

**COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING AND THE IMPACT ON THE  
CHP'S SERVICE DELIVERY**

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DONALD L. COX  
CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL, SANTA ROSA

COMMAND COLLEGE/EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE CLASS XXV  
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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

## **COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING AND THE IMPACT ON THE CHP'S SERVICE DELIVERY.**

As the men and women of the California Highway Patrol enter into the next millennium, many are asking, "Can the Highway Patrol, as we know it, maintain its leadership role in traffic management through the traditional model of traffic law enforcement?" The importance of traffic enforcement will not diminish in the next century. Criminals will still travel to and from the scenes of their crimes and travel in motor vehicles, to transport illegal drugs, unlicensed firearms, and stolen goods. Proactive traffic enforcement will remain an important tool for criminal interdiction and crime suppression, as well as for community policing<sup>1</sup>. As the CHP moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> century the need to embrace Community Oriented Policing, (COP), to address traffic issues in the County area has never been more pressing.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is like many other law enforcement agencies that are in the process of embracing, COP. The rising number of law enforcement agencies making this change coupled with the public expectation that they be involved in solving contemporary community problems is creating an environment where the public expects to have a voice in how law enforcement will address community issues.

This has been especially noticeable for the CHP as there has been a significant increase in the number of town hall meetings, in the county area, which have been held to address community traffic issues. The town hall meetings have become essential for the public to voice its concern and for the Department to emphasize its interest in

preventing accidents and improving traffic conditions. The meetings continue to help build a positive rapport between citizens and the CHP and are a “*critical tenet of community policing*”.<sup>2</sup> To address this growing area of community concern, the CHP adopted the COP strategy to deal with traffic issues in the county area. The decision to change to COP has been necessitated by several factors.

The population in California has increased from 32.9 million, a surge of 574,000 since the last census.<sup>3</sup> There is no indication future growth in California will slow in the next ten years. This growth, largely the result of migration and immigration, will have a significant impact on the CHP’s ability to maintain service levels while embracing COP in the county area. The rapid growth has resulted in a significant change in population demographics as well as added a significant number of licensed drivers and registered vehicles.

Not only are communities becoming densely populated, ethnically diverse, older and more politically active, but residents are also placing an increased emphasis on quality of life issues.<sup>4</sup> Using traditional enforcement strategies, not involving COP, to combat traffic problems makes it extremely difficult for the CHP to reach out to many of the diverse communities and have an impact on quality of life issues.

The ability to impact community issues is important if the CHP is to maintain its leadership role in traffic management. More and more communities are demanding personalized traffic law enforcement service. While much of the pressure for more

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<sup>1</sup> Source: **THE POLICE CHIEF**, July 1997, Top 10 Traffic trends, page 16.

<sup>2</sup> Source: FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. **Focus on Community Policing**. Mark Cutliffe, August 1994. Page 12

<sup>3</sup> Source: C.K. McClatchy News Service, Sacramento Bee, **Placer one of the booming Counties**, by Bill Lindelof page B-1

traffic law enforcement service comes directly from individuals or community groups, more communities are turning to elected officials to initiate change. The ability of the community to organize, raise money and lobby for their concerns has given them social standing and the ability to gain both formal and informal access to those who hold power.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, it is not uncommon for political leaders, both local and State representatives, to make direct contact with the CHP Commander having jurisdiction to address community traffic concerns.

Additionally, as the California Highway Patrol looks to the future, the issue of transitioning from a traditional traffic enforcement model to a COP traffic enforcement model is being further impacted by the Sheriff's Department. Through proposed legislation, County Sheriffs' are advocating a change to the Vehicle Code which would authorize sheriff deputies authority to enforce traffic laws in the county area other than incidental to their primary responsibility as a general law enforcement agency.<sup>6</sup> Under current law, the Sheriff of the county may not engage in traffic law enforcement as a primary responsibility with the exception of DUI enforcement.<sup>7</sup> This does not preclude the sheriffs from enforcing traffic laws; however, no funding source has been established to staff deputies to perform this function. Currently, funding from the Motor Vehicle Account, within the State's budget, to conduct other than traffic related enforcement is not permitted. The proposed legislation would establish the funding source to staff deputies to perform traffic responsibilities. To ensure this proposed

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<sup>4</sup> Trojanowicz, Robert, and Bucqueroux, Bonnie, **Community Policing**, Anderson publishing, 1990, p 333

<sup>5</sup> Ibid Chapter 3, The Changing Meaning of Community

<sup>6</sup> Senate Bill 470, Sheriff Charlie Plummer of Alameda County. This bill would authorize sheriffs to enforce provisions of the Vehicle Code.

<sup>7</sup> Office of Special Projects Report on **County Traffic Enforcement Services**, Page 1, February 1997.

legislation does not occur, the CHP has been attempting to solidify their traffic responsibilities in the county area.

These factors have formed the impetus for the CHP to take the necessary measures needed to transition to a COP strategy of enforcement. This change to a COP model of enforcement allows the CHP to keep stride with other law enforcement agencies' attempts to forge partnerships with the community. The new strategy is based on a community involved traffic management partnership that will evolve from an enforcement/deterrent model to a problem solving/prevention model. This change will be the first step in changing the complexion of neighborhoods and restoring community spirit by working with communities to resolve traffic problems.

Numerous articles have been written in an attempt to document the successes and problems associated with Community Oriented Policing. Most of the literature written is very supportive of a COPs approach to enforcement; however, it is not the sole answer to solving problems. Because of the successes of this model of policing, the CHP, as the primary traffic authority in the county area, believes this strategy will be the most effective way to address the growing area of traffic responsibility in the county in the next century.

However, this strategy does not come without impact to the CHP's service delivery. Specifically, the Department can anticipate a significant impact on deployment strategies, hiring practices, training, patrol strategies, and any future consolidation of State Agencies. As California continues to change there will be other factors which will also have an impact on the CHP's ability to provide a sustained level of service, but none will have more of an impact than COP.

In an effort to determine the impact COP will have on the service delivery consideration must be directed at the following topics:

**BUDGET:**

Currently, the CHP is responsible for both traffic enforcement on freeways and county roads. In addition, in 1995, all state buildings and properties came under the jurisdiction of the Department adding to its responsibility. Traffic management and safety will continue to be the Department's primary mission as we approach the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How the Department addresses the issue of COP will depend largely on the commitment the Department is willing to give to the county area and still meet its responsibility to provide freeway enforcement. The Department is in somewhat of a dilemma as it has built a successful reputation around traffic law enforcement on the freeways. This is not the case for traffic enforcement on the county roads. In fact, the public in most cases is not even aware the CHP has primary traffic enforcement responsibilities in this area, and many believed this responsibility belongs to the County Sheriffs. As the demand for more traffic services increases in the county area, the greater impact any redirection or reduction of funding will have on the CHP's service delivery.

If a significant portion of the Department's major funding source were to be siphoned off to fund other State, County or City programs, the CHP would be required to immediately downsize commensurate with the size of the funding loss. The first area of responsibility that would be impacted would be the level of service to the county area. During the funding difficulties the mid-1980's, the CHP immediately developed an enforcement strategy (*Major Highway Corridor*) that focused primary traffic

enforcement on freeway beats. Any reduction in funding would have more of an impact today to the CHP because of the added State Police responsibility and the new commitment to COP. Since the State Police responsibilities are not funded through the MVA, the CHP's presence would only be impacted if that funding source were reduced. In all likelihood that would not be the case as the funding comes from other State Agencies. If funding cuts were severe enough to result in a shift in deployment to the freeway, the COP program would not survive as we know it today. Downsizing would result in a significant decrease in staffing which in turn would result in an increase in the number of traffic collisions as well as fatalities in the county area.

Currently, more people are killed in traffic collisions each year in California than are murdered. Diminishing the importance of traffic enforcement to the county puts the citizens at extreme risk. In addition, if the CHP were to reduce its personnel and program resources, responses to county emergencies would be negatively affected, as would the ability to provide routine assistance to both citizens as well as other law enforcement agencies. CHP officers currently provide a vital service to allied agencies by assisting local law enforcement in time of need. Whether it is for traffic control, search and rescue, officer backups, hazardous material scene management, assistance with the DUI driver, or any number of services, the CHP provides thousands of hours of assists annually. In 1994, 1995, and 1996, the CHP provided 179,103 assists to Police Departments and 202,329 assists to Sheriffs Department throughout the state. These impacts could be jeopardized should the CHP be forced to reduce its operation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Source: CHP Office of Research Planning, County Traffic Enforcement Services. February 1997.

**Training:**

CHP is facing the challenges of dealing with the changes that a switch to COP demands. COP requires rethinking the ways in which the CHP relates to individuals and groups in the community. The shift to COP has major implications for training. The first issue that must be addressed is the training of patrol officers to work traffic in the county area and of nonsworn employees to address calls for service or traffic complaints. Training is essential as a majority of the officers and nonsworn personnel only have experience dealing with freeway issues. Addressing traffic issues on county roads requires a different enforcement approach as well as knowledge regarding applicable laws, i.e., school zones, use of radar and enforcement on two-lane roadways. This training would have to start at the academy and be continually reinforced in the Field Training Orientation program.

**Patrol Responsibility:**

In addition to providing training, the patrol function must include a traffic analysis overview of the community. This analysis is necessary if the CHP wants to change the complexion of neighborhoods and restore quality of life, reduce fear of crime and resolve traffic problems. The analysis of key neighborhood elements and the implementation of identified changes is critical to having an effective COP traffic enforcement program. The analysis should examine the neighborhood's existing traffic controls and any existing enforcement strategies, as well as its social makeup. These components are critical in the analysis process. As part of the analysis it is essential that the importance of community input not be underestimated. Through town hall meetings, and public forums, residents can offer valuable information concerning the

neighborhood, and in turn, the CHP can educate citizens about traffic enforcement efforts. The goal is to control the flow of traffic effectively, increase the overall effectiveness of enforcement efforts, while providing the community the ability to be involved in solving traffic issues.

Additionally, neighborhood patrol teams (NPT) must replace the traditional speed enforcement units (SEU)<sup>9</sup>. NPT are teams of officers working together in a community with an emphasis on problem solving rather than on enforcement. Whereas, SEU teams emphasize enforcement and do very little problem solving. SEU members are selected because of their tendencies to be high enforcement producers (wrote a lot of citations) and received very few citizen complaints. This mentality of selection based on high enforcement is changing to members being selected for NPT based on the officers' ability to get directly involved with community groups in decision making and problem solving. The problem solving aspect of NPT is essential to the delivery of COP. While the importance of ticket writing is not meant to be minimized, the importance of being able to solve community problems is just as important. Allowing officers the flexibility to problem solve insures that community traffic problems do not just become the CHP's problem, but one that must be shared with the community.

The use of teams relieves officers of regular field responsibilities (most significantly radio call responsibility) and allows them to be assigned exclusively to community problem solving activities. Teams promote an attitude of ownership, commitment and responsibility for officers. Traffic enforcement by individual officer

through ticket writing only is being replaced by promoting an atmosphere of trust through direct interaction with the community. While the use of teams to address community issues seems like the right strategy to pursue, the CHP labor union representative would be opposed to this kind of deployment as it could negatively impact scheduling flexibility.

In the private sector, the value of teams has been demonstrated repeatedly. Many successful organizations are restructuring around them. So likely is it that this trend will continue that leading authorities such as Peter Drucker view teams as the “basic form of work organization” in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Efforts will also have to be made to address issues of parking enforcement and vehicle abatement. Both of these issues pose a significant challenge, as both could have an impact on patrol. Currently, both of these issues are functions of the patrol, and enforcement is done reactively rather than proactively. Both of these issues are directly related to improving quality of life concerns within the community, and consequently, demand a lot of attention from the community. Because of the perceived increased demand for service in the future, the CHP will also have to address this issue as part of its COP strategy.

**Deployment of Personnel:**

This is going to be a significant issue for the CHP to address in the future as COP becomes more intergrated into the CHP’s operation. Since community make-up is an essential part of the analysis that must be conducted in each neighborhood, the need

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<sup>9</sup> Source: NPTs and the Delivery of Community Policing Services, Richard DeParis, San Diego Police Dept.

for officers to represent the neighborhood they patrol is critical in establishing and building trust. While the ethnic make-up will be important, the ability of the officers at a minimum to communicate fluently with the community they work is a must. With the defeat of proposition 209, the Affirmative Action Initiative, efforts to meet this demand will increasingly become more difficult. Steps will have to be taken by the CHP to address recruitment, hiring and retention issues that are facing not only the CHP but other law enforcement agencies.

This will not be an easy issue for the CHP to overcome since CHP officers have the ability to transfer throughout the State based on individual officer seniority. This means that officers can select their preference of assignment without regard to community ethnicity or bilingual speaking ability. The ability to transfer continually poses a hiring and recruitment dilemma for the Department.

In examining the issue of deployment the CHP must also look at shift hours. Currently most office shift times have been in place for more than twenty-five years and were designed to address the freeway commute traffic. The hours were not developed with consideration of county traffic enforcement. As an example the morning shift is getting off work at the same time most schools are dismissing children. During this change of shift no patrol units are addressing any traffic issues in the local school areas.

The shift to COP will further impact the CHP's service delivery as it will require the redirection of personnel from freeway responsibility to county roads.

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<sup>10</sup> Source: **NPTs and the delivery of Community Policing services** By Lt. Richard J. De Paris, D.P.A., Training Director, San Diego Regional Public Training Institute, San Diego Police Department.

Although the Patrol has had traffic responsibility in the county area since 1959, it has not always provided routine patrol to the county. In the mid-1980's, the CHP adopted the major highway concept, which was the first significant change to the CHP's enforcement strategy. Under this concept the CHP's primary enforcement/service strategy was directed at the freeways and service to county roads was provided on demand or a limited patrol basis.<sup>11</sup> During this period, the patrol made a conscious decision to direct enforcement efforts towards freeways as most, if not all, of the county area was sparsely populated and the few residents residing in these areas did not live in a community setting. Consequently, the need to establish a community oriented policing model or at minimum a change in enforcement philosophy never materialized.

As the CHP attempts to embrace COP and maintain a significant presence on the freeways the task of meeting both needs will become increasingly more difficult with out added resources.

**Mileage Death Rate:**

For the last eight years the mileage death rate (MDR) has been declining to the current level of 1.44 deaths per hundred million miles driven. The CHP Commissioner is of the opinion that the current rate still has considerable room to decrease. While current enforcement efforts were only mildly contributing to the decrease, advances in vehicle safety, stiffer laws and broader use of radar for freeway enforcement would allow the rate to continue to decline. With the focus of enforcement changing to include more county road enforcement through COPs, the Department is certain that an

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<sup>11</sup> California Highway Patrol, Office of Special Projects, Major Highway Concept Program, 1981.

increased presence in the county would continue to reduce the MDR. CHP presence in the county, coupled with the use of radar on the freeways, will greatly improve the service delivery to the citizens of California. While COP may not initially have a positive impact on the MDR, it is important that we not pass judgment too quickly. While there are some reservations as to whether the MDR would continue to decline if the CHP does not obtain support for Statewide use of the radar on all freeways, overall, the shift in enforcement strategy will be effective and contribute to a reduction in the MDR.

#### **TECHNOLOGY:**

As the CHP looks at ways to meet the increased requests for traffic enforcement services while continuing to meet the demand for services, emerging technology appears to hold part of the answer. Emerging technology can help reduce the demand for service as well as free up patrol units, prioritizing response by officers, thus increasing officer availability for calls for service, or permitting more time for interaction with the community. While the CHP is limited by funding, many technological advances are available which could assist in improving/meeting the service delivery.

As resources dwindle attention will be given to photo radar to catch speeders as well as to automated camera enforcement to detect traffic light and stop sign violations. Improvements to the computer aided dispatch centers, cellular telephones, automated citation devices, digital cameras, collision avoidance devices, global positioning systems and satellite technology which will send out automatic distress signals when an airbag deploys could assist in better deployment of personnel. Additionally smart

highway technology and smart vehicles will improve the CHP's ability to provide a sustained level of service. Further advances by Microsoft early in the next century will be speech-enabled personal computers.<sup>12</sup>

Some of this technology has already been installed in automobiles allowing drivers limited voice control over phones and car electronics. While all of this technology will go a long way in improving the service delivery to the public, we can not lose sight of the fact that face-to-face interaction between law enforcement and the community is essential.

#### **IMPLICATION ON LEADERSHIP:**

As difficult as it will be to recruit and train good street-level personnel for the demanding mission of COP, it may be even more difficult to sustain the leadership initiative necessary to accomplish that mission.<sup>13</sup> The success of COP depends largely on the commitment of the leadership and their ability to provide a vision that will enable officers to step up to the plate and accept ownership and responsibility in the community. For this philosophy to be effective, CHP leaders must take the first step in *Challenging the status quo*, allowing officers to be innovative and creative with new enforcement strategies. The ability of everyone, regardless of rank, to put forth diverse ideas will encourage a sense of investment and ownership in the community. Effectiveness of the leadership will be directly proportionate to the degree of communication that takes place vertically, laterally, externally and internally while at the same time fostering direct communication at each level.

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Business Week February 1998, page 80, **Beyond Talking Barney**, Otis Port

In an effort to create an atmosphere of *esprit de corps*, it is important Commanders maintain consistency. This does not mean that Commanders set such a rigid standard that they will not tolerate mistakes, but rather they set the expectation that mistakes are to be learned from, and that no one is expected to be perfect. This requires a great deal of courage on the part of leaders as in most cases it requires risk. Author Tom Peters warned, "If you are not taking risk, you lose automatically." As CHP Commanders take on this tremendous challenge of COP, they will undoubtedly be faced with many decisions which will require risk taking. Only those Commanders who have a vision and have communicated it to everyone will be successful in taking risks associated with COP.

COP is going to require a change in the way the CHP does business. It will not be business as usual or the way we were trained. This change will have an impact on each and every employee we hire, and train and to the citizens for whom we provide law enforcement services. While the change will be more severe for some, the fact remains both citizen and employees will have to change. The way that change is sold and implemented by the leadership will correspond directly to the success of COP. Law enforcement leadership often errs by underestimating what is required to introduce new concepts. COP is a significant change in enforcement strategy philosophy and the responsibility of the rank-and-file employees. Consequently, leadership must not drop the ball. The message must come from the top of the organization. With the change

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<sup>13</sup> Source: Article written by Gene Stephens, Ph.D. **COP It Can Work BUT Only With CREATIVE, FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP PAGE 12.**

comes training, and the quality and relevancy of the training will impact any hopes for success.

Will this issue impact the leadership of the CHP in the next five years? Without a doubt. The success of COP is directly linked to the commitment of the leadership and that commitment is heavily dependent on how thoroughly Commanders understand the concept. Herman Goldstein in his book, PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING, identified three changes which are especially important if leadership is to be successful: (1) Police leaders must articulate the basic values with which they approach the police task and which influence their management techniques; (2) they must have a strong commitment to problem-solving as the core of policing, with all it entails; and (3) more broadly, they must make fundamental changes in the most common type of relationship that exists between and rank-and-file. While Goldstein's list of changes are for Problem Solving Policing, they also hold true for COP and may be the key for continuation of the philosophy.

## **CONCLUSION**

As the CHP moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and looks at ways to address the growing traffic problems, especially in the county area, it appears COP will be the best vehicle to meet the new challenges. But with change comes internal resistance, pressure and a reluctance to critique the way business is conducted. This coupled with the anticipated impact to the service delivery poses a serious challenge for the COP leadership to address. There is a feeling among some law enforcement practitioners that doing things status quo continues to be the best way to accomplish any new task. This is what I describe as the "*wait and see approach to leadership.*" Implementing

the change will be the first issue the CHP Executive Management will have to address if COP is going to be successful.

Continuing to be aware of future demographic shifts, improvements in technology, and interacting with the community in solving issues rather than just reacting to calls will help mitigate any negative impact to the service delivery. The CHP will implement those recommendations having an immediate impact to ensure COP is successful. As changes occur in these areas, it will be incumbent upon CHP leaders to make the necessary changes/adjustments to ensure the needs of both the Department and the community are met.

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