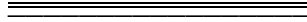
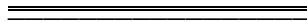


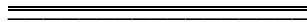
**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**



Implementation of an Area Traffic Officer Program



**A Leadership White Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**



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July 2012**

ABSTRACT

Communities have consistently asserted that their major quality of life concern deals with traffic issues. More people are killed and injured from traffic crashes than that of crime issues (NHTSA, 2007; Maggard & Jung, 2009). Equally important to communities is the perception and reality that crime rates are rising (NHTSA, 2007; Maggard & Jung, 2009). As departments struggle to maintain current service levels in times of strained budgets, it is necessary to deploy enforcement resources in a manner to effectively address both crash and crime problems concurrently. This paper will analyze a combination attack approach of reducing crashes and decreasing crime at the same time and with the same enforcement resources. This can be achieved through the implementation of an area traffic officer program within a community that utilizes the new methodology of data-driven approaches to crime and traffic safety.

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INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement continues to deal with challenges associated with crashes and crime trends. Executives today are faced with many decisions on how to appropriately assign resources that focus on reducing crashes and crime. Some organizations focus only on one aspect, whether that focus is on reducing injury crashes or the focus is on hot-spot crime areas. With today's competing demands of accomplishing more with less in the face of budget reductions, personnel shortages, and community priorities, it is important to realize that police can address both crashes and crime reductions under one strategy. Research will be examined in these areas with an emphasis on developing a program that effectively accomplishes both goals.

Proactive traffic enforcement is law enforcement's most effective tool to reduce crashes and prevent criminal activity (Sweeney, 1999). The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) (2010) estimated that traffic crashes claim the lives of more than 40,000 people in the United States every year, while another 3.4 million people are injured costing society billions of dollars in medical bills, property damages and liability claims. While the majority of traffic enforcement units across the nation focus their attention on reducing crashes as an underlying goal, recent studies indicated that intensive enforcement efforts are proven to show benefits in the reduction of criminal activity as well as reducing crashes and traffic violations (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2009; Sweeney, 1999). By combating both crime and crash reductions, departments are able to maintain a more reliable target acquisition by deploying the appropriate resources at the proper places and times (Weisburd, 2008). Traffic enforcement can be an effective mechanism for disrupting criminal activities such as

thefts, burglaries, drug offenses, and illegal firearms, when it is implemented in high-crime areas (Weiss, 1999). Inferences can be drawn that when traffic enforcement is maximized in high crime and crash areas, reductions in crashes, crash fatalities, and criminal endeavors can be reduced at varying levels (Silverii, 2010). Research examined from the Kansas City Gun Experiment (Sherman & Rogan, 1995) supported the conclusion that aggressive traffic enforcement focusing on hot-spots is highly promising as a viable and long-term crime reduction strategy (Chermak, McGarrell & Weiss, 2001).

The Metropolitan Nashville Police Department implemented a traffic program where high crime areas, along with increased crash locations, were targeted for specialized enforcement. This traffic enforcement method was effective in fighting crime and reducing injury crashes (Burch, 2009). Burch (2009) reported that Nashville saw a 25% reduction in fatality crashes, and the crime rate was at its lowest level in 17 years.

This paper will explore the important, dual-role that a specialized traffic enforcement program can play within a department. More importantly, the strategy of relying on data-driven approaches to develop high risk target areas will be examined with the goal of contemplating a new paradigm shift in traffic enforcement programs that are relatively new to the law enforcement arena. Departments should implement an area traffic officer program to efficiently address underlying social crime and crash issues by promoting traffic safety with problem-solving strategies.

Exposure to this new program, including the advantages and alleged disadvantages, will be the primary function of this paper. The reader will understand the

positive benefits to starting this type of specialized enforcement program within the community. Research from cities where this program has been implemented will assist the reader in looking at the numerous rewards that occur with an area traffic officer program. For fairness, alleged disadvantages and challenges associated with a dedicated enforcement program will also be examined.

Specifically, benefits of an area traffic officer program include a reduction of crashes, decreasing crime levels, increased accountability to the community and better use of competing resources. This, in turn, allows police executives the opportunity to address both high crash locations and high criminal activity areas at the same time, by implementing an area traffic officer program. Research will show how this type of program will maximize a department's potential to deter and reduce social crime disorders in identifiable neighborhood areas, where a pattern of criminal activity and traffic safety issues emerge together. The program will also foster a positive relationship between the community and the department (Sweeney, 1999).

Disadvantages alleged by critics will be analyzed with rebuttals submitted on each counterpoint. Some will say that budgets will not allow departments to fund a dedicated traffic program. Others will allege that crime and crash reductions produce only temporary effects through the theory of crime displacement; therefore, the return on investment is minimal. The final counterpoint will look at the idea that area traffic officer units duplicate existing geographical and computer statistical accountability programs that are already in place in many law enforcement agencies.

Before engaging in further discussions, the understanding of what encompasses an area traffic officer program is warranted. NHTSA, Bureau of Justice Assistance

(BJA), and National Institute of Justice (NIJ), along with several other local and state police leaders, developed a new operational model that can address both of the competing demands of reducing crashes and crime in a community (Burch, 2009). This new model is called Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety, or DDACTS for short. It allows agencies to place traffic enforcement resources in hot-spot areas where a pattern of crime and traffic crashes emerge together. The model utilizes evidence-based crime patterns and crash locations in order to work closely with other community partners to effectively address underlying crime problems and traffic concerns and to tackle these issues using both traditional and non-traditional methods to affect positive outcomes within the community (Burch, 2009). Burch (2009) argued that this new method ensures accountability and uses problem-solving strategies to reduce crime and crashes. Burch (2009) also argued that “The application of high visibility traffic enforcement is a proven and effective countermeasure that addresses both crime and crashes, whether they occur simultaneously or independently in time and/or location” (p. 18). As technology has continued to evolve, this type of DDACTS model relies on geographic mapping of high crime and crash locations. This enables supervisors to allocate resources in these areas to address the underlying issues that lead to high crime and elevated crashes.

An area traffic officer program complements the DDACTS model in several ways. The first city to launch an area traffic officer (ATO) program was Irvine, California (Maggard & Jung, 2009). Irvine police leaders considered the ATO program to be an extension of its highly successful geographic policing strategy (Maggard & Jung, 2009). Irvine Chief of Police, David Maggard, reported that a city’s future prosperity, which

attracts businesses and tourists, must have a sustainable and efficient transportation network (Maggard & Jung, 2009). In addition, residents frequently reported that traffic issues were a top priority in their community. After careful consideration, an ATO program was established with the following factors taken into account according to Chief Maggard and Daniel Jung (2009).

Primary emphasis should include creating a single point of contact within the agency to deal with traffic issues (Maggard & Jung, 2009). Of critical importance is enhanced monitoring of the issues to ensure resolution of the problems raised. Forming partnerships with stakeholders in the community is also essential to the ATO program. Additional elements would include working closely with other city and state departments to provide a long term solution to effectively address the underlying and root causes to the issues at hand. The ATO program should also strive for commitment to sound transportation policies that allow for the safe and efficient flow of vehicles within the community. Ultimately, building rapport with community members and ensuring an open level of communication medium exists invites issues to be brought to the department's attention. This will further facilitate a way to communicate proposed solutions back to the community (Maggard & Jung, 2009).

The key component to the ATO program established in Irvine was using problem solving strategies that emphasized a sustainable and long-term solution to these issues. Each of the officers assigned to the ATO program were assigned to geographic areas consistent with the existing policing areas already established by the department. These officers were charged with investigating and resolving complex traffic concerns in their assigned areas, which required working with many internal and external

stakeholders in the community. Interestingly, officers were assigned four year rotations to ensure that real progress could be obtained by making the necessary contacts and having time to develop the long-term solutions that were sought out. The program significantly reduced the workload for many commanders through decentralization techniques since ATOs would now be tasked with resolving complaints and responding to traffic concerns at their position level. Many positive benefits were realized through the implementation of the ATO program, including a reduction of crashes. Chief Maggard and Jung (2009) reported, "Simply put, from a law enforcement perspective, the benefits of establishing an ATO program far outweigh those of the traditional approach of addressing traffic management issues" (p. 50). This paper will provide the positions and counter-arguments to combining a DDACTS strategy with implementation of an ATO program.

POSITION

This paper will examine four position points that support the need for departments to implement an area traffic officer program. The first position deals with seeking to reduce injury and fatality crashes in a community. The second position analyzes the benefits associated with decreasing criminal activity through increased traffic enforcement. The third position demonstrates the benefits of increased officer accountability in a specialized traffic enforcement program. The last position considers the benefits of utilizing law enforcement resources in a more efficient manner to effectively problem solve true traffic safety concerns and social crime disorders.

Many law enforcement agencies in the past have been unable to effectively address higher crime rates and increases in injury or fatality crashes due to dwindling

budgets and strained resources (Maggard & Jung, 2009). This, in turn, makes it difficult for agencies to address traffic management issues that can be the root causes for traffic safety concerns within a community (Maggard & Jung, 2009). As collisions increase, the impact to society can be large due to a variety of factors, including associated health costs, loss of productivity due to commuter's demise of time in traffic collision areas, and injured parties involved in the crash itself. Police resources are often tied up when conducting collision investigations that may involve serious injury or fatality cases.

The first position this paper is realizing the benefit of reducing crashes. This model of policing relies heavily on high visibility traffic enforcement. A study by Bourne and Cooke (1993) stated that changes in driving behavior are affected by a driver's perceived risk of being stopped. NHTSA published a study that suggested that speed enforcement specifically is more optimal when motorists believe it will occur, fines are significant to violators, and enforcement is general in nature and occurs randomly (Scott & Maddox, 2010). Crash rates and injury severity realities are important issues to the community and its leaders. It would then seem obvious that enforcement of traffic laws is an integral duty afforded to police departments. The goal of any successful area traffic officer program should be to discourage unsafe driving and remove drivers from the roadway who engage in dangerous driving behavior that poses substantial risks to the public. By reducing the incentives for this type of dangerous driving behavior, fewer motor vehicle crashes may occur (Salzberg & Moffat, 1999).

Along with that reasoning, several studies have been conducted that demonstrate increased traffic enforcement reduces the number and severity of crashes, injuries, and deaths (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2009; Johnson, 2006; Russell,

2000). This benefit can be two-fold. As communities decrease the number of injury and fatal crashes, health care costs and civil litigation claims go down (Russell, 2000).

The second position supporting an area traffic officer program is realizing the benefit of reducing crime rates. Communities with high crime rates and traffic crashes suffer a lowered quality of life according to Hardy (2010). By the very nature of high visibility enforcement, departments will obtain deterrence for criminal activity (Fantino, 2009). It has been demonstrated that shoplifters, burglars, drug dealers, and other criminals normally drive vehicles to scenes to commit their offenses (Sweeney, 2009). Sweeney (2009) also suggested that fugitives and other criminals who drive on city streets often pay little attention to other traffic laws, which increases their probability of being contacted and detected by law enforcement.

It should be further noted while high visibility achieves a general crime deterrence in a community, most officers who have been directly assigned to traffic duties can drop what they are doing to respond immediately to emergencies (Salzberg & Moffat, 1999). Salzberg & Moffat (1999) presented the perspective that regular “patrol” officers are often tied up responding to other general calls for service and may not be available for true emergency calls should the need arise. This can present officer safety and citizen safety issues if officers are unable to respond to calls due to other priorities. A dedicated ATO may be in a better position to stop what they are doing and immediately respond to critical incidents and emergency calls.

Traffic enforcement has proven to be an effective means for identifying and apprehending criminals (Russell, 2000). As self-initiated traffic stops increase, officers increase their probability that they will identify other criminal activity which is afoot

(Russell, 2000). Many departments and training centers offer strategies where officers are taught to look beyond the traffic stop for other criminal activity. Courts have weighed in that as long as officers do not unnecessarily detain or do things out of the ordinary, as compared to other traffic stops, criminal interdiction will likely be upheld if later challenged. In addition, future offenders are often identified through the issuance of a citation that may lead investigators to develop intelligence later down the road should the stopped citizen arise as a suspect in an unrelated investigation.

Previous research has also shown that criminals have little regard for public safety issues and may violate traffic laws at a higher incidence than the motoring public at large, and enforcement of traffic laws can increase arrests and identify criminal activity (Harris, 1999; Hurley, 1998). Harris (1999) suggested that people who commit serious crimes find it inconsistent with their lifestyles to obey mundane traffic laws. One example to support the use of increased traffic enforcement on reducing criminal activity dealt with a department that was experiencing a high incidence of residential burglaries (Harris, 1999). The agency in question attempted to reduce burglaries by decreasing traffic enforcement and relying on more passive types of patrol methods to address the issue of burglary in neighborhoods; however, no reductions in burglary were realized. The results of the study revealed that burglary rates were at their lowest when traffic enforcement in neighborhoods were at their highest levels (Harris, 1999).

The City of Grand Prairie, Texas conducted a case study on the contributions of traffic enforcement to the war on crime in 1994. The study results published indicated that 28% of the city's criminal arrests, including Part 1 offenses of burglary, robbery, and murder, were initiated by officers conducting traffic stops (Morford & Sheehan, 1994).

The case study raises awareness that specialized traffic enforcement can contribute significantly to the detection and apprehension of criminal activity when utilizing an all crimes, all hazards, and all threats approach.

Now that previous research has shown that reduced crashes and decreased criminal activity can be accomplished through an area traffic enforcement program, the next position point of increased accountability measures to the community is analyzed. Hardy (2010) suggested that law enforcement groups must work collaboratively with local stakeholders to reduce social harm. Stakeholders take the form of business leaders, tourists, and citizens residing or commuting in the city, government officials, and many other key parties who have genuine interest in the safety of the community (Heinonen & Eck, 2007). Agencies have adopted strategies to improve law enforcement and community relationships and increase citizen's involvement, in the belief that there will be increases in perceptions of safety and decreases in crime and in fear of crime (Chermak, McGarrell & Weiss, 2001). There are five ways that the police agencies can achieve greater accountability in adopting an area traffic officer program (Hardy, 2010). This is achieved by building local partnerships, strategic operations, information sharing, monitoring operations, and measuring outcomes (Hardy, 2010).

Under local partnerships, police agencies should form true partnerships with the community members and organizations. This breeds trust and demonstrates the agency's willingness to address serious crash and crime issues. Additionally, accountability increases when the public is involved and made aware of the issues at hand (Hardy, 2010).

Under strategic operations, law enforcement agencies should use a data-driven analysis approach to develop the amount and location of resource allocation to address overlapping crime and crash hot spots. This enhances accountability and demonstrates that resources are being used efficiently to achieve results. There are many software platforms available in the commercial market to accomplish this section (Hardy, 2010).

Under information sharing and outreach, police executives should share results, promote community participation in the overall strategies developed, and document accomplishments. This allows the agency to be held accountable to police employees as they are asked to buy into this new method of policing. It also holds the department accountable to the community, who ultimately has a genuine and profound interest in reducing social harm issues within their community (Hardy, 2010).

Under monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting operations, in order to increase successes in the area traffic officer program, agencies should regularly collect and assess crime and crash data and adapt their operational strategies accordingly. After the monitoring of data, agencies should evaluate their strategies and optimize their current attack on crime and crashes to ensure the greatest reductions possible. Flexibility also enhances accountability within the organization and demonstrates that the agency is not satisfied with static operations that produce undesired results (Hardy, 2010).

Under measuring outcomes, law enforcement agencies should create goals during the planning and analysis that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Strategies can be developed that increases the probability to meet the goals, which should have an underlying theme of reducing crime and crashes in hot-spot

locations. Outcomes will help ensure the agency is moving in the right direction in addressing social disorder issues (Hardy, 2010).

The last position point focuses on the benefits of using resources in a more efficient manner that encompasses the age-old strategy of applying problem-solving to a community issue. In order to truly understand the use of problem-solving techniques in traffic enforcement, some views must be established. Traffic enforcement is not just the job of the traffic officer (Casstevens, 2008). Aggressive and proactive traffic enforcement is the greatest tool in preventing serious or fatality crashes, as well as reducing crime (Casstevens, 2008). Police agencies have used problem-solving capabilities to identify crime problems and then implemented strategies of increased traffic enforcement to reduce crime (Chermak, McGarrell, & Weiss, 2001).

Effective problem solving of a crime or crash issue is defined as identifying the initial decision to focus on a particular problem, developing methods to analyze the problem fully, and assessing the methods developed by looking at the results achieved (Heinonen & Eck, 2007). By taking the time to study the problem in the community before arbitrarily assigning resources, the agency is able to increase their chance of developing the correct strategy that will work in addressing the issue (Heinonen & Eck, 2007). The area traffic officer program model as presented, places the officers assigned at a great advantage for utilizing problem-solving methods to address community problems.

Agencies should empower officers to meet with community stakeholders and establish proactive, long-term solutions in crime and crash reduction goals (Maggard & Jung, 2009). The area traffic officer should serve as a single point of contact for

identifying and resolving traffic problems with departmental personnel, community residents, and business owners (Maggard & Jung, 2009). They should be given the tools and time to effectively problem-solve the issues at hand and seek out sustainable strategies that fall in line with the community's expectations and department's goals. Decentralization of decision-making allows commanders to focus on more pressing, broad departmental issues that warrant high-level critical analysis reserved for the upper echelon of command staff.

Problem-solving involves the important tool of measurement. This will allow the area traffic officer and agency to determine the degree to which the efforts have been successful and also suggest how to modify strategies to produce the intended results (Scott, 2006). Scott (2006) also suggested that measuring the extent of the problem before implementation of remedial responses allows the agency to determine how serious the problem is and provides a baseline with which to measure the results of the enforcement efforts against.

During the identification phase of problem-solving, the area traffic officer must identify hot-spot areas where crime and increased crashes results. There is significant literature on how to establish computer capabilities to track crime and crashes through geospatial mapping (IACP, 2009; BJA, 2009; Hall, 2010). Baltimore County uses programs identified as "ArcMap" and "CrimeStat III" to map crime and crash locations (Hall & Puls, 2010). Crime statistics, community input, and intelligence data should be used in identifying these hot spots where enforcement resources will be allocated (Hurley, 1998). The Highway Safety Committee established that the use of crime mapping software to track crime and crashes enables police supervisors to deploy

resources in the most effective manner to intercept violations in progress and reduce crashes (IACP, 2009). This demonstrates the importance of utilizing problem-solving techniques in identification, analysis, response, and measurement.

COUNTER POSITION

This paper analyzes three valid counter arguments and provides a rebuttal on each that illustrates the benefits to starting an area traffic officer program outweighs the potential set-backs that may be encountered along the way. The first counter point deals with department budgets prohibiting agencies from finding a funding source to start a new traffic program. The next argument details the potential risks encountered when crime displacement contentions are raised. The final counter position will analyze the position of duplication of efforts as compared to several geographical and managerial accountability systems that are already in place.

Departments will have some critics who will claim that diminishing budgets will not allow agencies to re-assign sworn personnel from patrol assignments to specialized traffic enforcement positions. Current news clips across the country share stories of slashed municipal and state budgets with future funding predictions remaining bleak. Moore (2008) reported that officials in Flint, Michigan went through several rounds of demotions and layoffs to save money. Camden, New Jersey laid off nearly half its officers in January of 2011 (Praetorious, 2011). Denver, Colorado officials have proposed to cut nearly 100 officer positions this year (Meyer, 2011). Agencies are continually asked to reduce budgets, remain fiscally responsible, and be stewards of the public's money, while staying committed to the police mission in a particular community.

While patrol operations are the backbone to any agency, resource allocation in creative ways can achieve higher results in crime fighting strategies and crash reductions.

Many law enforcement agencies are experiencing difficulty in addressing traffic management issues because of dwindling budgets (Maggard & Jung, 2009). An area traffic officer program statistically can generate sustainable amounts of revenue depending on how it is set up and what local government codes allow. A case study of the Fresno, California police department in 2002 illustrated the fact that traffic violators should pay for their own enforcement costs while law abiding taxpayers should be exempt from subsidizing negative traffic behavior (Scott & Maddox, 2010). In the past, cities have often considered raising property taxes to deal with increased levels of police service (Bradley, 2005; Lav & Brecher, 2004). The City of Fresno was able to capitalize on a revenue sharing agreement in 2002 with the County of Fresno in order for a portion of each traffic fine going back to the police department to fund traffic safety campaigns and enforcement efforts. The city also implemented an aggressive impound policy regarding unlicensed drivers, which increased revenues for the traffic safety program. Together, these funding sources allowed the city to lower traffic collisions, increase enforcement efforts, and launch an educational campaign over a sustained period of time without increasing the tax structure (Scott & Maddox, 2010).

While some agencies may be prohibited in implementing a similar revenue sharing plan, most states allow retention of certain amounts of traffic fines collected for inclusion in the city's general fund. Area traffic officers will be in a position to devote more time to traffic enforcement versus a patrol officer due to the differences in job duties. Some of the non-tangible benefits of utilizing an area traffic officer program

cannot have a monetary value assigned. For example, forming partnerships, making changes to environmental roadway design to improve roadway safety, and arresting serious criminals in the community all add a significant value to the department's credibility in its attempts to reduce crashes and crime.

The next counterpoint involves return on investment. Some will argue that return on investment is minimal because increased traffic enforcement in target areas only produces temporary displacement of criminal activity and driving behavior changes. This argument leads to the presumption that no long-term results are ever achieved due to displacement. Displacement is defined as the shifting of crime in response to a prevention or enforcement campaign (Eck, 1993). While there is some validity to crime displacement issues, it should not be used as an excuse for not undertaking specialized traffic enforcement programs (Eck, 1993). Eck (1993) pointed out that police administrators should consider the circumstances under which displacement is most likely to occur, so plans to attack the problem can be developed that will minimize the possibility of displacement.

The phenomenon of crime displacement can be inconsequential if it indeed occurs (Guerette, 2009). Also consistently found is that displacement is the exception rather than the norm (Guerette, 2009). Critics who support displacement often base their assertions on unfounded suppositions rather than empirical facts, according to Scott and Maddox (2010). Measurement techniques that are developed in evaluating the success of target area suppressions will allow departments to compare any displacement effects in relation to the gains achieved by the goal of the enforcement project. In other words, displacement risks should not discourage a law enforcement

agency from committing specialized officers to an area traffic officer program based upon the limited empirical evidence that exists, according to Eck (1993), thereby diminishing the real hazard of crime displacement. Eck (1993) stated that, generally speaking, “little or no displacement is the most likely outcome” (p. 1).

The last counter argument deals with duplication of existing platforms in traffic enforcement programs. Some will suggest that implementation of an area traffic officer program duplicates existing geographical policing models and COMPSTAT (Computer or Comparative Statistics) strategies, which are already in used by many departments across the country. COMPSTAT is defined as a police managerial accountability method by which mid-level commanders are evaluated as compared to crime statistics in the area of responsibility (Ratcliffe, 2008). One of the major goals of COMPSTAT is the realization of police managers making use of intelligence reports to allocate resources appropriately, which achieves a crime reduction strategy (Ratcliffe, 2008). In Ratcliffe’s book, *Intelligence-Led Policing*, he summed up COMPSTAT in four basic principles. These four areas include gathering timely and accurate intelligence, developing effective tactics, ensuring rapid deployment of resources, and pursuing relentless follow-up and assessment of strategies.

While COMPSTAT plays an important role in many policing organizations, implementation of an area traffic officer program will not detract from this methodology of police managerial accountability. This argument is further from the truth. The area traffic officer program will complement the COMPSTAT process. For example, many jurisdictions farm out the crime reduction strategies to the patrol bureaus or precincts. It has already been established that field patrol operations have many priorities in today’s

demanding world. The officer or officers assigned to the area traffic officer program are in a unique operational standing where they can be immediately assigned to hot-spot areas where crashes and crimes overlap. This enhances an agency's toolbox, which will allow for more effective responses to social harm issues.

CONCLUSION

Traffic enforcement continues to play a vital role in communities. The days of grabbing a radar gun and writing a quick citation indiscriminately with no real purpose on reducing crime and crashes are gone. Policing agencies today are expected to utilize enforcement resources effectively and efficiently. An area traffic officer program accomplishes this two-fold, important task.

Area traffic officer programs seek to approach social decay and disorder issues in a data-driven accountability manner that relies on intelligence of where high clusters of crashes and crime appear in conjunction with one another. As implemented, the program will achieve reduced injury severity ratings in crashes and overall crash reduction based upon the evidence presented. Additionally, decreased criminal activity occurs as high-visibility patrols saturate problem areas. Area traffic officers are empowered to apply proven, problem-solving methods that seek the true causes of high crash and crime areas. This long-term responsibility for a specific geographical area enhances the officer's understanding of the community, which breeds trust between the department and the citizens it is charged with serving.

While some counter positions were presented in the theme of budget strains, return on investment due to crime displacement fears, and duplicating existing platforms, such as COMPSTAT and geographical policing models, all were diminished

with supporting claims based upon sound research. Revenue enhancements from increased enforcement strategies, inconsistent findings on crime displacement realities, and the opportunity to complement COMPSTAT operations all demonstrate the success that can be enjoyed by administrators who commit to an area traffic officer methodology.

The future is bright for law enforcement leaders as they struggle to keep up with emerging technologies and new crime hazards. One element that has remained consistent through the years is the public perception that traffic concerns remain a top priority for most communities in the United States. The area traffic officer program utilizes data-driven approaches to crime and crash mapping, focusing on long-term, sustainable solutions to traffic safety issues. The time is now to implement a proven strategy in combating crash and crime through the initiation of a stand-alone area traffic officer program.

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