

Valley Benchmark Cities (VBC)

Megan Lynn - Management Assistant,
Scottsdale



- **Why benchmark?**
- **History**
- **Process**
- **Trend reports and performance measures**
- **Examples of use**
- **Lessons learned and advice**
- **Key takeaways**

A group of approximately 15 people are seated around a long, light-colored conference table in a modern meeting room. They are engaged in a meeting, with some looking towards a projector screen at the front of the room. The room features a patterned carpet, a projector mounted on the ceiling, and large windows on the right side. A whiteboard is visible on the left wall. The text 'Why Benchmark?' is overlaid in large, bold, blue letters across the center of the image.

Why Benchmark?



**Context is
needed**

ARIZONA
VALLEY
BENCHMARK
< CITIES >

Benchmarking

- **The art of evaluating by comparison with a standard for learning and improvement**



Comparisons can be challenging



Monthly residential utility bill



Without comparisons

- You don't know what you don't know
- Have no explanation for variation
- Reasons why you got the results
- Reliability / validity of data



Ways to gain comparative insight

- ICMA and professional associations
- Budget Comparisons
- Media sources
- [Comparative Budgeting - A Practical Approach](#)



How networks can help

- **Discussions to gain understanding**
- **Identify best practices and improve the services we provide**
- **Track progress and trends**
- **Improve accuracy**



**“Evidence suggests that improved performance occurs at a much greater rate when performance measures are compared.”
Smith and Cheng, 2004**



FAST COMPANY

MILKEN INSTITUTE
CHANGING THE WORLD IN INNOVATIVE WAYS

BusinessWeek **sperling's**
BEST PLACES

CITIES
RANKED & RATED

Kiplinger's **Google** *The Atlantic*
PERSONAL FINANCE **CITIES**

STAR
COMMUNITIES



Forbes THE BUSINESS JOURNALS
TRAVEL+LEISURE

MERCER



JONES LANG
LASALLE



Springer

Gallup · Healthways
Well-Being Index™

areavibes MONOCLE

Economist Intelligence Unit

CNN Money

INSURANCE JOURNAL

Journal of Urban Affairs
The Journal of the Urban Affairs Association

ARIZONA
VALLEY
BENCHMARK
< CITIES >

History



ARIZONA
VALLEY
BENCHMARK
◀ CITIES ▶

City's spending questioned

For Scottsdale, workers are the largest expense

By Beth Duckett
The Arizona Republic

Despite deep cuts planned to city services and personnel next year, Scottsdale's general-fund budget — the money it spends on basic services — is estimated to be millions of dollars greater than other Valley cities' with larger or similar populations.

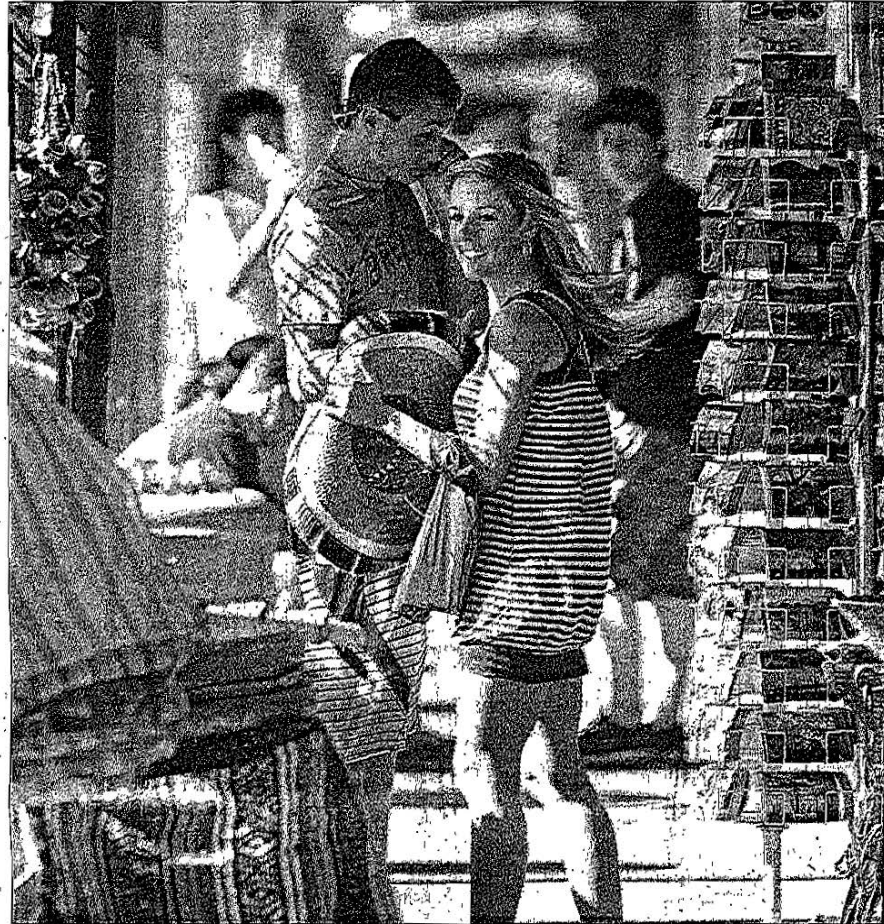
Many officials defend the higher budget in relation to the number of residents, saying it's the price the city must pay to cater to tourists and residents who demand better services and programs in a city known for its upscale neighborhoods and lifestyle.

But others suggest the city needs to take a harder look at what it's spending in relation to its population.

A good portion of a Scottsdale's general-fund expenses are spent on employee-related costs. An analysis provided by the city shows Scottsdale ranks the highest among the Valley's largest cities when it comes to the number of employees. The city has 11.7 full-time equivalent employees per 1,000 residents, compared with Phoenix's 10.8 and Chandler's 6.9.

Scottsdale Vice Mayor Bob Little-

See SCOTTSDALE, Page B8



Lacy Fons of Milwaukee tries on hats while shopping last week in Old Town Scottsdale. Tourism is a big driver of general-fund spending, city officials say, as Scottsdale caters to its visitors as well as its residents. DAVID KADLUBOWSKI/THE REPUBLIC

ARIZONA
VALLEY
BENCHMARK
CITIES

POPULATION VS. BUDGET SIZE

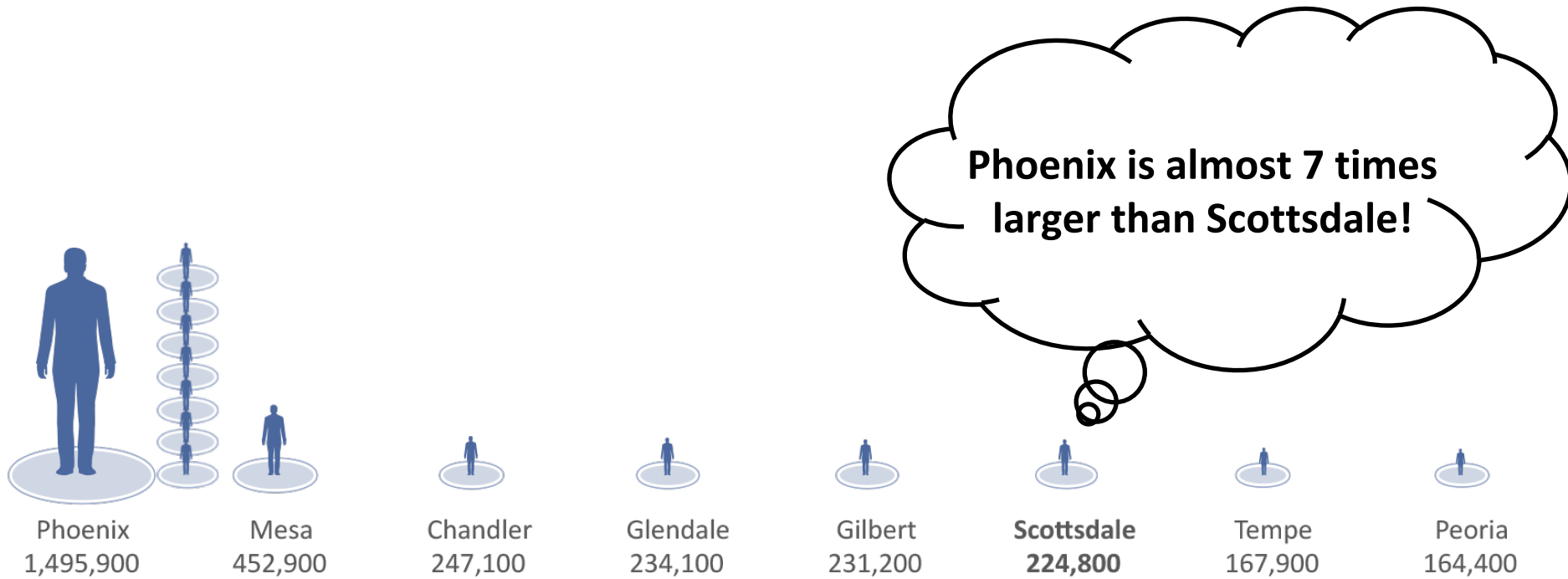
Scottsdale's projected operating budget is higher than those of other Valley cities of larger or comparable populations. Figures are based on the 2010 census and recent reports from cities. Budget numbers are subject to change as cities refine their plans for the 2011-12 budget year.

	Population	Operating budget
Mesa	439,041	\$228 million (may increase)
Chandler	236,123	\$174 million
Glendale	226,721	\$170.8 million
Scottsdale	217,385	\$235.2 million
Gilbert	208,453	\$103.7 million

EMPLOYEE COSTS OF MAJOR VALLEY CITIES

	Total employees	Employees per 1,000 residents	Personnel costs*
Mesa	3,597.4	8.2	\$219.3 million
Chandler	1,625	6.9	\$151.1 million
Glendale	1,971	8.7	\$149.7 million
Scottsdale	2,546.5	11.7	\$160.4 million
Gilbert	1,181	5.7	\$66 million

Source: Comparative full-time equivalent information for largest Valley cities, Scottsdale, March 29, 2011. Analysis based on 2010-11 figures.*General-fund estimate for 2010-11 year ending June 30.



Valley Benchmark Cities



Chandler - Arizona
Where Values Make The Difference



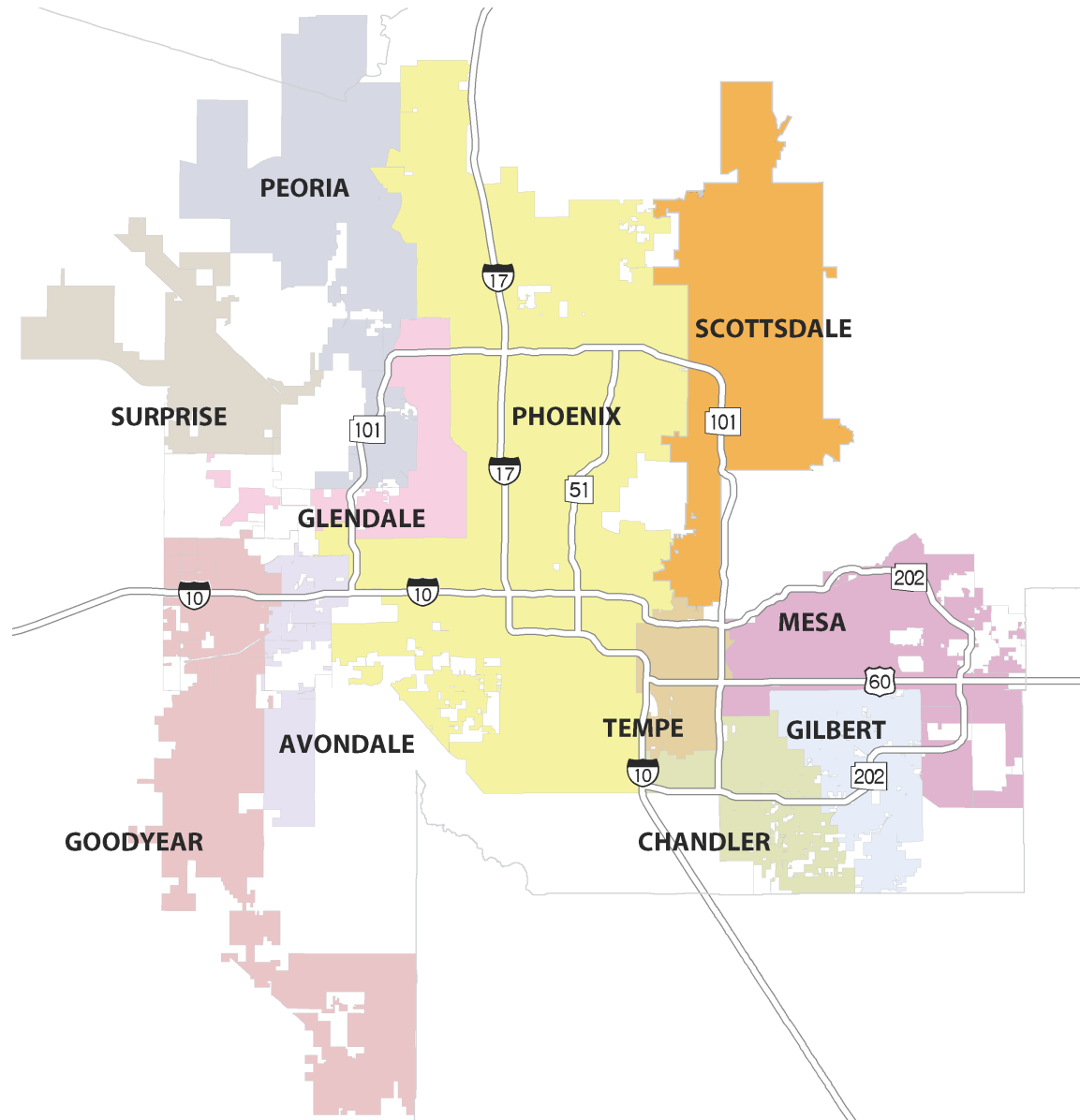
GILBERT
ARIZONA



Glendale
ARIZONA



Goodyear
ARIZONA



City of Phoenix



CITY OF
SCOTTSDALE



SURPRISE
ARIZONA



An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Los Angeles, with various skyscrapers and buildings. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains under a clear sky. The city is densely packed with buildings, and a road with traffic is visible in the lower left. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

welcome

center for urban innovation

school of public affairs

Early comparative efforts

- **Sales Taxes**
- **Property Taxes**
- **Utility Bills**
- **Permit and Development Fees**
- **Land Use Impacts**
- **Salaries and Benefits**

Stay resident-focused!

1. Keep crime low
2. Response time if my home catches fire
3. Make sure my garbage gets picked up
4. Make sure my water is clean
5. Make sure the streets are fixed



Scottsdale
\$80.92

Monthly Residential Utility Bill

Source: City of Tempe. Typical
water, garbage and sewer
charges as of January 2012

What have we measured?



- **Permit/ Development Fees**
- **Demographics**
- **Public Safety**
- **Libraries**
- **Streets and Utilities**
- **Administration/ Finance**
- **FTE Comparisons**
- **Police/Fire Response Times**
- **Parks/Recreation Measures**
- **Economic Development**



Valley Benchmark Cities

FY 2013/14 Report



Why did we do this?

- We didn't have concrete answers to the question from elected officials: How does this compare to...?
- Couldn't get the information we needed from existing sources
- City manager committed to council to join a

Do your background work

**Identify similar size and scope
jurisdictions within your
region/state**

**NOTE: National comparisons
are more complex due to
differences in climate,
geography, demand levels,
political environment, funding**

Build support for the idea

- Talk to staff who would be involved (assistant city managers, assistant tos, budget directors, ICMA primary coordinator) AND
- Talk to key managers directly (ICMA Conference, state association conferences, regional meetings, etc.)
- “Do elected officials ever ask, what do others do?”

Key steps in forming a network

- Identify and invite key leaders
- Identify potential partners
- Build rapport by learning from others
- Dialogue about efforts already underway
- Begin collecting and sharing information

Agree on a common purpose

Identify common financial and performance information that we agree to share and discuss with each other for the purpose of better understanding the similarities and differences between our operations, with the ultimate aim of improving local government performance.

Process



Current

process

- ASU fellow serves as project lead
- Meet monthly (September–June)
- Create a workplan
- Data collection and review
- Assign deep dive collections
- City Managers have final report approval

A group of approximately 15 people are seated around a long, light-colored conference table in a modern meeting room. They appear to be in a meeting, with some looking towards a projector screen at the front of the room. The room has a patterned carpet, a projector mounted on the ceiling, and a whiteboard on the left wall. The text 'Trend Reports and Performance Measures' is overlaid in large, bold, dark blue letters across the center of the image.

Trend Reports and Performance Measures

Valley Benchmark Cities FY 2017-18 Trend Report

Last updated on 2018-11-02

The purpose of the Valley Benchmark Cities initiative is to improve local government performance in Arizona by working collaboratively to identify and share resources, best practices, and common demographic, financial, and performance information to better understand the complex and diverse operations of the 11 participating cities (Avondale, Chandler, Gilbert, Glendale, Goodyear, Mesa, Peoria, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Surprise, and Tempe). Annually, since FY 2013-14, the Valley Benchmark Cities initiative publishes a report to share 24 Valley-wide measures with city leadership and the public. This report includes measures in the following service categories: Demographics, Fire Services, Police Services; Library Services; Parks and Recreation Services; Water, Sewer, and Trash Services; Finance and Administration Services.



In FY 2016-17 the report has moved away from individual community trends to a report based upon regional trends using the maximum, minimum, median, and average of the 11 cities' data. The definition of each metric is listed beneath the chart title. Notes detailing the regional trends identified and explanations of what caused any changes are included beneath the chart for each measure. Each city's individual data can be found in the Appendix.

The most recent changes to the FY 2017-18 report include the addition of three new Library measures. Physical Item Turnover Rate, Operating & Maintenance per Square Foot, and Operating & Maintenance per Visitor were added to this year's report per the recommendation of the Valley City Managers.

Navigate Through The Below Service Areas To Explore Our Performance Over The Past Few Years:

[Demographics](#)

[Fire/Medical Services](#)

[Police Services](#)

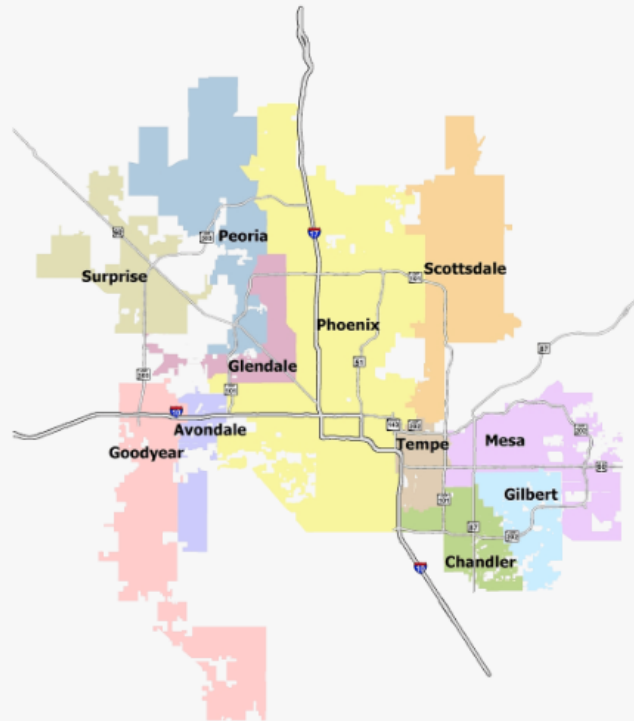
[Library Services](#)

[Parks & Recreation Services](#)

[Water, Sewer & Trash Services](#)

[Administration Services](#)

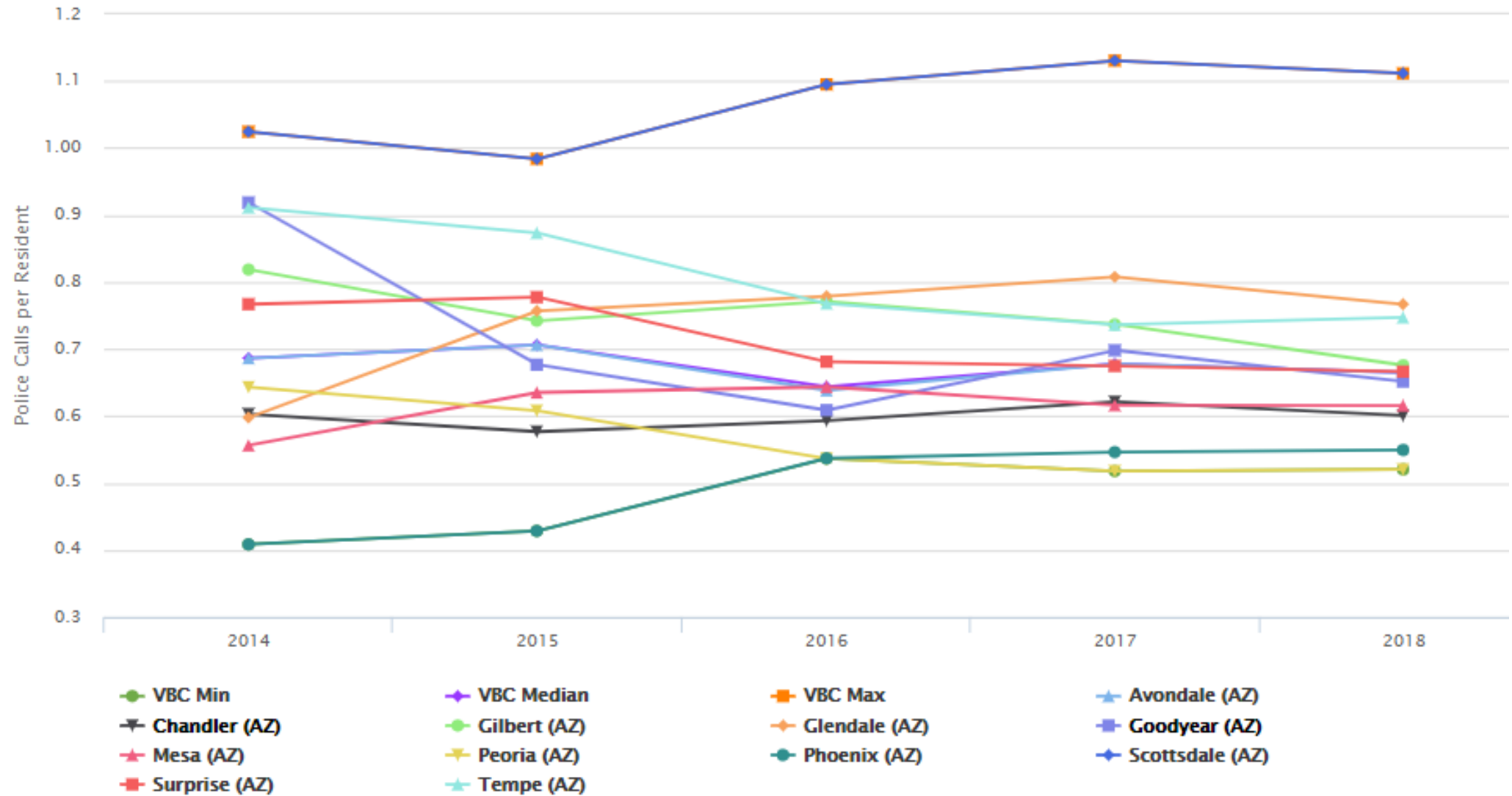
[Appendix](#)



**In March 2019,
we published
our FY2017/18
Trend Report,
our fifth trend
report to date**

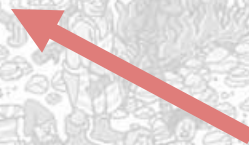
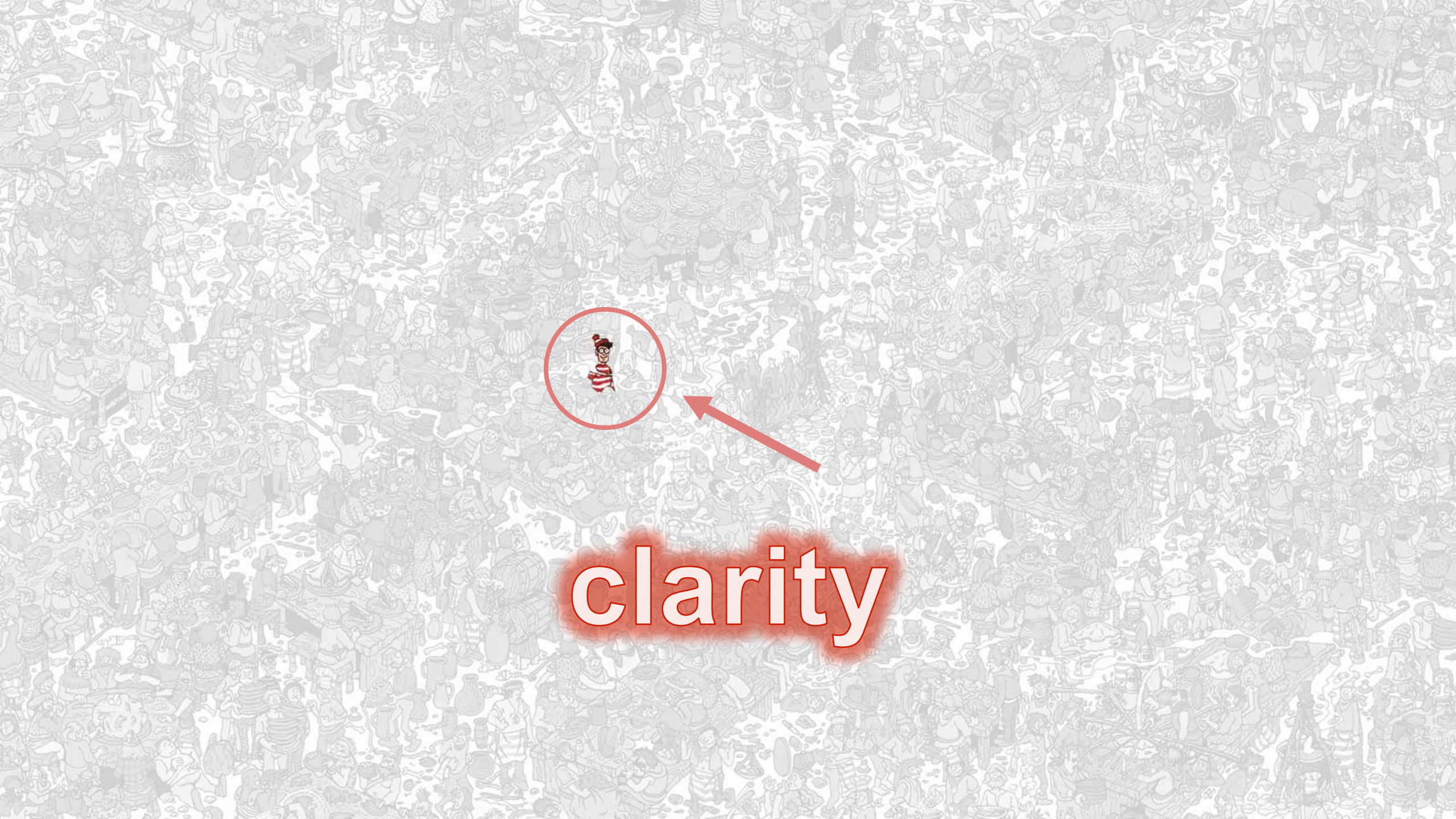
Total Police Calls per Resident

Number of officer and citizen initiated calls dispatched per resident

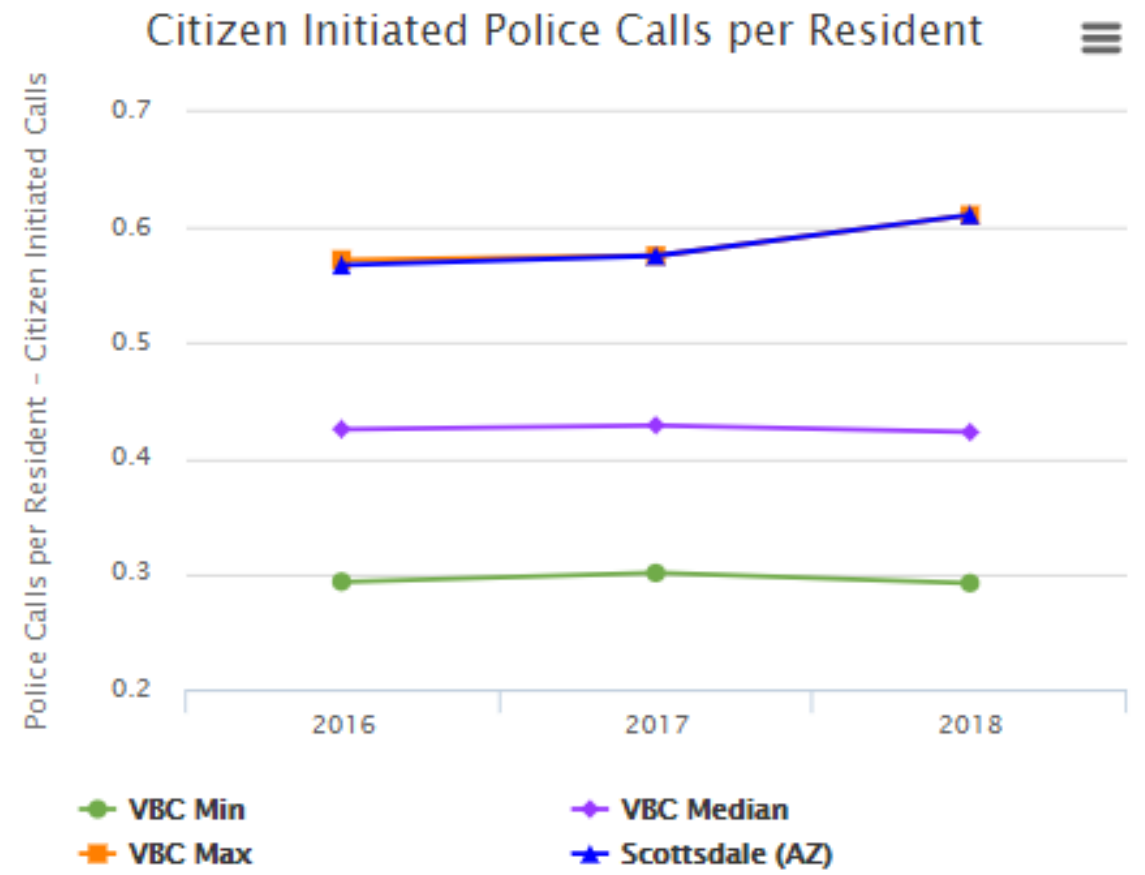
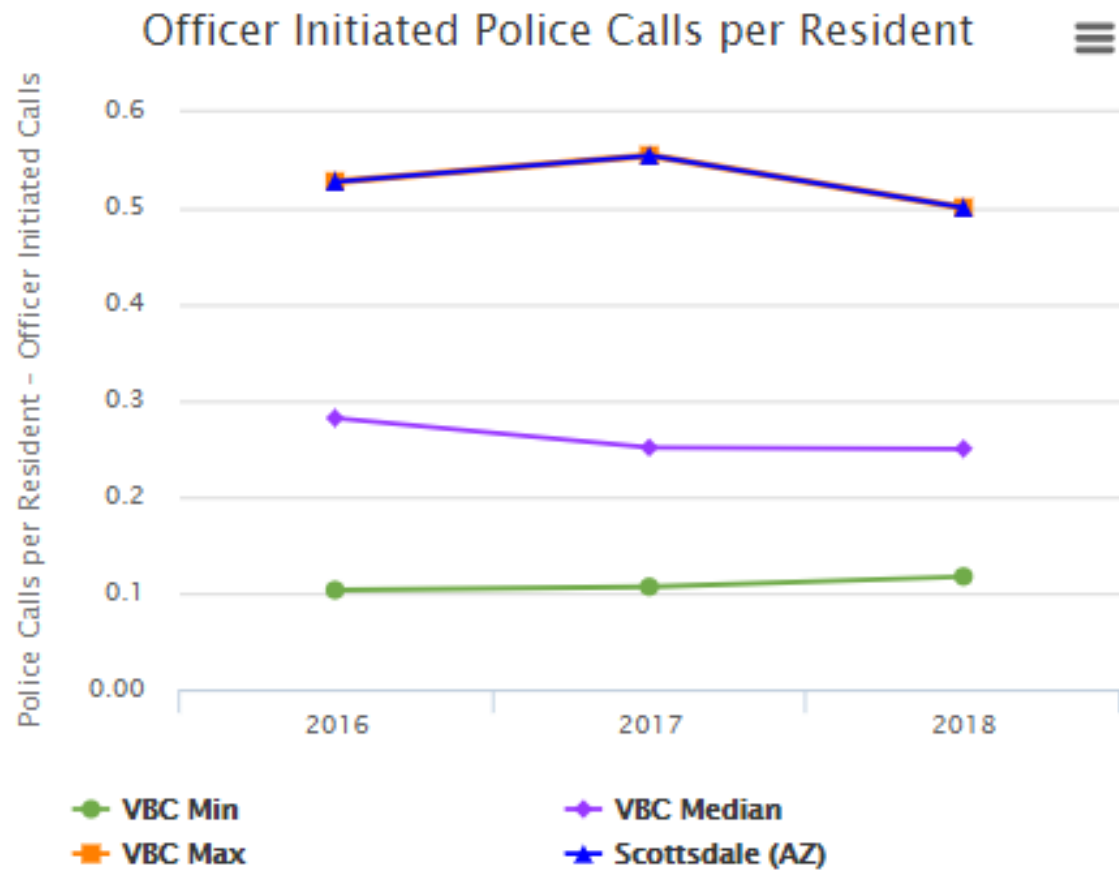




confusion

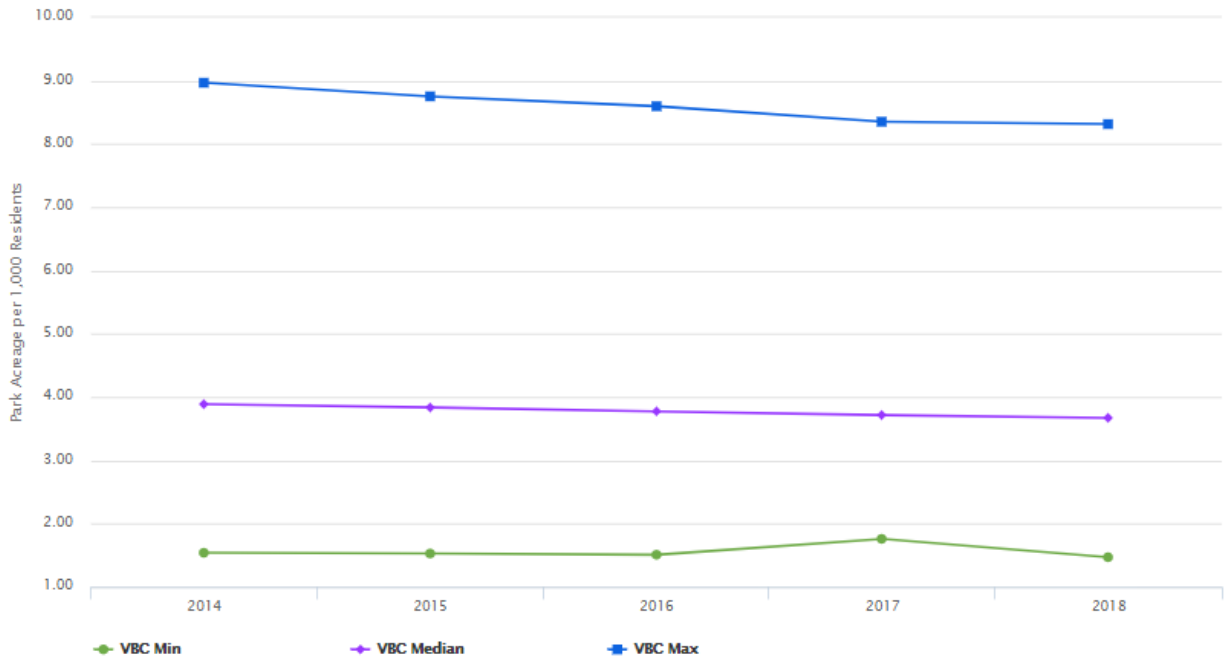


clarity



Officer initiated and citizen initiated calls provides some insight into the ability for certain cities to take a more proactive policing approach rather than a reactive response approach as seen in increasing ratios of officer initiated citizen initiated calls. Staffing levels, deployment practices, and community policing efforts likely have an impact on the individual cities results.

Park Acreage (Developed, Stadium, and Golf Course) per 1,000 Residents

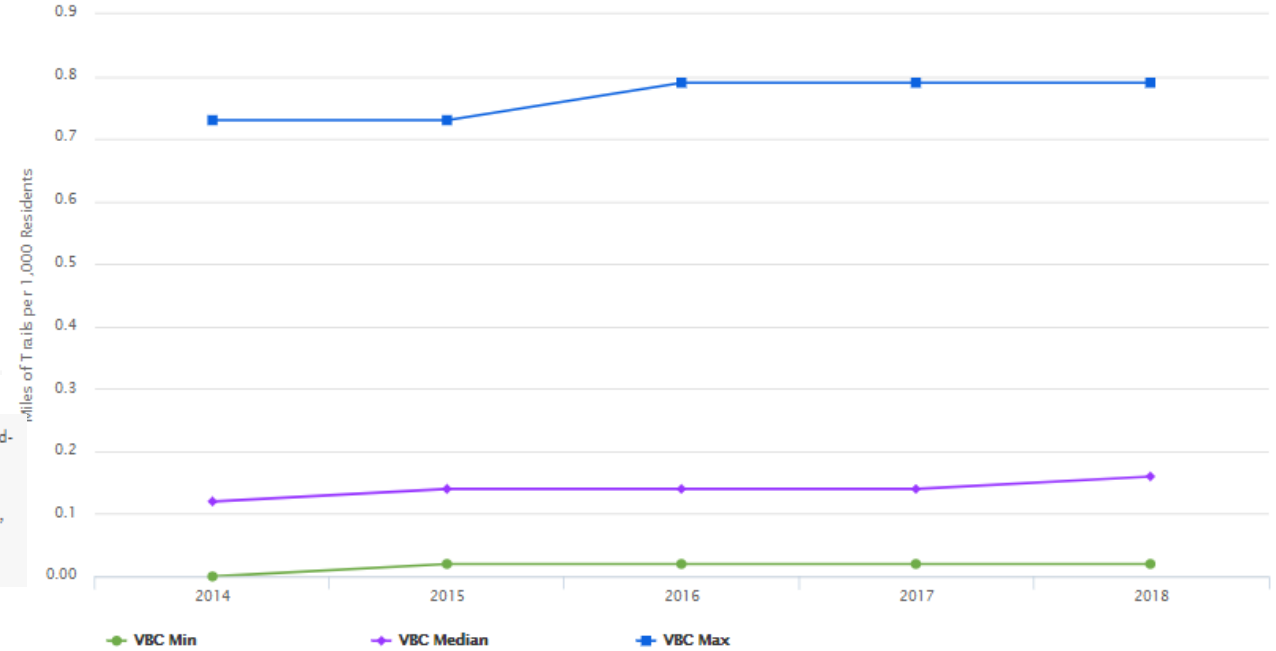


The average park acreage among VBC cities indicates an increase from FY 2014 through FY 2018. As population continues to increase and communities approach full build-out, this trend is expected to continue stabilizing.

Park acreage includes developed park acreage, golf course acreage, and stadium acreage. Natural preserve acreage, applicable to Avondale (80 total acres), Gilbert (182), Glendale (1,112), Peoria (1,133), Phoenix (41,440), Scottsdale (30,560), and Tempe (321), is not included. Planned park acreage is also not included.

Miles of Trails per 1,000 Residents

Aggregate number of municipally owned miles of bike, walking or hiking trails



The average miles of trails per 1,000 residents has remained relatively stable among VBC cities from 2014 through 2018. As the population continues to increase and communities approach full build-out, this trend is expected to continue stabilizing. Miles of trails includes only those trails separated from the roadway and also includes miles of trails in preserves.

3 - Valley Benchmark Cities Police Services

The trends tracked for this section are Police Response Times, Total Police Calls per Resident, Officer and Citizen Initiated Calls per Resident, Violent Crime Rate per 1,000 Residents, Property Crime Rate per 1,000 Residents, Violent Crime Clearance Rate, and Property Crime Clearance Rate. All of the influencing factors applied in FY 2013-14, FY 2014-15, and FY 2015-16 remain the same for this report. Last updated on 2018-11-02

Influencing Factors

Community Characteristics: The geographic size, diversity of landscape, and developed environment of a community can impact the amount and type of areas a police department needs to serve.

Impact of Non-Residents: Visitors to a particular city who do not maintain a formal residence impact the need for public safety services. These visitors could be seasonal residents, commuters from neighboring cities, tourists, or students not counted in population figures.

Citizen Engagement with Police: Police services are influenced by the extent to which police officers are involved in the community and residents are aware of the services provided by the department. In many communities, police forces utilize civilian staff to provide additional resources and support in the community.

Demographics: This factor considers the socioeconomic status of community residents, along with race, gender, age, and economic health of the community as potential predictors of demand for police services.

Deployment Strategies: How police resources are utilized within a community can vary based on multiple community factors. For example, some agencies place an emphasis on non-sworn roles in police support that can offset the cost of more traditional sworn officer positions.

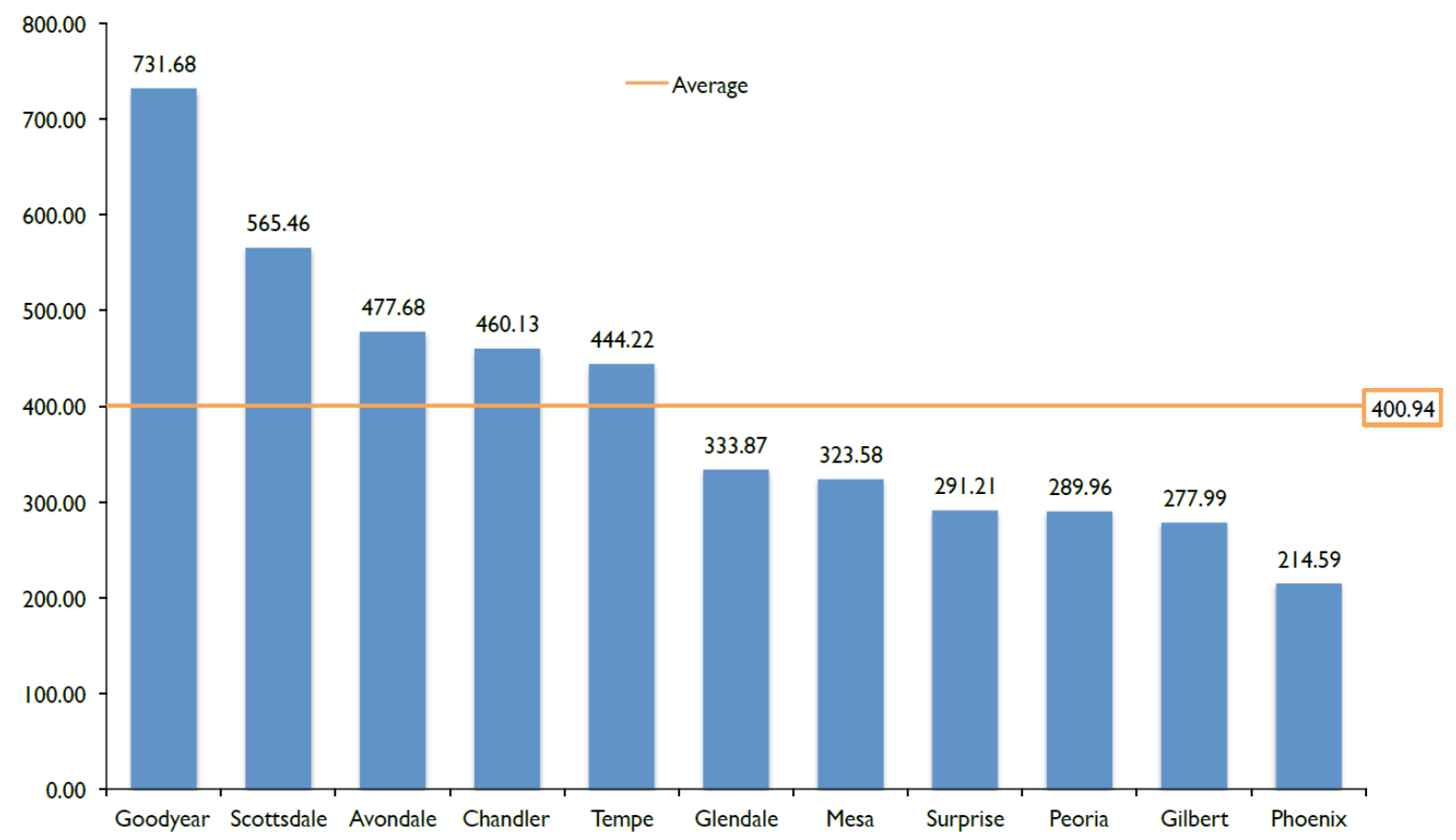
*Photo courtesy of the city of Gilbert, AZ



A group of approximately 15 people are seated around a large, light-colored conference table in a modern meeting room. The room features a patterned carpet, a projector mounted on the ceiling, and a large window on the right side. In the background, a projector screen displays a presentation slide with the text "Buy-in" and "Let's Discuss". A whiteboard is visible on the left wall. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

Examples of Use

Annual Calls for Service per Sworn Police Officer



- Source: City of Phoenix, Analysis of Cities
- Dispatched calls for service includes officer generated calls along with calls from citizens.

“VBC provides an effective and accurate way for our departments to see how their performance stacks up against their peers. For example, the FY15-16 report showed that Gilbert’s Fire response times were below average. We were then in the process of adding an additional fire station, so when council expressed concern over the low performance, we were able to explain that measures were already being taken to improve our performance.” – VBC Member

“Aside from the formal benchmarking report and analysis, a great degree of value is derived from the informal information sharing that takes place.

Because we have a built-in network of peer communities, we can effortlessly poll for research on various policies and practices that may be of interest to our respective organizations.”

VBC Member



A group of approximately 15 people are seated around a long, light-colored conference table in a modern meeting room. They are engaged in a discussion, with some looking towards a projector screen at the front of the room. The screen displays a slide with the text "Buy-in" and "Let's Discuss" along with a circular graphic. A whiteboard is visible on the left wall. The room features a patterned carpet, a projector mounted on the ceiling, and large windows on the right side. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

Lessons Learned and Advice

- **Make sure it's City Manager supported**
- **Get support from local college/national benchmarking group**
- **Trust is key and not everything needs to be published**
- **Know what you are trying to measure**
- **Use your subject-matter experts**
- **Pace yourself – start with several key measures and build on that over time**

A group of approximately 15 people are seated around a long, light-colored conference table in a modern meeting room. They are engaged in a meeting, with some looking towards a projector screen at the front of the room. The room features a patterned carpet, a projector mounted on the ceiling, and large windows in the background. A semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid across the center of the image, containing the text "Key Takeaways".

Key Takeaways

- **Comparisons help us understand how well we are doing, and provide context to improve services**
- **It helps to have jurisdictional commitment, mutual trust, willingness to share data and resources and a neutral facilitator**

Valley Benchmark Cities (VBC)

For full report: transformgov.org/valley-benchmark-cities

Megan Lynn - Management Assistant,
Scottsdale

