

Austin Police Department

Annual Crime and Traffic Report: 2008



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Research and Planning Unit
April 20, 2009

Background

Each calendar year, Austin Police Department reports crime statistics to the FBI through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. After federal review, these become our “official” statistics and are useful in tracking year-to-year performance and trends, as well as comparing our crime statistics to other US cities of comparable size.

Overview

This document contains UCR crime data for the calendar year 2008 (January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008). For comparison, we have included data from other large US cities for 2007 (the most recent data available), among them, Boston, Columbus, Memphis, Portland, and San Jose (see Page 6 for a complete list). We have also included selected traffic statistics on fatal collisions and the most recent comparable data for other jurisdictions.

The report is organized by crime category (violent or property), and by type of crime within each category (e.g., murder and robbery within violent crime).

Notable Findings

This year’s crime statistics includes the following noteworthy findings:

- Austin’s rate of 532 **violent crimes** per 100,000 residents was lower than the rate of 996 for other US cities of comparable size (Page 4).
- Austin’s **property crime rate** of 6,058 per 100,000 residents was higher than the rate of 5,416 for other US cities of comparable size (Page 11).
- The number of **murders** decreased from 30 in 2007 to 23 in 2008, and our rate per 100,000 residents was lower than other large US cities (Page 5).
- Austin’s number of **robberies** dropped from 1,457 in 2007 to 1,333 in 2008, and our rate per 100,000 residents was lower than other large US cities (Page 8).
- The number of **burglaries** increased from 8,031 in 2007 to 8,586 in 2008, and our rate per 100,000 residents was similar to other cities of comparable size (Page 11).
- The number of **auto thefts** dropped from 2,961 in 2007 to 2,633 in 2008, and our rate per 100,000 residents was lower than other large US cities (Page 13).
- Austin’s number of **traffic fatalities** declined slightly from 60 in 2007 to 59 in 2008, and our fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) was lower than those of both Texas and the US (Page 16).

- The rate of **traffic fatalities involving impaired drivers or pedestrians** is .62 per 100 million VMT, which is higher than both Texas and the US (Page 18).

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Overall Crime Statistics

The FBI identifies seven “Part I Index Crimes,” based on their seriousness and frequency of occurrence. Each crime is defined, including how incidents are counted, and grouped into two categories:

Violent crimes

Murder (number of victims)
 Rape (number of victims)
 Robbery (number of offenses)
 Aggravated Assault (number of victims)

Property crimes

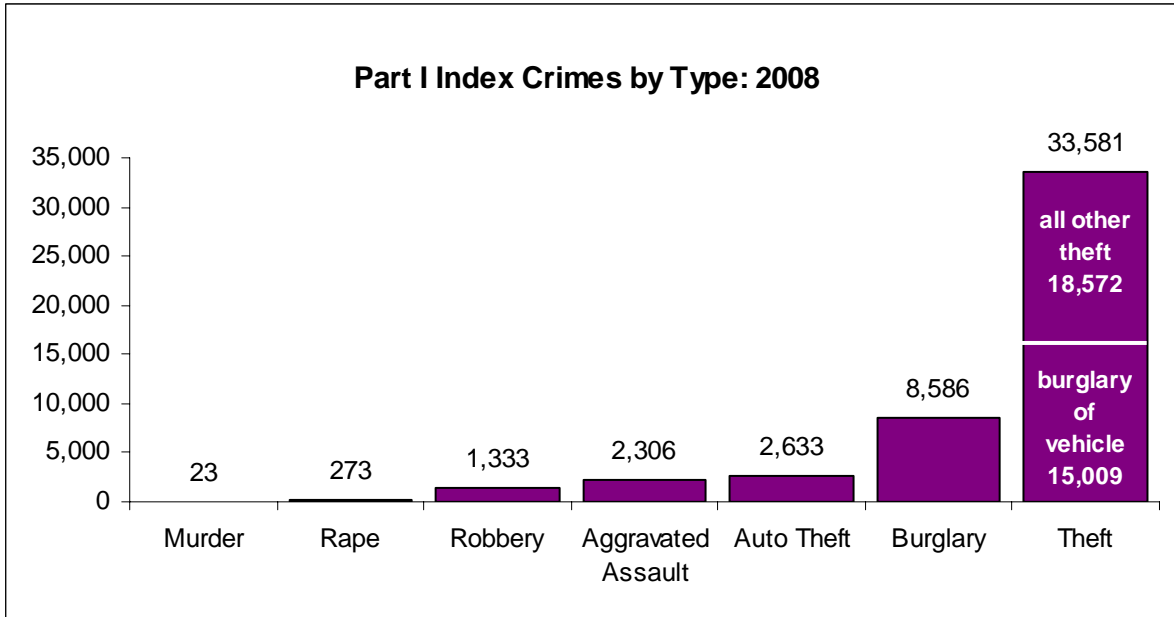
Burglary (number of premises entered)
 Theft (number of offenses)
 Auto Theft (number of vehicles)

These categories and crime definitions are used for reporting city-level crime statistics to the FBI under its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program.

Incidents and Rates

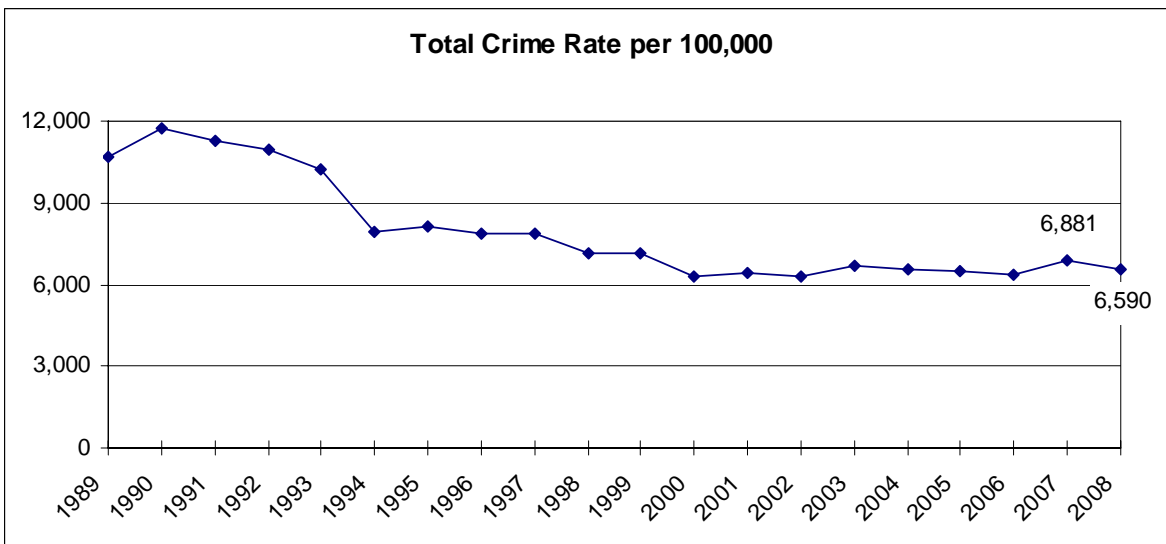
Throughout this report, crime is reported in terms of actual numbers (e.g., incidents, victims) as well as rate per 100,000 residents. Rates allow for comparisons to previous years and with other cities.

Part I Index Crimes	Offenses			Rate per 100,000		
	2007	2008	% chg	2007	2008	% chg
Murder	30	23	-23.3%	4.2	3.1	-25.7%
Rape	328	273	-16.8%	45.8	36.9	-19.3%
Robbery	1,457	1,333	-8.5%	203.3	180.2	-11.3%
Aggravated Assault	2,056	2,306	12.2%	286.8	311.8	8.7%
Total Violent Crime	3,871	3,935	1.7%	540.0	532.1	-1.5%
Burglary	8,031	8,586	6.9%	1,120.4	1,161.0	3.6%
Theft	34,461	33,581	-2.6%	4,807.5	4,540.8	-5.5%
Auto Theft	2,961	2,633	-11.1%	413.1	356.0	-13.8%
Total Property Crime	45,453	44,800	-1.4%	6,340.9	6,057.8	-4.5%
Total Index Crime	49,324	48,735	-1.2%	6,881	6,590	-4.2%



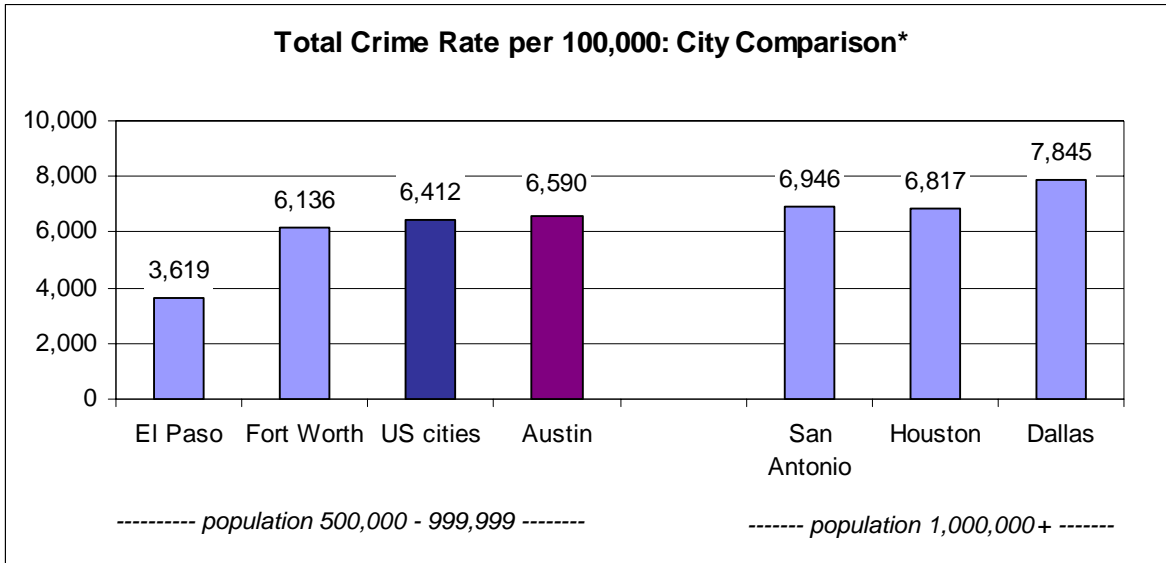
Over Time

In 2008, the number of all Part I Index crimes for Austin was 48,735. This represents a 1% decrease in incidents as compared with 2007 (49,324). The rate of crime per 100,000 residents was 6,590 in 2008 – a 4% decrease from the rate of 6,881 in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the rate ranged from 6,267 to 7,849.



Compared to Other Cities

This chart shows how Austin compares to other large US cities (those with population between 500,000 and 999,999; Austin's population was 739,543 in 2008). For regional comparison, Texas cities are also identified. Austin's rate of 6,590 offenses per 100,000 was only slightly higher (3%) than the rate of 6,412 for all large US cities.



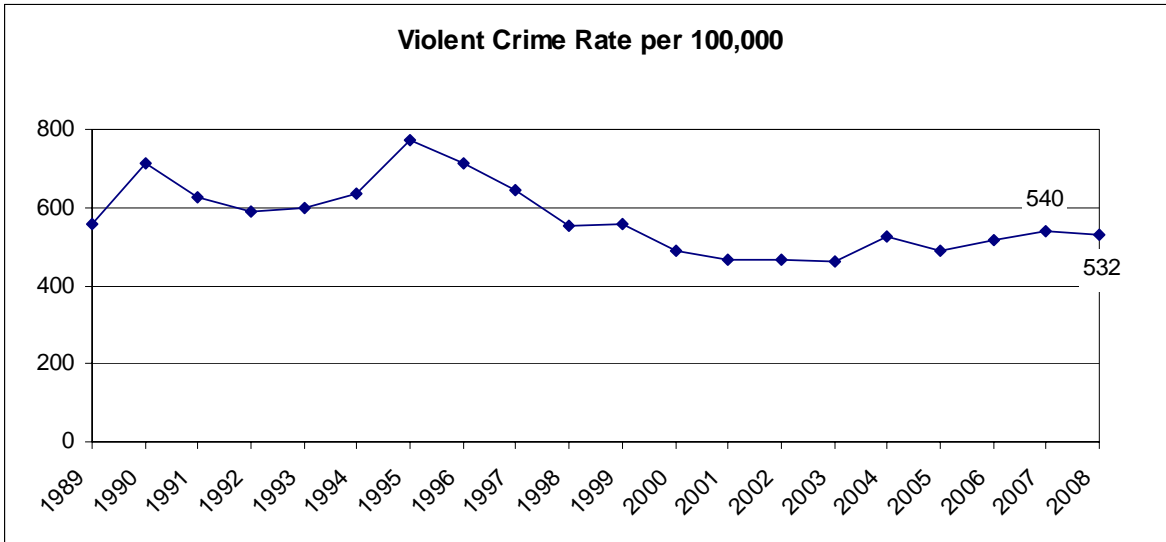
* Note: the FBI (data source) will not release final 2008 statistics until September 2009, so throughout this report, 2007 statistics are used for other cities and 2008 statistics are used for Austin.

The following cities are included in the "US cities" category above, and elsewhere throughout this report:

- Austin
- Baltimore
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Denver
- El Paso
- Honolulu
- Jacksonville
- Memphis
- Nashville
- Portland
- San Jose
- Washington
- Albuquerque
- Boston
- Columbus
- Detroit
- Fort Worth
- Indianapolis
- Louisville Metro
- Milwaukee
- Oklahoma City
- San Francisco
- Seattle

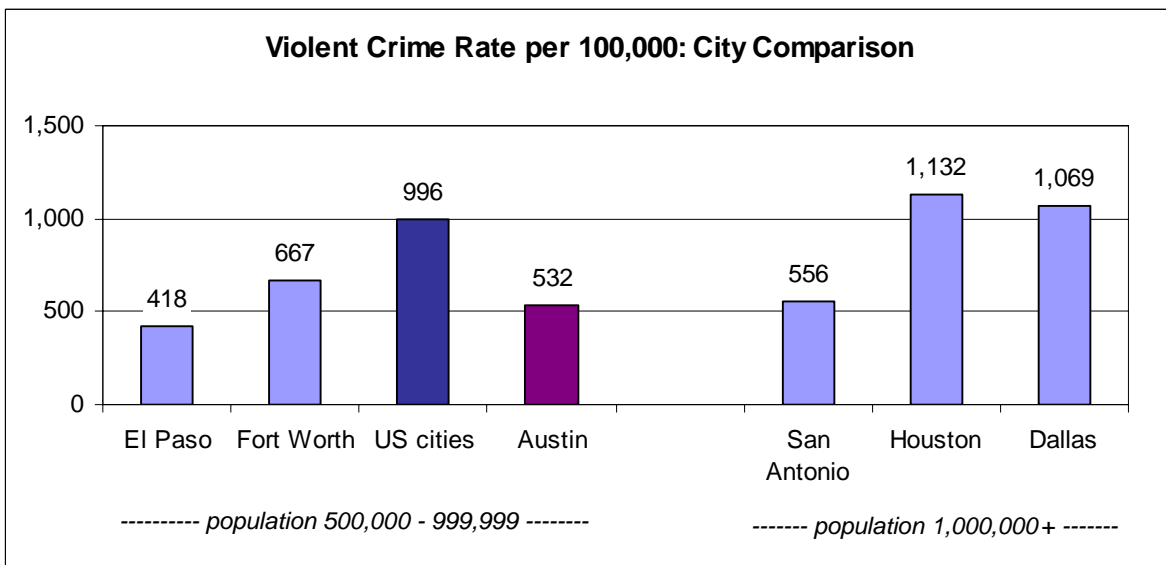
Violent Crime

In 2008, the number of violent crimes for Austin was 3,935. This represents a 2% increase in incidents as compared with 2007 (3,871). The rate of violent crime per 100,000 residents was 532 in 2008, which represents a 2% decrease from the rate of 540 in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the rate ranged from 462 to 644.



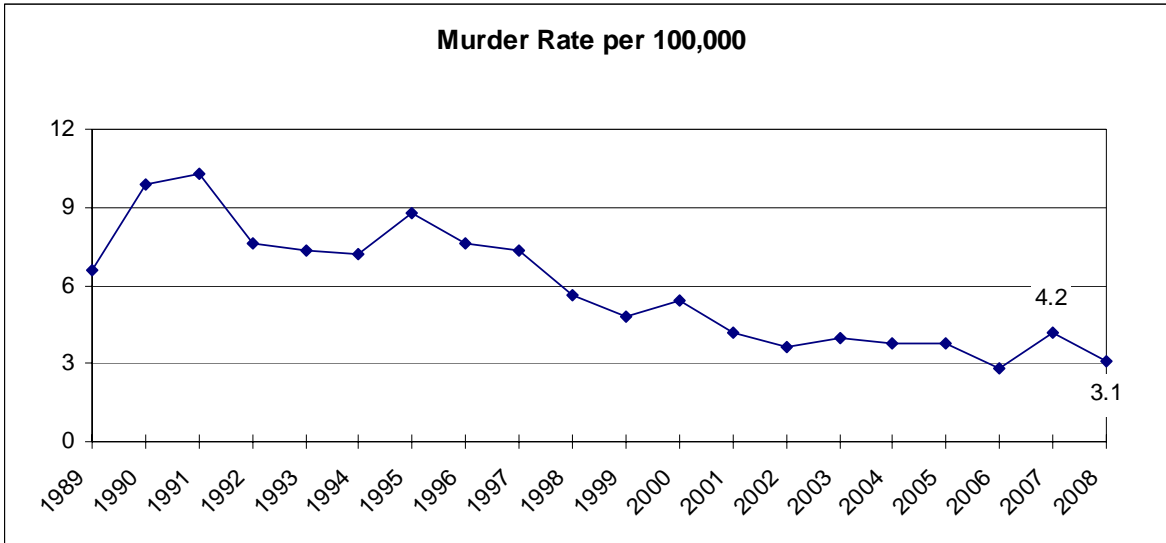
Compared to Other Cities

Austin's rate of 532 violent crimes per 100,000 was 47% lower than the rate of 996 for all large US cities.

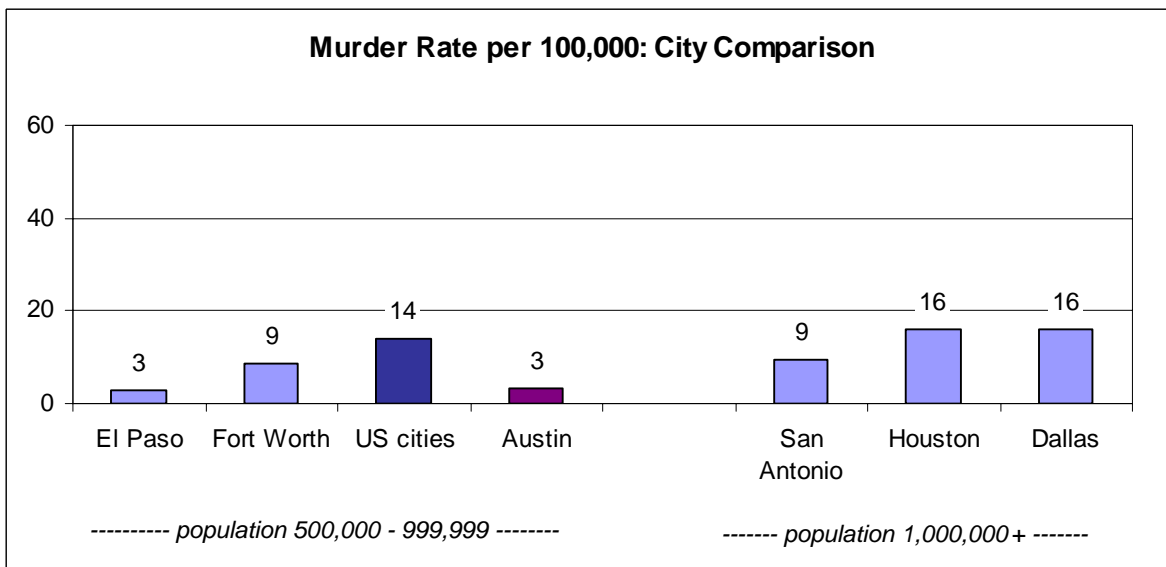


Murder

During 2008 there were 23 murder victims in Austin, down from 30 in 2007. The murder rate was three per 100,000 residents, down from four in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the number of murder victims ranged from 20 to 40.

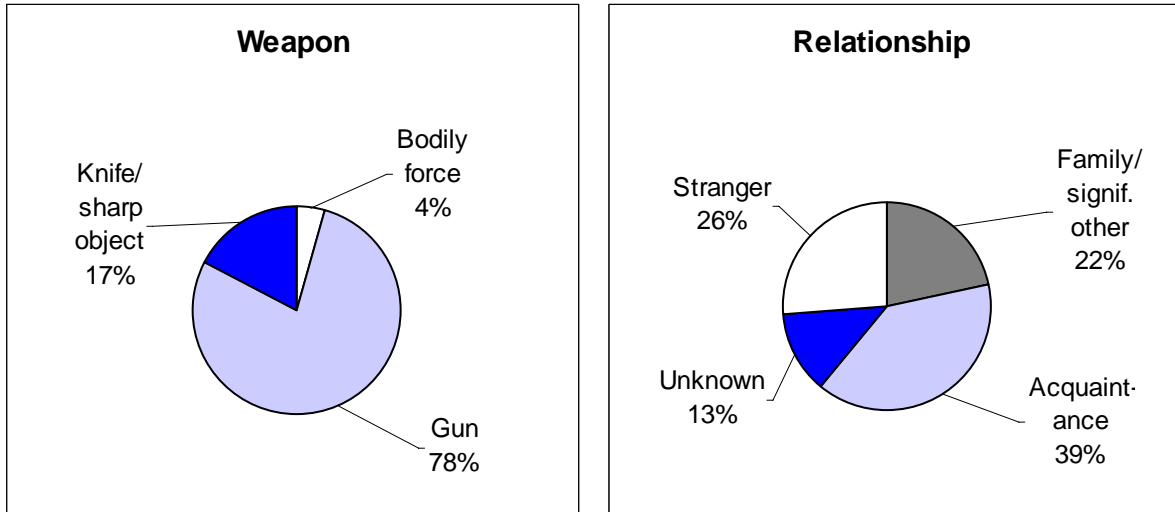


Austin's murder rate was 78% lower than that of other US cities our size.



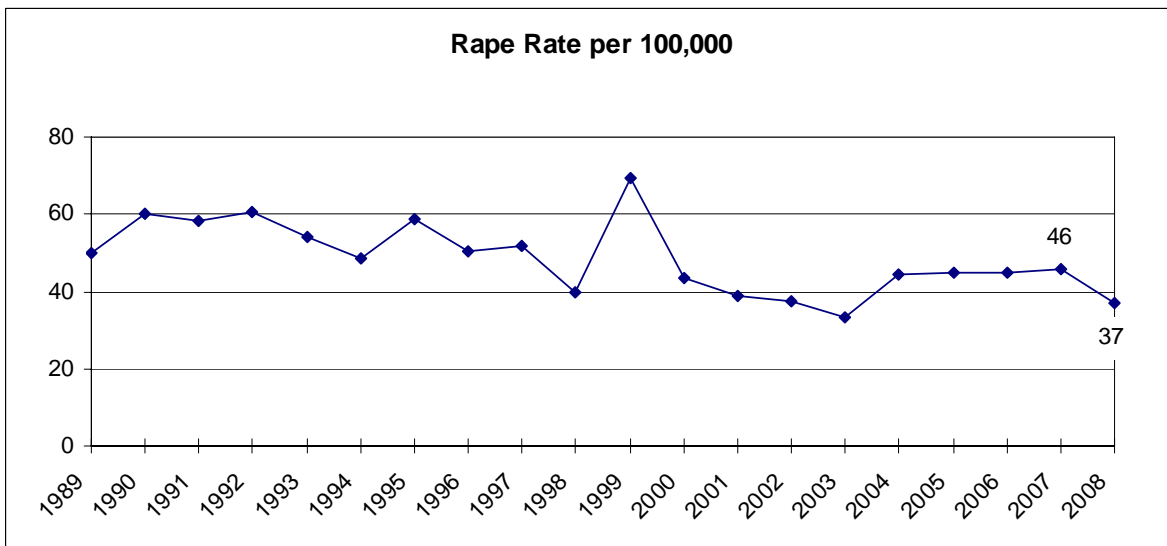
In 2008, guns were the most frequent weapons used in murders (78% of incidents), followed by knives or other sharp objects (17%). In 2007, guns were used in 43% of incidents and knives or other sharp objects were used in 37% of incidents.

In incidents where the relationship between the victim and suspect was established, the victim knew the offender in 61% of the murders, as compared with 60% in 2007.

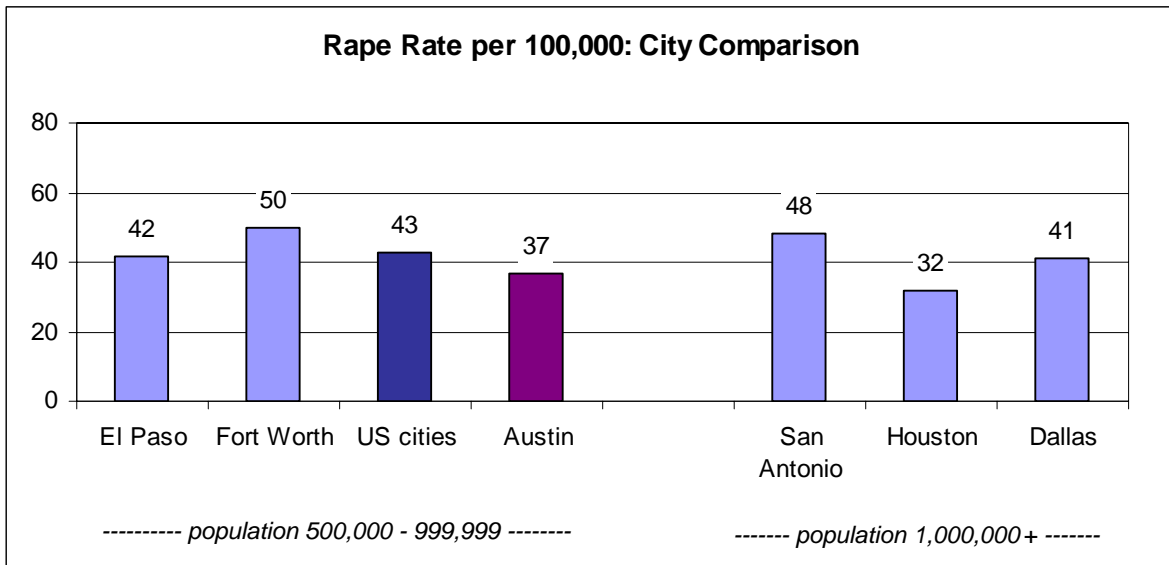


Rape

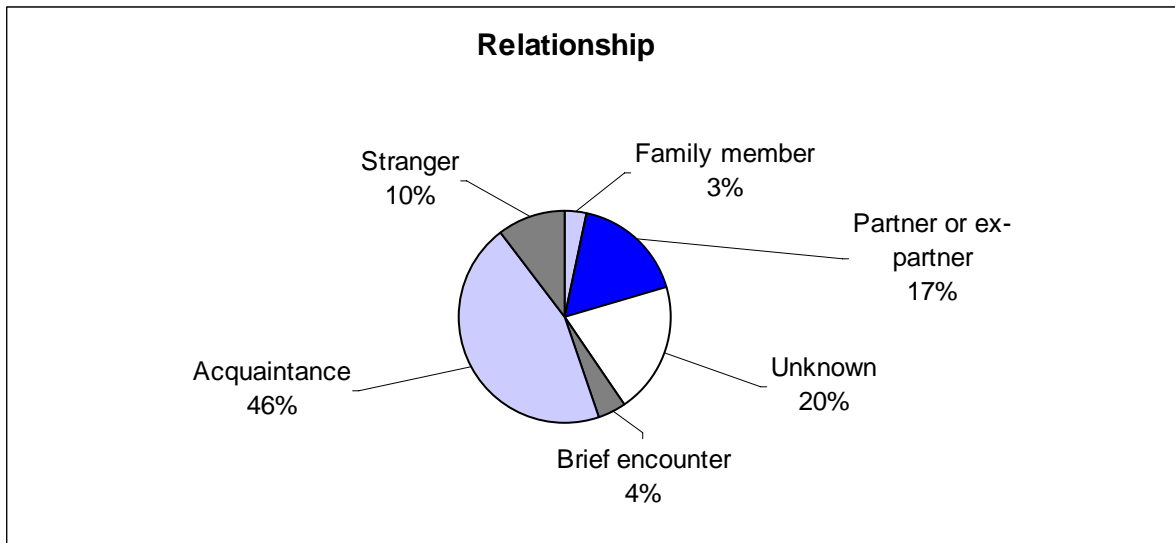
There were 273 reported victims of rape in Austin during 2008, down from 328 in 2007. The rate was 37 per 100,000 residents, which was down from the previous year's rate of 46. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the rate ranged from 33 to 69.



Austin's rate of reported rapes was 13% lower than other US cities of the same size.

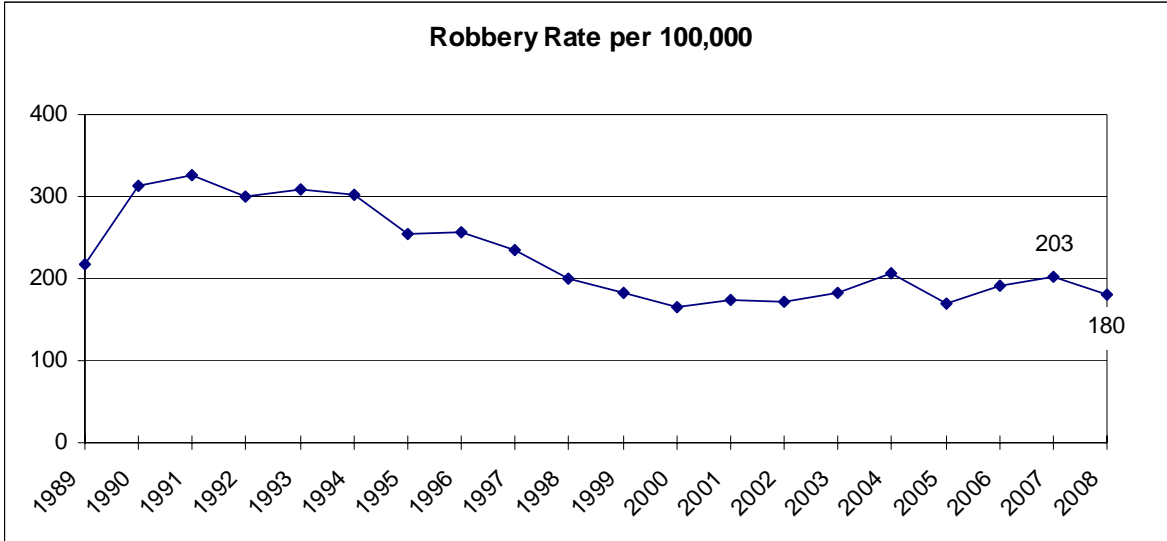


In 70% of the cases, the victim knew the suspect as an acquaintance, family member, partner, ex-partner, or brief encounter.

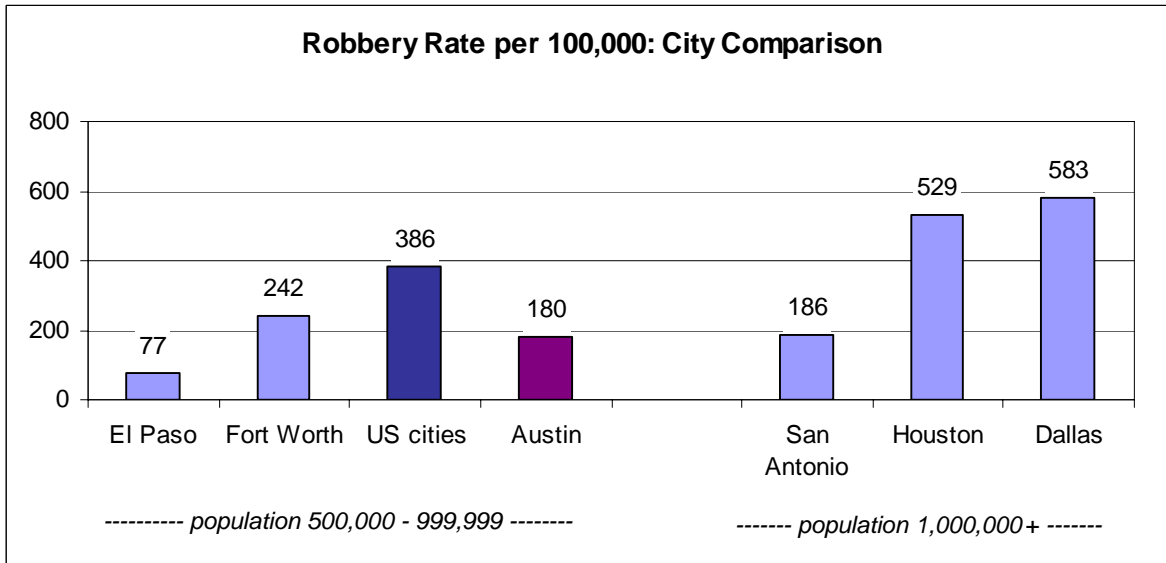


Robbery

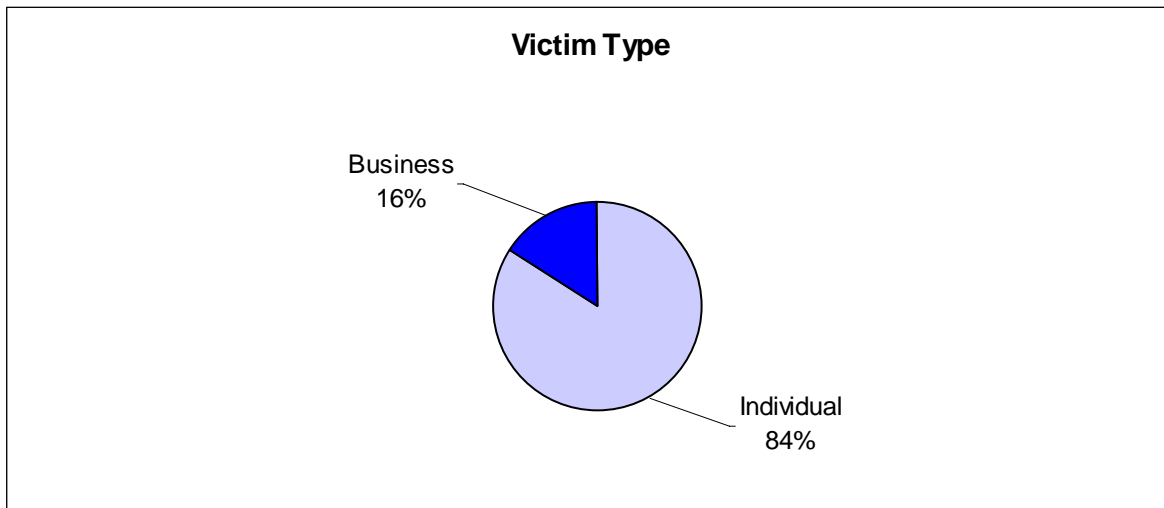
There were 1,333 robberies reported in 2008, down from 1,457 in 2007. The rate was 180 robberies per 100,000 residents, which represents a decrease from the previous year's rate of 203. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the rate of annual robberies ranged from 164 to 234.



Austin's rate of reported robberies was 53% lower than other US cities of the same size.

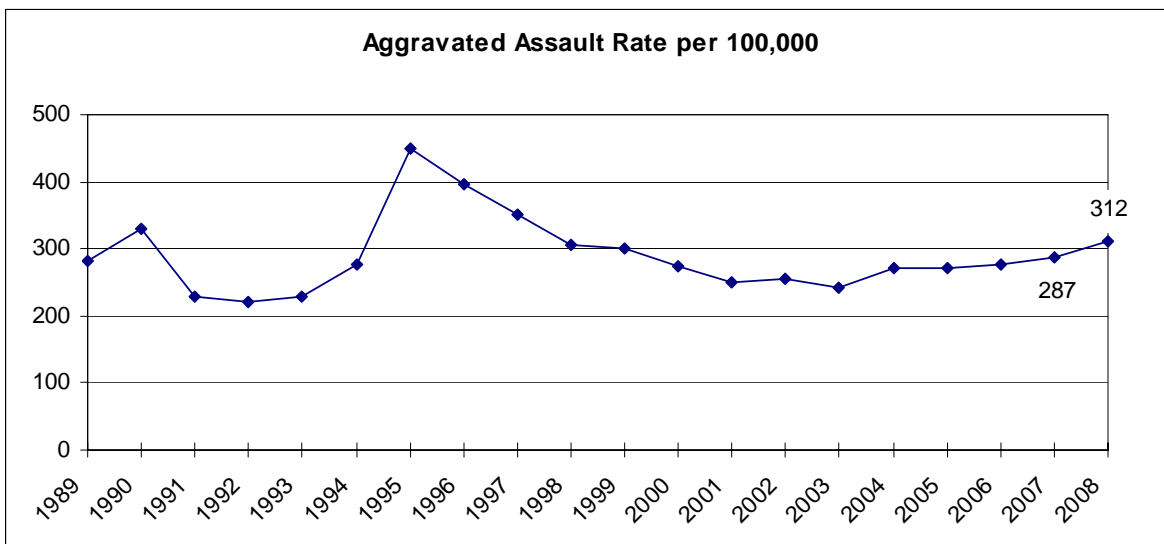


Eighty-four percent of robberies were committed against individuals, as compared with 16% that occurred at businesses. These proportions were the same in 2007.

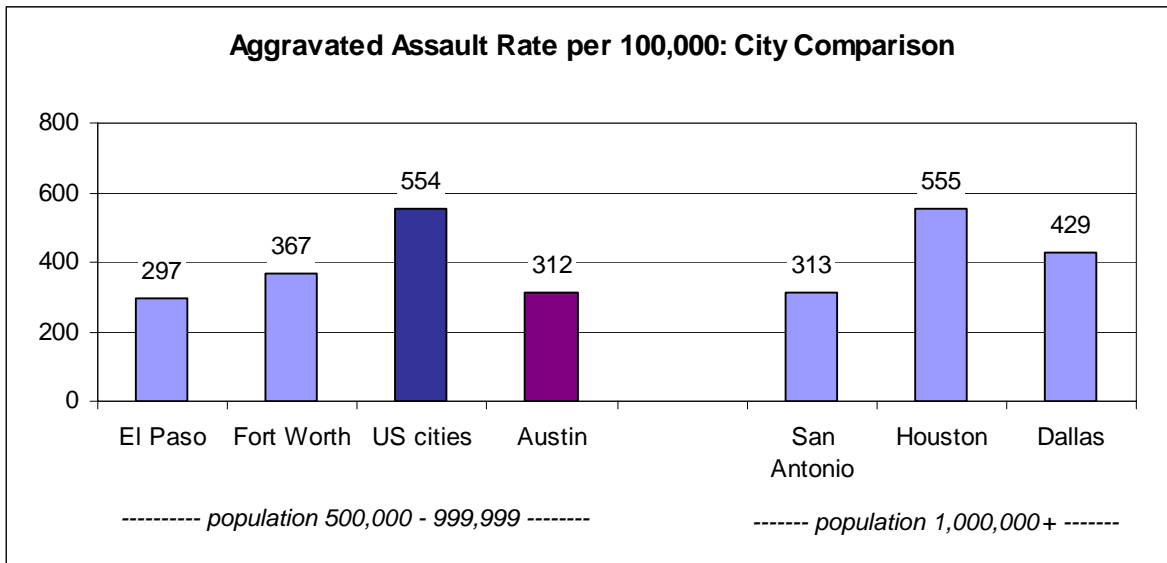


Aggravated Assault

There were 2,306 reported victims of aggravated assault in 2008, up from 2,056 in 2007. The rate was 312 victims per 100,000 residents, which represents an increase over the rate of 287 in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the rate of aggravated assault victims ranged from 242 to 351.

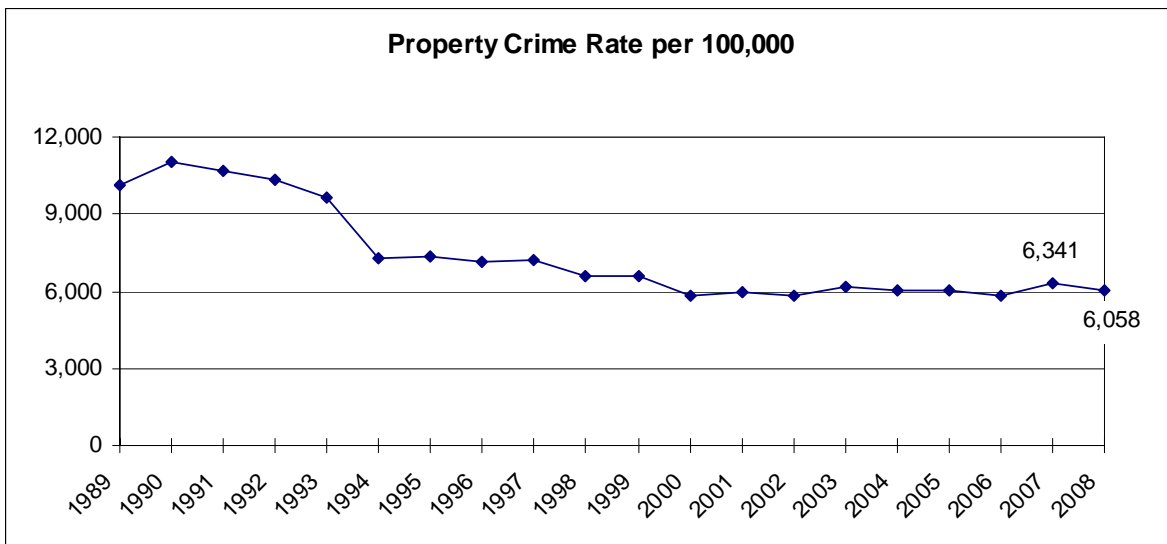


Austin's rate of aggravated assault victims was 44% lower than other US cities of the same size.



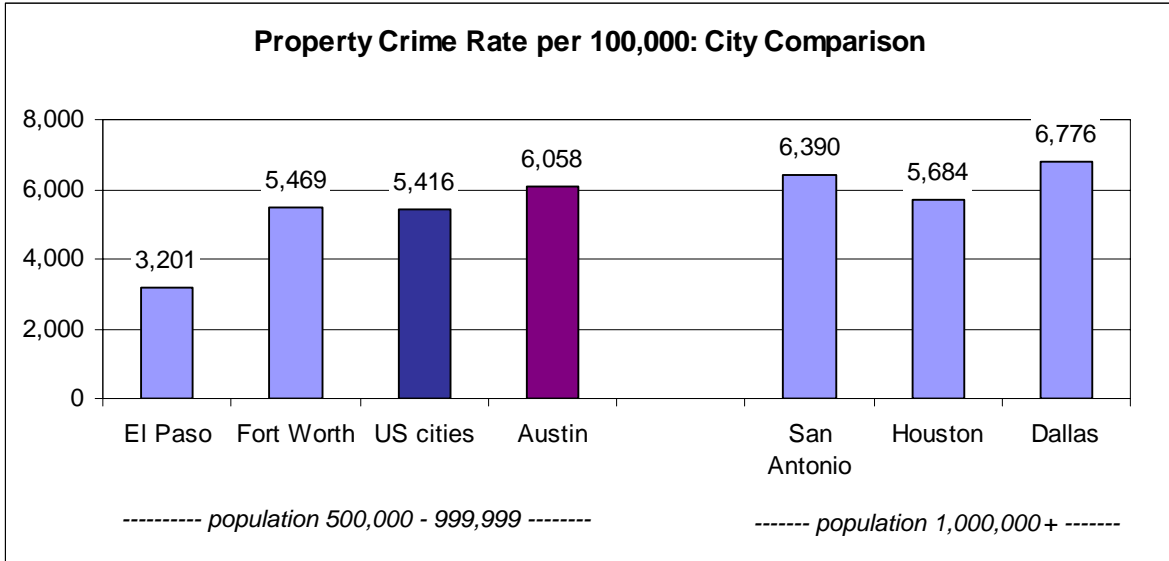
Property Crime

In 2008, the number of property crimes for Austin was 44,800. This represents a decrease in incidents as compared with 2007 (45,453). The rate of property crime per 100,000 residents was 6,058 in 2008, which represents a decrease from the rate of 6,341 in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the rate ranged from 5,800 to 7,205.



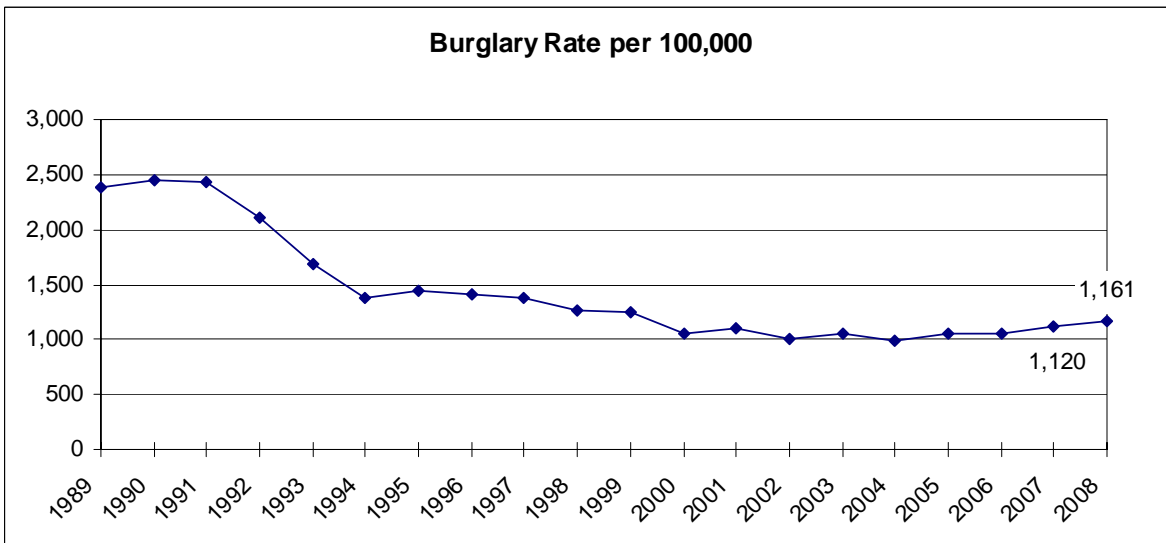
Compared to Other Cities

Austin's rate of 6,058 property crimes per 100,000 in 2008 was 12% higher than the rate of 5,416 per 100,000 for other US cities.

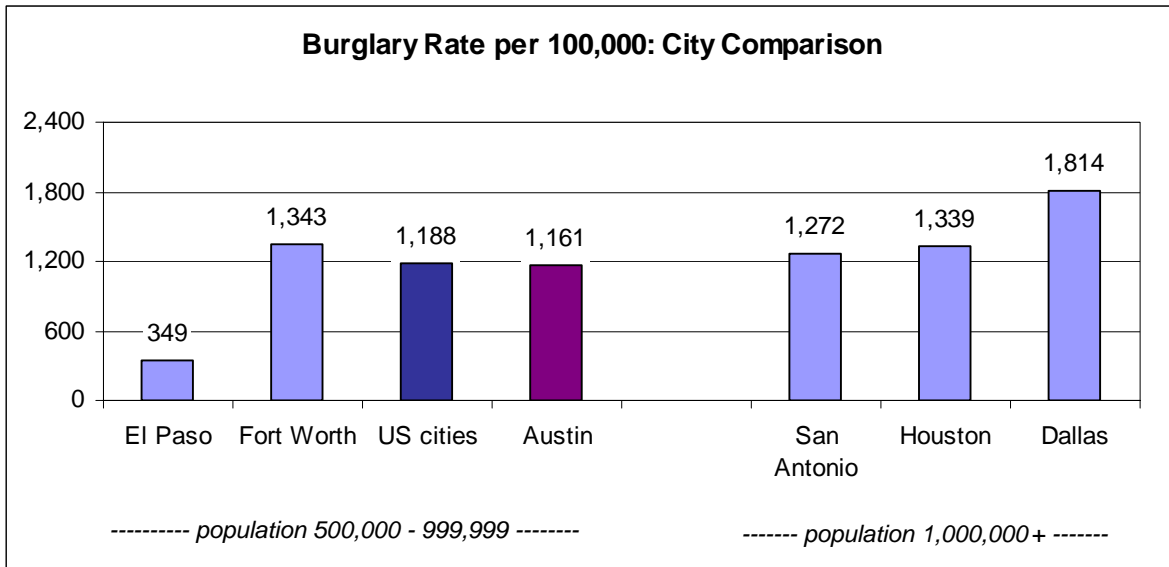


Burglary

There were 8,586 reported burglaries in 2008, up from 8,031 in 2007. The rate was 1,161 burglaries per 100,000 residents, which represents an increase over the rate of 1,120 in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the burglary rate ranged from 997 to 1,371.

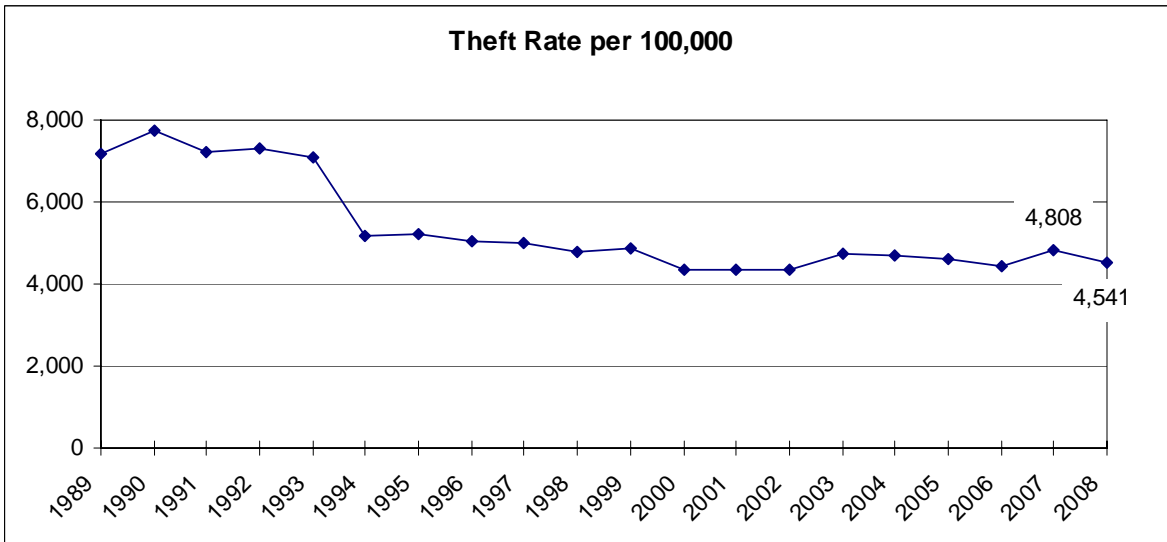


Austin's burglary rate in 2008 was 2% lower than other US cities of the same size.

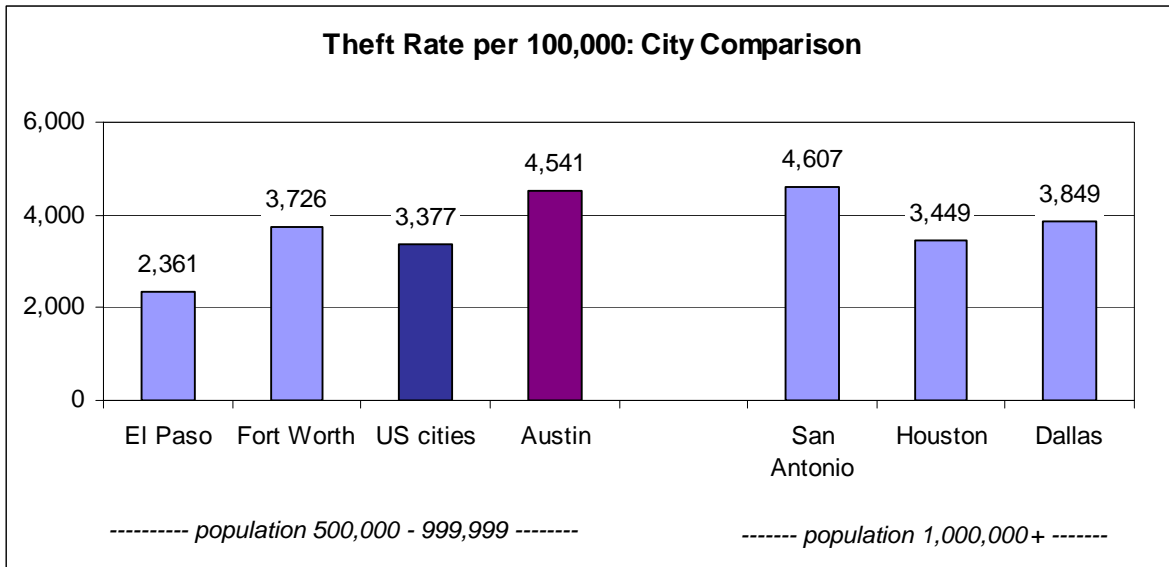


Theft

There were 33,581 reported thefts in 2008, down from 34,461 in 2007. The rate was 4,541 thefts per 100,000 residents, which represents a decrease versus the rate of 4,808 in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the theft rate ranged from 4,332 to 5,018.

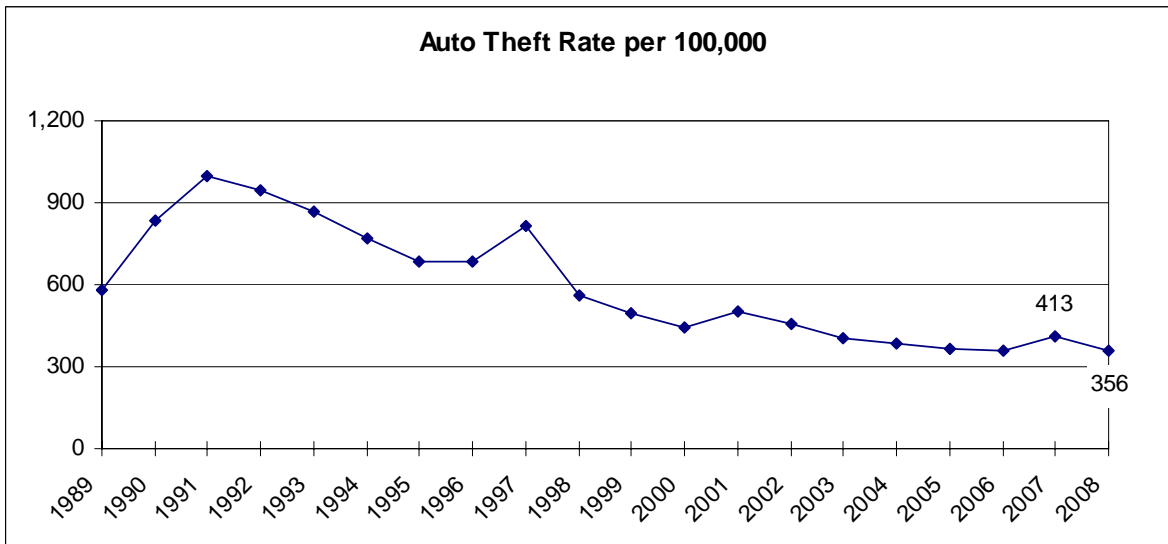


Austin's rate of thefts in 2008 was 34% higher than other US cities of the same size.

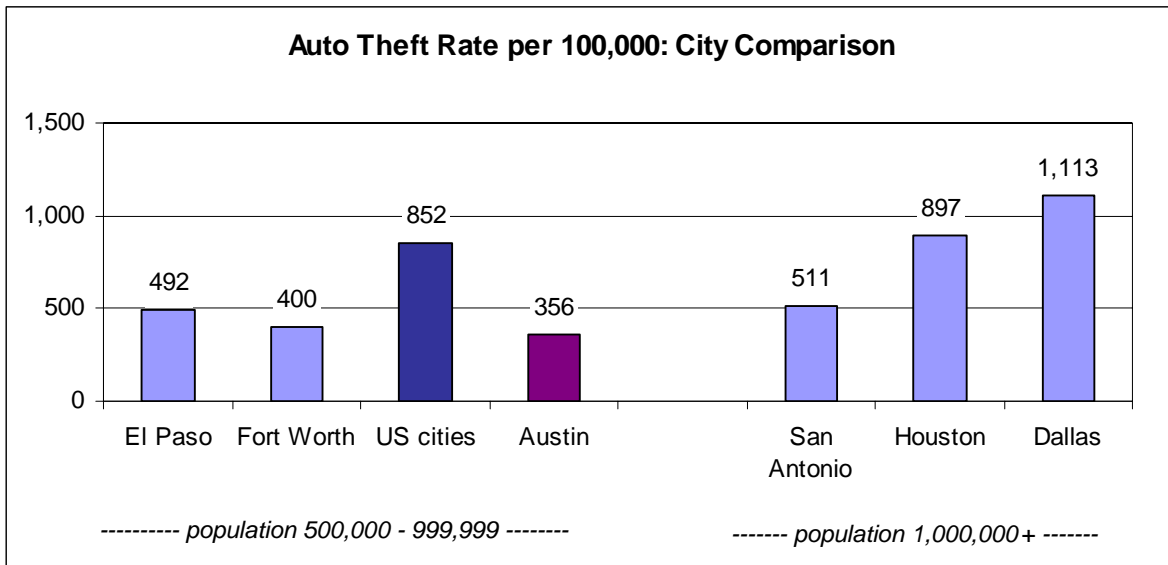


Auto Theft

There were 2,633 reported auto thefts (including attempted thefts) in 2008, down from 2,961 in 2007. The rate was 356 auto thefts per 100,000 residents, which represents a decrease from the rate of 413 in 2007. Over the previous 10 years (1997 to 2006), the rate ranged from 358 to 815.

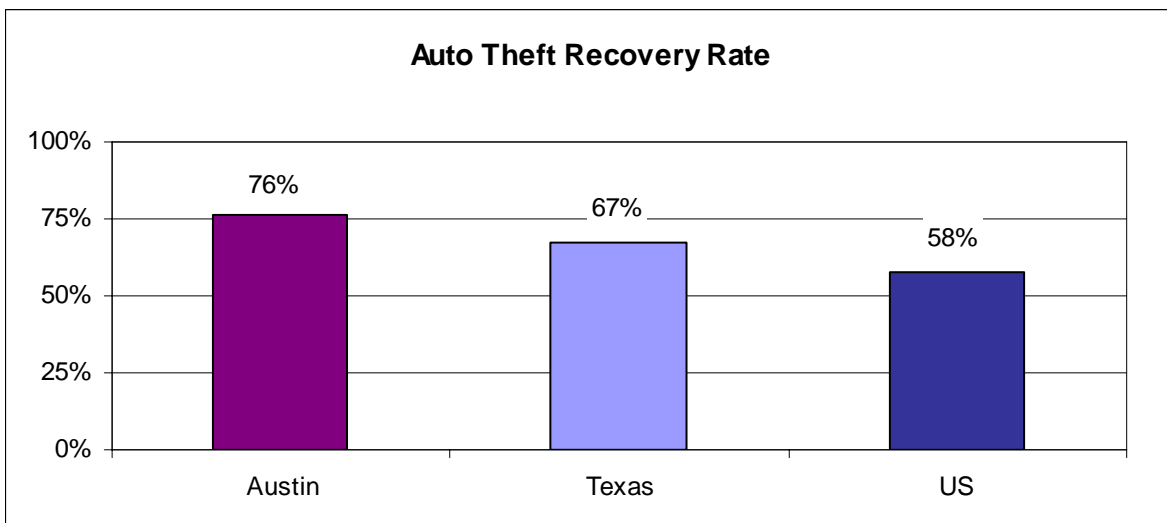


Austin's auto theft rate in 2008 was 58% lower than other US cities of the same size.



The most frequently stolen vehicles were Honda Accord and trucks made by Chevrolet, GMC, and Ford. Together, they represent 26% of all stolen vehicles where the make and model were known.

In terms of recovery, of all vehicles stolen in 2008 (not including attempted thefts), 76% were successfully recovered. That rate is higher than those of either Texas or the US.



Solving Crime

Crimes can be cleared in two ways: by arrest and by exception. A crime is cleared exceptionally when a circumstance prevents an arrest. Examples include when the offender dies, the victim refuses to cooperate with the prosecution, or the offender is being prosecuted in another jurisdiction and cannot be extradited.

Part I Index Crimes	% of Crimes Cleared by Arrest or Exception*	
	Austin	US Cities (pop 500,000 - 999,999)
Murder	83%	55%
Rape	50%	40%
Robbery	30%	21%
Aggravated Assault	56%	47%
Total Violent Crime	47%	37%
Burglary	7%	9%
Theft	12%	13%
Auto Theft	10%	10%
Total Property Crime	11%	12%

* Note: the FBI will not release 2008 statistics until September 2009, so 2007 statistics are used for other cities. 2008 statistics are available and are shown for Austin (produced by APD, may vary from those published by FBI).

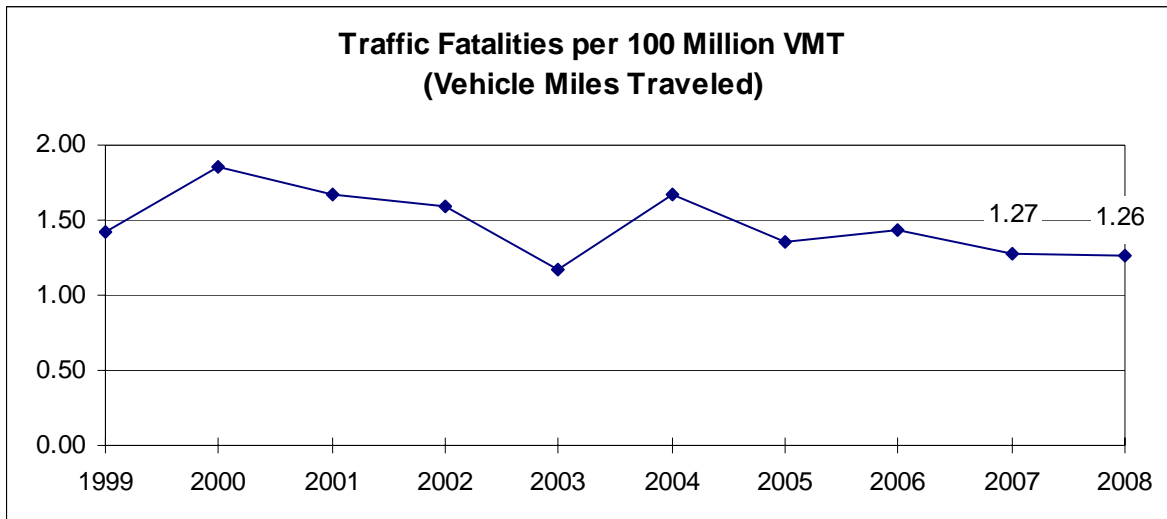
During 2008, Austin police solved, or cleared, 47% of the reported **violent crimes**. This compared with 37% for all large US cities (those with 500,000 to 999,999 residents) using the most recent data available. When looking at type of violent crime clearances, Austin outperformed other cities on all types.

Solving **property crimes** is generally more difficult because many property crimes are discovered after the crime has occurred, with no known suspects or witnesses. During 2008 Austin solved 11% of property crimes, which was slightly lower than other cities of similar size.

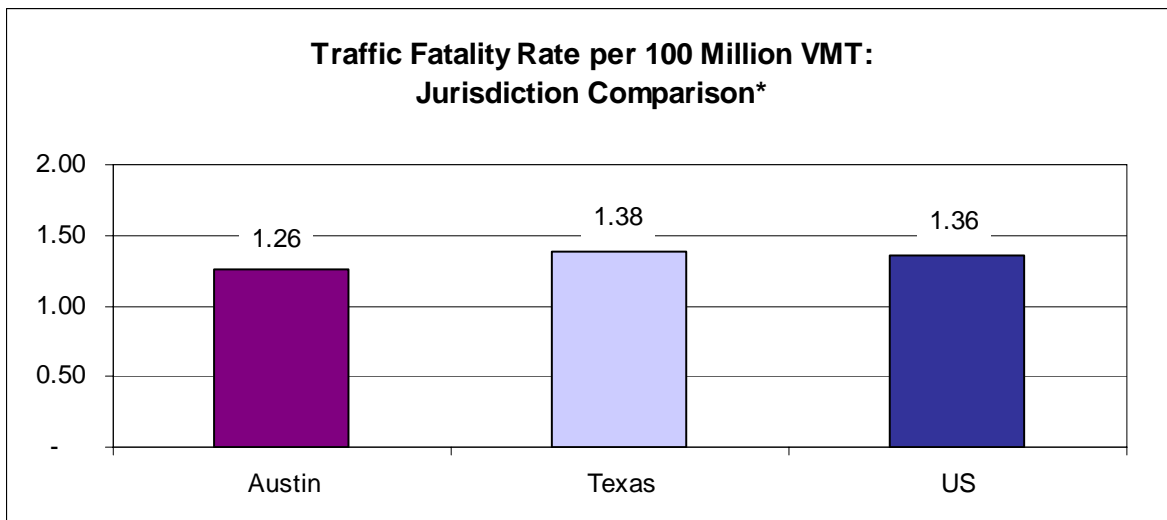
Traffic Fatalities

During 2008 there were 57 fatal collisions that resulted in 59 deaths, as compared with 59 fatal collisions and 60 deaths in 2007.

The 2008 rate was 1.26 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), nearly the same as the rate of 1.27 in 2007.

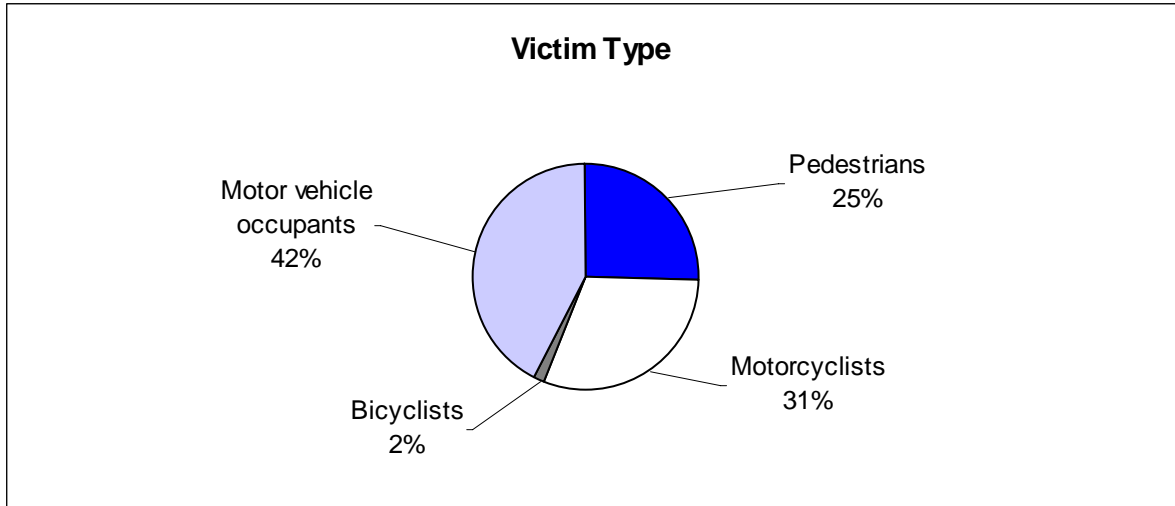


Austin's rate of 1.26 fatalities per 100 million VMT was lower than the rates of 1.38 for Texas and 1.36 fatalities for the US.

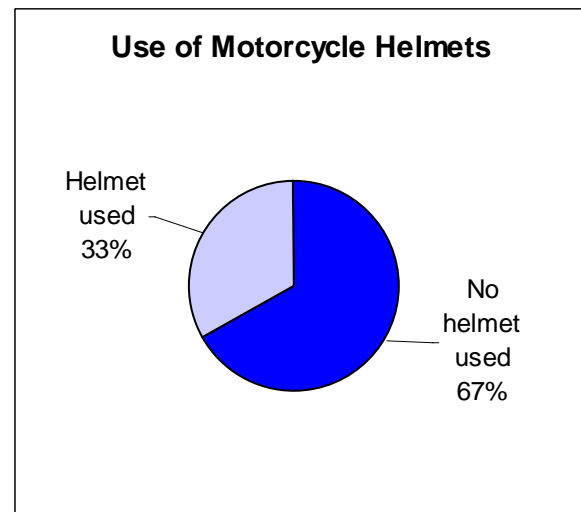
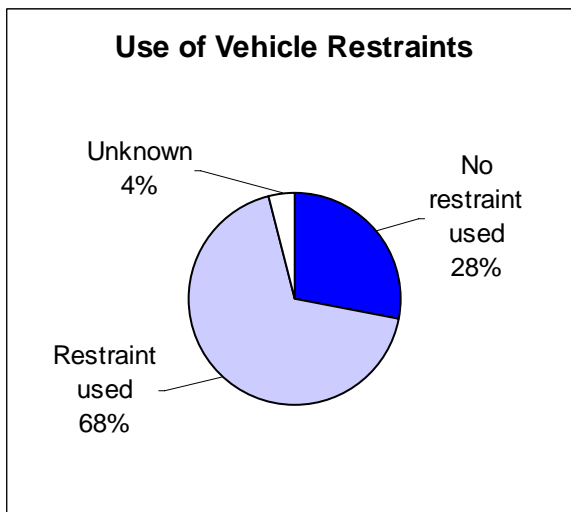


* Note: the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (data source) will not release 2008 statistics until May 2009, so 2007 statistics are used for Texas and the US and 2008 statistics are used for Austin.

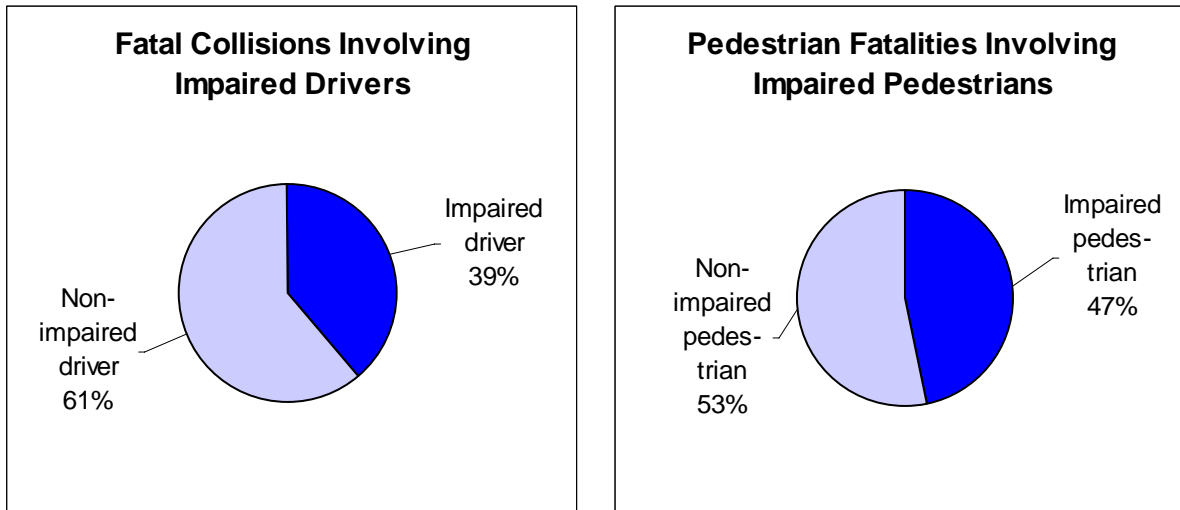
Most traffic fatalities involved motor vehicle occupants (25, or 42%), followed by motorcyclists (18, or 31%), and pedestrians (15, or 25%). In 2007, 45% of fatalities involved motor vehicle occupants, 13% involved motorcyclists, and 40% involved pedestrians.



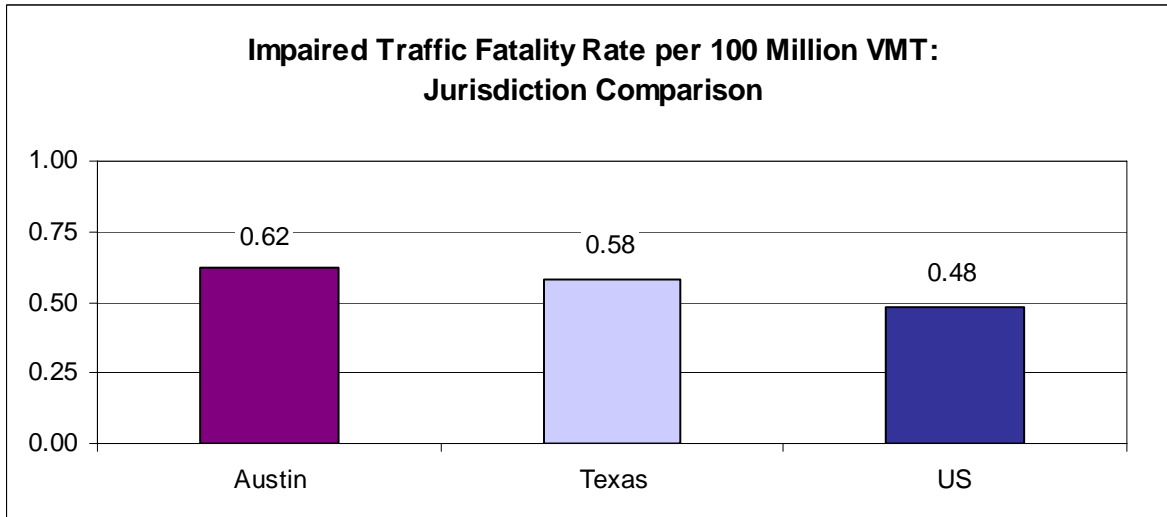
Of all motor vehicle fatalities, seven (28%) victims were not using restraints, as compared with 37% in 2007. Of all motorcycle fatalities, 12 (67%) victims were not wearing helmets, as compared with 63% in 2007.



Of all fatal crashes, 22 (39%) involved an impaired driver, as compared with 49% in 2007. Of all pedestrian fatalities, seven (47%) involved an impaired pedestrian, as compared with 54% in 2007.



Austin's rate of traffic fatalities involving impairment (drivers or pedestrians) is .62 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. That rate is higher than those of both Texas (.58) and the US (.48).



In 2008, 20 (35%) fatal crashes involved speed, as compared with 25% in 2007. In 2008, 24 (42%) fatal crashes occurred on freeways (e.g., IH-35, Mo-Pac, US Hwy 183, and State Hwy 71/290 West), as compared with 59% in 2007.

