ABSTRACT

OLYMPIA POLICING PROJECT

Scanning

Issues relating to morale, communication and leadership caused the Department to reassess its operations in 1995. It soon became apparent that not only was the Department experiencing internal turmoil, it was out of touch with the needs and expectations of the community and had lost the trust of elected officials, City management and other City departments.

Analysis

Lack of shared vision, poor communications and inconsistent expectations were central to the internal issues. Community issues stemmed from a long-standing practice of guarded privacy and a history of basing police services on perceptions rather than data. Success was measured by the number of calls taken/arrests made, not the number of problems solved.

Response

Internal problems were only tips of the iceberg. The larger problem was rooted in the basic approach to policing employed by the Department. The solution required a community-wide effort. Education, input from citizens and experts, survey data and employee participation were utilized. The City's Planning Commission was used to involve the public and institutionalize the project.

Assessment

Public confidence in the Department is high. Employee morale is steadily improving. Employees feel empowered to initiate problem-solving in the Department and community. Elected officials, City management and personnel have new trust in the Department.

OLYMPIA POLICING PROJECT

A.   Scanning:

1. What was the nature of the problem ?

Uncharacteristic of most police reform, the initial motivation for change in Olympia was not a community crisis. The City of Olympia has made a commitment to building a quality of life for its residents that is satisfying, enriching and self-sustaining. Although traditional police services were being delivered with general competence, there was a strong feeling in the community that more could be done to make Olympia safer. Initial attempts at community-based and problem-oriented policing had largely failed. There was no community-wide foundation for launching a successful implementation of a POP approach, even though there seemed to be a sincere intereSfin developing a true police-community partnership for solving public safety problems.

2.   How was the problem identified?

Initially, the problem was identified as a result of internal organizational issues in the Department.

3.   Who identified the problem?

Employees shared concerns about morale, training, leadership and a number of other organizational issues with Dr. Michael Pendleton, a consultant from the University of Washington. Dr. Pendleton issued a critical report late in 1995 that provided a qualitative assessment of the Department's condition. The qualitative assessment was later verified by a quantitative assessment done by a management consultant, Charles Knokes. The two assessment reports began a discussion among the Department, the City Manager's office and Olympia's elected officials regarding the health of the Department, which, in turn,

precipitated an in-depth examination of how policing should be done in the City.

4. How was the problem selected?

It might be more accurate to say that the problem selected the Department. The
Department came under intense scrutiny as a result of the Pendleton and Knokes reports.
The perception of elected officials, the press and the public was that the Department was
dysfunctional - perhaps nearly to the point of experiencing organizational "paralysis." The
problem demanded immediate and highly creative attention.

5. What was the initial level of diagnosis/unit of analysis?

The initial analysis identified that the primary problem was truly internal and that it was
acute. It also identified that a serious gap in communication, and trust existed between the
Department and virtually all other segments of the City's governance and operation. The
one positive factor that was identified was that the internal crisis had not, as yet,
noticeably impacted the Department's service to the general public. However, it was
abundantly clear that failure to promptly address the problem would soon threaten to
affect service delivery.

B.   Analysis:

I. What methods, data and information sources were used to analyze the problem ?

The original assessment reports by Pendleton and Knokes provided the initial sources of
information. Fueled with that information, an Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council was
formed, both to provide the Department with information on the expectations of elected
officials and to monitor progress on solution of the problem. Concurrently, a committee
consisting of a cross-section of Department employees (the "Advisory Team") was
convened to provide a conduit for information from commissioned and non-commissioned

staff to Department management and the Ad Hoc Committee, and to assure that the internal issues identified in the Pendleton assessment were being addressed. The Department, with consultation from Dr. Pendleton, restructured its upper management team with the intent of bringing a new sense of perspective to the problem analysis.

2. What is the history of the problem ?

The Department has operated on a traditional model for many years. The structure of the organization is hierarchic in the military model. The organization is call-driven. The underlying assumptions are that the community wants a police officer to respond to requests for assistance as quickly as possible, and that taking bad guys to jail is the desired end product and the ultimate gauge of good police work. In the past, the Department made efforts to implement community-oriented policing, but has ultimately abandoned the effort. The structural design and operational assumptions have been based solely on perception, not on data. The Department has not traditionally sought, nor has the community offered, regular citizen input into its priorities or practices.

3.   Who was involved in the problem, and what were their motivations, gains and
*   losses?*

As noted, the problem was initially identified as an internal organizational problem, affecting only Department employees. It was viewed by most employees as a failure of management to provide strong leadership, consistent supervision and enlightened vision to the Department. The rank and file called for major changes at the managerial and supervisory levels. As analysis progressed, however, it rapidly became apparent that the central problem was not that easily focused. While the majority of the organizational complaints had merit and needed to be resolved, another problem surfaced that broadened the scope of inquiry substantially. That problem: the Department's philosophy and style of policing were not always consistent with the concerns, needs and expectations of the community. Policing expectations and services had traditionally been developed from the

Department 's _perspective_ of what the community wanted and needed, not from the _community'sperspective._ In fact, the Department's ability to obtain regular input and feedback from the community, or to approach problems from a base of knowledge rather than intuition, was found to be extremely limited. In turn, elected officials and members of the community realized that they had never tried to take a serious collaborative role with the police, and that they really didn't understand policing very well. So, the underlying problem was not just one involving Department management. It involved all Department employees, elected officials, City management, City staff and the members of the community as a whole.

4. What harms resulted from the problem ?

The results of police-community estrangement are often difficult to identify in quantifiable terms. Being "out of touch" usually means that you don't realize when you've got a problem, and Olympia was no exception to that rule. The harms that resulted from our problem were subjective, but very real and far-reaching. Elected officials had no trust in officers of the Department and had no concept of what policing entails. Other City departments regarded the police as competitors instead of colleagues. Community resources and citizens felt that police were aloof and uncaring. Officers had no trust in City or Department management or in elected officials. Many officers felt that they were more "hired guns" than a valued part of the community. Those conditions made the City ripe for a major crisis. Fortunately, when that crisis happened, it happened inside the organization instead of in the community. We were lucky.

5. How was the problem being addressed prior to the project?

It wasn't being addressed. It wasn't recognized as a problem.

6.   What did analysis reveal about the causes and underlying conditions related to the problem?

Dr. Pendleton's report made 52 recommendations for organizational improvement. As the project developed, the following observations about causes and underlying conditions also were made:

- Police-community estrangement had developed to a point where the police assumed that everyone in the community was a potential "bad guy," and the community knew virtually nothing about the police. This created a feeling of mutual distrust.

- Police services and priorities were call-driven, not data-driven. Planning and visioning were short-range, at best. No mechanisms existed for becoming data-driven. Police activities were routinely reactive, and only rarely proactive.

- Services and priorities were evaluated on input, not output. Success was based on the number of quick responses to calls received/arrests made/records processed/cases handled/programs presented, not on the number of problems solved with quality.

- The organizational structure, scheduling and resource deployment of the Department were all designed to optimize *input*. The elements needed for quality *output* - time, data and manpower - were not consistently available for problem-solving or for building relationships in the community.

- Attempts at adopting COP or POP approaches to policing had mixed results and eventually went by the wayside. This was due largely to the fact that the attempts involved *applying* programs to the community, rather than integrating problem-solving police-community partnerships into the Department's way of doing policing.

- Training and operational guidelines were not adequate to support a Department

that was data-driven and that focused on problem-solving and partnership building.

7. What did analysis reveal about the nature and extent of the problem?

The internal problems in the organization were critical. Morale and confidence were low. Trust in management was very low. Estrangement from the community was high. Managers and supervisors felt under siege. City Council and the City Manager had little trust that Department management was able to address even the internal issues effectively. Some segments of the community felt that the Department was dysfunctional. The problem was serious.

8. What si (national information was needed to better understand the problem?

It was necessary to realize that a community crisis or a monumental event were not necessary to justify or motivate self-examination and change at the broadest level.

9.   Was there an open discussion with the community about the problem?

Initially, because the problem was viewed as being internal, community discussion was minimal. As the analysis revealed the broad nature of the underlying problem, the need for community dialogue was realized, and an extraordinary amount of citizen involvement occurred.

C.   Response:

/. What possible response alternatives were considered to deal with the problem?

The first thought with problems that appear to be internal tends to be "throw the bums out." That was not the alternative selected in this case, although there was considerable pressure to do.so. Another option considered was to hire outside experts to come in and

"fix" the Department. That, too was rejected, because external fixes often are short-term - simply because they axe external.

2. What responses were used to address the problem?

The approach that was selected was to undertake a process in which the Department, elected officials, City management and staff and the community would work together to develop a truly collaborative model of policing.

3.   How was the selected response developed from (he analysis?

The analysis showed that the underlying problem was a lack of understanding, communication and cooperation between the Department and other segments of the community. The selected response was the only approachjspnsidered that truly attacked the problem head-on.

4.   What evaluation criteria were most important to the Department/City before implementation of the response alternatives?

The selected response had to include community education; extensive involvement of the community in priority development and testing of ideas; reform within the Department that was a product of all employee groups; and development of plans for implementing a style of policing that was data-driven, focused on problem-solving and partnership building and cost-effective.

5.   What was intended to be accomplished with the response plan?

The response was intended to do the following things:

• Address each of the 52 recommendations in Dr. Pendleton's report;

- Produce an educational event that would provide the community with a foundation of knowledge about contemporary policing issues and problems;

- Assess the community's policing concerns, needs and expectations - with particular sensitivity to the community's desire to share responsibility for public safety and problem-solving with the Department - and institutionalize those concepts.

- Develop a workable strategy for converting the Department's organization into one that can consistently meet community expectations.

6. What resources were available to help solve the problem?

The project has involved Department personnel, members of the City Council, members of the City Planning Commission, City management staff, personnel from other City departments, Dr. Pendleton, Mr. Knokes, other consultants and many, many citizens. The City Council set aside more than $160,000 in the first year of the project to support the effort. The City was also fortunate to have the support of a number of key contributors who participated in building the educational foundation for the project. Those persons were: Dr. Herman Goldstein (University of Wisconsin), Dr. Hubert Locke (University of Washington), Chief Ron Burns (Tempe, AZ), Chief Pamela Roskowski (Corvallis, OR), City Manager Michael Gleason and Officer Richard Grimes (both retired from Eugene, OR), and Dr. Eileen Luna (University of Arizona).

7.   *What was done before the response plan was implemented?*

Considerable research was done prior to implementing the response. The Department and City wanted to see if other cities of comparable size and character had undertaken a similar exercise. The cities of Eugene, OR and Tempe, AZ both had gone through

processes that provided helpful insights to Olympia. However, it became apparent early in the project that much of the effort was charting new ground.

8. What difficulties were encountered during response implementation?

Initially, Department personnel were skeptical that management was either serious about moving the Department ahead or capable of providing the leadership necessary to solve the problem. They were also concerned that people outside the Department, who did not understand the business, would try to "micro-manage" the change process. Department management shared the latter concern, and was skeptical that City management and elected officials were prepared to support the process. Department management and supervision had also been directly targeted with responsibility for the internal problems, and there was a period of great discomfort in the early stages as healing took place. The entire Department was aware that change was necessary, **but,** at the same time, was frightened of that change. At times, it did seem to most people in the Department as though the project was simply too big to get our hands around. In fact, the first approach that was taken to addressing the 52 internal change recommendations made by Dr. Pendleton didn't work. That approach called for a separate committee to deal with each of the 52 recommendations. In five months, that had stretched the Department's resources to the breaking point, and the whole internal change project had to be redesigned.

Elected officials and City management were initially skeptical of the Department's ability to be creative and to address its internal problems with objectivity. Lack of trust, particularly in Department management, was a big issue for the Council early in the stages. The press got heavily involved and provided additional **fuel** to a number of the divisive issues between the Council/City Manager and the Department.

9. Who was involved in the response to the problem?

The Department upper management team started the project by reorganizing itself and developing a new way of working together. The team acknowledged responsibility for the internal problems, and made a commitment to the Department to resolve them. The management team also made a commitment to involve all levels of Department personnel in addressing issues. Dr. Pendleton provided intensive consultation and team-building assistance to the team. For the first five months of the project, the upper managers (Commanders and division managers) and mid-managers (Lieutenants) were assigned to oversee employee committees that were charged with addressing the 52 internal change recommendations made by Dr. Pendleton. The Advisory Team (an employee oversight committee comprised of representatives from non-commissioned employees, commissioned officers, first-line supervisors and mid-managers) and the Ad Hoc Committee (a City Council monitoring/advisory committee comprised of three senior Council members) were formed during the same period. The Advisory Committee met weekly to review progress and provide input to the working, committees and Ad Hoc Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee met monthly to review progress, provide input to Department management and develop Council expectations for the project. The Ad Hoc committee was instrumental in developing the City Council's Philosophy of Police Service Delivery, which served as one of the bellwether documents for the project.

In June of 1996, the proliferation of working committees had taken their toll on Department resources, and a change in direction had to be made. The Chief and upper managers developed a new vision statement, dubbed "OPD 2000 and Beyond," which broadened the project from one that focused on the recommendations developed by Dr. Pendleton into one that focused on a complete examination of the way the Department should look and function in the future. The OPD 2000 project called for an aggressive, employee-driven strategy to build a blueprint for the Department's future. Two committees - the Concept Development Committee (CDC) and the Organizational Structure/Teamwork Committee (OST) were created to do the work, with on-going assistance from the Advisory Team and the Ad Hoc Committee. At the same time, analysis led the City and the Department to realize that the blueprint for the future needed

to be crafted with a high level of community involvement and then institutionalized. It was noted that the City organization that was most adept at soliciting community input and then institutionalizing that input was the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is responsible for developing and maintaining the City Comprehensive Plan - a document that traditionally is used to institutionalize land use policies. The Comprehensive tMan development process seemed to be the ideal venue to meet the needs of our project, so the City Council, on recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee, charged the Planning Commission - working collaboratively with the Department - to use its thorough, year-long community involvement process to develop a police element to the Comprehensive Plan.

There was an immediate recognition that virtually everyone outside the Department (and many people within it) were not well educated on contemporary policing issues. From that, the idea for "The Olympia Forum on the Future of Policing" was fashioned. The Forum was designed to be an opportunity for the community and the region to listen to an informative dialogue on policing among a panel of presenters who could bring a national/international level of expertise to the table.

The CDC and OST committees worked solidly for six months, with facilitation and consultation from Lindsay Andreotti, a human resources consultant from Woodinville, WA. The CDC committee delved into the way that the Department did business, and produced a blueprint for change that would improve policies and procedures, integrate problem-solving into organizational practice, enhance communications, bolster accountability and build morale. The OST committee built organizational structure and scheduling designs that would support a data-driven, problem-solving policing style. The OST committee also developed strategies relating to career development and training, performance evaluation and equipment/facility needs. Each committee produced a final document that detailed its recommendations and demonstrated how the product addressed the OPD 2000 vision, the City Council's Philosophy of Police Service Delivery, and Dr. Pendleton's 52 organizational change recommendations. (Those documents are each

more than 100 pages in length, and so have not been submitted with this application.)
After the Forum was presented in February, 1997, the public involvement part of the
police element to the Comprehensive Plan began. Working with the Department, the
Planning Commission scheduled a series of events - an open house and three informational
panels - to gather the information needed to create policies on policing for the
Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the scheduled events, the video tape of the Forum
was presented a number of times on local access television for the community to view, and
it was provided to the Western Regional Institute for Community Oriented Policing for
use by other communities. The Planning Commission also engaged Elway and Associates,
a public research firm from Seattle, WA to conduct a telephone survey to determine the
community's opinions of police service and their broad interests in terms of service
expectations. Issue papers were prepared to give citizens attending the events an
overview of the topics on the table and food for thought during discussion of issues.
Representatives from social services, youth groups, volunteer groups, the media, police
"watch dog" groups, ethnic groups, gay and lesbian groups, the prosecutor's office,
courts, neighborhood associations, businesses and schools were among the many who
participated in the process. Dr. Eileen Luna, an expert on police accountability from the
University of Arizona, also made a special presentation that contributed immensely to the
discussion on that difficult topic. After the open house and informational panels, the
Planning Commission prepared a draft chapter for the Comprehensive Plan. This draft will
be presented to the public in a series of public hearings later in 1997. The final version of
the police chapter will be considered by the City Council in November and December and
added to the Comprehensive Plan before the end of the year.

The final piece to the project has been a special series of presentations to the City Council
("Policing 101" and "Policing 102"), designed to built their understanding and
appreciation of police work, and to provide an opportunity for line police officers to
engage in conversation directly with elected officials.

D.   Assessment:

1. What were the results? What degree of impact did the response plan have on the problem?

The project is still a work in progress, but, already, the impact has been profound. Perhaps the most rewarding result has been the building of new bridges and the tearing down of old walls. The new bridges are relationships that have been built between the Department and the community as a result of working together in this process. The Department has a new sense of purpose, and, more importantly, a sense of <u>belonging</u> to the community. The community has gained a new respect for the talent, sincerity and commitment present in the Department. The old walls are the walls of secrecy that have been a part of policing for many years. The Department has,learned to acknowledge that it cannot do its job alone, and that there is, in fact, real comfort and satisfaction in being open with the community and truly sharing responsibility for problem-solving. It has also learned that its customers are not just, or even primarily, those people who break the law. The community at large is pleased with the direction the Department is going.

The OPD 2000 committee blueprints have been moved to a special Implementation Team that has responsibility for bringing the plans into reality in a timely but realistic manner. A number of recommendations have already been implemented. Some, such as structural and scheduling changes, will take considerably longer to phase in. There is genuine pride in the accomplishment of the employee committees.

Annual Department training has been upgraded from 30 hours per officer and no set amount for non-commissioned staff to 80 hours for officers and 40 hours for civilians. It has become the norm for employees to have a hand in making key decisions and initiating change. We laugh about our informal slogan ... "process is our most important product," but our employees gain a pride in accomplishment now because they are a genuine part of

determining how the Department operates. Being <u>included</u> in the process is what makes that happen. Department morale has rebounded, and there is an aura of confidence in everyone's work that wasn't there two years ago.

2. What are the methods of evaluation and how long will the effectiveness of the problem-solving effort be measured?

There have been three methods of evaluation employed thus far in the project. The assessment by Charles Knokes was designed to be renewed periodically. The Elway telephone survey of the community is designed to be repeated periodically, and it was created with the idea of serving as a foundation for the Department's own on-going data collection effort. The final methods of evaluation are the Advisory Team and the Ad Hoc Committee, which have engaged in continuous monitoring and evaluation of the project since its inception. The Advisory Team will be continued atleast until the Implementation Team has completed its work. The Ad Hoc committee will turn over its role to the Council's General Government Committee (a standing committee) in October, 1997. The OPD 2000 blueprint and the draft of the Comprehensive Plan document both call for the establishment of a Police Advisory Board at the city commission level to provide citizen input to the Council and the Department on policing issues.

3.   Who is involved in the evaluation?

Professional consultants, Advisory Team, Ad Hoc Committee.

4.   Have there been problems in response plan implementation?

Relatively few after the initial abortive effort. The majority of the early fears have dissipated - replaced with a genuine enthusiasm for the process.

5.   *How are results being measured?*

Surveys and direct observation by oversight groups.

6.   *Will the response require continued monitoring or a continuing effort to maintain results?*

It is anticipated that this project will become a part of the Department and the community. It is in the nature of the project to recognize that future success will depend on continuous scanning, analysis, response and assessment. In that respect, the project will be in perpetual change and will need perpetual monitoring so as not to lose the work that was done in the past two years.