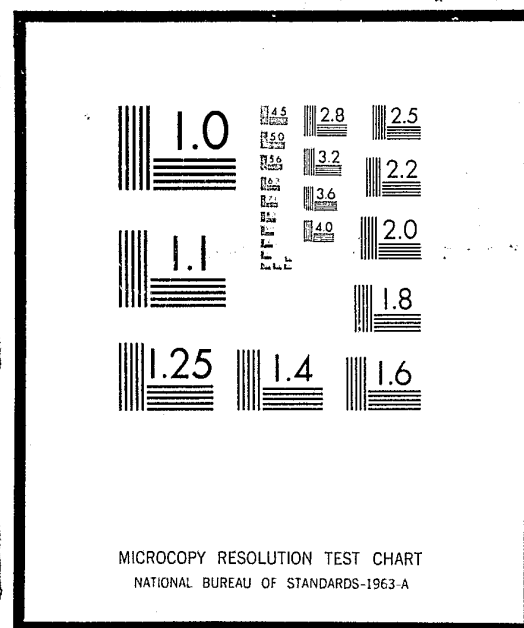


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R-77-102

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
Police Technical Assistance Report

Subject: Old Saybrook, Connecticut; Development of a
Police-Community Relations/Crime Prevention Program

Report Number: 76-192

For: Old Saybrook, Connecticut, Police Department
City Population: 10,000
Police Strength (Sworn): 19
City Area: 18 square miles

Contractor: Westinghouse Justice Institute
Consultant: Peter Freivalds
Contract Number: J-LEAA-003-76
Date: January 1977

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

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FOREWORD

This request for Technical Assistance was made by the Old Saybrook, Connecticut, Police Department. The requested assistance was concerned with developing an effective police-community relations and crime prevention program.

Requesting agency: Old Saybrook Police Department,
Chief of Police Edmund H. Mosca

State Planning Agency: Connecticut Justice Commission,
Ms. Mary R. Hennessey, Executive
Director; Mr. John F. Cronan,
Police Planner; Mr. Ron Peterson,
Regional Criminal Justice Planner

Approving Agency: LEAA Region I (Boston),
Mr. John M. Keeley, Police
Specialist

1. INTRODUCTION

Old Saybrook, Connecticut, is a residential community, a summer resort area, and serves as a center for year-round commercial, retail, and related services for part of the population of surrounding regions. As a result, the City accommodates a large transient population. This has obvious implications on criminal activity, including serious property crimes, drug traffic, and other offenses. The city contains a central business district, several shopping centers, and widespread residential neighborhoods (mainly single family dwellings, some of which are quite expensive). Although Old Saybrook is on the crossroads of several major State and Interstate highways, it has retained some characteristics of an old, established New England township.

The Chief of Police and his Department are looking for improved methods of operations and service delivery to the public. For example, the Department has acquired modern data collection and retrieval equipment; has availed itself of technical assistance from the personnel of the regional criminal justice planning agency; is attempting to upgrade its crime analysis to help improve effectiveness of the patrol and other operations; and has initiated several other special programs in the areas of traffic, youth services, and crime prevention.

In this regard, the Chief of Police requested technical assistance in the area of police-community relations and crime prevention, particularly with a view toward overcoming the public's relative passiveness in taking advantage of police-generated programs.

The Consultant's Departmental site visit was devoted to reviewing the agency's practices relative to the identified need area through personal interviews with the Chief, the second in command, the chief regional criminal justice planner, patrol sergeants, patrolmen, and officers in special assignments (crime prevention and youth work), as well as touring the commercial and residential areas of the city.

2. UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

The Police Chief perceives the problem to stem from the public's apathy or reluctance to make use of the Department's crime prevention programs. In more general terms, the Chief would like to "sell" law enforcement to the community and obtain a greater degree of community involvement and participation toward reducing criminal opportunity and, implicitly, some degree of criminal motivation.

However, it appears that the public and local officials are satisfied with the Police Department and demand neither increased nor improved levels of police activity or service. In particular, there was no indication of any friction between the police and citizens, and good police-community relations were observed by the Consultant. Although the Consultant did not sample the attitude of the citizens, neither interviews with the officers nor with a Chamber of Commerce official produced any potential area of policy-community discontent or friction. However, public apathy and lack of interest were recurring themes.

According to Department statistics, a 3-year average (1970-1972) of Part I Index Crimes for five cities in the region shows Old Saybrook with the second highest incidence per population. In 1975, the city shows the highest burglary rate, by a considerable margin, among seven cities in the region. At the same time relative to the size of the crime problem, Old Saybrook operates with a smaller police force than several of the other cities. While the Department's statistics show close to 50-percent greater average monthly workload in 1976 than in 1972, there has been no change in the level of manpower (see the Appendix regarding these data).

In summary, the following warrant further consideration:

- Less than optimum public cooperation and involvement with police programs.
- Some apprehension in the Department regarding budgetary support by local authorities in the area of police manpower.
- A higher crime rate, particularly burglary, in Old Saybrook than in several other, larger cities in the region.
- Need for optimum deployment of the limited manpower.
- Need for innovative approaches in planning, developing, and implementing special programs in the area of police-community relations and crime prevention, including youth work.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The problem areas outlined in Section 2 are closely connected. To establish some outer limits for the problem analysis that follows, it can be stated at the outset that a community in which there are no substantial gripes and complaints against the police would be envied by many police departments. On the other hand, when a Police Chief wants to achieve citizen involvement and response to police programs in a community that does perceive its crime problem as serious enough for vigorous reaction, he must be prepared to "walk an extra mile" to cultivate the public's cooperation. The Chief has added this effort, as indicated by the special programs attempted (traffic emphasis, crime prevention, youth work); however, in view of manpower limitations, concern should be given to the depth in which the programs can be developed. For example, the crime prevention and the youth officers are called upon to function in patrol, investigation, and other assignments, as well as in the special programs; and the Chief can devote only a fraction of his time in these areas. Therefore, regular, systematic procedures and sufficient followup are difficult to achieve. While there are distinct advantages in having special assignment officers participating in patrol or investigative work, when such participation comes in the relief category (i.e., filling in for unexpected absentees) or when such work is unpredictable as to time and duration, it can seriously undermine the special programs. When the public is slow to recognize the need for proactive police work, consistency and reinforcement of operating procedures and program goals are required to overcome apathy on the part of citizens. Again, with the given manpower, even including the supernumeraries, with the workload and the current deployment needs, it is difficult to generate sufficient depth to "institutionalize" programs in the crime prevention and youth work areas.

Without question, the Chief of Police and the officers in the special program assignments have proceeded with commendable initiative in starting the effort. Nevertheless, several questions warrant further exploration by the Department.

- How extensive a crime prevention effort does the Department wish to develop?
- What specific objectives are expected to be reached through the youth programs?
- What level of priority is assigned to the above two programs in overall Departmental operations?
- How well do all officers in the Department understand, accept, and promote the special programs?
- How extensively will the considerable crime analysis capability (data input and retrieval system) of the Department be used in practical application to enhance the crime prevention effort?
- If, as is commonly agreed, crime prevention is a shared responsibility between the police and the citizens, what are the respective duties in this venture of the police and the community?

4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the Consultant's site visit, the following findings and conclusions were reached:

- Old Saybrook has a competent and progressive Police Department.
- The assessment of Old Saybrook's police-community relations needs and capabilities must center around the special programs in the crime prevention and youth work areas. However, the needs with respect to these programs involve other Departmental resources. These include the potential contributions to the programs by all officers and maximum use of the crime analysis capability acquired through the data input and retrieval system. Of course, there is also the need for citizen involvement as recognized by the Chief. As noted in the Section 3, the programs have been started but have not been institutionalized. The lack of depth in these efforts should be the issue the Department should address. To achieve institutionalization of the programs requires:

- Definition of specific objectives.
- Optimum development and continuity of effort.
- Measurement and evaluation of results.
- Readjustment of procedures based on the evaluation.

It is not common for the public to actively seek out the police and require security checks or related assistance with target-hardening devices. However, such requests will occur more readily when securing one's home or place of business becomes the accepted thing to do in a neighborhood. Thus, concentration on specific areas with contiguous residential or commercial units and establishments may bring better results in a crime prevention program than a citywide effort. This suggests the need for a step-by-step process.

- Since Old Saybrook has already been divided into grid areas for data management and for potential improvement of police service delivery, this subdivision of space should be used to advantage.
- While the Department has done considerable initial work in promoting the crime prevention programs, there is no readily retrievable data regarding what residences and commercial establishments have been surveyed in what specific locations. Neither are there data regarding the extent of compliance and of followup control by the Department, nor of changes in the degree of victimization of secured as compared to nonprotected premises.

- The Department has made considerable effort to promote the crime prevention program through personal appearances before groups, through the mass media, and through other means of information dissemination. Yet, the effectiveness of these efforts has been less than expected.

- In view of previous experience with initial program development and promotion, the question now concerns alternative procedures for program implementation and "marketing." As with crime prevention programs, the special youth programs in the schools need tightening regarding specific objectives, priorities, and operating procedures. Data on police-school relations nationwide indicates considerable difficulty in police effort to penetrate administrative, professional, and related power structures of school systems to a point where meaningful contributions can be offered. The various obstacles in this important area demand that police program intervention procedures and purpose be particularly well planned and spelled out.

• It appears that the special programs are supported and promoted by the Chief and the special assignments officers, but are not fully a part of overall Department operations. To the extent this is true, optimum impact cannot be expected. Police-community relations programs must be an integral part of overall Department operations. Such integration is difficult for large departments, but can be achieved in small police agencies. Without adequate integration, the priority of community relations and crime prevention programs tends to decline; in time, the programs are regarded with ambivalence and lack of confidence regarding success even by once-enthusiastic officers.

• There is a need to define optimally what specific kind and degree of public cooperation and involvement the agency wants to achieve. A tangible definition can lead to concrete procedures for realizing the expected results. The definition must include a full description of the public's share of crime prevention and related responsibilities. Concise definitions of problems, programs, objectives, operating procedures, responsibilities of participants, and expected results make marketing programs easier and more effective.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, the Consultant proposes the following recommendations:

- To develop crime prevention programs for reduction of criminal opportunity, the Department should utilize to the maximum, its crime analysis capability and the planning and development assistance of the regional criminal justice planning agency.
- As an experimental alternative to previous prevention efforts, the Department may want to first concentrate on one or two particular grid areas, showing high incidence of burglary. Following the rationale that people are increasingly more concerned with problems--the closer they affect one's own situation, the Department should saturate the selected grids with relevant crime information, program description, and detailed guidelines for program implementation.
 - This effort should include preprogram information delivered to every residence and business establishment in the grid area indicating need for the program, objectives, the expected results, and the specific requirement of citizen participation to achieve the results.
 - The materials should include a short reply form to indicate a commitment to participate or reasons for non-participation.
 - The preprogram information should also indicate that there will be a followup call by a police officer to arrange for the security survey or to discuss the program (where no reply is received or where the reply is negative). Operation Identification can be included as part of this program.
 - All program promotion efforts should maximize face-to-face contacts between members of the Department and the citizens. It may be possible to use the Explorers to deliver the initial information door to door.
 - It is essential that all officers in the Department be fully informed regarding the program and be expected to participate in it. The crime prevention officer can train other full- and part-time officers in performing security surveys on an OJT basis.

- All officers should have crime prevention information materials readily available for distribution when contacts with citizens occur that allow some program promotion.
- The Chief, the second in command, and all supervisory personnel should encourage interest in the program by all officers. It is only when a program is accepted enthusiastically by the entire Department that the enthusiasm can be transformed into citizen acceptance and involvement.

- To achieve Department and communitywide acceptance and institutionalization of the crime prevention program, the Department must develop the kind of data that can show how well the program is working and that can be used to alter program practices as required. Specific information needed includes:

- The burglary rate over time in the grid area.
- The expressed objective of the program -- reduce burglary rate in secured areas by 1/3 to 1/2.
- The percentage of establishments secured.
- The difference in victimization between secured and non-secured premises.
- The degree of compliance and participation by citizens after initial contact, followup, and so forth.

- Much of the Department's previous community relations efforts has been in the form of appearances by police in group meetings devoted to other agendas and not specifically to police work and crime prevention. The results have been less than satisfactory. If and when the need arises, the police should call a citizens' meeting devoted entirely to crime prevention. This can often produce better results than when police business is squeezed into a meeting devoted to other primary issues. To the extent possible, it is preferable that several officers participate in the agenda of such meetings.

- The Department should also explore other avenues to promote citizen initiative and involvement with respect to any police program where such participation is required. Anyone with some experience in community organizations knows that high-level citizen initiative and involvement

are difficult to achieve even under the best of circumstances. Still, some techniques may succeed better than others.

- An effort should be made to have citizen associations or neighborhood groups form subcommittees or task forces on crime prevention. These subcommittees can have an effective liaison with the police and added impact on other members of their group or organization. The police can, and often must, initiate the citizen effort. However, once the program is underway, the program should depend significantly on citizen participation. The key is finding and selecting the right people who are interested in devoting some time to the program. Volunteers who are not competent can do more harm than good.
- Overall, the essential needs are to have police officers exercise some community organization skills and cultivate citizen involvement. The previous suggestion to concentrate on specific grids would enhance peer pressure among citizens and allow the police to test out alternative approaches in a small area. The objective should be testing and experimentation, followed by measurement of results and expansion of program coverage.
- The police-generated youth program in schools also needs specific prioritizing, planning, experimenting, and readjusting. First, however, the department must work out specific points:
 - Establish program priorities and objectives from the police point of view.
 - Assess needs, objectives, and program areas acceptable to the school system, students, and parents.
 - Combine the above.
 - Develop operating procedures for the officer in charge of youth programs.
 - Establish guidelines for the involvement of other officers in school programs. The matters that need clarification with respect to the school youth programs include the following:

- What grade levels will be serviced and at what consistency?--Consideration should be whether or not it is preferable to initially develop the full program envisioned in one school before proceeding to the others.
- Is the department fully committed to the youth program as one capable of preventing some amount of youth offenses, or is it satisfied with merely improving relationships between police and the youngsters?--The programs will probably be better accepted by the school system and the parents if its expressed goal is to keep the optimum number of youths out of trouble.
- What materials will be used at each level?

The youth officer should review the police-school program materials developed by Dr. Robert Portune, Changing Adolescent Attitudes Toward Police, 1971. The W.H. Anderson Co., Cincinnati, Ohio (should be available from LEAA, NCJRS).

- For all special programs, but particularly for the school effort, a procedure should be devised to seek citizens and agency input -- expression of needs and suggestions. A short survey can be developed for this purpose.
- With regard to manpower:
 - The request for additional manpower already documented and submitted by the Police Chief to the budgeting authorities should be pursued vigorously. While more officers do not necessarily assure the success of existing or upgraded programs, optimum involvement of officers in special programs requires both additional manhours and a certain flexibility in work schedules or assignments.
 - As noted previously, all officers should be involved in the special program--to some extent from time to time. This would also require some manhours away from regular assignments.

5.1 Summary

- Old Saybrook already has a well-run Police Department in which there are no major policy-community relations problems.
- The discussion of issues and recommendations should serve to suggest alternative courses of action. The thrust of the report suggests the possibility of somewhat greater depth in program development and implementation, which leads to better community acceptance.
- It is recognized that any additional effort in special program areas tends to tax the limited manpower and resources of the Department available for regular, day-to-day police work requirements.
- Citizen involvement in crime prevention programs may be closely tied to fear of crime (defined as an individual's perception of the probability of his being a victim of a criminal offense). A program which generates fear in order to stimulate involvement is self-defeating. However, a healthy concern, i.e., recognition of crime as a primary problem, is desirable.

APPENDIX

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OLD SAYBROOK DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES

Criminal Arrests

Comparison 1972 - 1976

	1972	1976	# Arrests Change	% Change
JAN	27	67	+40	+148%
FEB	31	27	-4	-13%
MAR	23	47	+24	+104%
APR	37	36	-1	-3%
MAY	60	52	-8	-13%
JUN	29	80	+51	+176%
JUL	43	42	-1	-2%
AUG	38	36	-2	-5%
SEP	17	48	+31	+182%
OCT	17			
NOV	15			
DEC	14			
TOTAL	351			

As of September, totals are as follows:

<u>End of Sept. 1972</u>	<u>End of Sept. 1976</u>	<u># Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
305	435	+130	+42.6%

OLD SAYBROOK DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICES

Total Activity - Criminal, Motor Vehicle, General Service

Comparison 1972 - 1976

	1972	1976	#incidents change	% change
JAN	556	940	+384	+69.0%
FEB	627	765	+138	+22.0%
MAR	607	966	+359	+59.0%
APR	603	923	+320	+53.0%
MAY	690	996	+306	+44.3%
JUN	779	1193	+414	+53.1%
JUL	1042	1437	+395	+37.9%
AUG	874	1272	+398	+45.5%
SEP	689	889	+200	+29.1%
OCT	689	913	+224	+32.5%
NOV	582			
DEC	748			
TOTAL	8486			

As shown by these figures, the average monthly workload is 46.9% greater in 1976 than it was in 1972. In spite of this, the Department is still operating at the 1972 manpower level.

BURGLARY 1975

MULTI TOWN COMPARISON

<u>Town</u>	<u>1975 Burglaries</u>	<u>#Per 1000 Population</u>
Waterford	112	6.2 burglaries per 1000 persons
Groton	397	10.7 burglaries per 1000 persons
Stonington	191	11.5 burglaries per 1000 persons
Clinton	129	12.1 burglaries per 1000 persons
Norwich	673	15.1 burglaries per 1000 persons
New London	684	22.6 burglaries per 1000 persons
Old Saybrook	277	30.4 burglaries per 1000 persons

END

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