

# **CITY OF CORAL GABLES**

## **- MEMORANDUM -**

**TO:** MARIA ALBERRO JIMENEZ  
INTERIM CITY MANAGER

**DATE:** March 3, 2009

**FROM:** RICHARD J. NAUE JR.  
CHIEF OF POLICE

**SUBJECT:**  
REPORT ON THE POLICE  
DEPARTMENT'S AREA  
PATROL

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In January 2008, the Coral Gables Police Department implemented a new strategy to provide uniformed police services to the City. This strategy known as the "Area Patrol System" is a departure from the traditional model of policing that entailed routine responses to incidents coupled with random preventative patrols in the 12 police zones that had been in place throughout the city. The impetus for the implementation of this system was largely based on the widely held belief that in order to more effectively prevent and combat the most commonly occurring crimes in Coral Gables a new approach was necessary. During the police department's research of alternative approaches to law enforcement, it was believed that police resources could be more effectively utilized and deployed. Since January, an initial analysis of our performance indicators including crime statistics, response times, and the corresponding fiscal impact this approach appears to have yielded positive results. To date, the area patrol strategy has proven to be a more effective method of policing in the City of Coral Gables and what follows is an executive summary with statistical analysis detailing our performance measures.

Prior to January of 2008, the Department had patrolled the city in the same systematic manner for the better part of the last several decades, despite significant changes and advancements that have occurred in policing in the last 20 years. Under the previous patrol zone method, one officer was deployed in each of the 12 police zones throughout the City. Each zone was of similar geographic size yet some zones, because of their proximity to major thoroughfares and surrounding jurisdictions, experienced higher levels of crime. Despite these differences including in some cases substantial variations of criminal activity, officers continued to be deployed in the same manner and in the same locations every single day. When an officer in one zone was dispatched to a call, his or her back-up officer was sent from the adjacent zone, leaving that particular geographic area without any police presence. Similarly, the other surrounding zone officers remained in their respective zones without any flexibility to adjust location despite the demands stemming from other calls for service, traffic violations, watch orders, and various situations requiring police attention. Clearly, this approach left significant voids in coverage depending on the level of activity in any given zone.

A review of the vast amounts of professional literature on recent studies, conducted to compare traditional policing models with more recent ones reveal overwhelming evidence in support of focused and deliberate methods of police patrolling. The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Police Services has indicated the following in “Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections of the First 20 Years”:

“The fundamental logic of preventative patrol is twofold. First, the presence of uniformed police officers is intended to deter citizens from committing offenses, and to enhance their sense of security. Second, the presence of officers is intended to increase the probability that they will interrupt offenses in progress.”

This logic at face value seems to make sense. However despite the numerous studies and common sense approaches to the contrary and that “preventive patrol has been deemphasized by many modern police managers, it remains a strong public expectation of police.” Herein lays the challenge to those who remain steadfast in the belief that random patrols are best.

The Los Angeles Police Department conducted a study on random preventative patrol and found that an officer is likely to encounter a robbery in progress once every 14 years. Further studies have found that the presence of officers is largely an unknown. The amount of time one spends looking out of the window of home or office is minimal thus rendering the chance of observing a passing patrol car nearly nil.

Yet another study by the Police Research Group found in the case of residential burglaries that 40 percent of all repeat burglaries occurred within one month of the last burglary. Furthermore they found for the target area that “the biggest predictor of future burglary was a recent past burglary” thus rendering assignments of officers to areas that have increased criminal activity a logical decision.

The National Academy of Sciences extensive study “Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence” stated the following:

“The committee concludes that contemporary policing has relied on an operating model emphasizing reactive strategies to suppress crime. The committee’s assessment of several decades of research is that there is weak or, at best, mixed evidence regarding the effectiveness of what we have defined as the ‘standard model’ of policing. However a large body of carefully conducted research has found much evidence of the effectiveness of what we have called the ‘focused model’ of policing.”

The National Academy of Sciences developed eight recommendations from this study. The first recommendation stated the following:

“The committee recommends that police continue to turn their attention from providing standardized levels of police resources and activities to achieving measurable results related to focused effectiveness and fairness issues that reflect community goals. Research demonstrates that the more police focus on achieving localized and specific results, the more effective they will be in controlling crime and disorder. Because one-size-fits-all requirements restrict the police’s ability to match resource to priorities, communities will be safer holding police accountable for results rather than resources. This new management philosophy, coupled with advances in information systems that support more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of policing strategies, promises to stimulate further innovation in policing in the United States.”

The Coral Gables Police Department has adopted such a philosophy in its innovative approach to combating criminal activity and quality of life issues. In its decision to deploy officers in real-time to where crime is happening as opposed to the same locations day in and day out, the Department is actively pursuing the criminal element and as such is keeping its citizens safer. The appeal of focusing resources where crime is concentrated is straightforward. If we can prevent crime at these localized areas then we might be able to reduce total crime. Various computerized crime analysis resources including the CAD, RMS, and information sharing systems within the Department allow for advanced real-time research of crime and criminal offenders. It is with these tools that effective deployment of police personnel can occur.

The Area Patrol concept has allowed the Uniform Patrol Division to reschedule its workforce to increase the number of officers during peak times based on calls for service and reported crime trends. As such, you can see a reduction of total reported offenses and certain types of crimes, most notably an 11.45% reduction of violent crimes and a 6.19% reduction of total burglaries in the year that the Area Patrol has been in place compared to the same time period of 2007. With the compliment of the other divisions on the road during a 24-hour period, the only time that the true minimum staffing for a shift is 11 officers is from 2:00 AM to 6:00 AM but this only occurs if three officers have taken leave for the midnight shift on any day other than Wednesday. All the Uniform Patrol Officers are scheduled to work on Wednesdays because of Department required training.

Attached for your information and review, you will find the reports that the Command Staff is using to evaluate the Area Patrol. The first report, prepared by our Technical Services Division Commander and titled Uniform Crime Report provides statistical data on crime activity, on a weekly basis, all supervisors in the Uniform Patrol Division use this report to strategize on how to proactively patrol areas of our City. The Annual version of this report is provided here for purposes of this review. The second set of reports is the annual comparison of Response Times Report, also generated by the Technical Service Division Commander. Using the “travel time” data, this report is used to monitor the response time to Emergency and Non-Emergency calls. A

review of both of these Reports will reveal a favorable trend in performance since the implementation of the Area Patrol System with a Four/Ten schedule.

The other reports were used specifically to evaluate the scheduling of the Uniform Patrol Division, along with the aforementioned two other reports.

In times of fiscal constraints, the policy makers and Administration of the City of Coral Gables have historically always prioritized public safety. This Department recognizes and appreciates that support. It is more critical than ever that we continue to identify proactive methods of using our existing resources for the enhanced delivery of service. It is with that in mind that the implementation of the Area Patrol was initiated. The statistics clearly indicate that the concept has produced favorable results and targeted crime fighting opportunities. Our command staff will continue to monitor this implementation for opportunities for improvement.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this information with you.

Attachments:

- 5 Year Uniform Crime Reports Comparison
- 180 Day Uniform Crime Reports Comparison
- Technical Services Response Times Report (2007 to 2008)
- Technical Services Response Times Report (180 Day)
- Automotive Fleet Report
- Power Point Presentation