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# Kansas City, Missouri Smart Policing Initiative

From Foot Patrol to Focused Deterrence

December 2015

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Smart Policing Initiative  
Spotlight Report

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## Smart Policing: Research Snapshot

Kansas City, Missouri has experienced a persistent violent crime problem throughout much of the last decade. From 2010 through 2013, Kansas City ranked among the worst of the 50 largest cities in the United States for homicide, averaging more than 100 per year—for a rate of 22 per 100,000 residents. Kansas City’s violent crime rate in 2012 was equally dismal, with nearly 2,500 aggravated assaults and 1,645 robberies. Violent crime in Kansas City is geographically concentrated in three of the department’s six patrol divisions. In addition, violence disproportionately involves firearms. From 2010 to 2014, 90 percent of homicides and 42 percent of all aggravated assaults were gun-related.

In 2011, the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) received a grant through the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) to team with researchers and develop innovative interventions to reduce violent crime. Over the next four years, KCPD and their research partners at the University of Missouri–Kansas City implemented a multi-pronged effort to address violent crime through evidence-based strategies. In 2011 and 2012, the Kansas City SPI team planned, implemented, and evaluated a replication of the evidence-based Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment. For 90 days, pairs of rookie officers worked foot patrol shifts in four violent crime micro–hot spot areas. Results showed that foot patrol areas witnessed a 26-percent reduction in aggravated assaults and robberies during the 90-day period, and a 55-percent reduction during the first six weeks of the study. No reductions were reported in control areas or in catchment areas surrounding the foot patrol areas. Crime did increase in the target areas during the last seven weeks of the study and returned to pre-treatment levels after the foot patrol treatment ended.

In 2013 and 2014, the Kansas City SPI team planned and implemented a comprehensive focused deterrence pulling levers strategy, called the Kansas City No Violence Alliance (KC NoVA). KC NoVA is an offender-focused strategy designed to reduce violent crime by building on the earlier success of the foot patrol project. During 2014, KC NoVA identified 64 groups composed of 884 violent offenders. The team held four call-ins with 149 attendees. As a result of the focused deterrence strategy, 601 offenders met with social service providers, and 142 offenders received a social service assessment. The SPI team conducted interrupted time series analysis to assess impact and found that the focused deterrence strategy produced statistically significant decreases in homicide (40 percent) and gun-related aggravated assaults (19 percent). The crime decline effects were largest immediately after implementation and weakened over time.

The Kansas City SPI produced a number of lessons learned for law enforcement leaders and line officers. For leaders, the Kansas City SPI demonstrated the importance of keeping focus on Smart Policing principles in the wake of leadership change, and of effective communication to both internal and external stakeholders. The Kansas City SPI also provided insights regarding different deployment methods of foot patrol. For line officers, it highlighted the importance of determining what officers should actually do during foot patrol assignments, other than be present and visible. Finally, the Kansas City SPI underscores the importance of embracing the two key messages in a focused deterrence strategy: the threat of a law enforcement response to additional criminal activity, and the offer of help for those who want it.

# *KANSAS CITY SMART POLICING INITIATIVE: FROM FOOT PATROL TO FOCUSED DETERRENCE*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Kansas City, Missouri has experienced persistently high violent crime rates in recent years. From 2010 to 2014, the city experienced, on average, 22 homicides per 100,000 residents per year, as well as 785 aggravated assaults and 361 robberies per 100,000 residents per year. These rates are two to four times greater than the national average.<sup>1</sup> The majority of homicides were committed with firearms, and violent crime was generally concentrated geographically within the city. In 2011, the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) received funding through the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) to address the persistent violence problem.<sup>2</sup> KCPD sequentially implemented two innovative, evidence-based strategies with the support of SPI. First, in 2011 and 2012, KCPD planned, implemented, and evaluated a foot patrol program in small violent crime micro-

places (e.g., hot spots). For 90 days, pairs of officers were assigned to conduct foot patrol in violent crime hot spots, for two shifts each day.

Leadership change in the police department, county prosecutor's office, and mayor's office in early 2012 led to a shift in focus for the Kansas City SPI. In 2013 and 2014, Kansas City stakeholders developed a focused-deterrence (or "pulling levers") strategy.<sup>3</sup> Violent offender groups were identified using street-level intelligence and analysis, and stakeholders communicated to those offenders a two-pronged message: future violence on their parts would have serious consequences, and opportunities to avoid violence would be provided through partner social service agencies. The KCPD's deployment of foot patrol and focused deterrence represents a dual, evidence-based effort to address the persistent violence committed by groups of offenders in concentrated areas throughout the city.

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<sup>1</sup> The Kansas City homicide rate is comparable to similarly sized cities, but the city's aggravated assault rate is twice as high as the rates in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Louisville, and Pittsburgh. See: <https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats/>.

<sup>2</sup> For a complete description of the Kansas City SPI, see: K.J. Novak, A.M. Fox, and C.N. Carr. May 2015. *From Foot Patrol to Focused Deterrence: Kansas City's Smart Policing Initiative Final Report*. Kansas City, MO: Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

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<sup>3</sup> D.M. Kennedy. 2006. "Old Wine In New Bottles: Policing and the Lessons of Pulling Levers." In *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*, D. Weisburd and A.A. Braga (eds.), p. 155-70. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

## I. THE PROBLEM

Kansas City, Missouri is a Midwestern city with a historically high rate of violent crime. Kansas City has a population of approximately 460,000 citizens who are distributed across some 319 square miles and who are served by the KCPD.<sup>4</sup> Kansas City's population is approximately 30 percent African-American and 10 percent Hispanic. Twelve percent of households are headed by single parents with children under age 18, and almost one-fifth of its citizens live below the poverty line. KCPD employs more than 1,400 sworn officers, the majority of whom are assigned to the Patrol Bureau, which operates across six patrol divisions.

The city has had a serious violent crime problem that overwhelmingly involves guns, and that is concentrated in the urban center. From 2010 through 2013, Kansas City ranked among the worst of the 50 largest cities in the United States for homicide, averaging more than 100 per year—for a rate of 22 per 100,000 residents, which is four times the national average. Kansas City's violent crime rate in 2012 was equally dismal—2,476 aggravated assaults were reported, a significant increase from 2010 (n=2,371) and 2011 (n=2,274). There were 1,617 robberies in 2010, but in 2011, 2012, and 2013, totals rose to 1,673, 1,645, and 1,716, respectively.

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<sup>4</sup> Kansas City Police Department. 2012. *Annual Report*. Retrieved from <http://kcmo.gov/police/>.

A significant portion of the violent crime in Kansas City involved guns. From 2010 through 2014, 86.3 percent of all homicides and nearly half (42.1 percent) of all aggravated assaults were gun-related. Notably, those homicides occurred in a geographically concentrated area. Of the 394 homicides in Kansas City from 2011 through 2014, 85.5 percent (n=337) had occurred in the Central, Metro and East Divisions of the city.<sup>5</sup> This gun violence has persisted despite the fact that KCPD has recovered an average of 984.4 handguns per year in the Central, Metro, and East Divisions, alone.

## II. THE RESPONSE

In 2011, KCPD and local stakeholders began to rethink how violent crime was being addressed in Kansas City, and they applied for a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Smart Policing Initiative to serve as a foundation for that change. Upon being awarded the SPI grant, KCPD, along with its research partners from the University of Missouri—Kansas City (UMKC), initiated a four year, multi-pronged effort to address violent crime through evidence-based strategies. In 2011 and 2012, the Kansas City SPI team planned, implemented, and evaluated a replication of Philadelphia's

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<sup>5</sup> There are six KCPD patrol divisions, and each is quite large. Central Division covers 17 square miles and has a population of 51,521. Metro Division covers 35 square miles and has a population of 89,799. East Division covers 45.5 square miles and has a population of 82,585. Kansas City Police Department. 2013. *Annual Report*. Retrieved from <http://kcmo.gov/police/>.

Foot Patrol Experiment.<sup>6</sup> In 2013 and 2014, the Kansas City SPI team planned, implemented, and evaluated a comprehensive focused-deterrence (or “pulling levers”) strategy.<sup>7</sup>

## The Kansas City Foot Patrol Experiment

Foot patrol has experienced a re-emergence in American policing over the last three decades. In the 1980s, the strategy became a central feature of community-oriented policing because it requires officers to get out of their vehicles and engage with citizens in informal, consensual encounters. A 2007 survey indicated that 55 percent of police organizations were regularly using foot patrols.<sup>8</sup> At that time, about 80 percent of cities similar in population to Kansas City<sup>9</sup> were regularly implementing foot patrols.

Despite police departments’ widespread adoption of foot patrol, the method’s effectiveness had remained unclear until recently. Evaluations from the 1980s consistently found foot patrol to have a

beneficial impact on subjective outcomes, such as citizen satisfaction with the police and fear of crime, but there was little evidence regarding its impact on crime (e.g., the Newark Foot Patrol Experiment; the Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program).<sup>10</sup> One possible explanation for the lack of crime impact from the early studies is that most foot patrol strategies were non-directed (i.e., not driven by crime analysis), and officers were given little guidance on what to do while on foot patrol. Recent examinations of the effectiveness of foot patrol have been more encouraging. For example, a study in Newark, New Jersey found that violent crime had declined by 30 percent in areas receiving foot patrol.<sup>11</sup> In 2009, the Philadelphia Police Department and its research partners at Temple University identified dozens of micro-hot spots of violent crime throughout the city (small areas that averaged about 1.3 miles of surface streets and 14.7 intersections per hot spot), and half of those hot spots were randomly assigned to receive foot patrol. Pairs of rookie officers worked foot patrol shifts in the summer months, during which time those officers engaged in a variety of activities, from community-oriented work to aggressive enforcement. Violent crime in the targeted foot patrol areas declined by 23 percent, while no

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<sup>6</sup> J.H. Ratcliffe, T. Taniguchi, E.R. Groff, and J.D. Wood. 2011. “The Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment: Randomized Controlled Trial of Police Patrol Effectiveness in Violent Crime Hotspots.” *Criminology* 49 (3): 795-831.

<sup>7</sup> Various iterations of focused deterrence/pulling levers are rated as either “effective” or “promising” on Crimesolutions.gov. The Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment is rated as “effective.” See: <http://www.crimesolutions.gov/TopicDetails.aspx?ID=6#practice>.

<sup>8</sup> B.A. Reaves. 2010. *Local Police Departments, 2007*. NCJ Report No. 231174. See: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1750>.

<sup>9</sup> Population range of 250,000 to 999,999.

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<sup>10</sup> Police Foundation. 1981. *The Newark Foot Patrol Experiment*. Washington, DC: Police Foundation; R.C. Trojanowicz. 1982. *An Evaluation of the Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program in Flint, Michigan*. East Lansing, MI: School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University.

<sup>11</sup> E.L. Piza, and B.A. O’Hara. 2012. “Saturation Foot-Patrol in a High-Violence Area: A Quasi- Experimental Evaluation.” *Justice Quarterly* 31(4): 693-718.

measurable change was observed in the control areas, even taking possible geographic displacement into account. Moreover, the greatest crime-prevention benefit was observed in the most crime-prone foot beats.<sup>12</sup>

The Kansas City SPI team sought to replicate the Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment, with a specific focus on micro-hot spots for aggravated assaults and robberies. The team identified 20 potential target areas, selecting them based on weighted violent crime data from 2008 to 2010 (each area included 1.3 to 1.5 miles of surface streets). The SPI team created detailed profiles for each of the 20 candidate areas, including a roadmap with boundaries and crime maps using kernel density smoothing.<sup>13</sup> The SPI team examined each of the potential target areas, with the aim of narrowing the list of candidates to eight: four that would receive foot patrol, and four that would serve as their control areas.

KCPD leadership were reluctant to truly randomize selection of the treatment and control areas because of public safety concerns. What ensued was analogous to a fantasy football draft, in which police commanders selected a treatment area, and then research staff would identify a similar comparison area. The result was a

matched-pairs assignment of treatment (foot patrol) and comparison areas: beat areas 1, 2, 4, and 7 were selected for foot patrol, and areas 3, 5, 6, and 8 were selected as comparison areas (see Figure 1). Catchment (or displacement) areas were also assigned about 650 feet (roughly two blocks) surrounding the target areas.

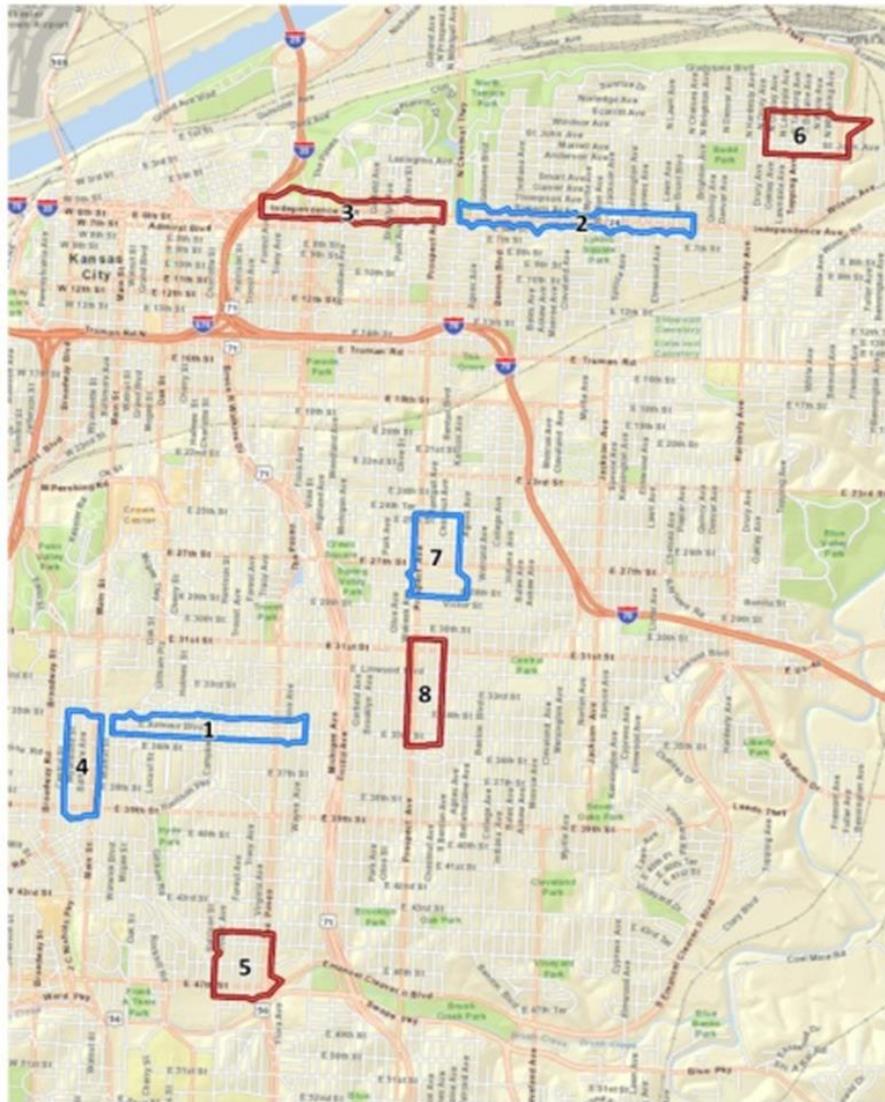
KCPD selected rookie officers to participate in the foot patrol study. During academy training, cadets were informed that foot patrol would be their initial assignment, lasting approximately 90 days, after which time they would be given other permanent patrol assignments. The cadets participated in a 4-hour orientation to become familiar with the goals of their assignment (which included exposure to the Philadelphia study). Command staff provided orders and rules regarding the foot patrol assignment: cadets would engage in foot patrol for the majority of their shifts; they were not to engage in foot patrol beyond their designated boundaries; and they would not respond to 911 calls (or other calls for service), but could respond to calls for backup for others assigned within their respective areas. Following this police academy training and a break-in period with a field training officer (FTO), the paired rookies worked two, 8-hour foot patrol shifts per day. Foot patrol beats were operational five days a week, Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., with two shifts overlapping. Over the 90-day treatment period, the officers performed 8,192 personnel hours of foot patrol.

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<sup>12</sup> J.H. Ratcliffe, T. Taniguchi, E.R. Groff, and J.D. Wood. 2011. "The Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment: Randomized Controlled Trial of Police Patrol Effectiveness in Violent Crime Hotspots." *Criminology* 49(3): 795-831.

<sup>13</sup> For information on kernel density smoothing, see: B.W. Silverman. 1986. *Density Estimation for Statistics and Data Analysis*. New York: Chapman and Hall.

**Figure 1. Map of KCPD Foot Patrol and Control Areas**



## Assessing Impact of the Kansas City Foot Patrol Experiment

There were four target areas, four target catchment areas, and four comparison areas identified for the study. KCPD provided detailed reported crime data for 83 weeks, from January 1, 2011 to July 31,

2012. Data for the current study consisted of crimes known to police (including offense types, dates, and locations) for the 30 weeks before treatment (T0), the 13 weeks during treatment (T1), and the 40 weeks following treatment (T2) (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Biweekly Observations (#) by Time Period**

|    |                | Time Period                  | Biweekly Observations (#) |
|----|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| T0 | Pre-treatment  | Jan. 1, 2011 – Jul. 29, 2011 | 15                        |
| T1 | Treatment      | Jul. 30, 2011 – Nov. 4, 2011 | 7                         |
| T2 | Post-treatment | Nov. 5, 2011 – Jul. 31, 2012 | 20                        |

**Table 2. Aggravated Assaults and Robberies across Target, Catchment, and Comparison Areas**

|                | Target Area | Target Area Catchment | Comparison Area |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Pre-treatment  | 1.85        | 1.67                  | 1.61            |
| Treatment      | 1.36*       | 1.75                  | 1.67            |
| Post-treatment | 2.01        | 1.32                  | 1.64            |

\* $p < .05$

Researchers employed repeated measures t-tests because the effectiveness of the treatment (i.e., foot patrol) was measured by comparing whether the mean number of aggravated assaults and robberies was reduced across the pre-treatment, treatment, and post-treatment periods, within both target and target catchment areas (relative to comparison areas).

Table 2 displays the biweekly average number of aggravated assaults and robberies in each of the four foot patrol areas over time. The target areas experienced a reduction from 1.85 violent crimes before treatment to 1.36 violent crimes during treatment. This 26.4-percent reduction represents a statistically significant change in violent crime in the period during which foot patrol was deployed ( $t = -2.63$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Once foot patrol was removed, the average number of violent crimes increased to slightly above pre-treatment levels (2.01).

Researchers then examined violent crime rates for each of the catchment areas

surrounding the foot beat areas to test for displacement. Robberies and aggravated assaults increased modestly in the catchment areas during the treatment (from 1.67 to 1.75); however, that increase was not statistically significant ( $t = 0.18$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Violent crime decreased between treatment and post-treatment periods (1.75 to 1.32); that change also was not statistically significant.

Next, the researchers estimated models for violent crime during the same period for the comparison areas.<sup>14</sup> Table 2 shows that violent crime increased slightly (and non-significantly) in comparison areas during the treatment period (1.61 to 1.67). Violent crime declined slightly in the post-treatment period, but this change was also not statistically significant (1.67 to 1.64).

<sup>14</sup> Comparison catchment areas were estimated but not reported here; they did not contribute much to the interpretation of the results overall, as there is no theoretical reason why crime would be displaced from an area not receiving treatment.

Additional analysis by the research team determined that nearly all of the crime decline in the target areas occurred during the first six weeks of foot patrol deployment. In fact, robbery and aggravated assault dropped by 55 percent from pre-treatment to the first six weeks of the foot patrol experiment. Crime in the treatment areas actually increased significantly during the last seven weeks of the foot patrol experiment ( $t=3.43$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The reasons for this increase are unknown. In total, the estimates indicate that foot patrol was associated with immediate, significant declines in robberies and aggravated assaults during the early treatment period, and then crime-prevention benefits dissipated over the last half of the foot patrol period (and after foot patrols were removed). Crime declines occurred with no geographic displacement or diffusion of benefits to contiguous areas. The crime trends in the foot patrol areas were not observed in the comparison areas, supporting the conclusion that the foot patrol treatment resulted in significant, short-term crime prevention benefits.

### **Focused Deterrence (“Pulling Levers”) Strategy in Kansas City**

After leadership change in 2012 at KCPD,<sup>15</sup> the county prosecutor’s office, and the mayor’s office, the newly elected and appointed city leaders sought to

implement a different strategy to address violence in Kansas City. The leaders agreed on a focused deterrence strategy to reduce group-involved violence. They also enlisted the participation of community and social services organizations and, together, began shaping the Kansas City No Violence Alliance (KC NoVA), with focused deterrence and “pulling levers” at the core of their mission. Such strategies “deploy enforcement, [social] services, the moral voices of the communities, and deliberate communication in order to create a powerful deterrent to particular behaviors by particular offenders.”<sup>16</sup> Kennedy has identified six features common to effective implementation of such initiatives:

1. Select a particular crime problem.
2. Create an interagency enforcement group.
3. Conduct research, with help from front-line officers, to identify key offenders.
4. Frame a special enforcement operation directed at key offenders if they commit further violence.
5. Match enforcement with supportive services and community encouragement to embrace nonviolence.
6. Communicate directly and often with offenders, letting them know

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<sup>15</sup> See K.J. Novak et al. (2015) for a detailed discussion of the leadership change at KCPD and its impact on planned SPI activities, including expanded foot patrol.

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<sup>16</sup> D.M. Kennedy. 2006. "Old Wine In New Bottles: Policing and the Lessons of Pulling Levers." In *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*, D. Weisburd and A.A. Braga (eds.), p. 155-70. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

that they are under close scrutiny, and exactly how they can avoid severe sanctions.<sup>17</sup>

Focused deterrence has been implemented under a variety of names, and, in many U.S. cities, the strategy has delivered results. In Boston, MA, Operation Ceasefire reduced monthly youth homicides by two thirds.<sup>18</sup> In Lowell, MA, officials documented a 24-percent reduction in Asian gang assaults and a 50-percent reduction in Asian gang homicides.<sup>19</sup> The strategy has also produced significant crime reductions in Rockford, IL; Indianapolis, IN; Minneapolis, MN; High Point, NC; and New Orleans, LA.<sup>20</sup>

The KC NoVA Governing Board was created to guide the focused deterrence strategy. The Governing Board consists of the Jackson County Prosecutor; the

Mayor of Kansas City; the Kansas City Chief of Police; the Regional Administrator of Probation and Parole; the Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri; and the Chancellor of UMKC.

KC NoVA's first year of implementation (2013) was uneven, and the team faced numerous challenges.<sup>21</sup> The Kansas City team continued to push through those challenges, and during their implementation year, 82 offenders enrolled for social services through KC NoVA. The team made a number of changes throughout 2013 to enhance the focused deterrence strategy. For example, UMKC researchers trained KCPD crime analysts to conduct social network analysis in order to identify violent offender groups. KCPD reassigned 28 officers from patrol to the Violent Crimes Division to implement the enforcement side of the focused deterrence strategy (e.g., finding and arresting offenders who failed to heed the deterrence message). The team also streamlined decision-making authority by outlining specific roles and responsibilities for each team member, and stakeholder agencies permanently assigned staff to KC NoVA (including the prosecutor's office, U.S. Attorney's Office, and Missouri Probation and Parole).

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<sup>17</sup> See Kennedy, 2006. This has been the approach KC NoVA developed and adapted for local conditions.

<sup>18</sup> A.A. Braga, D.M. Kennedy, E.J. Waring, and A.M. Piehl. 2001. "Problem-Oriented Policing, Deterrence, and Youth Violence: An Evaluation of Boston's Operation Ceasefire." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 38(3): 195-225.

<sup>19</sup> M.S. Tillyer, R.S. Engel, and B. Lovins. 2010. "Beyond Boston: Applying Theory to Understand and Address Sustainability Issues in Focused Deterrence Initiatives for Violence Reduction." *Crime and Delinquency* 58(6): 973-997.

<sup>20</sup> N.E. Corsaro, E.D. Hunt, N.K. Hipple, and E.F. McGarrell. 2012. "The Impact of Drug Market Pulling Levers Policing on Neighborhood Violence: An Evaluation of the High Point Drug Market Intervention." *Criminology and Public Policy* 11(2): 167-99; N.E. Corsaro, and E.F. McGarrell. 2009. "Testing a Promising Homicide Reduction Strategy: Re-assessing the Impact of the Indianapolis 'Pulling Levers' Intervention." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 5(1): 63-82; N.E. Corsaro, and R.S. Engel. 2015. "Most Challenging of Contexts: Assessing the Impact of Focused Deterrence on Serious Violence in New Orleans." *Criminology and Public Policy* 14(3): 471-505.

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<sup>21</sup> See K.J. Novak et al. (2015) for a detailed description of KC NoVA's implementation challenges.

During 2014, KC NoVA hit its stride and fully implemented its focused deterrence pulling levers strategy (see Table 3). For example, the Kansas City SPI team identified 64 criminal groups composed of 884 offenders. They conducted four group audits to review the intelligence on those groups. The group audit is a facilitated process during which the law enforcement representatives of the team meet to document what each one knows about

violent groups, their members, and their relationships. The team conducted four call-ins in 2014, with a total of 149 attendees. Over the course of the project, 601 offenders had face-to-face meetings with social service providers (social service meetings often occurred outside of the call-ins), and 142 offenders had social service assessments. The team also carried out six group enforcement operations.

**Table 3. KC NoVA Implementation Measures**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Number of group audits  | 4   |
| Number of groups identified                                       | 64  |
| Number of group members identified                                | 884 |
| Number of call-ins  | 4   |
| Number of call-in attendees                                       | 149 |
| Number of group enforcements                                      | 6   |
| Number of social service clients assessed                         | 142 |
| Number of face-to-face social service meetings with group members | 601 |

### Assessing Impact of the Kansas City Focused Deterrence (“Pulling Levers”) Strategy

To assess the changes in violent crime in Kansas City, researchers used official police data from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2014 to track “reported incidents of homicide and aggravated assaults with a gun.”<sup>22</sup> Because of low cell

counts (no homicides were reported on many days), the team aggregated the number of incidents per month. Implementation of the focused deterrence pulling levers strategy took place during all 12 months of 2014; therefore, the 48 months from January 2010 through December 2013 were coded as pre-implementation, and January 2014 through December 2014 was coded as the implementation period. Researchers

<sup>22</sup> Ideally, the researchers would have had information about the number of group-related homicides and non-fatal shootings in Kansas City going back at least five years. This data was not available, however. Given the lack of historical data on group-related violence, the

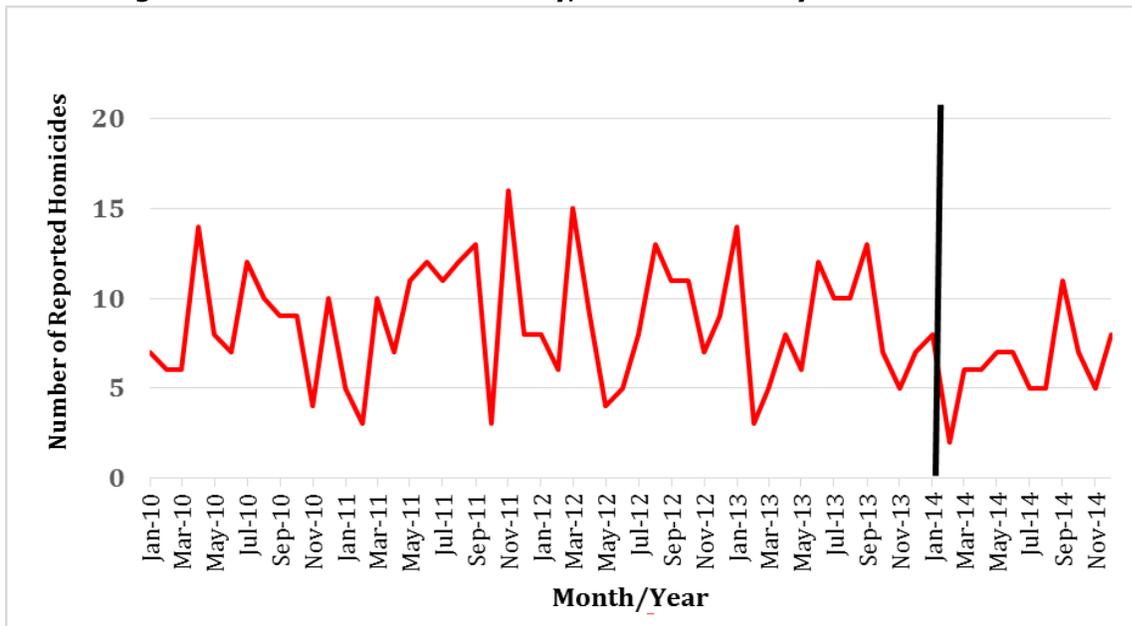
researchers were only able to assess the overall violence numbers.

employed both bivariate analysis and interrupted time series analysis (ITS) to assess the impact of the focused deterrence pulling levers strategy.

Figure 2 displays the monthly number of homicides from January 2010 through December 2014. The vertical line at January 2014 indicates the start of robust implementation of focused deterrence. Over the five-year period, there is considerable monthly variation, ranging from about 5 to 15 homicides per month. Visual inspection of the data also shows that the number of monthly homicides in 2014 was less volatile, with fewer spikes than in previous years.

Table 4 shows the mean monthly number of homicides and gun-related aggravated assaults during the pre-implementation and implementation periods. From January 2010 through December 2013, there were 8.73 homicides on average per month; after implementation, the average number of monthly homicides was 6.42, a statistically significant reduction of 26.5 percent. From January 2010 through December 2013, there were 83.0 gun-related aggravated assaults on average per month; after implementation, the average number of monthly gun-related

**Figure 2. Homicides in Kansas City, Missouri January 2010 to December 2014**



**Table 4. Changes in the Average Monthly Number of Violent Crimes**

|                                | Pre-Implementation<br>(Jan. 2010 – Dec. 2013) | Implementation<br>(Jan. 2014 – Dec. 2014) | t-value | Total         |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---------|---------------|
| n =                            | 48  | 12  |         | 60            |
| Homicide                       | 8.73 (3.34)                                   | 6.42 (2.19)                               | 2.91*   | 8.27 (3.26)   |
| Gun-Related Aggravated Assault | 83.00 (17.75)                                 | 78.17 (17.45)                             | 0.85    | 82.03 (17.65) |

Numbers= Mean (Standard Deviation); \* p<.05

**Table 5. Interrupted Time Series Model Evaluating Kansas City’s Focused Deterrence Strategy**

| Level Effects                          | Parameter Estimate | 95% Confidence Intervals |        |                 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------|--------|-----------------|
|  |                    | Lower                    | Upper  | Relative Effect |
| <b>Homicide</b>                        |                    |                          |        |                 |
| 1 month                                | -3.66*             | -4.47                    | -2.84  | -39.98%         |
| 3 months                               | -3.09*             | -3.71                    | -2.48  | -33.94%         |
| 6 months                               | -2.53*             | -3.06                    | -2.00  | -28.94%         |
| 12 months                              | -1.41              | -2.21                    | -0.61  | -15.65%         |
| <b>Gun-Related Aggravated Assaults</b> |                    |                          |        |                 |
| 1 month                                | -15.85*            | -21.65                   | -10.06 | -18.64%         |
| 3 months                               | -9.98*             | -14.45                   | -5.51  | -13.76%         |
| 6 months                               | -4.05              | -8.09                    | -0.01  | -4.92%          |
| 12 months                              | 7.81               | 1.67                     | 13.95  | 10.91%          |

\* p<.05

aggravated assaults was 78.17, a non-significant reduction of 5.8 percent. Overall, this analysis indicates that a declining trend in violent crime corresponded with the implementation of focused deterrence in Kansas City. The interrupted time series analysis provides a more rigorous test of the crime impact associated with the Kansas City focused deterrence pulling levers strategy.

Table 5 shows the results of the interrupted time series model. For both homicides and gun-related aggravated assaults, the table shows the 1-month, 3-month, 6-month and 12-month effects. Those effects indicate the change in crime trends at that point after implementation of focused deterrence. Table 5 also shows the parameter estimate, which reflects the monthly reductions in homicide and

gun-related aggravated assaults at that point, and the relative effect.<sup>23</sup> In terms of homicides, the one-month effect of the focused deterrence strategy was a 39.98-percent reduction in the trajectory of homicides. This effect, which was statistically significant, continues but declines during the remainder of the implementation year (33.94-percent reduction at 3 months, 28.94-percent reduction at 6 months, and 15.65-percent reduction at 12 months). In terms of gun-related aggravated assaults, there was an 18.64-percent reduction after one month of implementation. This effect is statistically significant. Similar to the homicide trend, the effect on aggravated assaults declines at three and six months (13.76-percent and 4.92-percent reductions, respectively). Interestingly, after 12 months of implementation, the trend in gun-related aggravated assaults actually increased by 10.91 percent (not statistically significant). Overall, the interrupted time series analysis shows that statistically significant reductions occurred in both homicides and gun-related aggravated assaults following implementation of the focused deterrence strategy. Notably, the effects were largest immediately after implementation and decreased over time.

### III. LESSONS LEARNED

The Kansas City SPI team implemented a pair of evidence-based strategies in an effort to curb violence and gun crime in

the city. In both phases of their SPI, the strategy of choice—foot patrol in micro-hot spots and focused deterrence—was associated with immediate, statistically significant declines in violent crime. In each case, however, the crime decline effects waned over time. The Kansas City SPI offers a number of important lessons learned for police managers and line officers.

#### For the Police Manager

##### *Keep the focus on Smart Policing principles.*

The KCPD experienced a significant leadership change during the SPI project. Leadership change has occurred in a number of SPI sites, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance has devoted significant attention to the issue as a potentially serious barrier to sustainability of SPI programs.<sup>24</sup> The experience in Kansas City demonstrates that leadership change does not necessarily represent a death knell for a police department's focus on applying evidence-based strategies. Clearly, leadership change can bring a shift in vision. There was a demonstrable vision-shift in Kansas City from foot patrol to focused deterrence. But the focus on evidence-based practices did not change, nor did KCPD's adherence to the core principles of Smart Policing. It's the work of middle management—sergeants, lieutenants, majors, and commanders—that generates stability of focus. Simply put, middle management represents the

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<sup>23</sup> The relative effect was standardized so that we could compare the percent of change in homicides to the change in gun-related aggravated assaults.

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<sup>24</sup> See: <http://www.smartpolicinginitiative.com/tta/webinars>.

evidence-based anchor for a police department. As long as an agency's mission remains grounded in the core principles of SPI (i.e., in collaboration, data-driven decision-making, research partnerships, and strategic targeting of problems through evidence-based strategies), course corrections that are implemented at the top of the organization can be successfully managed and can continue to help reduce crime.

During this period of leadership transition in Kansas City, the most critical component to success was the communication between the UMKC researchers, CNA (the technical assistance provider for SPI), and KCPD command staff. Had the Kansas City team not been consulting with each other and with the SPI support team, the transition would not have been as seamless. The inclusion of the KCPD's fiscal personnel was just as important as including the personnel that were drafting the new organizational focus on violent crime. Leaders must remember that it is critical that the organizational shift be shared with the entire agency in a manner that empowers the support and implementation staff to make vital, "mid-course" changes without interference or repercussion. In Kansas City, the Chief of Police clearly documented and publicly stated that KC NoVA and the focused-deterrence effort were top priorities for the department. The KC NoVA Governing Board also played a critical role ensuring that the initiative stayed on task.

**Middle management represents the evidence-based anchor for a police department.**

*Decide how much time is need for foot patrol.*

The Kansas City Foot Patrol study joins a growing body of research demonstrating that targeted use of foot patrol in micro-hot spots can generate immediate, significant reductions in crime. But results from the Kansas City SPI, and additional analysis from Philadelphia,<sup>25</sup> suggest that the crime-reduction benefits of foot patrol can wane over time. For example, the results from Kansas City showed that foot patrol produced a 55-percent reduction in violent crime during the first six weeks of the study, but crime actually increased during the remaining seven weeks of the study. This raises important questions about the duration and nature of foot patrol deployments, given the cost and resources required to implement the strategy. Should foot patrol be part of a short-term, rotating deployment where officers are shifted to new micro-hot spots every six weeks? Or should foot patrol officers remain in hot spots for longer periods, even if there is a declining return on investment in terms of crime reduction? The current research evidence does not allow for a definitive answer to this question, though we

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<sup>25</sup> E.T. Sorg, C.P. Haberman, J.H. Ratcliffe, and E.R. Groff. 2013. "Foot Patrol in Violent Crime Hot Spots: The Longitudinal Impact of Deterrence and Post-treatment Effects of Displacement." *Criminology* 51(1): 65-102.

recommend that agencies consider the overall goal of their foot patrol program. If the goal is centered on producing short-term reductions in crime in hotspots, then a rotating deployment may be more likely to achieve that goal. If the goal is to produce longer-term investments, such as enhanced police legitimacy through procedurally just treatment of citizens,<sup>26</sup> then a foot patrol program grounded in stable deployment is the preferred method. A foot patrol program with stable assignments would allow those officers to become integrated into the neighborhoods where they work, as they build relationships and legitimacy over time with the people who live and work in their beats. A blended approach could also be employed where some officers remain in long-term foot patrol assignments, and additional foot patrol officers are occasionally given short-term assignments in response to crime trends. In short, the deployment decision should be determined by the overall goals of the program.

***Remember that internal communication is critical.***

Successful implementation of a new strategy hinges on buy-in from line officers. It is patrol officers, after all, who will be asked to conduct foot patrols or identify offenders for a focused deterrence strategy. Consequently, open lines of communication between agency leader-

ship and line officers is critical, as it can generate internal legitimacy. That is, by giving line officers a voice in the planning and implementation process, by treating them fairly and respectfully, and by demonstrating trustworthy motives, the agency leadership can enhance their own legitimacy (and that of the organization) in the eyes of line officers, thereby naturally increasing officer buy-in. In Kansas City, internal transparency and communication were central to the SPI. Rookie officers assigned to the foot patrol study were briefed on the program while they were still in the academy. They received a foot patrol orientation, and the academy instructors engaged the cadets in an open discussion about the Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment. When the rookie officers began their 90-day foot patrol assignments, they had a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the program, as well as the leadership's expectations regarding their role in the study.

KCPD took a similar approach with its focused deterrence strategy. Focused deterrence is a complex undertaking that requires numerous partnerships and multiple interventions (e.g., law enforcement at multiple levels, other justice system components, social service provision). In an effort to demystify

**Open communication between agency leadership and line officers can generate internal legitimacy.**

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<sup>26</sup> Procedural justice is achieved when officers give citizens the opportunity to state their case; their decisions are fair and neutral; they treat citizens with dignity and respect; and they demonstrate trustworthy motives. See: T.R. Tyler. 1990. *Why People Obey the Law*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

focused deterrence—what it is and what it is not—the KC NoVA team conducted in-service trainings across KCPD, as well as additional orientation sessions for external stakeholders. The marketing of focused deterrence through the internal and external trainings demonstrated the core elements of the strategy and clarified the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group. For patrol officers, the training highlighted how focused deterrence can complement and is consistent with their existing responsibilities. Moreover, the Kansas City SPI highlighted the importance of continuing internal communication. The results presented here showed that KC NoVA had a declining effect on crime over time. The reasons for this finding are unclear, and the Kansas City SPI team is drawing on the experience and expertise of officers throughout the department to understand the cause of the declining impact, and to modify the strategy as needed to ensure continued effectiveness.

## For the Line Officer

### *Understand the goal of foot patrol.*

When line officers are assigned to foot patrol, they may or may not be given specific instructions on what activities to engage in during the assignment. The overall goal of a foot patrol program can vary, and the officers' activities should be driven by the program's goal. Officers should think about what they can accomplish now that they are away from the patrol car. The vast majority of police officers enter the profession so they can

help people.<sup>27</sup> How does foot patrol allow officers to achieve this goal? Regardless of the specific program goals, positive engagement with the people who live, work, and spend time in an officer's beat should be a central responsibility. Effective policing hinges on cooperation from citizens, and informal, consensual interactions between officers and citizens is an excellent, proven method for generating that cooperation.<sup>28</sup> The message for officers is simple: be seen; get to know the people; help solve problems; and become part of the fabric of the neighborhood. Such activities can generate police legitimacy, which will make the officers' crime-control activities more efficient and effective.

### *Apply the two—equally important—messages in a focused deterrence strategy.*

The focused deterrence strategy delivers two important messages. The first message centers on deterrence: offenders are put on notice that law enforcement is aware of their criminal activity; that such activities will no longer be tolerated; that law enforcement and other justice system agencies are now working together with a focus on the specific offenders and groups; and that, if an offender continues to

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<sup>27</sup> A.J. Raganella and M.D. White 2004. "Race, Gender and Motivation for Becoming a Police Officer: Implications for Building a Representative Police Department." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 32: 501-513.

<sup>28</sup> J. Sunshine and T.R. Tyler. 2003. "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing." *Law & Society Review* 37: 513-548; T.R. Tyler and J. Fagan. 2008. "Legitimacy and Cooperation: Why Do People Help the Police Fight Crime in Their Communities?" *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 6: 231-275.

engage in crime, law enforcement will act swiftly to arrest and prosecute the offender (often on federal charges). This is an easy, palatable message for line-level patrol officers, especially when dealing with violent offenders. Research shows that such communication can be effective, as long as it is backed up with certain, swift, and highly visible law enforcement actions if criminal activity continues.<sup>29</sup> But focused deterrence delivers a second, equally important message to offenders: if the offender wants help to stop engaging in crime, help will be provided. Help comes in the form of educational and vocational training, housing, employment, substance abuse treatment, medical care, and spiritual support. This second message can be more difficult for line-level patrol officers to accept, especially when the message is delivered to known violent offenders. However, it is just as critical to the success of focused deterrence as the first message.

This second message can be more credible when line officers are working in partnership with trained social service providers and neighborhood stakeholders representing the moral voice of the community. This genuine offer of assistance positions the police to enhance their legitimacy, promotes procedural justice, and creates a more holistic strategy to reduce violence.

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<sup>29</sup> S. Durlauf and D. Nagin. 2011. "Imprisonment and Crime: Can Both Be Reduced?" *Criminology & Public Policy* 10(1): 13-54.

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