

Theory of Change

Peace officers do not investigate crimes, nor are they the first line of response to criminal incidents. When deployed, trained, and activated with precision, however, they can have a significant impact on crime prevention and public safety.

In order to have that impact, focusing on effectiveness and efficiency is critical and is well-documented. The following are methods of changing deployment and response strategies to improve both in law enforcement and crime prevention.

Effectiveness

Deterrence Theory

There are three levers to deter antisocial and criminal behaviour by ensuring the certainty, swiftness, and severity of punishment. Law enforcement teams can most significantly impact the certainty of punishment by being present in spaces prone to criminal behaviour and social disorder. In fact, studies show that certainty is the most effective lever in proactive prevention. Not only do peace officers represent a capable guardian of public spaces, they have authorities which create a certainty of enforcement actions.

Foot Patrol

Rather than responding to incidents, deploying law enforcement resources in proactive ways to engage with specific locales is important to successful prevention efforts. Proactive, highly visibility, and engagement-focused style of foot patrol has been found to have a significant impact on reducing violence in those areas. For this reason, the TPO team has created TCAT (Transit Community Action Team). Resources in TCAT will be deployed into a geographically-focused foot patrol program where individual peace officers will have ownership of specific areas of concern within the transit network, starting with LRT locations.

Hot Spot Policing

Research and analytics show that crime and disorder concentrates in small geographic areas of cities, often referred to as hot spots. In order to be effective in reducing crime, deploying law enforcement and other crime prevention strategies into those hot spots has been found to effectively reduce overall crime and disorder incidents. Statistical analyses have shown that hot spot locations remain durable over time without prolonged and well-guided interventions which provide the appropriate level of program fidelity and dosage.

Efficiency

Koper Curve

Deploying effective resources 24/7 to hot spots of crime and disorder may be the most effective way to prevent future issues, but it is resource and budget intensive. In what is now known as the Koper Curve theory, deploying resources to methodically but unpredictably have a visible presence in hot spots for only 15 minutes over a 2-hour time block shows a sustained reduction in crime and disorder issues while mitigating the costs associated.

London Underground Hot Spot patrols

The above theories were applied to the London (UK) Underground using a hot spots methodology and the Koper Curve. That study found a 21% reduction in crime in the Underground stations which received the patrols over the stations that did not.

Crime prevention and non-police law enforcement resources

A study in the UK found that using Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), a resource similar to peace officers, in hot spots had a marked effect on crime reduction (39% reduction) and fewer emergency calls-for-service compared to locations that did not have PCSO presence. Another study found that PCSO hot spot patrols contributed to a £ 5 to £23 savings in the overall justice system for every £1 spent in resourcing the PCSO program.

Local Replication of Studies

2019 TSI results

In 2019, Community Standards and Neighbourhoods partnered with the EPS to pilot the Transit Safety Initiative, a hot spot program using EPS and TPO resources in partnership, using many of the above theories in a quasi-scientific test of this theory of change model. With only 6 hours a day, 4 days a week, that hot spot deployment produced a 27% reduction in violent crime compared to the locations that did not get peace officer and police officer presence treatment.

The TSI was a successful proof of concept model which reduced both crime and disorder at the targeted intervention sites. The TCAT program, launching in mid-May 2022, is based on this work and will use a similar model. An optimal staffing model would see the TCAT program scaled up to reach further than current staffing levels will allow.

Uniforms and Visibility

High Visibility Uniform



Regular Operational Uniform



- TPOs offer a high visibility uniformed presence with enforcement authorities, unlike security guards. These high-visibility uniforms will be the standard deployment uniforms used by the TCAT (foot patrol) peace officers.
 - Peace officers are action-oriented and have the authority to enforce municipal bylaws, provincial statutes, and assist EPS in criminal matters.
 - TPOs provide a visible presence using the deterrence theory.
 - Peace Officers are considered capable guardians of public spaces.
 - Constant community engagement builds relationships and public trust.
 - TPO visibility will include high visibility PPE and engagement presence at known problematic hot spot locations.
 - A high visibility law enforcement uniform has been linked to public trust and increased legitimacy in enforcement resources.