

Public 'doesn't see enough officers,' chief says

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man thought of as the father of the modern police force.

Using Zone 111, which encompasses Newmarket and its 70,000 people, as an example, Middaugh said four patrol cars currently are assigned to the area around the clock.

Under his restructuring, Zone 111 will be divided into five beats, with one car per beat.

Each officer will take "ownership" of his beat, learn its geography and become familiar with its people.

"One of the concerns of the public is they don't see enough uniformed officers," Middaugh said. "They want to see officers on foot patrol. They need that safe and secure feeling, especially (in light of the events of) the last five weeks. We definitely think it will make people more secure."

Under the restructuring, the region's 32 zones will be broken down into 55 beats, Middaugh said, about one quarter of the beats will likely see foot patrols, some beginning as early as January.

Among areas specifically targeted for foot patrols are downtown Unionville, Markville Mall, Stouffville, Pacific Mall, Kleinburg, Woodbridge and Canada's Wonderland.

"In six months' time, I want beat officers to be able to give me a complete profile of their beats," said Middaugh. That profile will be established through "personal contact, ongoing communication (and) establishing a 'comfort level'."

He said the most important thing is knowing "who the good people are. We don't get to know the good people enough."

Officers will be assigned to their beats for a minimum of one year.

There will be a slight redrawing of some district boundaries to provide better coverage and non-essential duties assigned to front-line officers will be reduced.

During the study, it was found front-line officers were undertaking tasks that took time away from their patrols.

These included transporting docu-

ments, picking up found property and obtaining meals for people in custody, duties that could be performed by civilian personnel.

The restructuring will allow officers to spend more time on proactive police work. The new approach aims to split officers' time between proactive duties, administrative duties, and reactive

responding to calls.

Middaugh also hopes to have civilian personnel take over more duties at district offices. Currently, two armed officers are assigned at all times to the front desk in each of the force's five districts. He said by "civilianizing" half of those positions, better use can be made of trained police officers.

"They want to see officers on foot patrol. They need that safe and secure feeling."

— York Regional Police Chief Robert Middaugh

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