

Presentation Notes from Inspector Kevin Thaler Friends of Crime Prevention – Friday January 10, 2014

Prior to 2009, the Waterloo Regional Police Service was a reactive police service. Prior to 2009, there were approximately 210 officers across the Region assigned to patrol to answer calls and 2 officers in each Division who addressed problem addresses/repeat individuals.

In an effort to understand & change how we do better policing in Waterloo Region, WRPS partnered with a consultant from the U.S. who studied crime trends and policing response in major cities such as Los Angeles, Seattle, Charlotte, N.C., Baltimore, Edmonton and more.. His theory and model is built on the idea of more generalist police officers and less specialty units. Police officers have more to offer and can be more effective than just a simple call-taker.

Our challenge became how to build in problem solving time so that officers could be more proactive, while also challenging the capable officers we have and identify those that show promise of leadership.

But to design proactive initiatives and build problem solving time, you first need to build the time to do it. This can happen in two ways – hire more cops or become more efficient in how you respond with the resources you have. We went predominantly with the latter.

Using a series of mathematical formulas designed to model frontline patrol services for any day of the week, during different time periods, our tool, Managing Patrol Performance (MPP) took into account a wide variety of indicators that impact patrol performance in the field and the level of service being provided to our community, including:

- the rate of citizen generated calls for service; (avg 10/hour)
- the percentage of each type of priority of call; (approx. 14 % priority 1)
- the number of patrol units dispatched to citizen generated calls for service;
- the average service time for each patrol unit;
- the average travel times for calls by priority type;
- the time spent on non-call related duties such as report writing or court attendance;
- the geographic area being covered by patrol; and
- the number of actual fielded patrol units on duty.

MPP captured data from all of our internal systems – payroll and timekeeping, computer assisted dispatch, occurrence/records Management system.

We learned that 43 % of the time we are taking calls in our assigned zone Which means that 57% of time we were taking call in other zones, across town then not home to answer the priority one call back in an officers original zone. We are chasing our tails. and this left no time for proactive work.

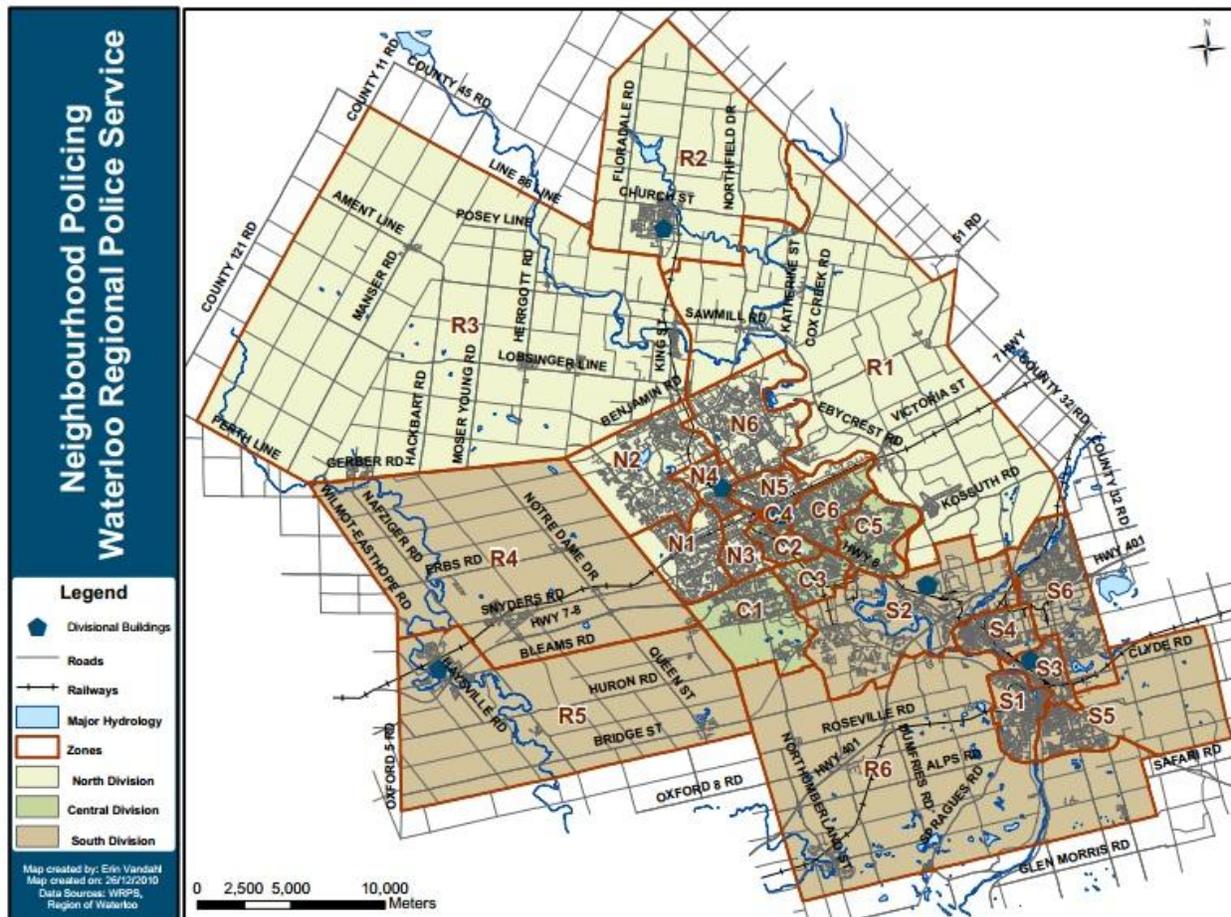
But an officer isn't also on the road or street available to take call for service. You also have to factor in Admin time such as court case preparation, mandated Provincial training, courses, annual leave, prisoner escorts, vehicle repairs...

What can the WRPS do within our organization to increase the available problem solving time for patrol?

Supervision and management practices have a significant influence over how patrol time is spent. Some of our internal practices identified for review include:

- examining ways of better providing consistent service through Differential Police Response (DPR);
- online reporting
- new and balanced patrol zones (every urban zone is equal in call volume +/- 3 %
- balanced Divisions
- consistent Rural Deployment and 24 hour supervision
- stacking schedules to allow for ramp up of officers in peak service times without incurring overtime as we had in the past
- in-service training during the non-peak season;
- new communications call centre tracking software and call management solutions and for limiting cross-zone dispatching;
- better matching our existing patrol resources to workload demands with a modified shift schedule; and
- partnerships within the community e.g. LHIN, Lutherwood, CMHA for front line mental health response. (WRPS would spend up to 5000 hours at hospitals guarding individuals before these initiatives with local partners were created)

Development of the Neighbourhood Policing Concept:



With the reorganization to a neighbourhood policing model, we expect to have a true complement of patrol constables hovering around 107 officers per division.

- 9 platoons working two separate shift schedules
- An additional supervisor to cover the extra officers we now deploy
- Senior staff reduction – 4 inspectors report to 1 superintendent instead of 4 inspectors reporting to 4 superintendents.

The zone divisions were created using 18 + months of call for service data. Each zone is within 3%, give or take of the adjoining zones, this balance allows for an accurate assessment of needs of each zone by time of day, day of week and month of year. If a development project expands the calls for service in a zone, the boundaries of the zone will be altered to bring it back into line with adjoining zones. The zone and division boundaries are based on equity, not on political (ward) or municipal boundaries.

The concept is a more generalist patrol officer assigned to a specific area, bringing the skills and team required to deal with identified problems. Remember, in the past we

went to the calls and forwarded the information to specialist teams to resolve. This caused inefficient response and many more calls for service received until that specialist team got around to targeting the issue. Now, with more problem solving time, any officer can consult with specialists but pursue action in conjunction with supervisor and other members stacked in that zone.

Police officers become more than just a call handler

How does WRPS improve on problem identification, prevention, intervention and enforcement?

We still have specialized units for the big investigations, but we are now teaching younger officers how to pursue investigations and the cream is rising.

The public benefit is that response is tailored to the neighbourhood, and more lasting change is promoted. Visibility is only one slice of this dynamic, action and results are the foundation.

There is an implementation and assessment team convening every two weeks to assess success, determine next steps and develop and review Zone Action Plans, Specific written tasks tailored to each of 24 patrol zones in Waterloo Region. For instance, the needs of Fairview are different than those of downtown Kitchener. Some zones are “quieter” than others for criminal activity, but are higher in “service calls”(i.e. domestics, youth issues, traffic problems).

Interagency partnerships are critical – we cannot arrest our way out of many problems and the police cannot solve in 15 minutes what has taken a lifetime to develop.

Shift level leadership – Zone ownership. Every Staff Sergeant is assigned a zone to manage. A zone matrix means they also supervise officers from adjoining platoons who are assigned to their patrol zone.

Schools – every officer is a school resource officer, the former Community Resources is folded and officers are redeployed to the street.

Accountability – every minute of an officer’s time is tracked .Every activity is captured on monthly E-reports, and division commanders can view the activity of every officer, every Sergeant and their team, every Staff Sergeant and their group of teams.

This all boils down to having the **Right** people, in the **Right** place, at the **Right** time in the **Right** numbers.

Ongoing measurement - if you can’t measure it, you can’t improve. For example, we are now seeing officer generated calls at a rate of approx. 24 per hour. In 2013 we had

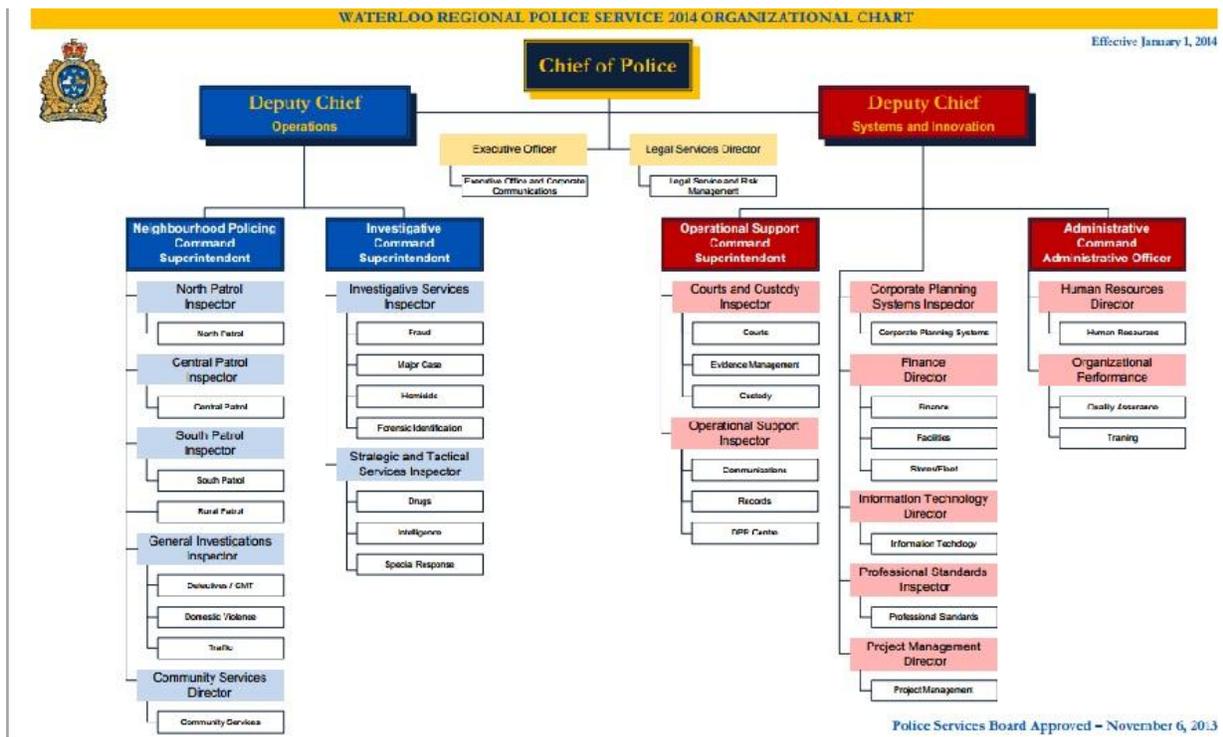
over 300 000 calls for service or officer generated calls. These include proactive initiatives like mall walk-throughs, community centre drop-ins, outreach, schools, warrant execution, bail enforcement.

Bail enforcement – means ensuring curfews are abided by. This helps to reduce recidivism. If the accused knows the police will check, they are unlikely to be out getting into more trouble.

Address recidivism and victim recidivism – Each zone has a top 10 list of addresses within it that are the leading call generators. This is a red flag to areas that need attention. Not always enforcement. King and Victoria was once a problem collision location. Sometimes it is a mall, but surprisingly, it is often a residence. What can our problem solvers do in their zone, with proper guidance to reduce our calls to that location and help that occupant and the surrounding neighbourhood.

That is the promise of a collaborative problem solving initiative.

What does WRPS look like now after the reorganization?



- Traffic and Domestic violence moved to Neighbourhood Policing
- Detectives have been centralized in Investigative Command with de-centralized deployment
- Patrol has stepped up in several cases where a Patrol Constable could learn a detective duty and complete an investigation.
- Divisional Inspectors now have a patrol only focus, though connections with detectives remain.
- Reduced Command staff will mean some committee involvement will be reduced or downloaded to staff sergeants – though that doesn't always help the situation.
- Community Resources is reduced to Lee Fitzpatrick. 6 high school liaison officers remain in place across the Region.

For additional information on the Waterloo Regional Police Service Neighbourhood Policing model, see these additional documents.

[Neighbourhood Policing: Rebuilding to meet the needs of our changing and growing community – January 2011](#)

[Neighbourhood Policing: Developing the Geography – Discussion Paper #2](#)

[Neighbourhood Policing: Rural Staffing and Deployment – Discussion Paper #3](#)

[Rural Policing: Rebuilding to better meet the needs of the rural community – February 2013](#)