



# VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Operations Division

**Date:** October 27, 2010

**To:** Deputy Chief Constable Doug LePard i/c Operations Division

**From:** Inspector Adua Porteous i/c District One

**Subject:** Sexual Offences Reduction Plan - 2010

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### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this interim report is to document a comprehensive plan to address the increase in sexual assaults in Vancouver. The characteristics of these sex offences, as well as trends and potential contributing factors, are described and form the basis of the strategies developed to reduce these troubling crimes.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2010, it became apparent that there had been a year-over-year increase in sexual offences, and in September 2010, the VPD's Public Affairs Department reported this when providing a regular update on crime statistics in Vancouver. It should be noted that sex offences are the only significant offence type to show an increase compared to 2009. As a result, Supt. Rothwell was directed to oversee an SCU analysis for the 2008-2010 period (hereinafter referred to as "the measurement period") and provide potential explanations/causative factors for the increase. As a result, SCU broke the analysis down to the four districts, and determined the following:

- District One has experienced the greatest recent increase of any of the four districts over the measurement period. Specifically, over the three years reviewed by SCU, District One, fuelled by sexual assaults in the Central Business District, had an increase of 21.6% from 2008 to 2009 and an increase of 29% from 2009 to 2010. Over the three-year measurement period, sexual assaults rose 56.8% in District One. In addition, in 2010, District One experienced the second highest number of sexual assaults of the four districts. There were three notable trends identified in this analysis: sexual assaults were linked to licensed premises; women 25 years and older were victimized most frequently; and sexual assaults at the lower end of seriousness, such as groping and unwanted kissing, showed a marked increase.
- District Two had the highest number of sexual assaults of all the districts during the measurement period. There was, however, a decrease in 2010 from 2009 in sexual assaults in this district. Overall, District Two has experienced a 16.9%

increase in sexual assaults from 2008 to 2010. Of note, the Strathcona neighbourhood has had the highest number of sexual assaults for the last three years in the district. Also of note there is a high ratio of sex trade workers in the Strathcona area.

- District Three has experienced little change in numbers of sexual assaults, yet the location of where the majority of their sexual offences occurred shifted during the measurement period. Since 2008, there has been a 3.5% decrease in sexual assaults in the district. There has been a shift from the Sunset neighbourhood having experienced the highest number of sexual assaults in 2008 to the Kensington-Cedar Cottage area having the highest number for 2009 and 2010. One possible explanation for this decrease and displacement may be some successful anti-gang initiatives which resulted in the incarceration of several dozen gang members and associates who frequented the Sunset neighbourhood in early 2009.
- There was a significant decrease in sexual assaults in District Four in 2009. The number of such crimes, however, has since climbed in 2010 to a level just shy of 2008 levels. Overall, however, there has been a 4% reduction in sexual assaults over the measurement period in this district. The Kitsilano neighbourhood had the highest number of sexual assaults in 2008. Kitsilano and the Fairview neighbourhoods had the highest numbers of sexual assaults in 2009, and Fairview had the highest totals in 2010.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPOSINGS, VOYEURISM AND GROPINGS:**

Some experts define the act of exposing as a disorder where one bares their genitals to an unsuspecting stranger producing sexual excitement with no further attempt at further sexual activity with the stranger. Research has shown, however, that the manifestation of paraphilias such as exposings, indecent acts and voyeurism may be behaviour that will lead the offender to more serious sexual offences or are already part of a violent sexual crime cycle.

Early manifestations of paraphilias such as voyeurism and indecent exposures were part of the sexual repertoire of notorious criminals such as Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, Col. Russell Williams and Vancouver's own Donald Bakker. It is important to consider that some trespass at night calls may have a sexual purpose associated to them: it is possible that the suspect is on the property for the purpose of committing sexually motivated offences. While not all exposers become violent sex offenders, it is likely that all violent sex offenders started out with offences such as exposing and voyeurism. For this reason, exposings, voyeurism, and less-serious sex offences such as groping must be treated very seriously.

### **STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

On October 13, 2010, in an effort to address the increase in sexual offences, the Special Investigation Section organized a sex crimes analysis and strategy meeting with the

Operations Division and SCU. The meeting was a brainstorming session with an objective of identifying and carrying forward a comprehensive action plan that could be implemented by Operations and SIS regarding an increase in the frequency of sexual offences.

Subject matter experts at the meeting identified some precursor crimes such as indecent acts/exposures and a need to monitor such crimes and analyze their relationship to sexual assaults. Attendees also identified the need for SCU investigators to liaise routinely with Operations Division members with a goal of passing along investigative advice to first responders that would assist SCU with the files, and maximize the chances for successful investigations. There was discussion of an “investigative template” to assist first responders with these types of investigations. This is to be followed up by the Sex Crimes Unit and Training.

It was identified that a consistent approach from all districts must be implemented to raise member awareness to not only sexual assault cases, but identified precursor crimes. To that end, the following recommendations were developed:

#### For the Operations Division

- **Crime Mapping:** All districts should implement separate mapping of indecent acts/exposures for their weekly crime meeting reports. This will assist in identifying trends and support dedicating appropriate resources such as Patrol saturation, plainclothes car, foot beats, covert surveillance and /or mobile patrol in a timely manner at the district level. This strategy will be assigned to the District Analysts.
- **Street Checks:** There should be directed street checks/uniform presence in areas surrounding licensed establishments, parks and other areas where higher than normal pedestrian traffic is found. This strategy will be assigned to the Crime Control Officer and the Sergeants in each district.
- **Quality of Investigations:** District managers are to reinforce to all members that when they investigate any sex related crime/occurrence, a thorough and comprehensive investigation is required. This includes events such as indecent exposures, voyeurism (e.g., ‘peeping Toms’) as well as all types of sex assaults regardless of the level of cooperation from the complainant/victim.
- Reluctant reportees may not want to burden the police; however, oftentimes the information they can provide may be relevant to other investigations. By ensuring that our investigations are thorough and complete, we can ensure that we have the greatest opportunity to identify and link seemingly isolated incidents and to locate and charge persons responsible.
- Often the suspect description may be vague or less than ideal; however, our members need to remember that these events are often one in a series occurring over a long period of time that can eventually lead to more significant offences.

- **Education:** All districts Staff Sergeants are encouraged to contact SCU and HRO and set up team meetings to discuss the significance of investigating gropings and indecent acts/exposures, and to take the opportunity to provide further education to members.

#### For the Investigation Division

- **Analysis:** Weekly analysis from the SCU analyst updating the district analysts on trends involving sexual assaults, groping, and indecent acts/exposures should occur. This is critical to successfully implementing the other strategies described in this report.
- **Compstat Reporting:** Monthly Compstat reporting from SIS about sexual assaults, groping, and indecent acts/exposures throughout the city must be implemented. Such reporting should include but not be limited to geographic and temporal analysis, crime categorization and *modus operandi*. This reporting should also include any suggested strategies to combat these crimes. Providing this opportunity for monthly reporting will enhance the awareness of the issue but will also be more effective in addressing emerging trends.
- **Projects:** Wherever appropriate, SCU should look for opportunities to leverage Patrol resources to address sex offences that occur on the street, such as gropings. There is more opportunity for collaboration, such as occurs with Robbery/Assault in identifying and locating robbery suspects, for example.
- **Investigative Template:** The SCU will collaborate with training to produce an investigative template for patrol by December 1, 2010
- **Prioritizing Sex Offenders:** When a viable sex target has been identified, e.g., ----- A discussion for surveillance resources should be considered by the investigator from SCU and also the involvement of HRO to liaise with ISPO for assistance.
- **Evaluation:** A monthly analysis by the SCU analyst to examine how the Districts are doing e.g., number of specific initiatives implemented, any results (e.g., arrests, etc) can be addressed at Compstat by the SIS Inspector.

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