



Community and Problem Oriented Policing: Mini Stations in the Context of 21st Century Policing

Issue Brief and Synopsis of the April 18th Public Forum

The goal of the Cleveland Community Police Commission (CPC) is to be a place where Cleveland comes together to talk about the types of police services that it wants and needs. Recently, there has been public debate centered on the revival of the discontinued Cleveland Division of Police Mini-Station Program. The CPC Community and Problem Oriented Policing Work Group, led by Dr. Yvonne Conner, has taken a three-step approach to empowering the community on this issue:

- Provide factual data and research related to mini-stations
- Provide education related to the Consent Decree and the Cleveland Division of Police's current Community and Problem Oriented Policing Plan
- Facilitate a conversation in the community that explores the issue in the context of current reform efforts, CPOP and 21st century policing

What is CPOP?

CPOP is a combination of core principles of community policing and the methodology of collaborative problem solving. The Cleveland Division of Police released a new CPOP plan in 2109.

Why is CPOP important?

- **CPOP requires Community Partnerships:** Collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police.
- **CPOP requires Organizational Transformation:** The alignment of organizational management, structure, personnel, and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem solving.
- **CPOP requires Problem Solving:** The process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and evaluate effective responses.
- **CPOP places responsibility for community engagement and problem oriented policing on all officers. All officers shall:**
 - Incorporate CPOP principles in their daily duties.
 - Strengthen relationships and build engagement opportunities between the CDP and the communities within the City.
 - Actively participate in community meetings and events.
 - Incorporate bias-free and procedural justice principles in interactions with citizens.
 - Proactively learn about and engage the communities in their assigned areas.

What's the role of community members in CPOP?

- Community members are contributors of ideas to help the police improve services, identify and solve problems. Theoretically, this happens in all Cleveland neighborhoods.
- Each police District will have a Committee of involved citizens who collaborate to improve quality of life and reduce crime. Community members are encouraged to get involved.

If you are reading this in digital format follow this [link](#) to the 2019 CPOP plan.

Research Memorandum Regarding Police Mini-stations

Background (1980s-2004)

Police mini-stations (substations, storefront stations, etc.) were established in Cleveland by Mayor White in the 1980s and were part of an earlier consent decree to reduce discrimination, improve community relations, and reduce crime¹. These were combined with more officer foot patrols and other community outreach activities to help reduce crime. Officers assigned to these stations were meant to be seen as more approachable by community members². The mini-stations were disbanded in 2004 by Mayor Campbell as a cost saving measure during Cleveland's budget difficulties in the early 2000s³.

These mini-stations were small storefront police stations that were placed throughout the city, particularly in high crime areas. There were 21 mini-stations in total, they typically had two rooms and were staffed by two officers, with one officer working Monday-Friday 8 am to 4 pm, and the other working Tuesday-Saturday noon to 8 pm. Stations were manned by 42 police officers, 4 sergeants, and 1 lieutenant. They required approximately 30 zone cars to operate.

What the research says

There has been fairly limited research on the effects of police mini-stations, but the empirical analysis that has been done has consistently drawn two main conclusions: first, that mini-stations were not effective at reducing crime, and, second, that they were well liked by the community, regardless⁴. However, there has been little or no research done on the effectiveness of mini-stations in the decade since Cleveland's program ended in the 2000s.

City Council's Proposal (2018)

There has been renewed interest in bringing back police mini-stations for the last few years, and recently 12 members of the City Council have petitioned to have them brought back⁵. Under this new proposal there will be 17 mini-stations, one for each Council Ward. They would not be housed in stand-alone facilities, and instead be housed within existing city infrastructure, such as rec centers. These mini-stations would be staffed comparably as they were in the 1990s and 2000s and would have similar hours. This proposal was made before the Cleveland Division of Police had a Court approved CPOP Plan.

Estimated costs

The total estimated cost to operate these new mini-stations is approximately **8.9 million dollars** per year. This total assumes that: (1) there will be little to no facilities cost, as existing city facilities will be utilized, (2) the costs associated with the program will be comparable to what they were originally, and (3) ancillary costs will already be accounted for. These calculations were made by the CPC with data from the Department of Public Safety and the Mayor's Office. These estimates are very conservative, and are only the starting point when considering the potential costs of reintroducing mini-stations.

¹ CWRU, 2019

² Ideastream, 2019

³ NYT, 2004

⁴ Wycoff & Skogan, 1986; Uchida et al., 1992; Sherman et al., 1997; Zhao et al. 2002

⁵ Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2016; Ideastream, 2018

Personnel

Staffing 17 mini-stations will require 34 POs, 4 Sergeants, and 1 Lieutenant if they are to be comparably staffed as they were in the 1990s and early 2000s. The hourly cost in terms of salary and benefits for a PO is \$47.58, a Sergeant is \$55.21, and a Lieutenant is \$64.04. All officers work 40 hours a week.

The combined hourly cost for this staff is \$1,902.60; for 40 hours a week and 52 weeks a year that brings the starting personnel costs to \$3,957,408.00. Estimates from the city suggest that the yearly backfill costs (overtime hours, substitutions, reassignments, etc.) for an officer is approximately \$100,000⁶, for 39 officers, this totals \$3,900,000.00.

In total, estimated personnel costs for mini-stations are **\$7,857,409.00**.

Equipment

Much of the office equipment for these mini-stations is already owned by the city, so nearly all additional operating costs will come from the deployment of zone cars to the mini-stations. Assuming a number of vehicles comparable to the previous iteration of mini-stations, 25 zone cars will be deployed. These zone cars will be deployed for approximately 64 hours a week, 12 hours on Tuesday-Friday and 8 hours on Monday and Saturday.

It costs \$12.50 per hour to operate a zone car⁶; for 25 zone cars, for 64 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, the estimated total equipment costs are **\$1,040,000.00**. This does not include the costs of purchasing these vehicles.

This brings the most conservative total estimated costs to **\$8,897,408.00**.

Pros and Cons

While the official reasons that the mini-stations were disbanded in 2004 were financial; the program had other problems as well that, even though they were popular, contributed to their closure. There were issues with staffing, as officers still had to attend court hearings, and were often out working on investigations. This meant that stations were often closed during posted hours. There were also issues with accountability, as officers were difficult to supervise and keep track of. There were also conflicts stemming from investigative overlap, *e.g.*, if a mini-station officer investigates a complaint about a nearby drug dealer, they may inadvertently intervene in an ongoing drug bust. There is also a concern among some in the community that these stations may contribute to over policing. The existing research suggests that these problems have also been observed in other departments⁷. In addition to this, to reiterate, Mini-stations have not proven to be an effective way to reduce crime.

However, Mini-stations are popular with the community because they increase the visibility of the police and are seen by many as a friendlier face for law enforcement. Mini-stations were a 20th century attempt to address some of the problems between the community and the police; CPOP has been developed as a 21st century way of addressing these problems. How mini-stations relate to CPOP will be an important consideration moving forward.

⁶ Office of Public Safety & Mayor's Office

⁷ Sherman et al., 1997; Griffiths et al., 2001; Dumaine, 2005

The Conversation

The CPC hosted a forum on Mini Stations April 18th. At the forum attendees were provided with the information in this brief, listened to a panel discussion on the topic and engaged in a Q&A.

Panelists and summary of viewpoints were:

Sgt. Richard Jackson, CDP, Commissioner representing the Black Shield Police Association

- Advocated for a more modern approach to using resources than “brick and mortar” mini-stations

Det. Carl Bowers, CDP, 30 year veteran, award winning leader in community engagement efforts

- Introduced the idea of mobile mini-stations that can be deployed to areas selected by commanders to address problems identified using the new CPOP plan and conduct additional community engagement

Ms. Patt Needham, activist and representative of the group Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ)

- Using the Consent Decree and the new Problem Oriented Policing Plan as the backbone of her position she did not believe mini-stations in any capacity, mobile or brick and mortar, played a role in the divisions future plans

Christopher Brown, community safety expert for Cudell Improvement

- An advocate of neighborhood safety on the micro level, such as block clubs, believed there are better ways to address community concerns about safety and crime than sparsely distributed mini stations in only some wards

Eric Null, a representative of St. Johns A.M.E Church

- Advocated for the return of traditional mini-stations as a way to build relationships between the community and the police.

Two members of Cleveland City Council, Michael Polensek Ward 8 and Joe Jones Ward 1, also provided lengthy pro- mini station viewpoints and commentary during the public engagement periods. Their arguments largely reflected what our research has shown: Nostalgia and impressions of safety are strong when it comes to this topic

Although the attendance was sparse the event proved that citizens who are informed about an issue may change their opinion based on new information:

Attendees who were in favor of re-instituting mini stations at the beginning of event were 64%

Attendees who were in favor of re-instituting mini-stations at the conclusion of the event were 36%

The question remains open for a larger public conversation: Are mini-stations right for Clevelanders in the context of the new Community and Problem Oriented Policing Plan?