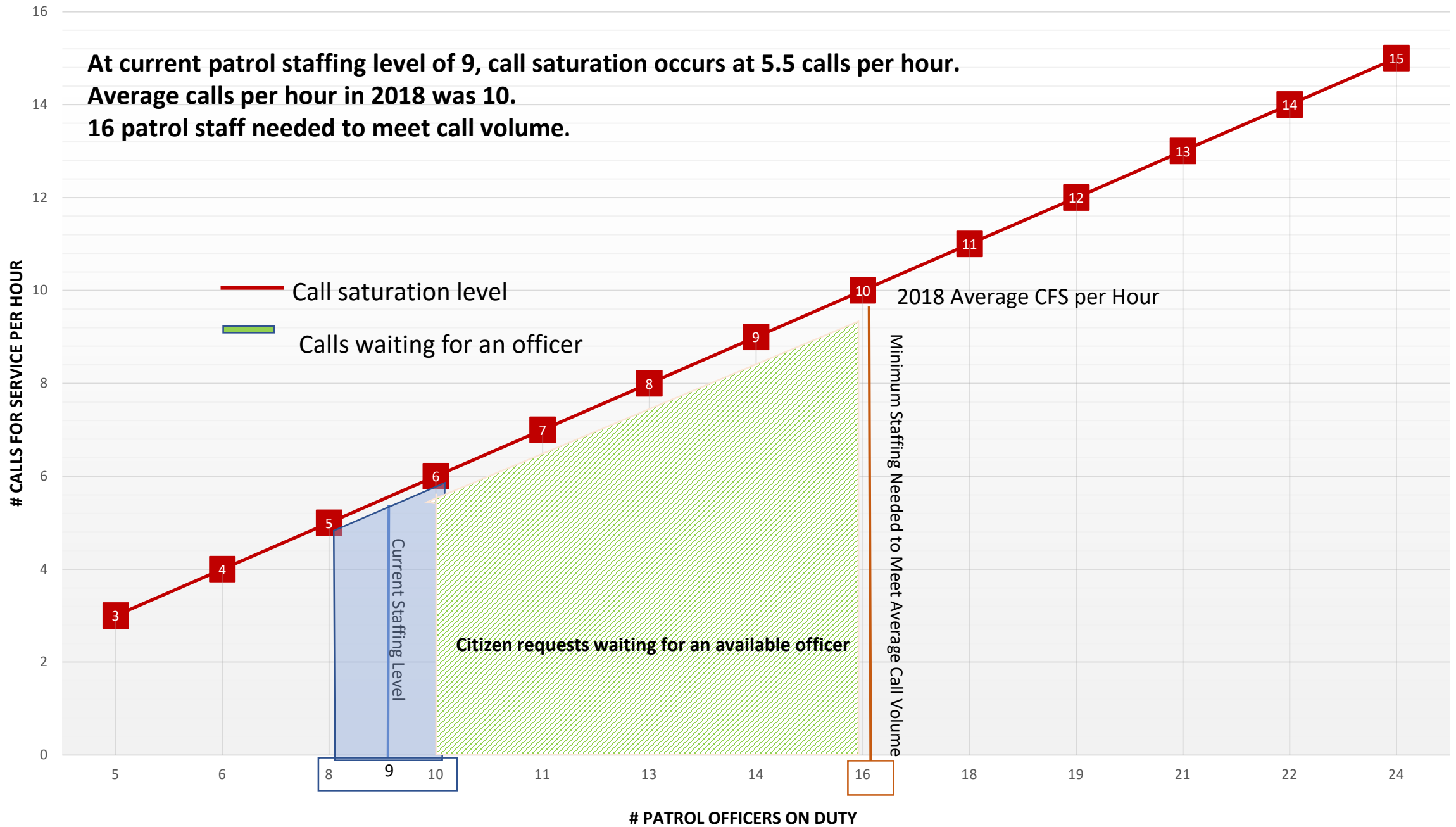
# Law Enforcement Crime Data

# BPD Calls For Service & Population Growth

|                   | 2006   | 2007   | 2008    | 2009    | 2010    | 2011    | 2012    | 2013    | 2014    | 2015    | 2016    | 2017    | 2018    |
|-------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Calls For Service | 59,363 | 60,624 | 59,659  | 59,674  | 61,167  | 60,980  | 73,289  | 79,585  | 84,011  | 87,263  | 84,820  | 94,643  | 93,325  |
| Population        | 98,554 | 99,835 | 101,686 | 103,168 | 104,521 | 105,457 | 106,772 | 108,581 | 108,458 | 109,638 | 109,647 | 109,806 | 110,000 |

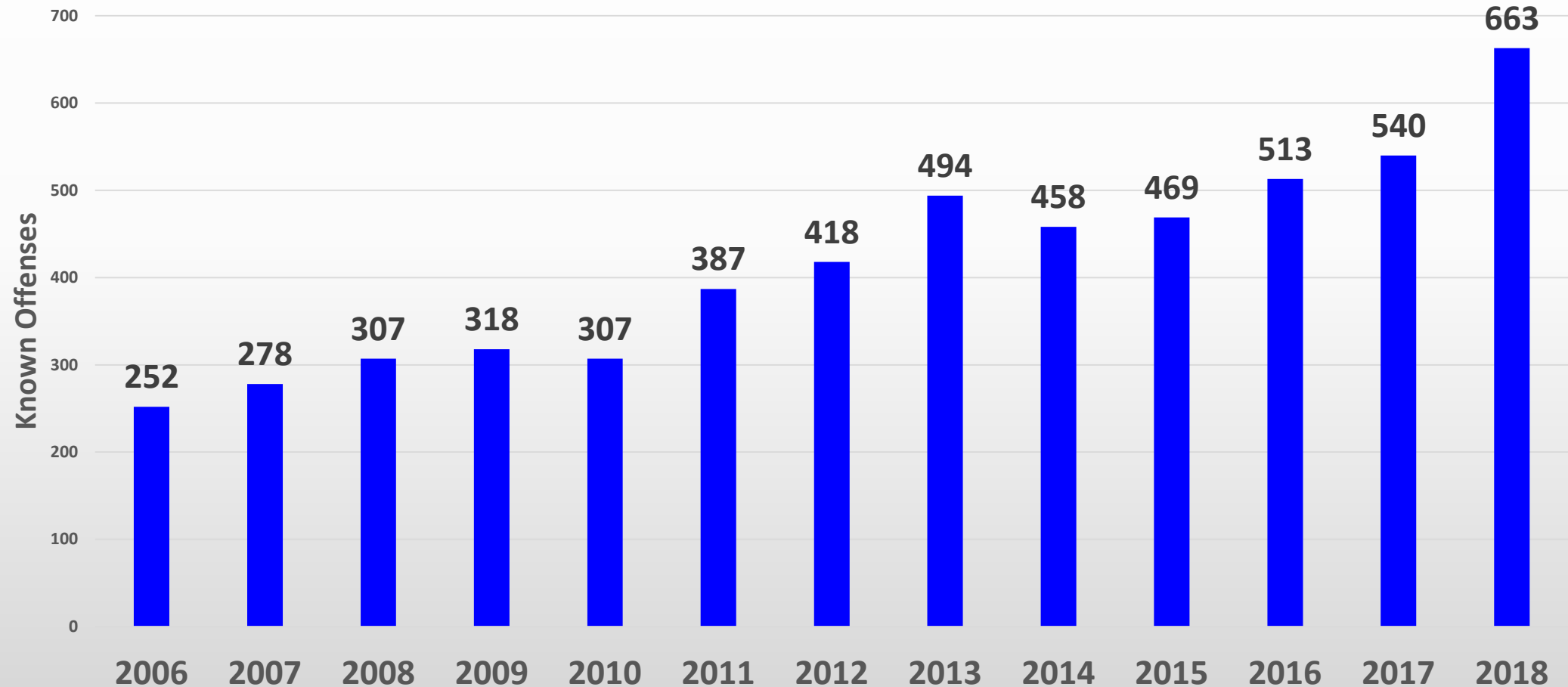


Source: Calls For Service from BPD annual reports; Census estimates from FactFinder.census.gov

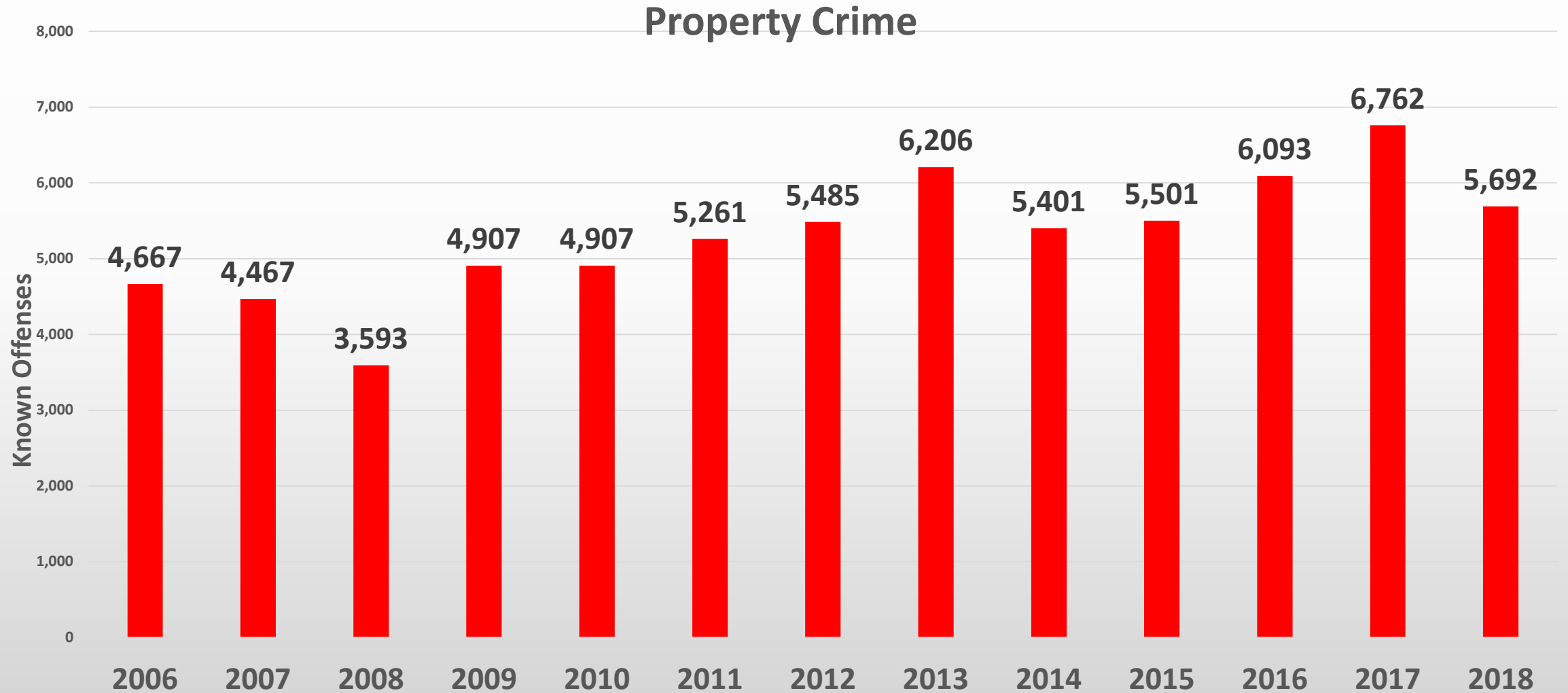


# BPD Historical Data Summarized

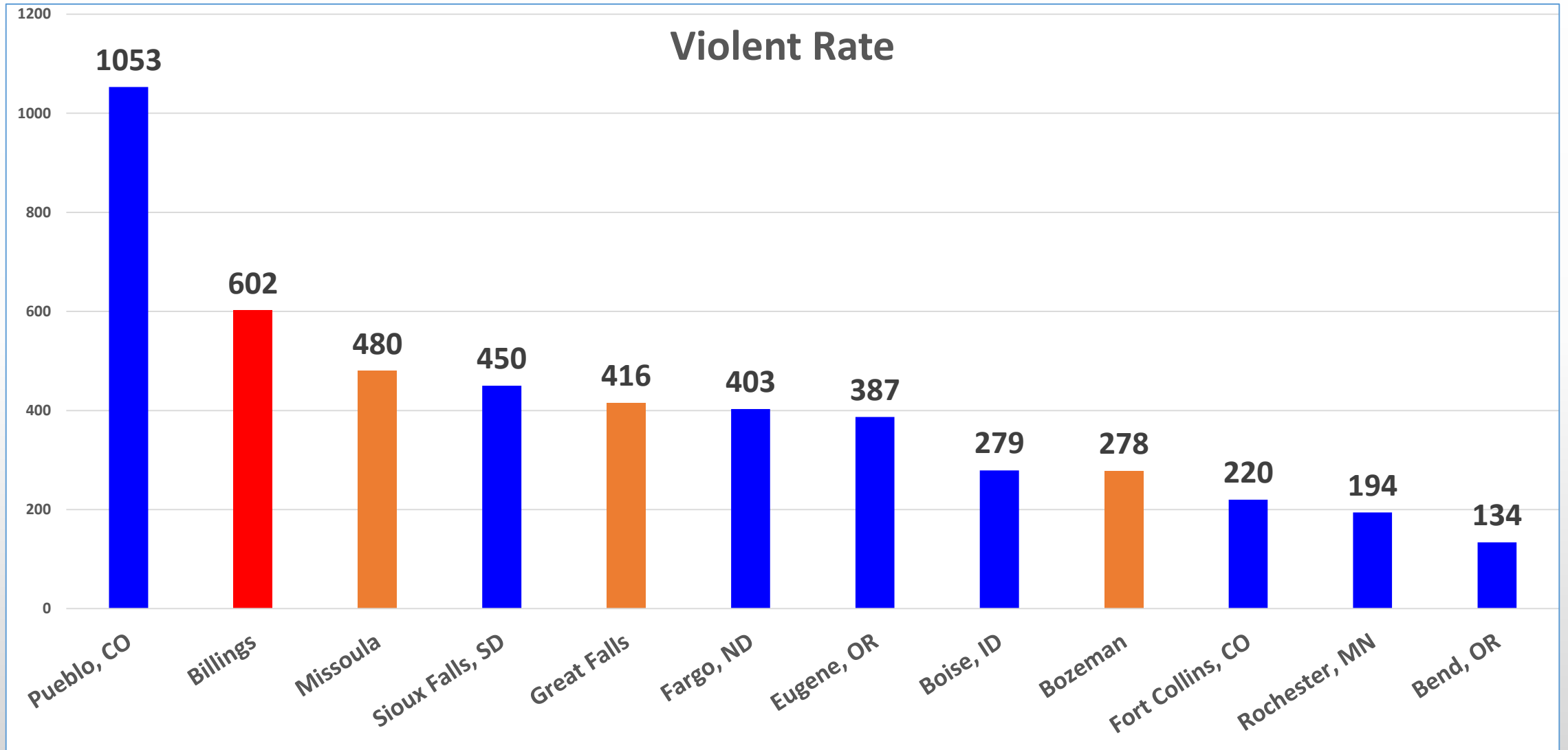
## Violent Crime



# BPD Historical Data Summarized Continued



# 2018 Peer City Crime Rate Comparisons per 100K



# 2018 Peer City Crime Rate Comparisons per 100K



# Crime Reduction Strategy

## Violent Crime Reduction

- **Increase capacity of specialized units targeting:**
  - Violent offenders
  - Felons in possession of firearms
  - Habitual offenders
  - Repeat victims
  - Illegal drug activity
  - Street Crimes
  - Hot spots – Geographic concentration of crime



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# Improve Downtown Safety

- **Increase downtown uniform presence with:**
  - Foot patrol
  - Bike patrol
  - Patrol cars
- **Enhance hot spot enforcement by:**
  - Maximizing citizen and business interaction
  - Crime mapping analysis
  - Implementation of predictive policing strategies
- **Take full advantage of crime prevention through:**
  - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
  - Business crime watch
  - Hotel grapevine
  - Community meetings



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# Improve Traffic Safety

- Increase capacity of specialized traffic enforcement units for:
- **High Visibility Enforcement (HVE)**
  - DUI enforcement
  - Hot spots
  - School zones
  - Citizen concerns



# Invest in Mental Health

- **Support community's capacity to resolve:**
  - Co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse
  - Homelessness
  - Clean and sober housing
  - Coordination of services

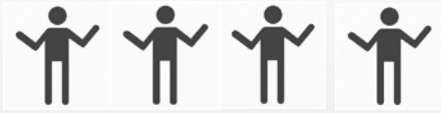


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# Code Enforcement

Preserving, Protecting & Enhancing Billings' Neighborhoods

**Today:** CE is complaint driven and handles 5,000 to 6,000/year\*



CE Officers



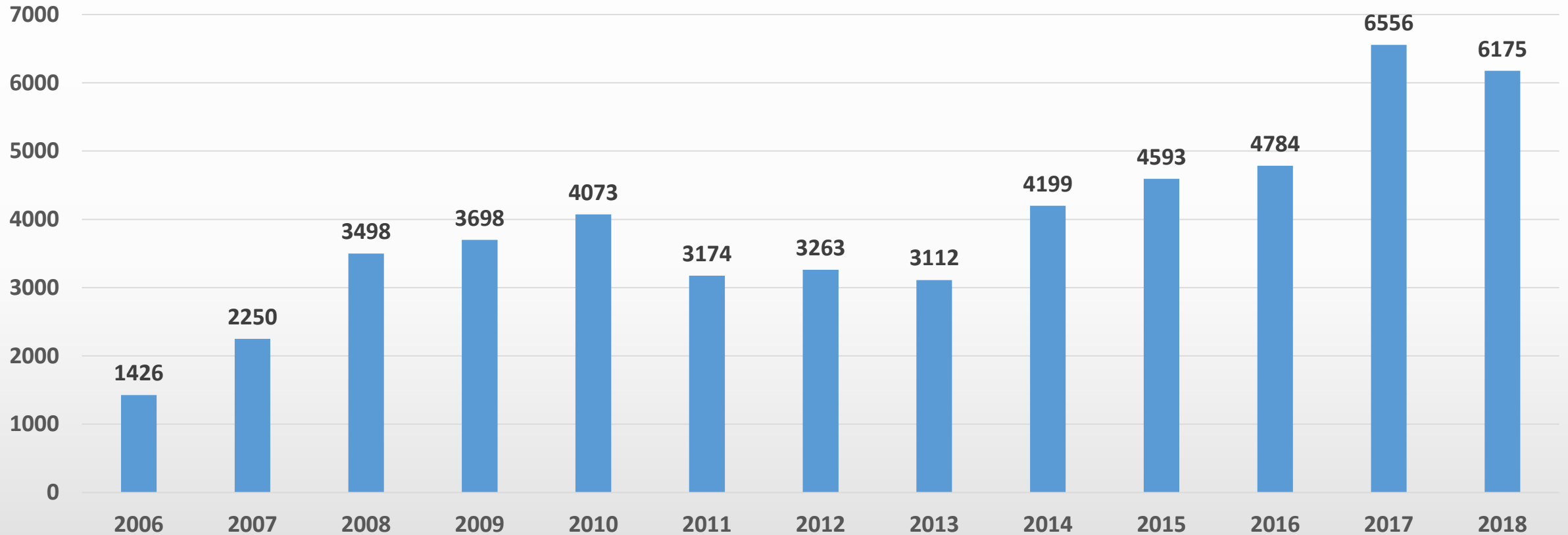
CE Clerk

PT CE Supervisor (position is paid by Planning Division and also serves as Zoning

Coordinator)

\* - 10 year average = 4,600/year – recent 3 year average = 5,800/year

# Code Enforcement Cases







Code Enforcement  
works to make  
**this** change to **this**



**And**  
**this** look like **this**



But clean up can  
**take months or**  
**years to achieve**



Problems are  
often **well**  
**established** by  
the time CE gets a

# Strategies to Improve Neighborhoods



## Move to active compliance effort

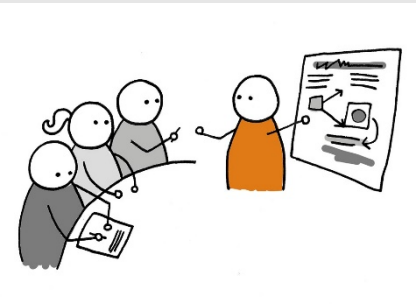
- Catch problem properties early
- Avoid neighborhood decline
- Reduce future crime
- Speed up compliance

## Make compliance successful

- **Education** Legal Staff to assist CE Officers
- Improve success rate in and out of court
- Legal staff helps reduce time to compliance
- Improve neighborhood clean up programs
- Enhanced response through coordination
- Improve fund capacity for neighborhood stabilization efforts

## and Outreach

- Talk to service groups and neighborhood task forces
- Use of web and social media tools
- Build Neighborhood Assistance Programs



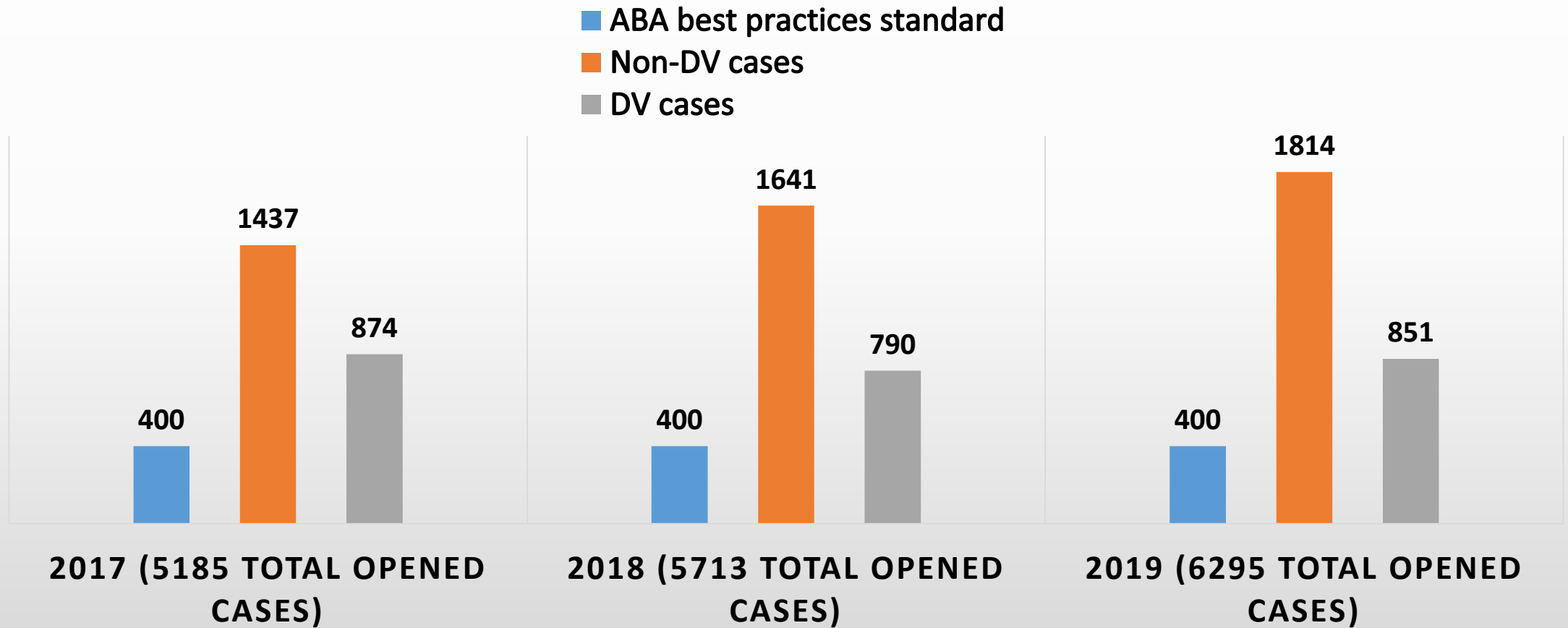


# Prosecutor Public Safety Challenges

- Reduce Caseload per Prosecutor (53% increase since 2007)
- Reduce Repeat Misdemeanor Offenders
- Warrant requests and response to crime victims/witnesses
- Need for dedicated legal staff to assist Code Enforcement



# Caseload Per Prosecutor



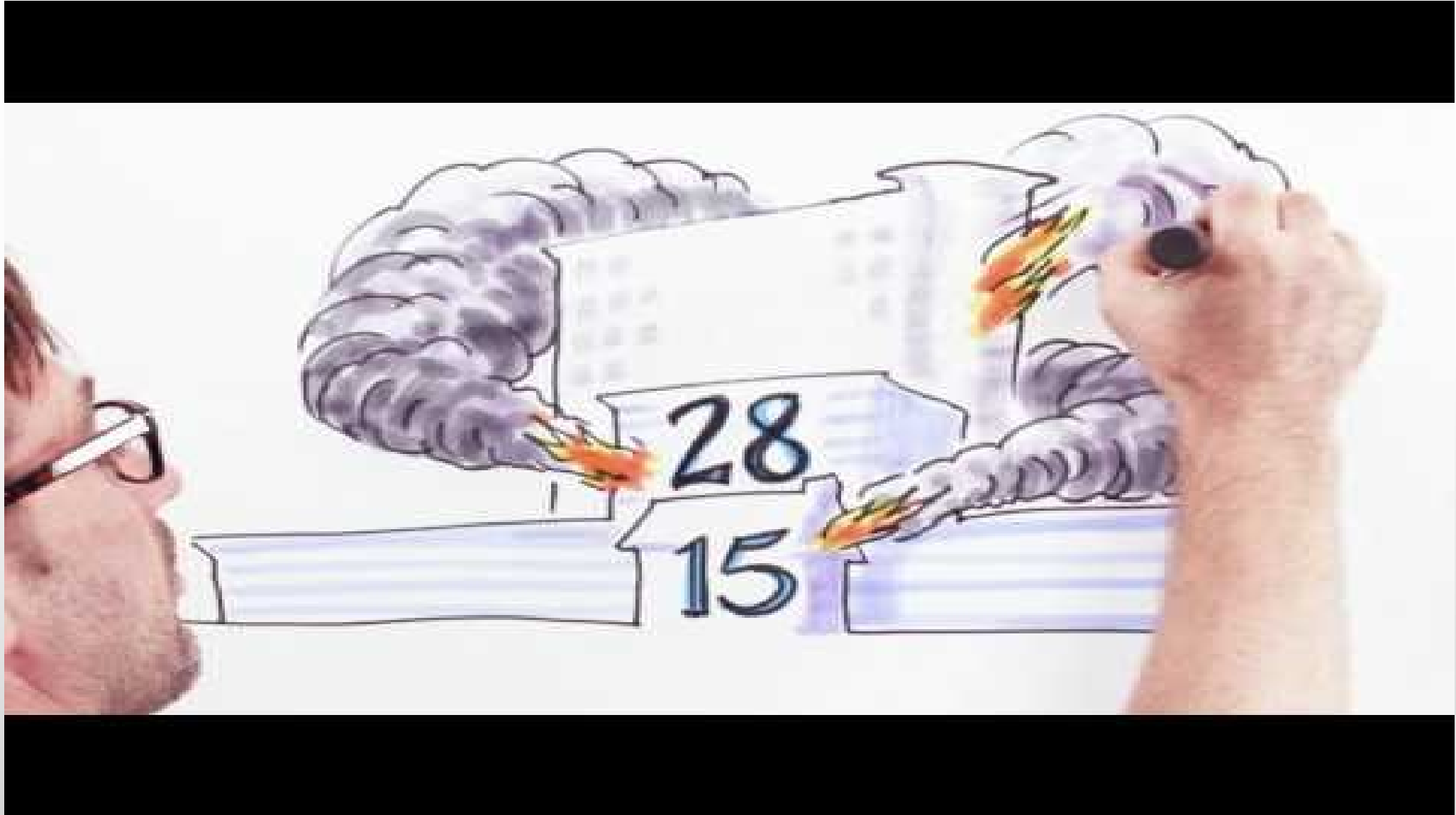
# Strategies to Achieve Goals

- Increase staffing
- Address space needs
- Expand collaboration with partners

# Billings Fire Department Problem Statement

**Billings Fire Department does not meet the national standard for fire stations & staffing, resulting in twice the national standard for travel time to emergencies.**

# Why Personnel and seconds count...

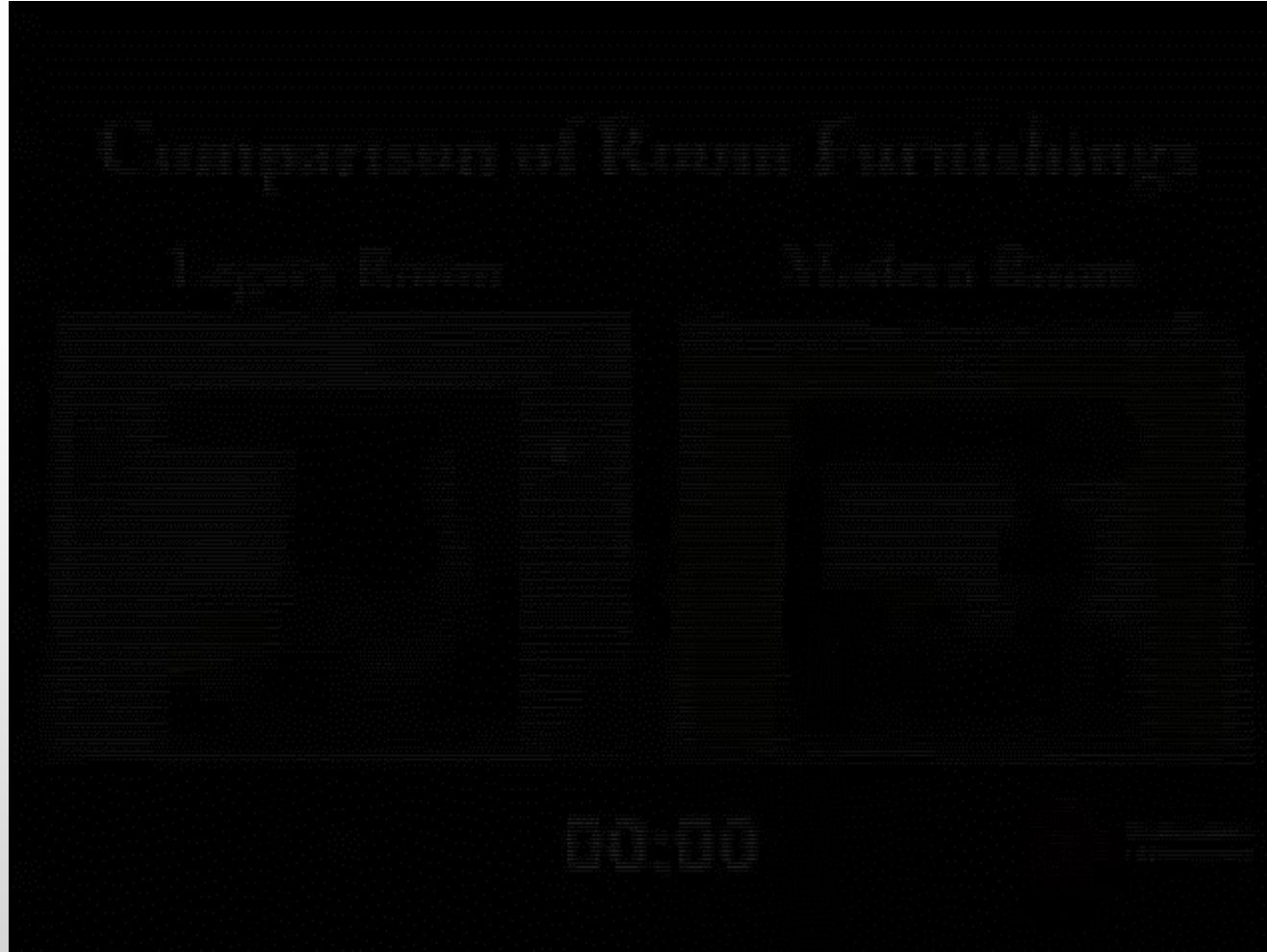


# National Fire Protection Association 1710

- Document written by a committee comprised of:
  - Members of the general public
  - Members representing industry
  - Members of the fire service
- Document focuses on deployment of emergency services in a timely and efficient manner to save lives and property
- Response and travel times were compiled using results of scientific studies conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology and Underwriters Laboratory Fire Safety Research Institute

# National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

## What are these studies referring to?

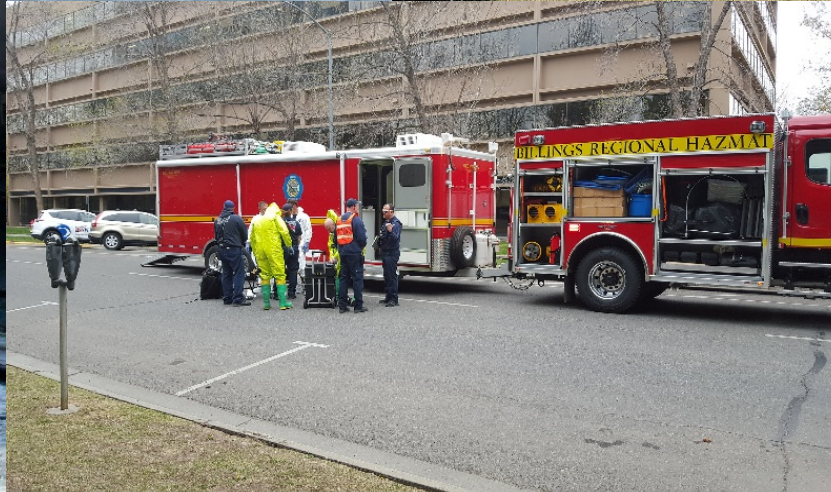


# ***STRATEGY TO REDUCE LOSS OF LIFE & PROPERTY***



- Reduce Dispatch Call Time Between 9-1-1 & Public Safety Resources
- Reduce Turn-Out Time for Firefighters to Leave Fire Stations





- Add Personnel to Increase efficiency for Fire-Rescue Operations
- Improve Facilities - Deferred Maintenance

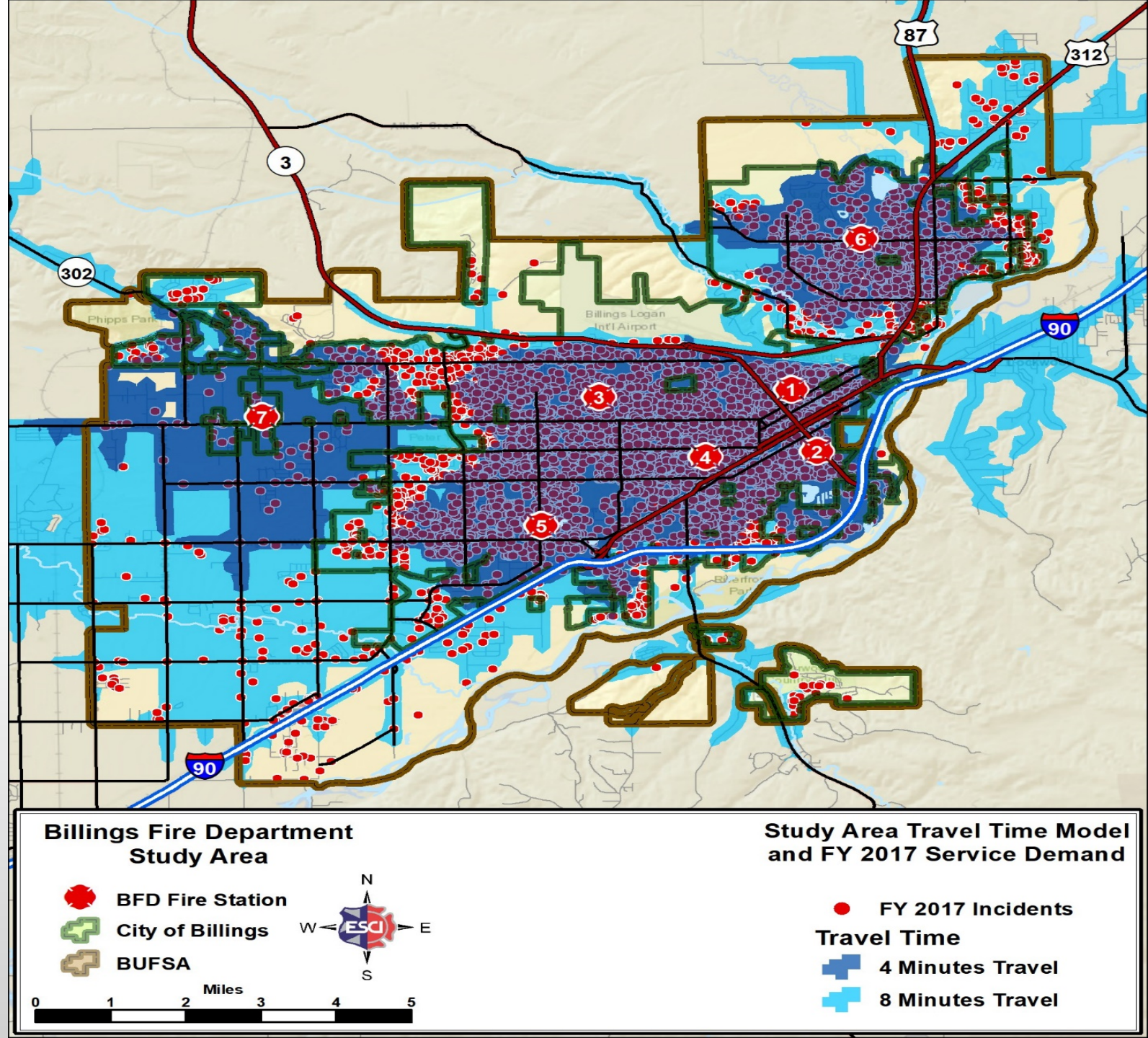




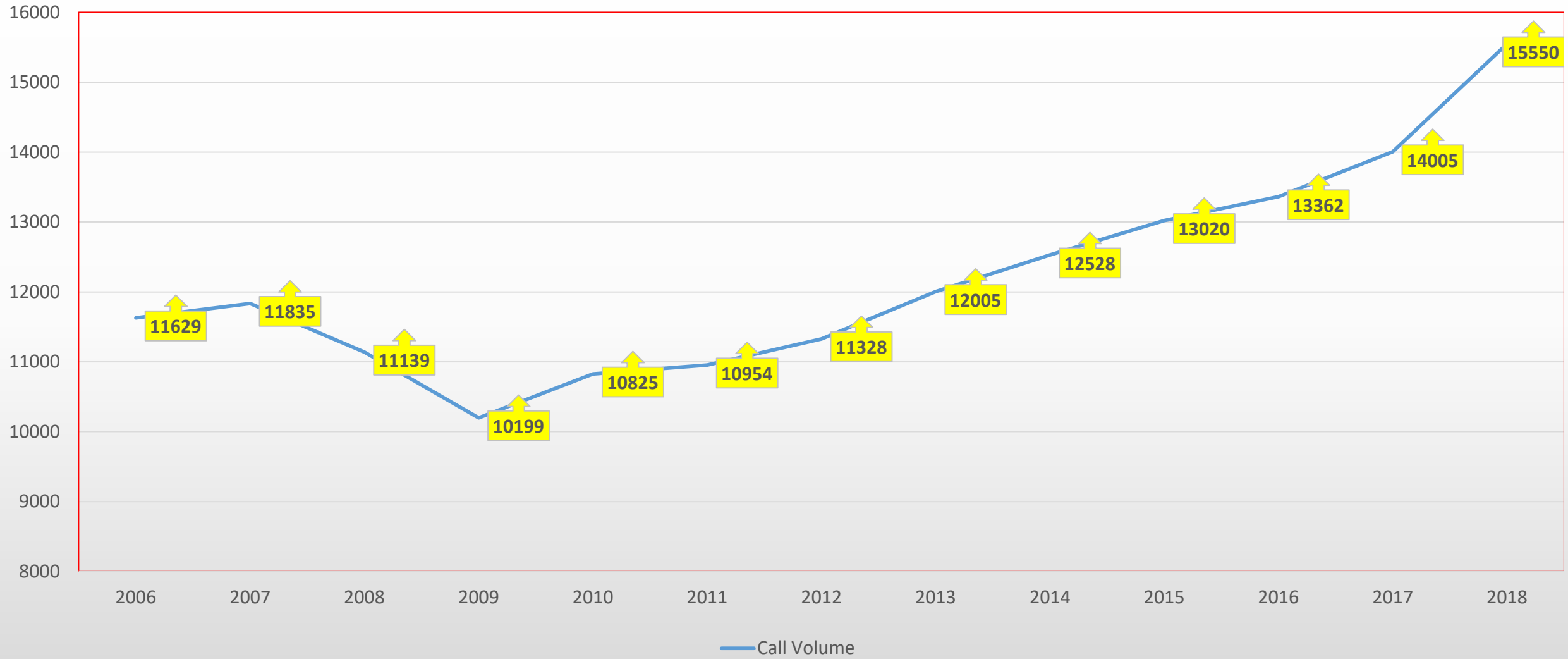
- **Add Fire Station 8 Equipment & Firefighters**
- **Reduce Response Times to Emergencies**

# BFD 4 and 8 minute travel time for **SINGLE ENGINE FIRST** Alarm response.

**BFD FIRST ENGINE—1 ENGINE ARRIVING  
FROM THE FIRST ALARM RESPONSE**



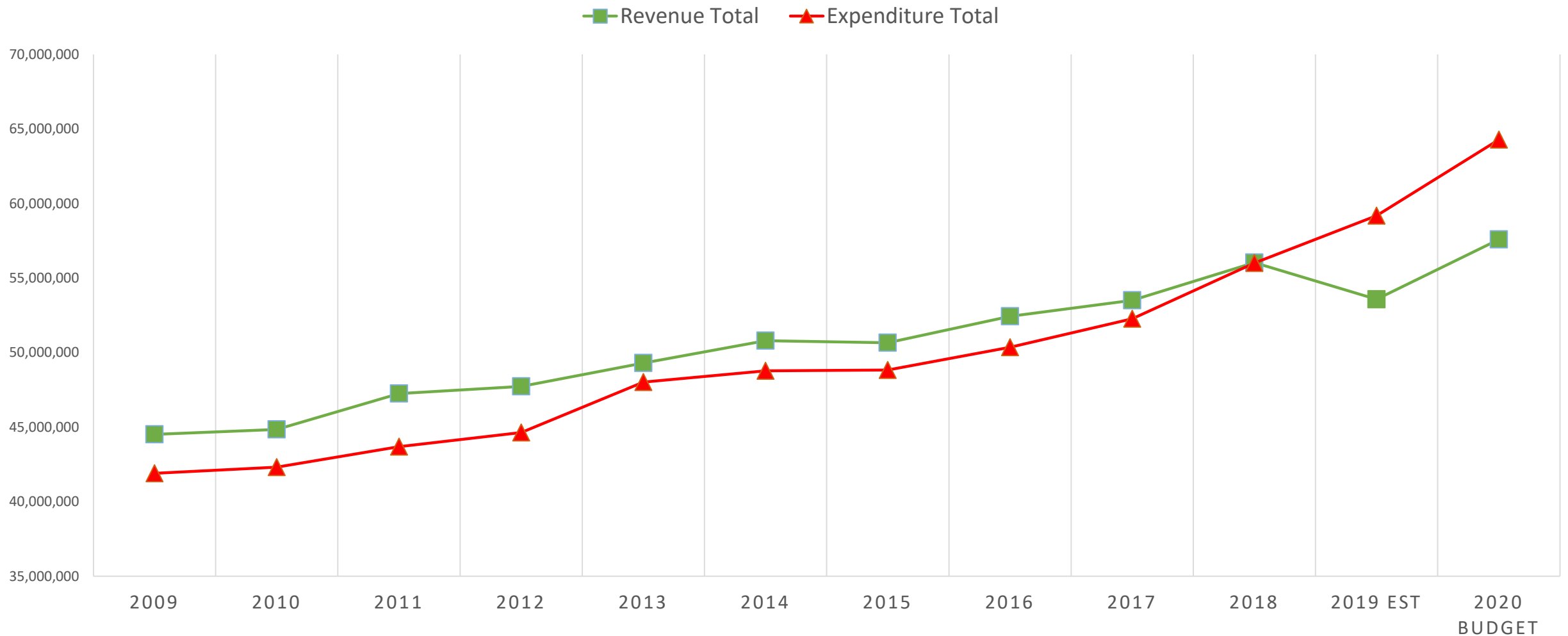
# BFD Call Volume





# General Fund/Public Safety Fund Structural Imbalance

# General Fund & Public Safety Fund Combined



# Ensure Maximum Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness – Continual Improvement Process



# Revenue Increases to Pay for the Strategies

- Impact Fees
- Equity between City and BUFSA charges
- Increase municipal fines (current \$110)
- Create a Public Safety District
- Charges for some services
- Public Safety Mill Levy
- Continue discussions with MT on tax structure changes

# Meeting Purpose

Briefly Describe Challenges

Share Strategies for Solutions

Receive Feedback