



**COMMUNITY POLICING**

**AND**

**THE EL PASO POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**REGIONAL COMMAND CONCEPT**

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COMMUNITY POLICING  
AND  
THE EL PASO POLICE DEPARTMENT  
REGIONAL COMMAND CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Community-Oriented Policing has been embraced by a growing number of police departments around the country over recent years. In the broadest sense, community-oriented policing involves expanding roles of police officers, detectives, supervisors, and managers while simultaneously, attempting to work more closely with the citizens of the community at the neighborhood level.<sup>1</sup>

The El Paso Police Department is on the verge of implementing a Regional Command model of police services for the citizens of El Paso. The new system will result in the decentralization of some of the investigative activities within the structure and function of the current Criminal Investigation Bureau. Decentralization as defined by the El Paso Police Department, will be the moving of certain line and essential support functions away from central

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<sup>1</sup> El Paso Police Department; "Regional Command Concept - Decentralization of Investigative Functions": 1992; p.3.

headquarters into the regional command stations within the neighborhood environment. Each regional command facility will have its own investigative unit composed of general assignment detectives and an appropriate number of detective supervisors to coordinate and direct the daily operation of those criminal investigations that will be conducted in that respective police region.<sup>2</sup>

The envisioned end result of the El Paso Police Department's overall Decentralization Plan, which will focus toward community-oriented policing, will be an interactive process. This will consist of officers, permanently assigned to a regional command, in a particular neighborhood. They will work directly with the area residents and business people to jointly fight crime and work toward the resolution of other problems which effect the overall quality of life in their geographical region of the city.<sup>3</sup>

With all this in mind, let's take a close look at what exactly community-oriented policing entails and how this concept of regional command actually fits in. Is the El Paso Police Department heading in the right direction, or are they creating more problems along the way?

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## PROACTIVE POLICING

Police agencies all over America are plagued with the pressure of reducing every kind of criminal activity. In a type of policing known as reactive policing, each officer responds to individual incidents on a case by case basis. Police officers have generally been incident-driven; that is, they have spent most of their time responding to calls for service that originate from the 911 emergency telephone system. In an attempt to deal with these incidents, officers have frequently felt their job is to cope with and handle only these incidents involving "real crime".<sup>4</sup> Traditionally this has meant more officers on the streets and more arrests made. Officers often confront the same situations over and over, in the same neighborhoods, public housing projects and apartment complexes. Of course for the officers this is very frustrating, and making any kind of difference seems hopeless.<sup>5</sup>

Police departments around the nation, in an effort to get away from reactive policing, are moving toward

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<sup>4</sup> Michael D. Maltz, Andrew C. Gordon and Warren Freidman, MAPPING CRIME IN ITS COMMUNITY SETTING; New York, N.Y., Springer-Verlag: 1991; p.15.

<sup>5</sup> Patricia Parker; "The Future of Policework begins to Take Shape"; POLICE; March 1990; p.20.

the concept of community-oriented policing which encompasses the ideal of proactive policing. Police administrators are encouraging officers to get out of their patrol cars and interact with the community.

The police are among the most powerful agencies in the nation. Individual officers exercise a great deal of raw government authority every time they climb into their uniforms. Against a history of abuse, new examples of how this authority can be wrongly used always appear. There is no wonder then, that the public puts great emphasis on controlling the powers of the police. Why then should we allow the police to engage in a more proactive role in deciding how to discharge their responsibilities? The new belief is that a more proactive role for the police, subject to appropriate accountability, will reduce, rather than increase, the abuse of police authority.<sup>6</sup>

This need for greater initiative takes three forms. The first relates to the initial identification of problems. Due to their familiarity with the community, it should be second nature for the police to identify emerging problems within the community and, based on thoughtful inquiry, offer proposals by which the

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<sup>6</sup> Herman Goldstein; PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING; Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press: 1990: p.45.

community might deal effectively with such problems in the future. Rather than wait until the problems have reached enormous magnitude to generate involvement, the police should be able to use the information they have to identify problems at an earlier stage and share this knowledge with the community.<sup>7</sup>

Second, the intelligent management of police resources also requires that the police be more outspoken. It is ludicrous for the police to be committed, in an unthinking manner, to devoting the majority of their resources to simply responding to citizens demands for service, engaging in a generic form of crime prevention. The police must demonstrate, to the public, how specifically targeted responses based on systematic analysis can - in the end - have a greater potential for addressing community problems than current practices.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, at the level of street operations, the police must, in order to be truly effective, assume an advocacy role in the community. Of course, the role of the police as advocates can be seen as loaded with problems. We definitely do not want the police to take stands such as, opposing free speech, or supporting a "lynch-type" hysteria. But given the relationships

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid: p.46.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid: p.47.

that have been developed between crime, disorder, and the physical appearance of neighborhoods, it would be nice for an officer to represent community concerns if garbage is uncollected, if fire-gutted buildings are not torn down, if potholes are not repaired, or if serious crimes are not being fully investigated.<sup>9</sup>

The general epidemic of violence sweeping the U.S. today, goes so deep and is so pervasive that it is often viewed as a disease. The police are called upon to cope with the collapse of a range of social institutions which include: education, adequate housing and affordable health care. In order to make a difference, the police must form a working partnership with the community and use all the resources available, to include government, business, and schools. The police need to be part of the agenda-setting leadership in the country, whether it is laws pertaining to guns, drugs, or the exposure of children to sex and violence on television. On the street level, police officers have to let the law-abiding public help identify the problems and define the solutions. Among the leadership circles, they have to assert and demand the participation of other community resources. This is the backbone of community policing.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Lee P. Brown; "Violent Crime and Community Involvement: Community Policing"; VITAL SPEECHES; Jan. 1, 1992; p.184.

With departments being understaffed, under-budgeted, and the calls increasing, it is difficult to provide responsive policing. Administrators need to see beyond the catch phrase, "community-oriented policing", and look deep into the true possibilities.<sup>11</sup> Greater initiative on the part of the police will not only place the police in a more positive (and definitely more needed) light in the communities they serve, it will also contribute significantly to improving the working environment within the department. This improved working environment, in turn, increases the potential to recruit and retain qualified personnel and to bring about needed organizational change.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ron Cowart; "Setting Up Shop"; POLICE; May 1991; p.42.

<sup>12</sup> Herman Goldstein; p.47.

## PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

A different type of policing technique which started to gain ground in the late 1980's was developed by Dr. Herman Goldstein, a professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School. He believed that police should go even further and attempt to find a permanent resolution to the problems which created the calls for service. Thus he introduced the concept of Problem-Oriented Policing (POP). This technique goes far beyond simple reactive policing, and deals in the examination of the underlying causes of repeated criminal activity in particular areas. This concept enables an officer to analyze a criminal problem by identifying conditions that contribute to that problem. For example, a public housing project might be a frequent location for drug dealers because of poor lighting, abandoned dwellings, and garbage-strewn streets.<sup>13</sup> A problem-oriented police department would analyze these problems and get the proper authorities and agencies involved in order to correct these problems. The correction of these simple problems would inevitably reduce the problem of drug dealers, therefore making the police officers job that much easier.

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<sup>13</sup> Patricia Parker: p.20.

"Problem-Oriented Policing" focuses on specific problems and the development of tailor-made solutions to these problems. It can involve many strategies based upon information the officer gains from thoroughly analyzing the problem before developing a response. While some of the conditions may appear to be a non-police problem, they may end up playing a critical role in solving the police problem indirectly. This is why it becomes so very important for an officer to enlist the support of the community resources in his attempt to tackle the problems at hand.<sup>14</sup>

Law enforcement agencies have not usually worked with the community organizations because crime has been viewed primarily as a law enforcement responsibility. Officers have dealt with crimes that have been committed or are already in progress. This reactive state often results in limited or unreliable information. Also, the paramilitary training that police go through emphasizes reactive rather than proactive behavior.<sup>15</sup>

It took the racial riots of the 1960's for police agencies to start working toward improving relations with minority communities by developing community relation units, stringent shooting policies, and

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<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Ross: "Fighting Crime by Getting the Community Involved"; CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR; Dec. 30, 1991; p.9.

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Parker; p.20.

civilian review boards. During the 1970's, many major police departments took this concept even further by providing storefront police stations and foot patrols in an effort to increase public contact with the police officers and improve public attitudes. This underlying philosophy of policing became known as Community-Oriented Policing (COP) - the concept of being seen and recognized positively in the community.<sup>16</sup>

This concept of Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) builds on the COP philosophy, only it acts through technical/operational means in carrying out the process. POP gets very specific by utilizing a comprehensive approach based on the "SARA" model. This is the simple process of Scanning, Analyzing, Response and Assessment.<sup>17</sup>

SCANNING: Officers are encouraged to group together individual incidents that may be related.

ANALYZING: Once a problem is well-defined, officers then collect information from various public and private sources - not just from crime analysis.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid; p.53.

RESPONSE: By enlisting the help of citizens, businesses, and various agencies, the police can then tailor a program that best fits the characteristics of the problem.

ASSESSMENT: After taking action over a defined time period, officers finally evaluate the impact of their efforts to determine if the problems have been alleviated.<sup>18</sup> This stage also involves the exchange of ideas and information between the various agencies, citizen groups and businesses involved.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

## RELUCTANT TO CHANGE

The developments, new insights, and research findings have definitely brought about a new era in policing. Unfortunately though, not everyone in the police field has been effected by them. But among the progressive police, more questions are being asked; more research is being conducted; and new approaches of policing are being tried every day. Highly initiative departments, often under the pressures of trying to achieve more with less, are grappling for fresh ways in which to carry out their jobs. This is a painful and sometimes frustrating process, but quite often a healthy and exiting one. It generates an atmosphere that encourages constructive criticism.<sup>19</sup>

Among the critiques of the most advanced forms of policing, five key concerns have most strongly influenced the development of problem-oriented policing. They include:

1. "The police field is preoccupied with management, internal procedures, and efficiency to the exclusion of appropriate concern for effectiveness in dealing with substantive problems.

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<sup>19</sup> Herman Goldstein; p.14.

2. The Police devote most of their resources to responding to calls from citizens, reserving to small a percentage of their time and energy for acting on their own initiative to prevent or reduce community problems.
3. The community is a major resource with an enormous potential, largely untapped, for reducing the number and magnitude of problems that otherwise become the business of the police.
4. Within their agencies, police have readily available to them another huge resource: their rank-and-file officers, whose time and talent have not been used effectively.
5. Efforts to improve policing have often failed because they have not been adequately related to the overall dynamics and complexity of the police organization. Adjustments in policies and organizational structure are required to accommodate and support challenge."<sup>20</sup>

The overall problem confronting police, policy makers, and academicians is that these trends and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid; p. 14-15.

findings seem to contradict many of the doctrines that dominate police thinking for generations:

Community-oriented and problem-oriented policing creates a new intimacy between citizens and the police. Problem solving, prior to the fact, has hardly been the norm. The implementation of these changes in policing can not merely be seen as a new police tactic. They must be viewed as a necessity and represent a new organizational strategy.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jack R. Greene and Stephen D. Mastrofski; COMMUNITY POLICING: RHETORIC OR REALITY; New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers; 1988; p.19.

## GEARING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Change is taking place very rapidly in our society today. Because of this, tremendous social pressures are occurring, and will continue to ferment and explode, unless opportunities are created to relieve these pressures. The police, like society, have two possible courses of action. They can either cling to the status quo, or become facilitators of change. For the police, this means not only protecting civil rights, but ensuring that all lawful means of dissent and petitioning of the government concerning grievances, are permitted and protected.<sup>22</sup>

Historically, the role of the police has been to maintain the status quo. Unfortunately though, reliance on the status quo will not prepare the police for the future. Unless the police are viewed by the public as a friendly part of the community, they will be perceived to be adversaries. In the U.S., social turmoil has recently erupted in mass demonstration, civil disobedience, and even full fledged rioting. Such incidences force the police into the role of antagonists rather than permitting them to be protagonists.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> William L. Tafoya; "The Changing Nature of the Police"; POLICE; June 1990; p.36.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid; p.38.

If there is any hope of creating opportunities for relieving social pressures of these kinds, the police must be viewed by the public as integral to the neighborhood. They must be seen as indispensable members of the community - not as an army of occupation.<sup>24</sup>

Adapting to the "Information Age" by the police must be by evolution. If they are transformed by revolution, neither the social order nor the police will have been well served by the means or the ends. Such an evolutionary process requires two major adjustments in the conversional organization of police work.<sup>25</sup>

First, the police must learn to share information with each other and with the community. Second, the police must also learn to act as a "referral service" to complementary aspects of various social and cultural services. Increasingly, the police will find it necessary to interface with the social, cultural, and private security services in their jurisdictions. This suggests the need for expansion of the concept of a social network.<sup>26</sup>

As stated earlier, "Community Policing" is described as a growing trend in U.S. cities today. A

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24 Ibid: p.39.

25 Ibid: p.42.

26 Ibid.

community police officers' goal is to become familiar with, and accessible to, law-abiding citizens. A conscious effort must be made to gain their trust and draw on their knowledge to uproot lawbreakers.<sup>27</sup> The concept of community-oriented policing puts the police closer to the neighborhoods because the stations are closer. Officers have the opportunity to walk the beat, and efforts are made to build rapport with the neighborhood people and assist them in getting the services they need.<sup>28</sup> Through supporting crime watch groups, putting officers on the beats, or setting up neighborhood police stations, local police are able to reach out to the communities they serve.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Laurie Goldstein; "New Philosophy of Policing: Department Seeks to Join Forces With the Public"; WASHINGTON POST; Dec. 23, 1991; Sec. A, p.1.

<sup>28</sup> Editorial; "Community Policing"; CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR; May 18, 1992; p.20.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Ross; p.9.

## PROGRESSIVE DEPARTMENTS ON THE MOVE

There have been various police departments around the country that have decided to experiment and put the concepts of community-oriented and problem-oriented policing to the test. Included within this section are just a few of these agencies. Here is an example of what can be accomplished with a progressive type attitude.

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y.

In 1990, Police Commissioner Lee P. Brown advocated a new approach - community policing - to assist in meeting the challenges of crime and management. He felt that there were two tenets of policing. The first being problem solving. Officers were trained and empowered to solve problems, rather than merely responding to incidents repeatedly. The second was encompassing citizen involvement, expanding the resources that the police have at their disposal. The feeling was that the police had virtually an untapped resource of community groups, the private sector, and other city agencies, all of which can help them do community problem solving. Brown's goal was to change the training, evaluation, and reward system so that the

officers would be more supportive of community policing and not supportive of the traditional ways of conducting business. The composition of the police should also reflect the ethnic composition of the community. Furthermore, every police officer should have the ability to work any place in the city. To do this, the officers were to receive cultural and sensitivity training.<sup>30</sup>

In an effort to show how well the new system was working, the Police Department reported in March 1992 that the city's crime reports fell to 678,885 for the 1991 year, down from 710,221 in 1990.<sup>31</sup>

PHILADELPHIA, PA.:

It is the belief of the Philadelphia Police Department that the basic concept of community policing is best defined as "a true partnership between the police and the public working together in a joint effort to prevent crime and promote safety in the community". No longer can the police maintain the "Thin Blue Line" against crime in the face of shrinking resources and the ever escalating war against drugs and

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<sup>30</sup> Alan M. Web: "Crime and Management: An Interview With New York City Police Commissioner Lee P. Brown"; HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW; May/June 1992; p.115.

<sup>31</sup> George James: "In Every Category Crime Reports Fell Last Year in New York City"; NEW YORK TIMES; Mar. 25, 1992; Sec. A, p.1.

its evil effects. To become more efficient, the police and the public must become co-producers of the strategies designed to combat crime related problems.<sup>32</sup>

The mission statement of the Philadelphia Police department best summarizes the basic concept of community policing:

"THE MISSION OF THE PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT IS TO WORK IN A TRUE PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR FELLOW CITIZENS OF PHILADELPHIA. TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR CITY BY RAISING THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH LAW ENFORCEMENT, TO REDUCE THE FEAR AND INCIDENCE OF CRIME. IN ACCOMPLISHING THESE GOALS, SERVICE WILL BE OUR COMMITMENT; HONOR AND INTEGRITY OUR MANDATE."<sup>33</sup>

In an attempt to accomplish these goals, the department has initiated various innovative programs which will enable the department to act in a proactive manner. Some of these programs include:

- \* Police Commissioner's Council - composed of a cross section of prominent civic leaders who meet with the police commissioner on a monthly basis and advises him of issues effecting the community and the Department.

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<sup>32</sup> "Community Policing"; Philadelphia Police Department; April 20, 1990;

p.1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

- \* Neighborhood Advisory Councils - composed of local civic leaders with the intention of providing support to the district captains. The captain, through meetings with his council, can obtain information about community concerns needed to effectively plan a management strategy. Through these meetings, the council members also become aware of the Department's limitations and ways in which they can lend effective support to the captain.
- \* Mini-Stations - Twenty mini-stations were opened throughout the city which are the spearhead for neighborhood foot patrols. This is an effort to provide more efficient and better quality police service to selective areas.
- \* Problem Solving Techniques - But using such techniques, root causes of problems which waste manpower and other resources are more effectively addressed.
- \* Victim Assistance Officer - Each police district has an officer assigned to provide victims with a supportive police presence that will assist them in forming a complaint, testifying in court, and acquire needed help.
- \* Crime Prevention Officer
- \* Community Relations Officer

- \* Decentralization - through decentralization, local commanders are given greater control of the Department's resources .<sup>34</sup>

Through these continuous efforts, the Philadelphia Police Department has become one of the leaders when it comes to the effective implementation of community-oriented policing.

Dallas, Texas:

Opened in 1985, as the first police operation of its kind, the Dallas Police Department opened its first community-based storefront in east Dallas. By blending social services with traditional policing, this area of Dallas experienced a dramatic drop in criminal activity and an astounding increase in the level of citizen-police cooperation. Thousands of dollars worth of property were recovered and dozens of arrests were made for offences ranging from domestic violence to robbery and murder. Even more important, the police officers have earned the trust of the community.<sup>35</sup>

In 1987, the Police Foundation's National Symposium on Community Institutions and Inner-City Crime named Dallas Storefront the nations best Inner-City Crime

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid: p.3-5.

<sup>35</sup> Ron Cowart: p.48.

Reduction Project. They brought out certain characteristics which made it such a success:

- \* Working to eliminate causes of crime, including addressing special social problems identified as having a direct relationship with inner-city crime.
- \* Building on existing resources and joining forces with private and other government agencies.
- \* Incorporating natural support systems through cooperation with these agencies.
- \* Having an identifiable client group attracted to the program, who tend to stay because of perceived value.
- \* Targeting and serving those who tend to lack privileges common to more affluent communities.
- \* Having clearly stated goals, and procedures to reach those goals: early intervention; outreach; treatment and rehabilitation; crisis intervention; student assistance and vocational training.
- \* Having sufficient resources to allow carrying out their basic mission.
- \* Having a decisive leader, often living in the area.<sup>36</sup>

Newport News, Va.:

In 1984, various departments had applied parts of the problem-oriented policing concept, but no one had fully implemented the complete concept throughout their

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid: p.44.

entire agency. The Police Executive Research Forum therefore selected Newport News, Va. to design and test such a comprehensive program. The department started out by selecting a 12-member task force who developed their own "SARA" model and went through various training sessions. Their main concentration would be in two distinct areas: Burglaries within the Blairfield Apartments, and auto thefts at Newport News Shipbuilding.<sup>37</sup>

In the Blairfield Apartments, the officers worked closely with the apartment manager and city agencies to improve many of the unsanitary and unsafe conditions. By June of 18986, burglaries had reduced 35 percent. Additionally, activities of the police department and the community association have resulted in much better living conditions for the residents.<sup>38</sup>

By applying the same process and philosophy to the vehicle theft problem, the department reduced those thefts by 55 percent. Now the POP model is an integral, ongoing problem-solving process within the entire department, addressing a wide range of problems.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Pat Parker: "Early Experiment": POLICE; April 1990: p.24.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Tulsa, Ok.:

With a population of 400,000, the city of Tulsa has relied on the POP model as an effective method of reducing all kinds of crimes, particularly drug-related activity in public housing projects. What has worked so well is the change in officer attitudes as to what their role is in making a community safer.<sup>40</sup>

The five worst housing projects were targeted for the initial experiment. Based on a foot patrol, and interaction with the residents, they soon realized that about 95 percent of the drug dealing was done by people who did not live in the projects. Due to the information which was gained and the good relationship the officers acquired with the community, arrests went up, and crime went down. Tulsa quickly realized that by using the POP concept, officers found out more information and in turn can get that information to the appropriate agencies.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid: p.25.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid: p.26.

## THE EL PASO POLICE DEPARTMENT'S CONCEPT

The El Paso Police Department, as stated at the beginning, is currently attempting to introduce the concept of Regional Commands. The envisioned result of the overall Decentralization Plan is aimed at the notion of community-oriented policing. The Department plans on bringing about an interaction in which police officers, permanently assigned to a specific regional command, will work with the area residents and business people to jointly fight crime and work toward the resolution of other problems which effect the quality of life in their geographical region of the city.<sup>42</sup>

Each regional command will be staffed with patrol officers, primary field investigators, administrators and support personnel. Their duties will be to perform all routine law enforcement operations within the assigned police area. Specialized investigative units, crime scene processing units, communications and departmental support personnel will be assigned to the Administration Building and will be responsible for select major crimes on a city-wide basis.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> El Paso Police Department; p.3.

<sup>43</sup> El Paso Police Department; "Projected Growth of Physical Facilities Through the Year 2010"; May 1991; p.1.

The ultimate goal is for optimum cooperation and respect between the police and the public, and that officers be viewed as being part of rather than apart from the community.<sup>44</sup>

In theory, with the adoption of a regional command model of policing, the El Paso Police Department will enhance the delivery of services throughout the city. The regional station will make a full-service police facility available to neighborhood residents and other area groups. With this closer working relationship, the police will be better able to identify and resolve both crime and non-crime problems that adversely effect the safety and quality of life in the neighborhood.<sup>45</sup>

Along with the broad goals of the regional command concept, the Department's administration feels there are specific goals that are expected to be obtained from the decentralization into what they term the "generalist" approach to criminal investigation. Criminal investigators will become involved in the investigation of most types of criminal behavior committed within a relatively small area. The end result will be that they begin to recognize trends, suspect's methods of operation and repeat offenders. They should also become alert to known trouble areas

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<sup>44</sup> El Paso Police Department: "Regional Command Concept - Decentralization of Investigative Functions": p.4.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

and begin to use beat officers for some investigative functions. Adding to this close proximity to the citizens, greater ties and associations can be developed between citizens and investigators. This in turn should result in a steady flow of information from citizen contacts.<sup>46</sup>

By putting both the patrol officers and investigators in the same police facility, a close and direct working relationship will be focused between the two police functions. Cooperation, teamwork, and better understanding of each others needs will be fostered between the officers involved in the various police functions at each regional facility. In addition, all regional personnel will have increased flexibility to respond to neighborhood problems and can use more creativity in jointly resolving those problems.<sup>47</sup>

This concept is based on the very good and highly successful program currently being used by the Aurora, Colorado Police Department. Hopefully, with a lot more research, planning, initiative, and cooperation by all parties involved, El Paso can have an equally successful program. Unfortunately, the cooperation portion is by far the biggest hurdle in the way.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

In conducting my research on community-oriented policing and the concept currently being envisioned by the El Paso Police Department, I spoke with a great deal of patrol officers, detectives, citizens, civic leaders and administrators. The general consensus among police line and investigative personnel is the feeling that the administration has failed to tell those who will be effected the most, any real details concerning the concept. Therefore, when questioned about implementation of the "Regional Command Concept", most officers were very much against it. It is seen as a great big secret that is on a "need to know" basis. And at this point, those who will make or break the program do not need to know. Even when I was gathering my information through the Research and Planning Division of the Department, there was a great deal of resistance about how much they wanted to release (probably due to my current position as a patrolman).

A number of officers also voiced the concern that the Department does not have enough officers to carry out the program. Maybe this is a hidden aspect of the whole thing. Get the citizens behind the idea, then

throw it in the laps of the City Counsel to give the Department the personnel needed to carry it out.

In speaking with a number of citizens, it does appear that they are behind the idea and are curious about what exactly it will involve. Anything that can be perceived as a benefit to the community, the citizens will rally behind.

It does appear that the Department needs to open up to both the community and the officers a great deal more. In doing so, the department needs to get more input from both the Department personnel and the public. One such way might be the design and distribution of attitudinal surveys among both police personnel and citizens. One such attitudinal survey is included in Appendix A. This type of research can assist the department a great deal in seeing exactly how the public perceives the police and what might be done to improve police/community relations.

Another type of survey which would greatly benefit the Department is included in Appendix B. A National Survey on Community Policing Programs would give the Department a better idea of what other programs are out there and how effective they are.

The Department is definitely in the right direction, but they can not just sit back and expect

everything to work out perfect. Continuous research and open channels of communication are the keys to a successful program.

## CONCLUSION

The ideas of community-oriented and problem-oriented policing are two concepts that have made a profound impact on police/community relations, and the all-around effectiveness of the police. The ideology behind them is ingenious. These ideas have long been overdue and must now be adhered to if a department wishes to just keep up with the astounding impact of crime.

It does appear like the El Paso Police Department is moving in the right direction. They must remember to continue forward, but to do so with a very open mind. Progress was not made by those who wear blinders. The theory can be perfect, but turning it into reality is the ultimate test of a truly progressive department. Let's hope the El Paso Police Department can stand up to the test.

# Appendix A

CITIZEN ATTITUDINAL SURVEY  
POLICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The below listed survey has been put together in an effort to get a broad idea about how the public at large views the El Paso Police Department and what the Department can do to better serve and assist the community.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?  
 male  
 female
2. How old are you?  
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3. What is your marital status?  
 single  
 married  
 separated  
 divorced  
 widowed
4. What is your race?  
 white  
 black  
 asian  
 american indian  
 other
5. What is your ethnic origin?  
 hispanic  
 non-hispanic
6. Are you currently a citizen of the United States of America?  
 yes  
 no
7. Are you currently a resident of the City of El Paso, Texas? (If "no" skip to question 9)  
 yes  
 no
8. What area of the city do you live?  
 central  
 east  
 northeast  
 west

9. What is your average annual income?

- under \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$25,000
- \$25,000 - \$50,000
- \$50,000 - \$75,000
- \$75,000 - \$100,000
- Above \$100,000

IN THE BELOW LISTED QUESTIONS, PLEASE ANSWER AS TRUTHFUL AS POSSIBLE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EL PASO POLICE DEPARTMENT.

10. In your opinion, do you feel that police officers are honest overall?

- yes
- no

11. Do you feel police officers obey the law?

- all the time
- majority of the time
- some of the time
- none of the time

12. What do you feel is the overall reputation of the El Paso Police Department?

- excellent
- good
- average
- poor

13. Do you feel that the El Paso Police Department portrays a professional image?

- yes
- no

14. Do you feel the Department takes the proper measures to keep out and get rid of "bad" policemen?

- yes
- no

15. Do you feel the El Paso Police Department has the appropriate number of officers to serve a city the size of El Paso?

- yes (if "yes", go to question 17)
- no

16. Does the Department have:

- too many officers
- not enough officers
- about the right number of officers

17. Have you ever been stoped by the police for a traffic violation?  
 yes  
 no (if "no", go to question 21)
18. Did you receive a citation?  
 yes  
 no
19. Do you feel you were treated fairly by the officer?  
 yes  
 no
20. How did the officer act?  
 very courteous  
 professional but not friendly  
 neutral  
 unprofessional  
 very rude
21. Have you ever had any personal dealings with the Police other than a routine traffic stop?  
 yes  
 no (if "no", go to question 28)
22. Did the dealing with the police involve an arrest?  
 yes  
 no (if "no", go to question 25)
23. Were you the one arrested?  
 yes  
 no
24. Was the person arrested a friend or relative of yours?  
 yes  
 no
25. How was the officers attitude during the situation?  
 very friendly and professional  
 somewhat positive  
 neutral  
 somewhat unpleasant  
 very rude and unprofessional
26. How did you feel the officer handled the situation?  
 excellent  
 good  
 poor  
 bad  
 dont know

27. Do you feel the officer(s) were fair in the way they handled the situation?  
 yes  
 no
28. Do you feel the police harass the public?  
 yes  
 no
29. Do you feel the police abuse their authority?  
 yes  
 no
30. How would you rank the El Paso Police Department in how they treat citizens?  
 excellent  
 good  
 average  
 poor  
 very poor

#### IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE

31. What do you feel the El Paso Police Departments relationship is with the community?  
 very good  
 good  
 average  
 poor  
 very poor
32. Do you feel the Department can do more for the public?  
 yes  
 no
33. Do you feel the Department needs to get more involved in the Community in areas other than just fighting crime?  
 yes  
 no
34. What do you feel are the biggest problems with the El Paso Police Department at this time? (if additional space is needed, please continue on the back of this page)

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35. What can the El Paso Police Department do to better serve the public? (if additional space needed, please continue on the back of this page)

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36. Overall, how would you rank the El Paso Police Department in the following categories?

0 being "do not know"  
1 being absolutely terrible  
                  THROUGH  
10 being the very BEST

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| CRIME CONTROL                             | _____ |
| CRIME PREVENTION                          | _____ |
| INVESTIGATIONS                            | _____ |
| TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT                       | _____ |
| RESPONSE TIME TO NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS | _____ |
| RESPONSE TIME TO EMERGENCY SITUATIONS     | _____ |
| PROFESSIONALISM                           | _____ |
| COURTESY                                  | _____ |
| COMMUNITY RELATIONS                       | _____ |
| MEETING THE COMMUNITIES NEEDS             | _____ |
| OTHER _____                               | _____ |
| _____                                     | _____ |

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING THE ABOVE SURVEY. HOPEFULLY, WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN DETERMINE THE DEPARTMENTS WEAKNESSES, AND BRING ABOUT A BETTER POLICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP.

# Appendix B

**NATIONAL SURVEY**  
**COMMUNITY POLICING PROGRAMS**

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1. Does your Department have a Community Policing Program presently in place in your city?

- No  
 No But we are planning on in the future  
 Yes

If "yes", Please give the name of the program  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How long has the Community Policing Program been in place?

\_\_\_\_\_ Year Program Began

3. How widespread is the Community Policing Program?

- City-wide  
 Targeted to specific neighborhoods  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Approximately how many neighborhoods

4. What elements are included in the Community Policing Program? (please check all that apply)

- Foot Patrol  
 Sector Integrity  
 Community Liaison Groups  
 District Phone Numbers  
 Store Fronts  
 Bike Patrol  
 Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- 

5. Approximately how many officers are involved in the community policing program, by rank?

- Captains  
 Lieutenants  
 Sergeants  
 Patrol Officers  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the size of your Department?

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Sworn Officers



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