



VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE
Planning, Research & Audit Section

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To: Leslie Stevens, Sgt. i/c Organizational Planning Unit
Planning, Research & Audit Section

From: Tim Szkopek-Szkopowski, Planning and Policy Analyst
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Subject: Policing Non-Residents of Vancouver

Introduction

On March 25, 2008, the Organizational Planning Unit was tasked with quantifying the enforcement of non-residents of Vancouver by the VPD. This was requested for inclusion in a presentation to the Police Board on the issues faced and costs incurred by the VPD as a result of policing a major Metropolitan city which is surrounded by smaller municipalities.

The data reported in this analysis are all individuals who identified as either an offender or a victim for each documented incident in Vancouver in 2008¹. The data was extracted from Versadex PRIME. It contains a separate entity entry from each GO report and Street Check written by the VPD. Each entity is not a separate individual as it is possible that the same person may appear at either a victim or suspect numerous times within a year.

Findings

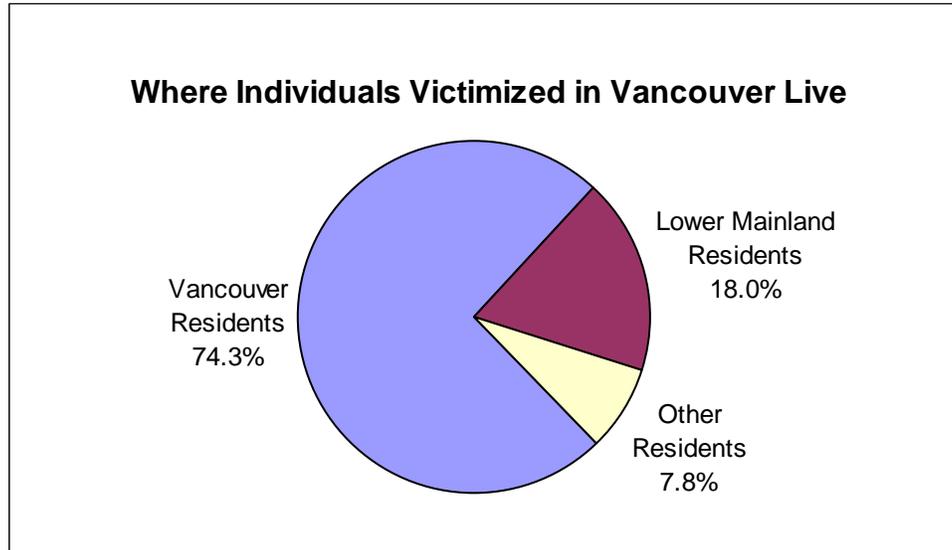
In 2008, the VPD recorded 223,475 case specific entities, which excludes routine traffic checks.

¹ Using the address fields, it is possible to distinguish entities who reside in Vancouver from those who do not. Instances when Vancouver was misspelled did not occur very often and did not significantly affect the analysis.

Addresses coded as NFA, or no fixed address, are not included in the analysis as there is uncertainty in the overall reliability of the city of residence of individuals listed as such. Additionally, records where the address field is blank were also excluded for the abovementioned reason. Note that for the total count of entities in 2008, entities with NFA and blank address fields were included; however for the analysis of residents for specific role codes these entities were excluded.

VICTIMS

In 2008, 51,827 entities were listed as victims or complainants². Non-residents of Vancouver make up 13,342, or 25.7%, of the total number of victims or complainants. Of those who were victimized while in Vancouver, 7.8% were not residents of the Vancouver or elsewhere in the Lower Mainland³.



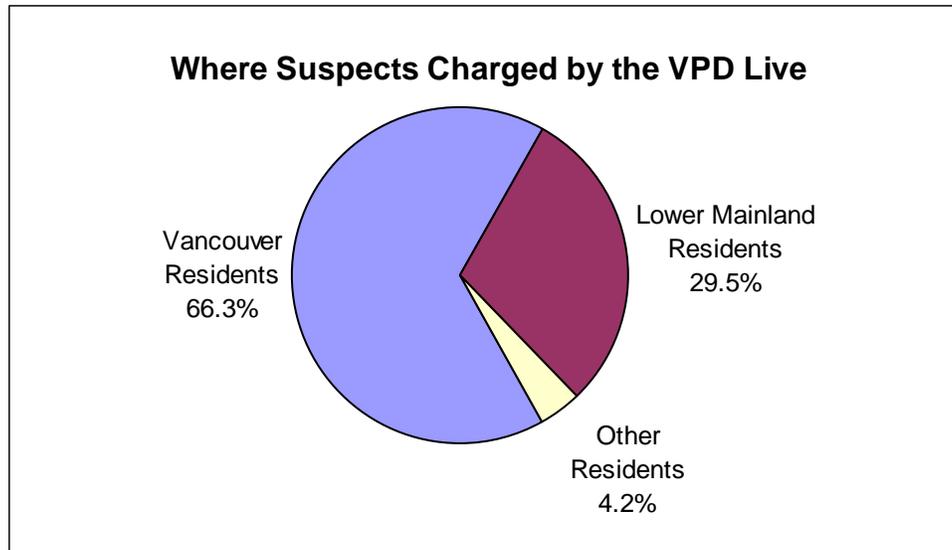
CHARGED SUSPECTS

There were 20,294 separate entries for suspects who were either charged or chargeable⁴. Non-residents accounted for 6,843, or 33.7%, of suspects charged or suspects chargeable in 2008. Of those charged by the VPD, 4.2% were not residents of the Vancouver or elsewhere in the Lower Mainland.

² Victims were classified with the following role codes; VICTIM, COMPLAINANT, and YTH-VICTIM.

³ The Lower Mainland consists of an area bound by Squamish at the North, Mission and Hope at the East, the US/Canadian boarder on the South, and the coastline on the West.

⁴ Charged suspects were classified with the following role codes: CHARGED, SUSP CHGBLE, RECOMND CHG, YTH-CHARGED, YTH-SUS CHG, and YTH-REC CHG.



SUSPECTS

Entities listed only as suspects were excluded from this analysis. The classification of 'suspect' covers a wide range of possible levels of involvement in a criminal event. In one instance a suspect could be an individual who meets a basic physical description of a criminal and is currently being investigated while in other instances this individual may have almost enough evidence against them to lay charges.

The other issue surrounding the inclusion of suspect information is that the role code in PRIME may not be updated routinely for these individuals. There is a distinct possibility that someone who is initially listed as a suspect but is later cleared may not have their role code changed.

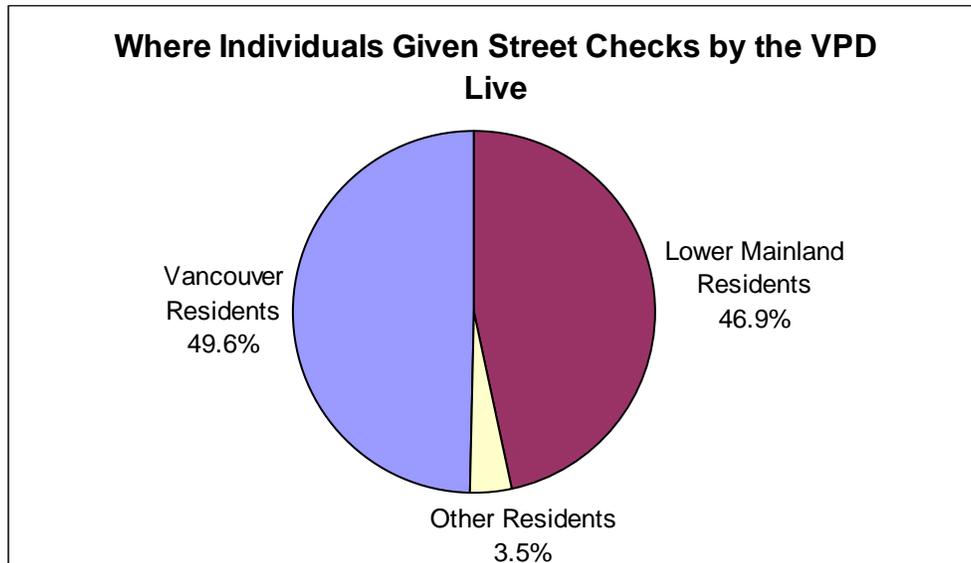
STREET CHECKS

There were 11,507 separate entity entries for street checks⁵. The street check role code is used when officers conduct a check of an individual on the street. A street check can be conducted in cases when individuals match the suspect description of a recently committed crime in the area or are acting in a suspicious manner such to gain the attention of the police. Non-residents of Vancouver accounted for 5,797, or approximately 50.4%, of all street checks in 2008. Of those given street checks by the VPD, 3.5% did not reside in Vancouver or elsewhere in the Lower Mainland.

Reasons for the elevated number of street checks may be attributed to the recent gang violence that the entire region has been subject to. These gang members quite often frequent the clubs and bars in the Downtown Core of Vancouver. For the purpose of intelligence gathering, these individuals are quite often checked by police officers, as are those who are seen associating with them.

⁵ Individuals given a street check had a role code of STREET CHEC

Another possible explanation could relate to officer familiarity with known offenders. If officers see people whom they do not know in high crime areas, they may be more likely to check those individuals to determine why they are there. As a result, people who do not know the reputation of certain areas, specifically those from out of town, may be checked more frequently.



Discussion

Care should be taken when interpreting the figures contained in this report. This report does not examine other cities and as such it is not possible to determine how the results in Vancouver compare to other areas of Metro Vancouver. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to include that data in this report.

Additionally, any examination of other cities must rely on cooperation from the police department of that city as their business rules may differ from those found in the VPD. In PRIME, a role code is used to determine what role an individual played in any given incident. A role can be witness, victim, complainant, property representative, suspect, etc. The definitions for each role code may differ slightly by jurisdiction.

Although this report does not contain an analysis of non-resident offenders in other cities, there are many residents of Metro Vancouver who travel outside of their own city for work. Data from the past 3 Canadian Censuses show that over 8,000 residents of Metro Vancouver travel to other regions on a daily basis for the purpose of work. Likewise, over 23,000 individuals travel into Metro Vancouver from other areas on a daily basis for the purpose of work. Over a 10 year period from 1996-2006 this number has been increasing dramatically.

The phenomenon of cross jurisdictional offending is not fully understood at this time; however, it is clear that all jurisdictions are impacted by it. One example of the movement of offenders is demonstrated by a chronic offender currently in Vancouver. This individual has 16 separate entries in his address history since Jan 18, 2008. This offender has resided in five different cities (Vancouver, North Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, and Surrey) and has been attached to no fixed address numerous times over this period of 15 months. He has over 280 entries on PRIME and his documented offences have taken place in Surrey, Burnaby, New Westminster, Vancouver, and on Translink property.

Cross jurisdictional enforcement also occurs in another manner. [15(1)]
[15(1)]
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[15(1)] As a result, police from both departments are travelling into other jurisdictions with the hope of preventing violence targeted at these high profile criminals.

The above mentioned issues are not fully accounted for with the figures found in this report and care must be taken when attempting to assess the costs and resources used when policing out of town offenders.

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