

# CITY OF CORAL GABLES

## - MEMORANDUM -

**TO: MR. DAVID BROWN**  
**CITY MANAGER**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2008**

**FROM: CHIEF M.L. HAMMERSCHMIDT**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**

**SUBJECT:**  
**AREA PATROL**

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For years, the Coral Gables Police Department's Uniform Patrol Division deployed its officers in a zone patrol format. The City was divided into 12 zones, 7 zones north of US 1 and 5 south of US 1. The size and location of those zones were determined by crime statistics and geography of the area. Each zone had one patrol officer assigned to it. This deployment guaranteed 100% equal coverage throughout the City, i.e. one officer would be patrolling in every part of the city at any given time. History has proven this to be an inefficient use of our scarce resources. The disadvantages to this type of deployment are (1) its inflexibility, one officer to each zone, no more, no less, with no consideration given to the amount and type of activity in the zone, which hinders our ability to address specific crime issues in specific areas without expending large amounts of overtime monies; (2) some officers are assigned to areas with little or no activity, essentially wasting resources for a shift in areas that do not have enforcement issues; (3) if an officer becomes involved in any type of lengthy call, (i.e. arrest, major incident, large traffic crash) it removes two officers from their assigned zones for hours at a time, thus defeating the equal coverage theory; and (4) when short of officers due to leave or training, overtime must be expended to ensure there is an officer assigned to each zone.

On January 7, 2008, the Department changed to an area patrol deployment. With area patrol the City is divided into 2 areas (North & South). The dividing line being the north lateral curb along US 1. Each area has a squad, comprised of 8 officers and 1 sergeant, assigned to it. The Shift Commander and the respective squad sergeants identify trouble spots, crime trends and community concerns in each of their areas. They then develop proactive strategies and tactics to deal with the issues. Examples of these strategies would be deployment of unmarked vehicles along with marked units as back up to look for vehicle or residential burglars who are operating in a particular part of their area. These officers would be sent out on special details and not be burdened with routine patrol calls. Other members of the squad would handle report calls. In addition, to ensure adequate coverage throughout the city, each area is further divided into two zones. The North Area is divided at Bird Rd and the South Area is divided at Kendall Drive. South of Kendall Drive has 2 officers assigned to it at all times. This is similar to the coverage prior to the change over from zone patrol.

Area patrol strategy provides several benefits to the citizens of Coral Gables. The first is a team approach to crime prevention. Area patrol gives supervisors the ability to address specific crime concerns within a given area. Officers can be directed to specific problems or issues on a daily basis. This also enables them to have complete knowledge of people, vehicles, residents, and

business needs in their areas. In addition, area patrol enhances the team concept by allowing the squad to utilize a variety of police tactics and equipment to include tools such as unmarked police cars, plain clothed officer and tactical surveillance equipment. These tools can help speed the Police Departments response to newly identified crime trends.

In conclusion, since its inception, the Area Patrol strategy has proved to be a very positive crime suppression initiative. Supervisors and Officers are adjusting well to the transition and have decreased property crimes due to arrests that have been made with this concept. In addition, since its inception, the Uniform Patrol Division has reduced its monthly overtime usage by 3% per month. With no other anomalies in the deployment of the patrol officers, this downward trend should continue to help hold down the costs in overtime used by the division.

Cc: Donna Lubin, Assistant City Manager  
Maria Jimenez, Assistant City Manager  
Senior Staff