

SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Bob Scales
Compliance Coordinator

DATE: December 31, 2013

FROM: Clark Kimerer
Assistant Chief, Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Span of Control / Unity of Command / Acting Sergeants

Pursuant to Appendix A (Schedule of Priorities) from the Monitoring Plan, the following information is scheduled to be presented to the Monitor and DOJ on December 31, 2013:

1. Span of Control (SA ¶ 153) – An update on SPD's review of span of control, needs assessment and plan for future analysis and development is included below.
2. Unity of Command (SA ¶ 154) – An update on the unity of command and plan for future development is included below.
3. Acting Sergeants (SA ¶ 155) – An update on the use of acting sergeants, including an update on the training requirements for acting sergeants, and plan for future development is included below.

Span of Control

Paragraph 153 of the Settlement Agreement states: "The City will provide and SPD will deploy an adequate number of qualified field/first-line supervisors (typically sergeants) to assure that the provisions of this Agreement are implemented. SPD will employ sufficient first-line supervisors to assure that first-line supervisors are able to: 1) respond to the scene of uses of force as required by this Agreement; 2) investigate each use of force (except those investigated by FIT) in the manner required by this Agreement; 3) ensure documentation of uses of force as required by this Agreement; and 4) provide supervision and direction as needed to officers employing force."

During the last few years, the Department has undertaken a number of efforts to address various supervisory issues, including span of control. In 2012, the Department began the process of eliminating in-squad relief for the purpose of improving supervision in Patrol.

In-squad relief is the practice of utilizing officers from the within the squad to cover furloughed officers' work assignments on a rotating basis. The negative impact of in-squad relief is a lack of continuity between the squad supervisor and officers assigned to the squad. In-squad relief supervisors generally only interact with half of their squad at a time because of furlough patterns, while the officers in the squad will require supervision from neighboring sector sergeants when their sergeant is furloughed.

Over the last two years, SPD has transitioned from a patrol deployment system where all patrol squads operated with in-squad relief to the current system where only a quarter of patrol squads require in-squad relief. The Department was able to reduce the in-squad relief factor by creating relief squads where possible. Relief squads can be created where there is an even number of sectors and there is sufficient

staffing. The ongoing NPP review process will address options for eliminating in-squad relief for the remaining squads.

In 2013, SPD significantly reduced the number of Acting Sergeants in Patrol in order to provide consistent model supervision for field officers. The Department has fully staffed all patrol Sergeant positions with permanent rank Sergeants or trained Acting Sergeants (also consistent with Paragraph 155 of the Settlement Agreement). As SPD implements the provisions of the Settlement Agreement, additional efforts will be made to fully and sustainably address the issue of span of control and assure that SPD is deploying an adequate number of supervisors to effectively manage field officers.

The ultimate goal is to identify the correct number of total permanent rank Sergeants to meet the needs of the Department, the community and the requirements of the Settlement agreement. In conducting the analysis, the following questions will be addressed:

- 1) How many field officers are needed to achieve the City's priorities for police staffing?*
- 2) How many field officers should be supervised by a single Sergeant? What factors should be taken into consideration when determining the appropriate span of control for a given squad?*
- 3) What additional duties will be required of field supervisors under forthcoming policies and procedures?*
- 4) How will SPD balance the new supervisory workload efficiently and effectively?*

The Department has been engaged in an effort that addresses the issue of how many field officers are needed to achieve the City's priorities for police staffing when balanced against other competing needs. As part of a City Council Statement of Legislative Intent, SPD is conducting a rigorous analysis that will drive the Department's deployment model and strategic staffing plan in the coming years. The process will result in an update of the Neighborhood Policing Plan (NPP), which is the basis for SPD's existing deployment structure, staff distribution and performance metrics.

As part of the process, an Interdepartmental Team (IDT) is analyzing patrol workload data, using the Managing Police Performance (MPP) software program, to calculate appropriate staff levels in Patrol. The MPP algorithm will provide SPD with a baseline for Patrol staffing, which will, in turn, provide a baseline for identifying the correct number of total permanent rank Sergeants.

The Department needs to evaluate supervisor workload data in the context of the new requirements for supervisors and changes to deployment and staffing models. The new plans, policies and procedures will certainly impact the workload of first-line supervisors and so it would be premature to assert a goal at this point before those impacts are known. The evaluation of span of control requires a mixed quantitative (NPP) and qualitative approach. That said, the Department plans to consider the following factors to ascertain the appropriate standards for span of control at SPD:

- NPP / Size of the Police Force: NPP will provide valuable information on the size of patrol, deployment structure and officer distribution; it will give us a solid, data-driven foundation to build on as SPD considers span of control. NPP will change the structure of the Department. For

example, SPD plans to completely eliminate in-squad relief in the new deployment model, which will result in changes to precinct boundaries and sectors. SPD will give individual attention to each precinct to ensure that sectors and squads are structured and staffed in a way that allows the precinct to address the unique needs of its neighborhoods. At the squad level, SPD will attempt to staff each squad in a way that allows for adequate staffing of 911-responders on any given shift, flexibility in deployment (e.g., foot/bike patrols), proper supervision, etc. Workload varies from squad to squad. To assert the same sergeant to officer ratio for two very different squads would be an inefficient use of valuable staff resources, which is why it is essential for the Department to construct a span of control model using NPP and the overall right-sizing of the entire police force as a baseline. *(Please refer to the attachments for more information regarding NPP, such as methodology and timeline. Specific questions regarding NPP should be directed to Assistant Chief Clark Kimerer (206-615-0764; Clark.Kimerer@seattle.gov).)*

- New Supervisor Duties: The Department must deploy an adequate number of qualified first-line supervisors to assure that the requirements of the Settlement Agreement are properly implemented. As part of the Settlement Agreement, the role of first-line supervisors is expanding. SPD is in the process of defining the new role of first-line supervisors as it relates to reporting use of force, bias policing, *Terry* stops and early intervention. As the applicable policies and procedures are implemented, SPD will evaluate what additional supervisory staff resources are necessary to satisfy the new supervision and reporting requirements. The Department will begin collecting both quantitative and qualitative supervisor workload data as the policies are implemented at the beginning of 2014. By mid-2014, SPD should have sufficient data to conduct a preliminary analysis of supervisor workload and evaluate for compliance.
- Task Complexity: The concept of task complexity will also play a significant role in setting goals related to span of control Department-wide. As mentioned above, the forthcoming use of force, bias policing, *Terry* stop and early intervention policies will define the expanded role of field supervisors throughout SPD. However, variation in task complexity from unit to unit or squad to squad calls for a qualitative analysis that considers a variety of objective task characteristics, such as supervisory duties, workload trends, etc., by squad, unit or section.

The Department believes that a comprehensive review that addresses the above questions is the proper approach to the span of control issue. The following example further illustrates this position. Currently, SPD is operating with 497 911 patrol officers, supervised by 66 first-line supervisors, which is a comparatively high supervisory level for a major police department. However, these numbers alone do not tell the whole story. With 66 patrol sergeant positions filled, SPD has a single supervisor assigned to each patrol squad. On the other hand, at 497 911 officers, the Department has reached a five-year low in 911 response staffing. If SPD evaluated only the ability of the supervisors to implement the provisions of the Settlement Agreement with its current staffing levels, the Department may find that the supervisors were able to execute their duties under the new policies, yet Patrol would not be operating at an optimal level. The Department relies upon NPP to match resources to workload in Patrol. Without NPP, SPD is missing key variables in the span of control equation: the appropriate number of field officers and how the workload is balanced efficiently and effectively across Patrol.

For the reasons articulated, SPD is committed to evaluating span of control in connection with NPP in order to plan for the deployment of an adequate number of supervisors long-term. The process is coordinated by SPD, but involves a number of external consultants. It is also a multi-part, multi-phase process. Phase I, which is in progress, includes four specific tasks: 1) workload data and staffing analysis using the MPP computer model; 2) service hour calculation and development of a service hour map; 3) development of new deployment maps (precinct, sectors, districts, & beats); and 4) rollout of the new deployment maps.

SPD will keep the Monitor, DOJ and other stakeholders apprised of the status of the needs assessment related to span of control and would welcome any technical assistance during this process. With regards to the timeline, the Department proposes that a formal update be submitted no later than June 30, 2014, to include a status update on NPP and a preliminary analysis of supervisor workload under the new policies. Prior to that date, it may be useful for the Monitoring Team to meet with SPD staff involved in the NPP process for further explanation of the deployment model and staffing plan. In the interim, the Department will systematically monitor first-line supervisors as the new policies and procedures are implemented. It should be noted that the Department already maintains a narrow span of control in certain specialty units, such as Gangs, SWAT and Anti-Crime Teams, where there may be a higher occurrence of use of force or a need for greater supervisor involvement. At present, SPD's Gang Unit is comprised of 16 officers/detectives and 3 sergeants, SWAT is comprised of 22 officers and 4 sergeants and SPD's precinct-based Anti-Crime Teams total 24 officers and 5 sergeants.

Should the Department determine that it needs to add or reassign supervisors in response to its findings, it will do so via the 2015-2016 biennial (in 2014) or supplemental budget process as soon as practicable, keeping in mind that there may be constraints related to hiring, training and backfill issues.

Unity of Command

Paragraph 154 of the Settlement Agreement states: "As a general rule, all operational field officers (including patrol officers) should be assigned to a single, consistent, clearly identified first-line supervisor. First-line supervisors should normally be assigned to work the same days and hours as the officers they are assigned to supervise."

At present, the Department has permanent rank Sergeants or trained acting Sergeants assigned to all 66 patrol squads. In addition, 74.4% of the Department's patrol officers are reporting to a single supervisor for their squad. As noted above, SPD has made a significant effort towards eliminating in-squad relief, which restricts the Department's ability to assign a single first-line supervisor to every field officer. North, East and South precincts currently utilize in squad relief due to an odd number of sectors in the precinct. The number of sectors in these precincts necessitates having overlapping supervision. One of the goals of the Neighborhood Policing Plan (NPP) update is to eliminate the use of in-squad relief.

The implementation of the updated model and deployment map in 2014 will permit assignment of all SPD patrol officers to a single, consistent, clearly identified first-line supervisor that will work similar days and hours as the officers they are assigned to supervise.

Total Officers in Patrol (December 2013):	497
Number of Officer with Unity of Command:	370
Number of Officers outside Unity of Command:	127

Status of Acting Sergeants

Paragraph 155 of the Settlement Agreement states: "Sergeant training is central to effective first-line supervision. The City and SPD will ensure that personnel assigned to a planned assignment of acting sergeant for longer than 60 days will be provided adequate training to fulfill the supervisor obligations under this Agreement, either prior to serving as acting sergeant, or as soon as practicable (and in no event longer than 90 days from the beginning of the planned assignment)."

Currently, the Department has seven supervisor positions filled by Acting Sergeants. Two of the Acting Sergeants are filling in because their supervisors are on extended sick leave and one more is filling in because his/her supervisor is serving as an Acting Lieutenant in Patrol. All seven Acting Sergeants have been through the Sergeant Training Course.

The Department plans to utilize five Acting Sergeant positions throughout the Patrol Bureau as in service training for those officers on the Sergeant promotional list. Going forward, the Department will continue to fill Acting Sergeant positions with officers on the promotional list who have received Sergeant Training. At times, the number of Acting Sergeants may fluctuate due to retirements, promotions, illnesses, etc. SPD is in the process of pre-training from the promotional list in order to have a supply of trained actors on stand-by.

Further, the Department is in the process of implementing additional protocols related to the training and oversight of Acting Sergeants, including, but not limited to:

- All Acting Sergeants will be assigned a Mentoring Sergeant
 - This will occur prior to January 30, 2014, or within 3 working days of arrival of the Acting Sergeant's Assignment.
 - On the Job Training protocols will be developed; finalized draft will be presented for Command Review by March 30, 2014.
- Watch Commanders will provide oversight of Acting Sergeants assigned to the Precinct. Duties include:
 - Assign a Sergeant mentor prior to January 30, 2014.
 - Ensure Acting Sergeant training requirements are met and tracked by Ops Lieutenant at Precinct, Operations Bureau Commander and Training Unit.
 - Conduct regular debriefs with mentor and actor on an ongoing basis; to be documented in Acting Sergeant File and PAS.
 - Perform gap analysis in Supervisor education regarding Acting Sergeants responsibilities, noted after reviewing training and briefing information and passed on to Precinct Commander for action.
- Original Sergeant Training records will be maintained by the Training Section and copied to Operations Bureau Commander.

DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Peter Harris
Council Central Staff

DATE: 9/6/13

FROM: Jim Pugel, Chief of Police, Clark Kimerer, Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Size of Police Force SLI

Please see the attached response to SLI 62-1-A-1. If you have any questions, please contact Greg Doss at 5-1230. Thank you.

Response to Statement of Legislative Intent #23 (62-1-A-1)

Budget Action Title: Police: Determining the appropriate size of the police force

August 29, 2013

Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 62-1-A-1:

In approving the budget for the Police Department, it is the Council's intent to develop a more complete basis for determining the appropriate size of the police force.

The Council recognizes that there is unlikely to be a good and complete answer to this question that is readily available. Therefore, the best approach may be a phased approach, in which the City reviews the sworn staffing requirements for major police functions in light of the major outcomes desired of the police.

Accordingly, the Council requests that the Police Department, Executive and Council staff jointly develop a scope for analyzing the sworn staffing requirements for major police functions. This may begin with a review of the Neighborhood Policing Plan for patrol, and then proceed sequentially to other major functions such as crime investigations and traffic enforcement.

SLI Response: The following scope has been developed by an interdepartmental team (IDT) consisting of staff from the Seattle Police Department (SPD), City Budget Office (CBO) and Council Central Staff.

Scope for Determining the Size of the Police Force

1. Introduction / Background:

The Neighborhood Policing Plan (NPP) has served as the deployment model and strategic staffing plan for the SPD patrol function since 2007. The City Council requested an update to the NPP in the 2012 Adopted Budget; however, uncertainty in the economy and a pending Department of Justice Settlement Agreement (SA) made a thorough update difficult.

Due to progress in the SA and stability in funding for officer staffing, the department is now in a better position to review both the NPP and the size of the entire police force. The department put together an interdepartmental team to determine how best to move forward. The team consists of the following members:

- Chief Clark Kimerer with the SPD will direct the project.
- Peter Harris and Dan Eder, from Council Central Staff representatives, will keep City Council members informed of potential policy changes and advise the IDT.
- Candice Livingston, the CBO representative, will keep the Budget Director and Mayor apprised of the financial and policy changes that are under consideration.
- Greg Doss and Angela Socci with the SPD will coordinate the project.
- Officer Greg McFadden, Peggy Garcia and Brandon Bouier of the SPD will serve as subject matter experts.
- Peter Bellmio, a private contractor that specializes in deployment analysis, will serve as a project consultant
- Christopher Koper and David Weisburd from George Mason University's Criminology Law and Society Section will serve as consultants to the project in the areas of deployment and crime analysis.

The team agreed that it would take a phased approach that focused first on two major areas: 1) determining an appropriate number of 911 responders; and, 2) determining the appropriate size of the entire patrol function. It was further agreed that future phases will examine other functions, including the department's specialty units (e.g. Arson, Bomb Squad, Traffic, etc.) as well as its investigative units.

The IDT agreed that determining the right size of the 911 function is a key first step in determining the overall size of the police force because 911 responders represent 40% of the department's sworn officers, and because 911 response is a departmental priority.

Determining an appropriate number of 911 responders

To begin this process, the department will conduct a deployment analysis that considers the many changes that have occurred since 2007, which will contribute to a revised NPP and a new deployment map. These changes include an adjustment in the way the department staffs its relief squads, a reduction in overall call volume and a change in the nature of the calls (e.g. ratio of Priority 1 to Priority 2 calls).

Similar to the 2007-08 NPP process, deployment metrics will rely on an analysis of patrol workload data using the Managing Patrol Performance (MPP) software program. The MPP software uses data from the department's computer aided dispatch (CAD) system to more precisely match workload to officers assuming a patrol officer work schedule of four days on, two days off with nine hours assigned per day. The MPP algorithm works by identifying the number of officers available, the number of calls they must address and the time it takes for an officer to get to a call.

The MPP staffing analysis results will help SPD to evaluate the current geographic lines used for patrol deployment. Along with service hours for all units dispatched to calls for service, the approach to deployment map development will be expanded to incorporate more data driven methods, including comparing crime incidence to calls for service, and input from various academic and professional consultants.

The MPP process will also help the department examine the question of whether additional officers will allow it to meet a 7 minute response time in all parts of the City and at all parts of the day. While the department is currently evaluated on a 7 minute citywide average response time, the original NPP had articulated a higher, longer-term goal of having no more than a 7 minute response at any place or time. This may again be identified as a longer-term goal.

The department expects that a better matching of resources to workload will result in a more efficient workforce. The identification of these efficiencies will factor into the NPP process and help the SPD determine if additional officers are necessary. This question may also be addressed in subsequent phases that examine the appropriate size of the non-patrol force.

We estimate that the size and complexity of the first phase of the project will require the remainder of 2013 and three quarters of 2014 to complete (approximately 18 months).

Determining the appropriate size of the entire patrol function

Following the determination of the 911 responder deployment, SPD will evaluate the right size of the remaining patrol function, which includes bike and foot beats as well as specialized officers assigned to Anti-Crime Teams or Community Police Teams. Determining the right size of these functions will present a challenge due to the lack of research available. For the purposes of determining the appropriate size of the total patrol force at SPD, we intend to evaluate the rest of patrol independent of 911 responders, assuming staff size should not be based solely on the proportion or number of available staff.

The department may also use this opportunity to validate its existing proactive time goals and may develop a new model around refined goals. Based on experience gained over the past five years, SPD has realized that proactive time could include certain officer initiated calls or time spent on the deployment of directed and predicted patrol. Strategic use of bike and foot beats and emphasis patrols deployed around specific strategies could be factored into the proactive time goal, ultimately affecting the number of needed patrol officers. This analysis will be focused on the impact that these types of deployments have on crime prevention. An updated timeline to include other patrol functions will be provided with the scope during the fourth quarter of 2014.

2. Phase one scope and deliverables:

At this time, the department is only able to provide a list of the scope and deliverables for the right sizing of the 911 patrol function. The department will present the scope and deliverables for the right sizing of additional patrol functions in the fourth quarter of 2014.

Phase one of this plan will include four specific tasks:

- Workload data and staffing analysis using the MPP computer model;
- Service hour calculation and development of a service hour map;
- Development of new deployment maps (precinct, sectors, districts, & beats); and
- Rollout of the new deployment and maps.

Workload data and staffing analysis using the MPP computer model

Once patrol workload data is collected and verified, Peter Bellmio will employ the Managing Patrol Performance (MPP) queuing model to determine the minimum number of officers needed to respond to calls by both time of day and day of week. This process will also determine the officer numbers that are needed to maintain current NPP goals, as well as to provide the best staffing level for peak work times (e.g. Friday and Saturday nights). Christopher Koper will address issues of data integration and also advise on best practices around deployment.

Service hour calculation and development of a service hour map

When calculating service hours, SPD will analyze 911 call data and consider both call type as well as the emergent nature of the 911 calls. Command staff will revisit the 2007 decision to exclude on-view data and lesser emergencies that could potentially be classified as Priority 2. The analysis of service call data will include a comparison between call data and crime data to ensure that the service hour calculation is representative of both high-crime locations and 911 call locations. Whereas service call data serves an important purpose in the determination of staffing needs, crime data is also a strong indicator of the need for police services. It is our hope that the crime data analysis will validate our service hour calculation.

The IDT's SPD subject matter experts have already done preliminary work on the service hour calculations and will work with SPD Command Staff to determine the final variables that should be considered in additional data queries for analysis. SPD chiefs will review the options and associated assumptions to determine the final data query components. The department is prepared to look at numerous data runs in order to fully analyze all the different variables that contribute to officer workload.

Development of new deployment maps (precincts, sectors, district, & beats)

Upon completion of the data and modeling steps, SPD staff will revise the service hour map with input from command staff. The map may possibly define new boundaries and will serve as the basis for the analysis that will be done by David Weisburd, one of the deployment and crime analysis consultants.

Weisburd will compare the service hour map with his prior work on Seattle's crime micro-places (hot spots) and, working with the Crime Analysis Unit (CAU), will note any

disparities between the maps. If any disparities exist, the IDT will work with CAU and Weisburd to determine if the final deployment map needs to be revised accordingly.

Prior to rolling out the new deployment map, a small team comprised of NPP managers will:

- 1) Consider how officers should be distributed across Seattle's geography;
- 2) Consult with the command staff, as well as Precinct Captains and CAU, to determine new boundaries for SPD's beats, sectors, districts & precincts; and,
- 3) Determine the ideal number of sergeants needed to provide adequate supervision. This work will be informed by the SPD Compliance Team and the work of the DOJ Monitor.

As in prior map boundary exercises, the department will strongly consider natural obstacles such as the Ship Canal and community and neighborhood boundaries.

Rollout of the new deployment maps

The proposed map will be evaluated and modified based on input from the Mayor's Office, the City Council, the DOJ Monitor, the Community Police Commission and the various Precinct Advisory Committees. The department will also hold community meetings to get feedback from Seattle citizens on any proposed changes to the existing deployment map.

Once reviewed and updated based on feedback, SPD's Information Technology (IT) staff will integrate the new maps with its existing systems while the department's Training section conducts system-wide trainings around the new deployment strategies. The new deployment map will require many technical system changes prior to its implementation. The IT and Communications sections will likely spend the last half of 2013 preparing the CAD and other electronic infrastructure (e.g. Video Mobile Data Terminals) for a September 1, 2014 "go live" date.

3. Schedule:

As noted on the attached timeline, the department has divided the right sizing of the 911 patrol into three tasks which may or may not overlap as they are carried out. As is noted above, an update of the Department's deployment policy is a complex, time intensive undertaking that will require the remainder of 2013 and the first three quarters of 2014. However, this bottom up process is the preferred way to determine how 911 responders are deployed within the confines of budget and authority and determine if additional or fewer 911 patrol officers are necessary, which could affect other patrol functions. The 911 exercise is the first priority and will be followed closely by other functions of the SPD patrol.

If the department determines that additional officers are necessary to meet a goal of a 7 minute response time during all parts of the day and in all parts of the City, then the Mayor may choose to propose additional officers as part of the 2015 budget process. It is also possible that SPD could take nearer-term actions (e.g. transfers of officers from non-patrol) to bolster the 911 force. This latter action might make sense as a temporary step until subsequent analyses are done on non-patrol functions. Either action would be made in consultation with the Mayor's Office.

The department will not be requesting any new resources to carry out the work that will be done in 2013. There will be some costs in 2014 for SPD to re-draw its deployment map and program the changes into its Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Some of the work requirements will include development of hard copy maps for all department facilities, development of training materials, changes to the department's web pages, the loading of the maps into the Video Mobile Data Terminals (VMDTs) and amendment of various reports that rely on geographic parameters. The department is working to estimate the costs of these activities and will provide to the City Budget Office a Budget Issue Paper that identifies all relevant costs.

4. Future Steps:

As noted above, the determination of the right size of patrol is the second phase in this process. This phase will begin in 2014 and extend into 2015. Since the second phase of the project has not yet been scoped, it is not possible to determine how the work will align with the City Budget process. That said, the department does not currently expect to request any additional resources to complete the next phase.

In future phases, the department will continue its work on the SLI by examining its remaining functions. The IDT staff will perform a literature review to determine best practices around staffing of police specialty functions to identify proven methods. For our analysis of the investigations functions, we will examine crime clearance rates and detective workload, which will assist in the determination of the number of staff that is needed to reach desired goals in this function. The IDT will continue through the various functions until it has built a model that can adequately answer the question about the appropriate size of the police force.

Seattle police scrap part of Neighborhood Policing Plan

Plan caused accountability problems, audit says

By CASEY MCNERTHNEY, SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF

Updated 10:06 pm, Thursday, January 12, 2012

When Seattle's Neighborhood Policing Plan was unveiled in 2008, city leaders hailed it as a monumental step to improving police service and response times.

But four years later, Seattle police have scrapped one component of the costly plan after seeing evidence it worsened the department's accountability problems.

Pushed by then-Mayor Greg Nickels, the plan redrew police beat boundaries and changed how patrol officers were supervised. Last week, the department returned to the way officers had been supervised for decades prior.

"In my view, many of the current issues of officer and sergeant performance stem from the approach of in-squad relief that was intended to make possible the new beat boundaries and shift structure of the Neighborhood Policing Plan," Office of Professional Accountability civilian auditor Anne Levinson wrote in her most recent report.

Last month, the Justice Department issued a scathing report that found Seattle officers engaged in a pattern of excessive force and too quickly resorted to impact weapons, primarily as the result of inadequate supervision and training.

The department already was preparing to transition back to the old squad relief system prior to the Justice Department report. Levinson, whose report first publicly addressed the problems caused by the plan, praised the department for moving forward and not allowing the process to be delayed by collective bargaining.

Deputy Chief Clark Kimerer said the decision to go back to the previous supervision model was done unilaterally and the change was "too important to use for negotiating leverage."

For decades before the Neighborhood Policing Plan, patrol officers were assigned to squads that worked consistently with the same sergeant.

But the Neighborhood Policing Plan brought new patrol beats, and had more rotation among supervisors. Some sergeants might supervise two or three squads during a week rather than sticking with one as they had previously.

That created lapses in the accountability system, Levinson said. If there was a complaint against an officer and he or she was given a referral for training, the sergeant who dealt with the issue may not have had the same knowledge of the individual as a sergeant who worked with the officer regularly.

Going back to the old model trades geographical integrity for squad integrity – rather than having officers assigned to one specific part of a neighborhood, officers are assigned to squads that might rotate.

"Returning to the approach of floating relief squads means officers will again have consistency in the sergeants who supervise them and sergeants will have clear accountability," Levinson wrote.

While officer schedules are changing, the new districts are not being redrawn. Though most changes were completed by Jan. 4, some modifications are still coming to the North Precinct.

Police officials say the Neighborhood Policing Plan resulted in some improvements.

A key department goal was getting response times for priority 911 calls below seven minutes, and department data shows it dropped from 7.2 minutes in 2008 to 6.1 minutes in 2010. By the middle of last year, the priority call response time was 6.3 minutes.

But because of budget problems, the city missed its goal of hiring 105 new officers in four years by dozens.

Kimerer said the Neighborhood Policing Plan also fixed some imbalanced workloads, and said the department has learned from the last four years.

Having younger officers regularly interacting with veterans is "immeasurably valuable," he said, "and we have a department full of those folks."

He hopes accountability will improve while relationships established in neighborhoods will continue.

"Philosophically I still have support for it," Kimerer said of the Neighborhood Policing Plan's initial relief system. "But this is the right way to go."

For more Seattle police and crime news visit the front page of the Seattle 911 blog.

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