

# CITY OF OAKLAND

## AGENDA REPORT

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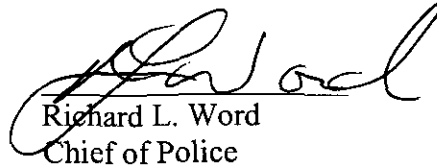
**To:** Office of the City Administrator  
**Attn:** Deborah Edgerly  
**From:** Police Department  
**Date:** October 12, 2004

**Re:** **Community Policing Advisory Board Annual Report to the City Council**

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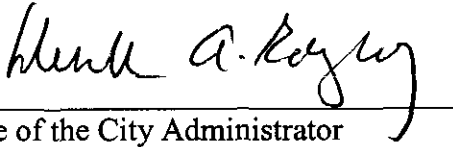
Attached is the subject report and supporting document (Appendix A). A Board representative will present the report.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard L. Word  
Chief of Police

FORWARDED TO THE PUBLIC  
SAFETY COMMITTEE



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Office of the City Administrator

Item: \_\_\_\_\_  
Public Safety Comte.  
October 12, 2004

## **City of Oakland Community Policing Advisory Board**

**TO:** Mayor Jerry Brown, the City Council, Public Safety Committee, City Administrator Deborah Edgerly, and Police Chief Richard Word  
**FROM:** The Community Policing Advisory Board  
**DATE:** October 12, 2004  
**SUBJECT:** CPAB Annual Report to City Council

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### **SUMMARY**

Community Policing (CP) in Oakland is at a crossroads. On the one hand the citizens, newly united by powerful Police Service Area (PSA) e-mail groups, are clamoring to be part of the CP process at precisely the moment that the Oakland Police Department (OPD) is least able to respond to their identified needs because of severe staffing shortages.

Whether the November ballot measure is approved or not, there are a number of concerns that OPD needs to address:

1. OPD staffing levels in general
2. Measures to ensure Measure Y passage
3. Deployment plans for the new CPOs if the measure passes
4. Training protocols for CPOs
5. The need to integrate CP and Patrol
6. Communication technology needs for now and the future

### **BACKGROUND**

Community Policing (CP) which began ambitiously in Oakland during the mid-1990s, s been effectively dismantled in a series of reorganizations of OPD.

In late 2001 and early 2002, Community Policing officers (CPO) were redeployed to police the airport, port, and schools. Patrol officers were renamed CPOs (although they continued to perform patrol duties). And, in what could only be called a radical experiment, a new geographic based command structure was developed in attempt to focus department resources on neighborhood-specific issues. But alas, new budgetary constraints and the Consent Decree intervened to scuttle this reorganization by eliminating CP resources and tightening the chain of command to achieve better accountability in the rank and file of OPD.

The reorganization of 2003 returned patrol officers to a time of day "Watch" command and put CP back into a separate Division of Neighborhood Services, effectively disconnecting it from patrol as it had been prior to the reorganization of 2002. This is where CP is today: part of a hybrid system where the Police Services Area (PSA) Lieutenants, the Problem Solving Officers (PSO), the Crime Reduction Teams (CRT), the Neighborhood Services Coordinators (NSC) and

Beat Health together assume geographical responsibility for their PSAs and the rest of OPD takes responsibility for its particular watch. Most of the CP work is done by the PSA Lt., the two PSOs, and the one CRT in each of the city's 6 regular PSAs.

At the same time that CP has been devolving into its skeletal staffing, the citizens of Oakland have been affiliating with the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils (NCPC) and demanding more police services from OPD. Attracted to CP by the Yahoo groups, these citizens are better informed and more engaged than at any time in CP's past. Thus, there is a cruel irony to the situation: citizens are engaged and holding up their end of the bargain in the CP partnership, while OPD can only attempt to hold up its end with a handful of personnel that is stretched to the limit. CP in Oakland is in crisis today as staffing shortages have forced OPD to reassign the PSOs to patrol duties on a rotating basis, thus withdrawing another of the meager resources available to the NCPCs.

(This summary is based on a much longer, detailed account of the evolution and changes in CP over the course of its first decade and appears as Appendix A at the end of this report.)

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The recommendations the CPAB is making regarding the reorganization will have no direct fiscal effect.

## **KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS**

The recommendations which follow are a combination of maintenance issues and new initiatives dependent on the passage of the new Violence Prevention Measure on the November ballot.

### **1. OPD Staffing**

- It is imperative that the PSOs, CRTs, and Beat Health not be eliminated to infill for other positions in OPD. CP will collapse without these resources.
- If the ballot measure loses, all existing CP resources including PSOs, NSCs, CRTs and Beat Health must be retained. They are currently the only problem solving and enforcement resources available to the NCPCs.
- OPD's authorized staffing level cannot be allowed to fall below the current 739 sworn positions and will soon need an academy to maintain that number. It is important that the academy be timed to deliver trained officers when they are needed, requiring some anticipation, since nearly a full year is necessary to recruit, train and have new personnel street-ready for active duty.
- The City Council should work to restore the 39 sworn positions lost when the authorized force of OPD was reduced from 778 to 739 in reaction to the budget crisis that began in 2002-03.
- OPD should begin the process of identifying and training more experienced police officers for the CPO positions required by the ballot measure. As a rule, newly hired officers, whether fresh from the Police Academy or lateral transfers from other

jurisdictions, should not be selected for CP duty because that duty requires both experience, and a talent for self-directed policing that officers new to Oakland lack.

- There is still no clear job description or supervision for the NSCs. We have recommended numerous times before, and we continue to recommend, that this be addressed.
2. To ensure the passage of the November ballot measure
    - The council must be unmistakably clear with the public about staffing levels associated with the measure. The new floor will be  $739 + 63 = 802$ . Vagueness on this point will kill the measure.
  3. Deployment Plans for the new CPOs if the new ballot measure passes
 

OPD will have the opportunity to start over with CP if the 63 new officers are approved. We strongly urge OPD to have plans in place to preserve the best practices of CP and to restore what was best in the original dedicated CPO deployment:

    - If the new ballot measure passes, OPD should begin an early police academy so that Oakland will have trained officers to hire and deploy the moment that funds are available to pay for their positions.
    - CRTs must be kept in place so that the CPOs are not used as tactical squads and taken away from their problem solving duties.
    - The new positions must be dedicated Community Policing Officers, one per community policing beat. The positions must have a specific, clearly defined job description so that the officers applying for them know exactly what they are volunteering for.
    - OPD should adopt a policy that the CPO position is a multi-year commitment to a particular beat and prohibit rotation unless the working relationship between the CPO and the NCPC requires it.
    - The new positions should be flexible in duty days, hours, and means of transport (walking, bicycle, car, etc.) so that the CPO can adjust easily to the needs of the beat and community.
    - As in the earlier CPO deployment, the new position needs to be exempt from answering calls for service except in times of emergency where a one-time deployment is necessary for the safety of the city or fellow officers.
    - Training and supervision of the new CPO must establish ongoing collaboration and partnership between the CPO and the beat's NCPC as a primary responsibility of the position.
  4. Training for the new CPO position
 

CP is part of the curriculum of every Oakland Police Academy and is approximately 40 hours in length. Training for the new CPO position needs to be deeper and more closely tailored to the activities the CPO will be performing in the field. OPD needs to refine and formalize that training protocol before the selection of officers for the position begins.

    - We recommend that OPD start with the PSO training protocol and see if that can be adapted or adopted as it is and used as the basis for the new CPO position.
    - We strongly recommend citizen involvement in that training process so that trainees will be aware of citizen expectations and citizen perceptions of how the CP partnership needs to work.
  5. Integration of CP and Patrol

The push to integrate CP and Patrol consistent with the concept to make every patrol officer a community policing officer might have been one of the best features of the reorganization of 2002. It is imperative that OPD develop a method for connecting the CPO with Patrol in the beat so that they work as a team instead of as solitary officers performing separate functions.

- The method adopted to forge this partnership must be structural and not simply a verbal general order that can be ignored in practice.
- We recommend requiring that the CPO and beat patrol officer regularly meet face to face and that this meeting be logged and submitted as a weekly report, including notes about beat problems/priorities/projects discussed and what was decided.
- Whatever means are used to create this active teamwork in the beat, they must result in an active collaboration and cooperation between the CPO and patrol officers in the beat.
- We recommend an element addressing "community policing" efforts be included in every sworn officer's personnel evaluation from the level of Deputy Chief to patrol officer.
- We recommend that non-monetary incentives, such as extra points on promotional exams, should be provided to encourage active engagement in community policing.

6. Communication technology needs of OPD

- Cell phones for the CPOs are critical for CP to function in real time and for the partnership to be two-way.
- Every Patrol officer and every CPO should have an e-mail address, access to the internet, and daily opportunity to visit the PSA yahoo groups (would a bank of computers in the line-up room and at the Eastmont Station be a solution?) In addition, once this access is available, checking e-mail and the PSA site should be a daily duty responsibility and tracked for compliance.
- Each of the PSA yahoo groups should be promoted to include Home Alerts and other merchant and neighborhood associations. The more involved, the better the communication and the safer and more informed the citizenry as a whole.
- OPD should create an e-mail option for the DRUG hotline which is more convenient for some citizens and would eliminate the need to transcribe these messages, saving on labor costs and time.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

We ask that the City Council accept our report and direct OPD to implement its recommendations. We also ask that the City Council direct OPD staff for an update or report by June and December of 2005 on progress made on these recommendations and implementation of the ballot measure.

We strongly recommend that the deployment of the 63 new officers be monitored from the inception. Like the intervention and prevention programs, their activities need to be judged for their effectiveness. To this end, the CPAB offers its assistance to the oversight board authorized in the ballot measure in the development and implementation of these measures.

Community Policing, even in its compromised configuration, is a vital crime prevention strategy for Oakland. Should the citizens become disgusted and give up on the Community Policing

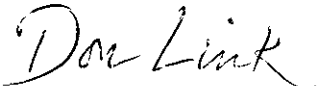
partnership and the promise of the NCPCs, it may be impossible to revive the system whether new CPOs are deployed or not.

## CONCLUSION

As a practice, CP in Oakland is severely compromised in its functioning due to staffing shortages and structural anomalies in OPD. The limited program still in place is functioning beyond expectations, but well below citizen requirements. What is in place must be maintained and strengthened. If the ballot measure is approved, the new deployment must be done intelligently with energetic forethought about how the new system will look and how it will interface with Patrol and the rest of OPD.

We offer our direct assistance to OPD in arriving at the final arrangement. We all want to see the return of a robust, effective CP in Oakland, one which empowers citizens and improves neighborhoods, and allows Oakland's citizens to realize the full promise of our wonderful city.

Respectfully submitted

  
Don Link, Chair

Prepared by Bill Ashley  
Colleen Brown  
David Flack  
Chuck Johnston  
Don Link

## **APPENDIX A--BACKGROUND: COMMUNITY POLICING IN OAKLAND 1994-2004**

Community Policing (CP) began in Oakland in 1994, when a handful of community policing officers (CPO) were deployed to the small group of beats sufficiently organized to work with them in an active partnership. A group of five Neighborhood Services Coordinators (NSC) was hired at the same time to work with the CPOs and the nascent community policing beats. The subsequent evolution and devolution of CP in Oakland developed out of these early efforts and became the blueprint for Community Policing developed by CP Task Force II. Its vision of community policing was codified in Resolution 72727, adopted by the City Council in June 1996.

The history of this process is important, because it shows what happened to CP over time and explains how we arrived where we are now: a city with a severely compromised system of CP.

Phase one 1994-2001 Dedicated Community Policing Officers assigned to serve a CP beat in an independent unit of OPD. The CPO had the primary responsibility of meeting and working with the beat's Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) to identify priorities for attention by citizens, police, and other appropriate city agencies.

CPOs served CP Units (CPU) which were overseen by a Sgt. who also served as the commander in charge of Special Duty Units (SDU) which did the type of tactical work currently done by our Crime Reduction Teams (CRT). However, during this period of time, CPOs provided the personnel for the SDUs and were pulled off of their beats and away from attending to NCPC priorities. CPU Sgts reported directly to the Area Captains bypassing the normal chain of command within patrol. NSCs in Phase 1 were each assigned 2-3 beats each and reported to the CPU Sgt.

CP in this phase was a separate, stand-alone unit that had no formal connections to patrol and was not integrated into the functioning of the Police Service Areas (PSAs) or Districts as they were called at the time.

2001 was a watershed year for CP in many senses. The City Council approved an OPD plan to take over the policing function for both Oakland Unified School District and the Port of Oakland. The incidents surrounding 9/11 heightened the need for additional security at the airport and the Port of Oakland. These additional areas of responsibility were accompanied by no increase in staffing: OPD had to meet the new needs with existing staff and this led to the CPOs being reassigned to patrol duty.

To preserve the gains made in establishing proactive community policing, OPD responded to the situation with a bold plan to make every patrol officer a CP officer and in this way integrate CP into the heart of how policing was done in Oakland

Phase Two: 2002-2003: The Grand Experiment to make CP universal in OPD

A central feature of Phase 2 was redefining all patrol officers as CPOs and requiring that they all attend NCPC meetings each calendar quarter. In addition, OPD put a cell phone in each patrol

car so that citizens in the beats could communicate with their “community policing” patrol officer.

The PSA Lt. was central in this new arrangement having 24/7 geographical responsibility and accountability for the PSA as well as direct responsibility for CP activities. The time of day Watch Command, which was central to traditional patrol duty was replaced with a bifurcated authority for patrol consisting of both the PSA Lt. and the Watch Commander in charge of each of the 3 shifts of patrol each day.

A new position, the Problem Solving Officer (PSO), was created to carry on the problem solving work previously done by CPOs; however there were only two assigned per PSA. Each PSO had the responsibility of serving 3-5 CP beats.

NSCs reported directly to the PSA Lt. as did the new stand alone CRTs assigned to each PSA to handle the tactical work associated with meeting NCPC enforcement priorities and other hot spot problems within the PSA.

The emphasis and goal of Phase 2 was 24 hour responsibility for all commanders and active participation in CP activities by everyone in patrol. Every officer was supposed to take personal ownership and responsibility for the beats and the NCPCs they served and, in theory, strategize with citizens and work to solve problems in the beat.

The Phase 2 model functioned for roughly a year, but was very uneven in its performance throughout the city and proved expensive due to increased overtime to allow patrol officers to attend NCPC meetings. In the latter part of 2002 and early 2003, PSA Lts., PSOs and occasional patrol officers attended NCPC meetings on a rotating basis with NCPC priorities forwarded to PSA Lts. for enforcement or other appropriate attention.

During this period, community policing became priority number 2 in OPD at best. OPD was struggling to simply keep up with the demands of maintaining 911 patrol.

The main benefit of the Phase 2 model was that it drove the broadening of CP to include all patrol officers and to encourage them to regard their beats in a different, more proprietary way similar to the way that the CPO had regarded it in Phase1, an ownership attitude.

By the summer of 2003, higher command in OPD was looking for a change in the structure of patrol duty to tighten the chain of command and eliminate some ambiguities inherent in the PSA Lts' 24 hour daily command responsibility for the patrol officers assigned to the PSA. The Watch Commanders oversaw each of the 3 three time-of day watches or shifts of Patrol each day, and the PSA Lt had 24/7 command responsibility for them as well. OPD disliked the non-hierarchical command structure that had Patrol officers serving two commanders.

The Riders Consent Decree Settlement introduced a sense of urgency to correct these chain of command problems and forced OPD to exert tighter control over officers in the field. To accomplish this, a new reorganization was necessary.



Phase 3 2003 to the present: the Reintegration of OPD with a hybrid time-of-day (Watch) command responsibility for patrol and a geographical 24/7 responsibility for CP by the PSA Lt.

OPD returned to the 3-Watch command structure with a Captain in charge of each of the three shifts and Lts. acting as Watch Commanders during each shift. In addition to these, a new Neighborhood Services Division was formed under Captain Cy Vierra to oversee CP with PSA Lts., the NSCs, the CRTs, the PSOs, and Beat Health included in this new Division occurring during the Day Watch (second shift). Because of the personnel shortage, PSA Lts also rotate as Watch Commanders during the Day Watch, distracting them from their primary responsibility for their PSA when filling their slot in the rotation.

CP must rely on the communication of NCPC priorities and projects to the Captains, Watch Lts., and Patrol Sgts of the evening and night shifts for them to be attended to by those two shifts and thereby to receive the 24/7 attention promised by the reorganization of 2002. As in the late period of Phase 2, PSA Lts, PSOs, and an occasional patrol officer attend NCPC meetings on a rotating basis, as they are available. Attendance at the NCPC meetings, especially effective attendance is very uneven throughout the city, and virtually non-existent in some places. The cell phones for the patrol cars that allowed citizens to communicate with their "community policing" patrol officers have been removed to cut costs. The original system of CP outlined in Resolution 72727 is only a shadow now of what it was, and hanging by a thread provided by assistance from an unexpected source.

Today, most of the CP work is being done by the PSA Lt. directing CRT attention to hot spots and his/her two PSOs' attention to the priorities of the NCPCs. PSOs attend some NCPC meetings, but with as many as 5 beats with varying days off and shift changes, they cannot be at every one and still attend to their demanding work in the beat. As in the past, from the beginning, the NSC remains the one constant face of OPD in the NCPCs and in the citizens' minds.

The internet provided CP with an unexpected, unplanned assist that has probably kept it alive in Oakland, given the lack of personnel to give it the direct attention needed. Beginning in North Oakland, primarily as a means of establishing on-going communication between NCPC leaders, Lt. Green created a Yahoo group e-mail site. Instead of a couple of dozen leaders tuning in to get statistics and breaking news about developments in the PSA, the site grew very quickly to include more than 250 members including activists in Berkeley and other PSAs in Oakland. On the command of Chief Word, who saw the invaluable nature of this tool, the Yahoo group e-mail site has been emulated in each of the other PSAs in Oakland.

The advantage of Yahoo groups is that they connect citizens with OPD, citizens with citizens, PSA Commanders with citizens and patrol officers, and citizens with city government. They have become an important nexus for communication and have empowered citizens in unexpected ways. The Yahoo groups that exist in each PSA have brought citizens and the police of every rank to the same forum where they discuss problems, plan strategies, share crime statistics, and disseminate vital information. Citizens in the PSAs with active Yahoo groups have taken charge of driving change in their beats and neighborhoods and the PSA. Neighborhood Services Division staff have responded with an energetic willingness to work on the problems identified.

Even though OPD had a shortage of personnel to send to NCPC meetings, it has nevertheless created a method to communicate with them directly and to hear their concerns and reports of developments and problems in the neighborhood.

Absent these PSA Yahoo Groups, it is fair to say that most citizens active in CP today would be discouraged and angry about the inability of OPD to deliver the CP services promised in Resolution 72727 and enjoyed in the early days of CP. The history of CP since 2001 has been the story of a series of take-aways accompanied by "mission-impossible-like" reorganization plans that promised to make up for the take-aways by utilizing the remaining, often skeleton staff, more intelligently and effectively.

Mission impossible works on television, but not in the real world. Community policing in Oakland today is an echo of the earlier days and held together only by the heroic efforts of a handful of PSA Lts., NSCs, PSOs, CRTs and a group of surprisingly patient citizen-activists in the NCPCs. At the time of this writing, PSOs are being withdrawn from the PSAs on a rotating basis to fill Patrol slots, removing yet another piece of the fragile CP puzzle.

Oakland has made little or no net progress in community policing during the period of 1994-2004. Instead, the city is left in the ironic situation of having citizens more energized and eager to be involved in the NCPCs and CP than at any time in the past, most of this due to the Yahoo sites and e-mail lines of communication. At the same time, OPD is at the nadir of its ability to respond to those citizens with collaborative problem solving, active working on the priorities identified, and steady progress at improving the health of the city's beats.

Community policing in Oakland is at a crossroads that will probably decide its fate for the next decade and maybe longer. Failure to nurture the system with personnel and effective service will doom it to becoming another noble, but disappointing experiment, that did not get the support necessary to succeed. The citizens are lined up and still joining in the effort to hold up their end of the partnership. The question is whether OPD will be able to meet its responsibilities to the citizens and uphold its end of the bargain. It is a supreme and cruelly disappointing irony that at the very time that citizens' desire to participate in full-blown CP is at its highest level, OPD's ability to meet that demand is at its lowest.