

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

April 5, 2019

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TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE BOARD OF POLICE
COMMISSIONER'S REQUEST TO REVIEW SELECTED
LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT DATA-DRIVEN POLICING
STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. It is recommended that the Board of Police Commissioners REVIEW and APPROVE the report related to the review of selected Los Angeles Police Department data-driven policing strategies.

BACKGROUND

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reviewed the Smart Policing Programs instituted in 2011, publishing a report on their findings and recommendations.

The review of both programs by the OIG encompassed in part three objectives:

- Clarify and evaluate the stated goals and design of the program;
- Assess the impact or consequences of the practices employed on those people and places selected as part of the program; and,
- Identify areas for improvement or revision.

As a matter of background, the Department initiated the multi-prong Smart Policing Programs as a means to assist and focus our Department's strategies in reducing crime and disorder. By utilizing historical data, it was the Department's intent to refine our policing strategies, to a more precise and focused crime prevention model. While working with a research partner, the below programs were implemented:

1. The Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration (LASER) program, strategically geared toward the reduction of violent crime, particularly occurring in public places. The violence reduction program was comprised of two components; person-based and location-based; and,

2. The Predictive Policing (PredPol) system, strategically geared toward the reduction of property crime, particularly burglaries and vehicle related thefts which has only a location-based component.

The person-based component of the LASER program was the Chronic Offender Program, which was designed to identify individuals who engaged in *violent* criminal activity and posed a high potential to reoffend. Once identified, through a variety of factors utilizing existing data bases, the offender would be monitored to ensure they were not the cause of crime. The monitoring of the individual was primarily defined as patrol and detective personnel having an awareness of the individual in relationship to their day-to-day activities. Simply being identified as a Chronic Offender did not form the basis for a detention or arrest.

The location-based components of the LASER and PredPol programs leveraged historical crime data, and based on regularity and consistency of criminal activity, maps were created highlighting those areas (corridors or sectors) most prone to crime. The difference in the programs were distinct as the location-based component of the LASER program was fixed for a duration of approximately six months and limited to a relatively small number of locations. PredPol information changed every 24-hours based on historical patterns influenced by more recent incidents of specific property crimes, were separated into specific 12-hour periods, and were significantly smaller in size (typically 500 feet by 500 feet in size). Additionally, the algorithm identified many more sectors which the local command would prioritize. Tracking the amount of time officers would spend in these identified areas was initially achieved by entering a status code manually in the patrol unit's Mobile Digital Terminal. As the Department's technological capabilities improved, we transitioned to the utilization of automated GPS systems to improve the accuracy of our efforts.

It was noted that the Department lacked detailed universal formal guidelines for the LASER program which contributed to the inconsistencies reported by the OIG. These inconsistencies affected the quality of the data obtained, specifically with the person-based component. The LASER program was intended to identify individuals with a violent arrest and conviction history as well as instances in which a firearm was used or possessed. A scoring sheet was created placing a numeric value for prior offenses as well as contacts with law enforcement. Additional weight was given when the individual was on parole or probation. Local commands then prioritized membership as Chronic Offender based on the total score calculated.

With the expansion of the LASER program to other portions of the City, particularly those who experienced significantly lower levels of violent street crime, problems arose in identifying individuals in the volume observed in the original pilot commands (Newton, Southwest, 77th, and Southeast). Additionally, the lack of a centralized governance mechanism overseeing the implementation facilitated several commands to identify individuals with property crime offense backgrounds as a Chronic Offender in place of the originally intended violent offender. These individuals were identified based on a different scoring criterion (i.e., property crime and narcotic offenses). This inconsistency caused individuals with *zero points* to be identified as a Chronic Offender. The Department's review of those identified with few or no points did not identify individuals without a criminal history or who were uninvolved in prior criminal activity.

Similarly, the OIG noted data quality concerns with the PredPol system as the data collected was derived from a combination of self-reported and various automated data collection systems. The OIG had concerns that the data was skewed as many of the hotspots identified by the PredPol system included LAPD facilities.

Additionally, the OIG reviewed ELUCD, a software company that produces survey questions via advertisements to various communication devices (smartphones, tablets, and/or computers) based on a person's location and the application the person is viewing on their device. The objective of the ELUCD program is to provide a real-time "sentiment meter" based on survey results, as well as, feedback on current community issues. While the Department does not have a formal contract with ELUCD, the company has provided the Department with some general data for the past several months. The Department continues to evaluate the potential value of the survey instrument as part of a larger public-sentiment survey strategy.

Consistent with the Department's Core Value of Quality through Continuous Improvement, and as a recognized industry leader, the focus of the Department's response is to not only improve and refine our crime prevention efforts, but to also ensure systems for administering strategies and reporting processes that are effective and transparent. Building public trust will not only enhance public safety but will also provide police legitimacy while strengthening and stabilizing our communities.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The findings and recommendations provided by the OIG, in concert with the Department's own evaluation of its Smart Policing strategies, have resulted in the following:

A. Offender-Based Programs

In August 2018, the Department ceased issuing Chronic Offender bulletins and will not issue them going forward. In their place, the Department will return to its practice of drawing critical information from physical descriptors of reported crimes, identifying those individuals recently released from incarceration, as well as information provided from the Parole and Probation Offices for individuals who have committed similar offenses in their past.

B. Location-Based Programs

With respect to the location-based components consistent with the academic literature of Precision Policing, the Department is currently in the process of evaluating the suitability of developing smaller, micro hot spots approximately 500 by 500 feet, to allocate the appropriate resources to a specific problem and area. It has been noted that a location-based strategy of identifying patterns and series of crime trends at specific locations, corridors, or neighborhoods are proven to lower crime.

Another component of the location-based program is the redesigning of anchor points into a discussion of crime generator and crime attractor locations, consistent with the academic literature of Precision Policing.

The Department will transition its efforts into developing a Precision Policing model to develop a framework that incorporates neighborhood policing, a focus on victimization, and accurately focusing efforts on location-based crime and disorder enforcement.

Lastly, the Department is working with the PredPol vendor to modify the manner that it analyzes our crime data to exclude criminal activity reported at police stations.

C. Reporting and Evaluation

As an organization, the Department will continue to seek opportunities to improve our service delivery and the impact our crime fighting efforts are having in the community. Since data-driven strategies are still an emerging field, the development and implementation of new technologies will further refine their use and provide opportunities to obtain independent evaluations of the efficacy and impact of each data-driven policing program.

The Department has initiated a search for independent outside research and evaluation at the university level. The Department also seeks to work with researchers and community organizations to conduct multiple approaches to measuring public sentiment. These may include the following:

- Annual Citywide telephone-based survey (landlines and cell phones);
- Citywide internet-based surveys that will allow for comparisons with other cities;
- In-person and online focus groups in four bureaus;
- Citywide mobile device surveys;
- Online surveys for 9-1-1 callers and consumers of police services;
- Call-backs by trained civilians or volunteers to 9-1-1 callers and consumers of police services; and,
- Station-based kiosks that measure satisfaction with services.

By using any or all the aforementioned methods, the Department strives to measure public sentiment at various levels from citywide down to the neighborhood basic car. Also, the Department seeks to obtain viewpoints from residents, callers, and victims on an array of core questions regarding safety, fear, satisfaction with police services, and trust, over time on a recurring basis, to gauge improvement and identify neighborhood or sub-groups expressing negative sentiments.

DEPARTMENT'S NEXT STEPS

To address the emphasis on data collection and usage, the Department is refining and expanding the use of Bureau Community Safety Operations Centers (CSOC). The expansion will include a CSOC in each of the geographic bureaus for a total of four Department-wide. The expansion will provide for consistency in application using a training cadre and a *centralized* model of oversight from the Office of Operations.

Chief of Police

Page 5

1.11

The Operations-South Bureau CSOC model has proven to be the most effective in design and utility of coordinating daily conference calls to develop crime reduction missions, officer deployment (patrol and specialized), community engagement strategies and events, as well as to assess previous year's trends. Additionally, the Office of Operations, in collaboration with Detective Bureau, is developing a Precision Policing manual, which will provide uniform, formal written guidelines that specify how Areas are to implement their Precision Policing strategies, to include offender and location-based strategies, taking into consideration the detailed recommendations provided by the OIG. The targeted date to complete staffing and establish formalized Precision Policing procedures is the summer of 2019.

To eliminate and prevent discrepancies in GPS reporting and accurately capturing time spent in identified sectors and hot spots, the Department will implement the Premier 1 Computer Aided Dispatch System for all mobile data computers anticipated in the summer of 2019.

The Department welcomes input from the community regarding the implementation and or changes to new and existing data-driven policing strategies and will work with the Commission on how to best incorporate this input. Crime reduction strategies are never static. As the Department implemented the initial Smart Policing programs to utilize data to improve public safety, we will continue to learn and evolve in our work, discarding those aspects of programs or strategies that fail to deliver intended results while striving to identify new or emerging ideas that hold promise.

Lastly, as our Precision Policing model is developed, Department staff will meet periodically with the designated Commission sub-committee to keep the Commissioners apprised of our progress on the strategies and report quarterly on the effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

If you have any questions, please contact Commander Jorge Rodriguez, Assistant to the Director, Office of Operations, at (213) 486-0100.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police