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REPORT

A REVIEW
OF "S.H.O.P.": THE
SERIOUS HABITUAL OFFENDER
PROGRAM OF THE CALGARY
POLICE SERVICE

SUMMARY REPORT

No. 1993-23

Responding
to Violence
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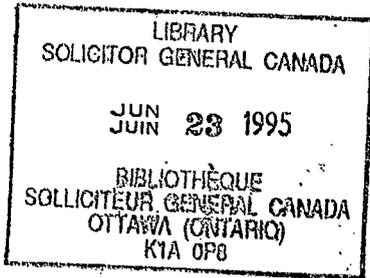
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A REVIEW
OF "S.H.O.P.": THE
SERIOUS HABITUAL OFFENDER
PROGRAM OF THE CALGARY
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SUMMARY REPORT

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Cat. No. JS4/1-1993-23E
ISBN 0-662-21124-3



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made possible through funding from the Solicitor General Canada under the Brighter Futures Initiative.

The Alberta Management Group wishes to express its appreciation to the members of the Project Advisory Committee (listed below) for their input and guidance during the course of the study

We would also like to express our gratitude to the Calgary Police Service for their special assistance with the survey of police personnel and the extraction of young offender records used in this study. Finally, we would like to thank the many staff of agencies in Calgary who shared their views about youth crime and the Serious Habitual Offender Program (SHOP).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the main findings contained in the companion **Technical Report** entitled, A Review of SHOP: The Serious Habitual Offender Program of the Calgary Police Service. The **Technical Report** also provides details on the program's implementation history in Calgary, as well as information on similar programs in Canada and the United States targeting repeat offenders.

This **Summary Report** has been prepared separately from the **Technical Report** to facilitate dissemination of key results to interested parties beyond immediate program participants in Calgary.

1.1 Purpose

The **Serious Habitual Offender Program (SHOP)** of the Calgary Police Service represents a focused effort to coordinate police and community resources to deal with the problem of the serious repeat young offender. The program, patterned after similar inter-agency initiatives in the United States, constitutes a significant change in the way policing resources are organized and allocated, and in the relationship formed between the police and other justice and social agencies in the community. SHOP was implemented in Calgary in 1989.

A review of SHOP is of interest not only to the Calgary community of agencies participating in the program, but also to other jurisdictions who may be considering similar initiatives to address the problem of youth crime. The objectives of the review, therefore, are three-fold:

1. To describe SHOP as currently implemented in Calgary and compare it to other interventions dealing with similar target populations;
2. To assess the impact of SHOP as implemented and identify opportunities for improvement of the program to enhance its operation and effectiveness in Calgary; and
3. To identify the policy implications and factors critical to successful implementation of similar programs elsewhere in Canada.

1.2 Methods

The study was conducted in two phases:

1. **Background Description** - In the first phase, efforts focused on describing the program in Calgary and comparing it to similar interventions in other jurisdictions in North America.

2. **Data Collection and Analysis** - In this phase, the research plan was designed and approved, instruments were developed and data were collected and analyzed.

A set of research questions was developed to guide the study. The questions dealt with the following issues:

- justification for the program as a response to youth crime in Calgary;
- appropriateness of the process used to designate habitual young offenders;
- profile of young offenders designated under the program;
- quality and utility of young offender information generated by the program;
- cost effectiveness of the program;
- impact of the program on young offenders;
- appropriateness of the program's design in the Calgary context;
- lessons learned from program implementation in Calgary and elsewhere.

Two major sources of data were used to address the research questions:

1. **Qualitative Information** - consisting of perceptions and opinions of stakeholders and direct participants in Calgary, including:
 - agency policy makers (11);
 - participating agency staff (21);
 - Calgary Police Service field staff (84);
 - young offenders (34) and parents/guardians of offenders (7).
2. **Quantitative Data** - consisting of the criminal histories¹ of a sample of Calgary young offenders, including:
 - SHOs - young offenders designated as Serious Habitual Offenders (189);
 - non-SHOs - other young offenders (180).

These two samples were randomly selected from a population of 4,565 youth who experienced a police contact for an alleged offence that resulted in an occurrence report being filed in December 1991.

¹Criminal histories were drawn from the following electronic data bases: PIMS (Police Information Management System) and COMIS (Corrections Management Information System).

A court order was obtained by the Calgary Police Service permitting the consultants to access offender records and to interview young offenders and their parents/guardians. This step was required to meet confidentiality provisions of the Young Offenders Act.

Results of the study are summarized in subsequent sections according to the primary study objectives:

1. Comparison of SHOP to Other Programs
2. Assessment of SHOP As Implemented
3. SHOP Design Alternatives
4. Implementation And Policy Considerations

2.0 COMPARISON OF SHOP TO OTHER PROGRAMS

2.1 SHOP in Calgary

In 1988 the Calgary Police Service (CPS) began research into a program called SHOCAP, the Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program, developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice. CPS viewed SHOCAP as a possible measure to handle more serious repeat young offenders in Calgary who were not being dealt with effectively by existing police programs targeting problem youth. After endorsing SHOCAP internally, CPS began putting police components of the program in place and recruiting community agency participation in the Fall of 1988. Intensive planning was undertaken by an inter-agency committee in 1989 to establish criteria for designating offenders and to operationalize community agency involvement in the program. The program in Calgary eventually came to be known as SHOP, the Serious Habitual Offender Program.

SHOP is coordinated by CPS which has established a dedicated SHOP team within the larger Youth Unit of the service. The SHOP team consists of eight constable investigators, one civilian clerical assistant and one sergeant. An analyst from the Centralized Analysis Unit is also assigned to assist as required. The eight SHOP investigators are assigned in pairs to the city's five police districts (one pair covers two combined districts), and each team is responsible for monitoring serious habitual young offenders (SHOs) residing in its jurisdiction.

An overview of SHOP activities and related impacts is provided in the model on the next page. The main program activities are described on the following pages.

2.2 Designating SHOs

One of the most critical aspects of the program is the process by which young offenders are formally designated as "Serious Habitual Offenders", since this decision affects how the offender will be viewed and subsequently treated by the police and participating justice and community agencies.

TABLE 1
SHOP Model

SHOP ACTIVITIES	INTENDED IMPACTS
<i>1. Designate SHO's</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of offenders who pose a risk of continuing to commit frequent offences; - Early identification of potential SHO's;
<i>2. Gather, record and maintain SHO data</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant, comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information on SHOs is maintained;
<i>3. Disseminate SHO data</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating agencies are apprised in a timely way of facts relevant to decisions, actions or services relating to SHOs; - Agencies make better (more informed) decisions;
<i>4. Supervise/Monitor SHOs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SHOs adhere to probation/release conditions; - SHOs refrain from committing illegal activities or demonstrating undesirable behaviours; - Relevant information on SHOs collected;
<i>5. Investigate SHOs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More efficient investigations; - More effective investigations;
<i>6. Prosecute SHOs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More effective prosecutions; - Better arguments/counter-arguments; - Harder for SHOs to play the system;
<i>7. Sentence SHOs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More informed sentencing decisions; - More pre-trial detention; - More restrictive pre-trial release conditions; - Stiffer sentences awarded; - Fewer alternative dispositions awarded; - More SHOs in custody;
<i>8 Rehabilitate SHOs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SHOs (and their families) engage in programs or activities beneficial to treating the underlying causes of their deviant behaviours.
LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- <i>Criminal careers of SHOs are curtailed;</i> - <i>Criminal careers of youth at risk are curtailed;</i> - <i>Youth crime is mitigated;</i> - <i>Criminal careers of adult offenders are curtailed.</i> 	

A "points" system is used in Calgary to aid in identifying young offenders who may be candidates for admission to SHOP. Offenders accumulate points for offences as follows:

- Class I - 7 points for serious offences such as murder, kidnapping, sexual/aggravated assault, extortion, robbery, arson, trafficking (narcotics), possession/use of weapons, etc.;
- Class II - 4 points for less serious offences such as careless use of firearms, obstruction of justice, living from avails, assault, theft over \$1000, housebreaking, possession of controlled/restricted drugs, forgery, etc.
- Class III - 2 points for other offences such as public mischief, resisting arrest, failure to appear, breach of condition, obscenity, threats, trespassing, prostitution, gambling, impaired driving, theft under \$1000, etc.

An analysis is prepared each month to identify offenders at or near the 51 point level -- the current informal threshold for entry into the program. Entry to SHOP is not automatic at the 51 point level. Considerable judgment and discretion is allowed in the designation decision. In some cases, individuals who are considered to be "up and coming SHOs" may also be candidates for designation. Approximately 10 new candidates are assessed each month. The Calgary Police Service currently has the responsibility for deciding which youth are taken into the program.

2.3 Gathering/Maintaining SHO Data

SHOP has an average of about 120 active SHOs at any time, although this number may vary between 100 and 140 at different times of the year. Once a youth has been designated as a SHO, the individual is assigned to a SHOP team based on the SHO's district of residence (approximately 30 - 40 SHOs per team), and SHOP begins to maintain an electronic file of information on the individual. Each SHO file consists of two main components.

1. **SHO Profile** - basic description, demographic data and criminal history.
2. **SHO Event Flow** - a chronological record of "events", including arrests, formal charges, convictions, sentences and releases, results of routine checks and information on behaviour or incidents reported by other contacts.

Key sources of information used to update SHO files include:

- SHOP Activity Reports - containing information on SHOs obtained by SHOP investigators in meetings with agency/community contacts, from their own investigations or from SHOs themselves;
- CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) - a printout on all "hits" where a SHO's name has been checked on CPIC, containing the location, purpose and results of the check;

- Check-up Slips - filled out by zone officers in the performance of their normal duty, detailing the purpose, location and results of checks made on SHOs;
- Agency Contacts - information on SHOs phoned in directly by agency contacts.

Although early implementation efforts attempted to establish formal protocols for sharing information between the police and community agencies, to date no such protocols have been developed.

2.4 Disseminating SHO Data

SHOP provides a number of formal information products for internal and external users:

- Daily Event Flow - a daily printout of new information on SHOs to keep SHOP investigators apprised of developments relating to SHOs in the city;
- SHO Profiles - printed on request for investigators or to furnish the Crown with information needed to prepare for SHO hearings or trials;
- Monthly Bulletins/Alerts - the picture and criminal profile of new SHOs or SHOs on "special watch" distributed within the Calgary Police Service to probation and corrections staff in Calgary and to other police forces in the area;
- Monthly SHO Lists - a reference list of current SHOs giving name, date of birth, number of points and number of offences.

SHOP investigators act as the conduit through which most SHO information is shared. Investigators may, when solicited, provide agency contacts with relevant new information they have gathered elsewhere, again in verbal form.

2.5 Monitoring/Supervising SHOs

The police do not specifically target SHOs for surveillance, although SHOs come under enhanced monitoring by the police, particularly by zone members who assist with field checks and enforcement of probation orders. A relatively new strategy sees police officers "breaching" SHOs directly (i.e., laying charges for a breach of probation conditions) rather than referring the breach to the probation officer. SHOs are immediately picked up by police and brought before a bail magistrate where a strong case is made to remand the youth in custody. This is seen as a major tactic to hold SHOs more immediately accountable and to curtail their freedom of operation.

The City of Calgary (Social Services) provides youth probation services through a special unit dedicated to young offenders. Probation officers play a key role in monitoring and supervising SHOs, and attempt to respond more quickly if SHOs violate probation conditions (e.g., get them into court more quickly). SHOs are typically handled differently and monitored more closely than other offenders by corrections staff

in order to prevent undesirable behaviour in custody. At this time, other community agencies (e.g., schools, Child Welfare, addictions) do not have a formal role within the program of monitoring or supervising SHOs while in the community.

2.6 Investigating SHOs

SHOP investigators use SHO information and knowledge to help identify likely suspects based on their past modus operandi. The investigators do not typically assume responsibility for an investigation (unless they have made the arrest), but offer assistance to zone members in conducting their investigations. For example, they may provide information packages on SHOs, assist with interviewing suspects and witnesses, and assist in preparing cases to go to trial.

2.7 Prosecuting SHOs

SHOP investigators supply the Crown with a complete package of information on SHOs, including past record and behaviour while on release. Investigators frequently appear at trials to be available if the judge seeks their opinion or to assist the Crown during a trial by gathering additional information or evidence the Crown feels is necessary to prosecute successfully. Probation officers may also come to court to be available if the judge seeks their opinion.

Significant efforts have gone into ensuring that information required by the Crown is available and properly prepared prior to court. Four Crown prosecutors have been dedicated to a Screening Unit which has been set up to handle first appearances and "show cause" hearings in Youth Court. Trials for SHOs are typically handled by a small group of Crown Prosecutors, although the same prosecutor does not always prosecute the same SHO (i.e., vertical assignment²). The prosecution strategy will vary with each case, however the trend is towards pursuing charges that will result in custody or strict release conditions. For example, criminal code charges may be dropped in favour of pursuing probation violations which would result in custody.

2.8 Sentencing SHOs

The Crown often works with SHOP investigators in determining the sentence to be recommended for convicted SHOs. Although few maximum penalties are awarded, the strategy is to request custody, wherever appropriate. Typically, very strict probation/release conditions are sought if custody is not awarded. Judges often resist arguments invoking the label "serious habitual offender" because it is seen as an attempt to influence their decision. On occasion, however, testimony of this nature is allowed and referred to by judges in making their decisions.

²Vertical assignment generally refers to the practice of assigning ongoing responsibility for individual offenders to specific staff members so that they will become intimately familiar with an offender's case history.

2.9 Rehabilitating SHOs

Primary responsibility for rehabilitative programming related to SHOs rests with probation and corrections. Other participating agencies such as the schools, Child Welfare and addictions clearly have a role in attempting to address the problems of SHOs in their caseloads, but unless the workers are actively exchanging information with the police, they would not be considered part of the formal rehabilitative component of SHOP. Corrections and probation staff use SHO information to help in programming and placement decisions, and sometimes direct special attention or resources to SHOs in their care. Workers in schools and other agencies who share information with police also make use of this information to make decisions relating to SHOs when in their care. It does not appear, however, that SHOs are afforded preferential intake to programs, or that new programs have been put in place specifically to address the needs of SHOs.

3.0 COMPARISON OF CPS SHOP TO SHOCAP (U.S.)

The program in Calgary, as described above, was compared to SHOCAP in the United States where 22 sites are currently operating. Key similarities and differences are outlined below.

3.1 Mandate

SHOP in Calgary currently focuses almost exclusively on containment of SHOs through apprehension and detention. While containment is still the major focus of most U.S. programs, several have expanded their mandates to intervene with pre-SHOs or youth at risk. Some have also established case management teams involving community agencies to develop strategies for SHOs upon their release. Most also continue tracking SHOs as adults through similar adult repeat offender programs.

3.2 Designation of SHOs

Point systems for identifying SHOs are common in the U.S. The decision to designate offenders as SHOs is typically made by an inter-agency committee, rather than by the police as in Calgary.

3.3 SHO Information Management

The key function of collecting, maintaining and disseminating information on SHOs, now performed by the police in Calgary, is increasingly being handled by prosecution or probation in the U.S. Furthermore, the function is typically performed by civilians rather than by police officers. In the U.S., participating agencies provide information on a regular and unsolicited basis to the central information area, and some sites are

actively moving towards on-line systems that can be accessed directly by agencies involved. In Calgary, SHOP constables frequently have to arrange meetings to gather information for the files, and the computer system being used is not directly accessible by others outside the police for data entry or extraction.

Confidentiality of information has been an implementation issue in most U.S. sites, although problems have largely been alleviated by using court orders, subpoenas or changes to state legislation, as well as developing formal information sharing agreements between agencies. In Calgary, confidentiality continues to be a major obstacle to the free flow of offender information among participating agencies.

3.4 Roles of Participants

Some important differences in the roles of participants include:

- Police - U.S. programs do not typically establish a separate unit within the police organization comparable to the SHOP team in the Calgary Police Service. Rather, regular members are responsible for all monitoring, investigation and apprehension duties. "Directed patrols" are frequently used, where members are specifically assigned to check up on individual SHOs as part of their shift duties. Standard procedures have also been established governing how patrol officers deal with SHOs they come in contact with. These measures are implemented to ensure SHOs receive priority attention and that they are handled in a consistent fashion throughout the service.
- Prosecution - In the U.S., vertical prosecution techniques are sometimes employed, where the same prosecutor always handles the same SHO cases from beginning to end. In Calgary, four prosecutors handle first appearances for SHOs, but are not individually assigned to specific SHOs.
- Judges - In Calgary, judges resist the use of the term "SHO" in arguments made before them, and clearly wish to remain objective and independent from the program.

In the U.S., judges are actively involved in SHOCAP. Many sit on the program's executive, and may have the power to directly order offenders to be designated as SHOs. Judges have significant authority to order agencies to share information and to provide rehabilitation or treatment services for SHOs. In terms of their treatment of SHOs in court, judges are made aware a SHO is before the court, and have access to the information available on the offender.

- Probation - As in Calgary, U.S. programs frequently establish special youth probation departments, and attempts are made to assign the same officer to individual SHOs, although complete vertical probation does not appear to be typical.

- Schools and Social Agencies - In the U.S., the involvement of non-justice agencies varies depending on the community and the agreements that have been established. Agencies typically provide detailed information on client behaviour and family background to the program. Agency staff are also involved in case management teams to work out intervention strategies, typically with pre-SHOs and youth at risk. In Calgary, involvement of non-justice agencies is ad hoc and limited mainly to providing information to the police on an informal basis.

It should be pointed out that U.S. SHOCAP programs differ widely among themselves, reflecting the needs and priorities of each community, and it would be inappropriate to suggest that a single model exists for others to emulate. Consequently, the comparison of U.S. SHOCAP to CPS SHOP provided above is intended only to gain insight into possible enhancements to SHOP that might be considered, rather than deficiencies that should be addressed per se. It is also important to note that differences in U.S. legislative and justice systems and traditions may influence the feasibility of adopting aspects of the U.S. model in Canadian jurisdictions. For example, legislation governing young offenders is typically state-controlled, allowing greater autonomy and flexibility at the local level to implement information-sharing agreements between participating agencies. The fact that judges are elected positions in the U.S. may also explain their greater willingness to get behind the program and to actively assist in removing operational barriers.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SHOP AS IMPLEMENTED

The assessment of SHOP in Calgary was guided by a set of research questions addressing key issues relating to the design, operation and impacts of the program. Key results are as follows.

4.1 Program Justification

It is recognized that there is no objective measure of need that can be applied in justifying a community's response to youth crime. The justification for any program should be based on the existence of a need or problem that is considered by the community to be serious enough (relative to other problems) to warrant a dedicated response. In this regard, a consensus exists among stakeholders in Calgary that the problem of youth crime was (and still remains) serious enough to warrant action. The majority of those interviewed recollected that crimes committed by youth in Calgary in 1988 (about the time SHOCAP was first being investigated) was growing, both in frequency and severity. It was felt that youth were mainly committing property crimes, although serious property crimes and crimes involving violence or weapons were also felt to be growing. Most also felt that a small population of repeat young offenders was emerging at the time and that this group was responsible for a disproportionate amount of crimes committed by youth.

These perceptions were confirmed through an analysis of overall youth crime statistics as well as the criminal histories of a random sample of SHOs and non-SHOs in Calgary. Highlights from this analysis are as follows (see Tables 2 and 3 for additional information):

- Although the adolescent population in Calgary has been dropping slightly in proportion to the total population, the frequency of police contact³ with young offenders has grown steadily since approximately 1984;
- SHOs, as a group, were responsible for less than 20% of the total number of police contacts; individually, however, the average SHO had a criminal career six times as long and compiled over eight times as many police contacts as the average non-SHO;
- Approximately 83% of police contacts for SHOs were related to property crimes (9% violent, 8% other crimes). These ratios were similar for non-SHOs.

Despite philosophical reservations by some stakeholders in Calgary, there is general support for the fundamental strategy of SHOP as a measure to contain offenders who do not respond to prevention or rehabilitation. Many community agency representatives expressed the need to complement the current program strategy with enhanced inter-agency prevention and rehabilitation efforts in order to make the program more compatible with their mandates.

TABLE 2

Calgary Young Offenders - Profile

	SHO	NON-SHO	TOTAL
Number of individuals	189	180	369
% males	95.2%	72.2%	84.0%
% females	4.8%	27.8%	16.0%
Average age (on Dec. 31/91)	16.4	15.7	16.0
Average age at onset (first police contact)	12.8	14.6	13.6
Average length of delinquent career (years from first contact)	3.6	0.6	2.2

³A contact was recorded as any event leading to the filing of an occurrence report by the police for an alleged crime. The contact may or may not have resulted in the laying of formal charges against the offender.

TABLE 3

Calgary Young Offenders - General Data

	SHO		NON-SHO		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Number of police contacts:	4109		467		4576	
Average # of police contacts per individual	21.7		2.6		12.4	
Number of police contacts involving weapons	135	3.3%	9	1.9%	144	3.1%
Police contacts by offence type:						
Violent	382	9.3%	40	8.6%	422	9.2%
Property-related	3396	82.6%	387	82.9%	3783	82.7%
Other	331	8.1%	40	8.6%	371	8.1%
Incarceration:						
Number of individuals admitted	169	89.4%	27	15.0%	196	53.1%
Number of times incarcerated	860		69		929	
Average length of time incarcerated (days) *	260		108		239	

*Calculated by the total length of time incarcerated divided by the number of individuals incarcerated for each SHO, NON-SHO, and TOTAL category.

4.2 Quality and Utility of SHO Information

One of the more significant aspects of SHOP which differs from the handling of other offenders is the computer system and related procedures that have been put in place to maintain information with regard to young offenders designated as SHOs. Significant resources have been committed to establishing the system and collecting and entering data from a variety of sources. The quality of this information, therefore, is critical to the success of the program in meeting the operational needs of those who participate in the program.

Users generally found the information maintained on SHOs to be complete, up-to-date and accurate. Problems with the information appear to be isolated. A few comments indicated that information about the family history and home environment of youth is frequently not available. This was attributed to the lack of involvement by provincial Child Welfare staff and the reluctance of probation staff to divulge this information. The Crown is particularly satisfied with the quality of information available on SHOs, suggesting it helps to reduce preparation time and generally enables prosecutors to be more effective in presenting their arguments. It was also suggested that court time is reduced because defence counsel is less able to prolong cases through the courts.

CPS field personnel also frequently use information provided by the program and suggested it helps them to be aware of SHOs active in their areas and to identify possible suspects based on their modus operandi. The information also helps them to locate SHOs for questioning or to monitor their activities.

Corrections staff indicated the information helps them make better decisions regarding programming and placement of SHOs within the institution and better recommendations regarding community release. Probation officers indicated the information assists them in preparing pre-disposition reports and the added police attention may help to enforce probation conditions. School contacts indicated they tend to get less information than they provide, although they clearly appreciate and value their relationship with the police and, generally, find it helpful to be aware that offenders are being placed in their schools so that they may take appropriate precautionary and programming measures.

4.3 Appropriateness of SHO Designation

The point at which offenders are designated as SHOs is a clear turning point in their criminal careers and their lives in general. It is considered important that a program which labels a set of individuals and involuntarily targets them for enhanced community attention, should use reliable criteria and procedures that are supported by participating agencies.

There appears to be some difference of opinion among participants in Calgary regarding the precise meaning of the term "serious habitual offender" and the related criteria an offender should meet in order to acquire the label and, legitimately, come under the largely negative program and community sanctions involved. In particular, many community agency representatives felt the criteria should be broadened to include "pre-SHOs", or youth "at risk", reflecting differences in perception among participants regarding the mandate of the program and how "seriously habitual" an offender should be before intake to the program.

In addition, some stakeholders have concerns about the factors considered and points allocated in arriving at the designation decision. For example, some felt greater weight should be given to serious/violent crimes, fearing that offenders may be qualifying because of frequent property crimes that do not necessarily render them serious criminals. Others expressed concern that the system may not be taking into consideration factors such as time span of the crimes, family history and responsiveness to rehabilitation. Finally, comments were made that the point threshold (currently at 51 points) is arbitrary, reflecting police resources rather than any objective definition of the target clientele, leading to concerns that the label "SHO" may be capriciously (and possibly dangerously) applied.

While many stakeholders were satisfied that the designation process was appropriate and accurate, there is a substantial undercurrent of concern that suggests the process lacks the broad support needed for such a critical aspect of the program (i.e., the intake decision).

4.4 Program Impact on SHOs

The success of the program in affecting the behaviour of young offenders designated as SHOs is based on the assumption that SHOs receive differential treatment once they have been designated; and that they behave differently as a result of the enhanced attention they receive. These assumptions are key in the logical linkage between activities of the program and intended effects.

SHOs clearly receive greater attention from the police than other offenders, due largely to being assigned to a team of SHOP investigators. This leads directly to greater monitoring and questioning by SHOP constables and other zone personnel, and to the establishment and maintenance of a more comprehensive file of information on their behaviour and criminal activity. The enhanced information that results from this police attention appears to lead to more charges being laid, and improves the Crown's ability to succeed in arguing for more restrictive release conditions or stronger sentences, including custody. SHOs also appear more likely than other offenders to be caught and charged for breaches of probation and to receive custody dispositions for these breaches.

SHOs notice the change in treatment they receive, particularly from the police, but also from the courts, the schools and their friends. SHOs clearly resent the treatment they receive. In particular, they feel harassed by police tactics (e.g., frequently watching and questioning them, turning friends against them, etc.). They do not appear to regard themselves as serious offenders, and view the treatment they receive as unfair and

unjustified. They are particularly perturbed by restrictive probation conditions which they see as impractical, setting them up to be breached in order to get them off the street. They do not see the SHO designation in any way as a "badge", and would be upset if they were to continue as SHOs after reaching the adult justice system -- a clear sign the program is making a significant impression upon them.

Police tactics, while effective in applying pressure on SHOs and holding them accountable for their actions, may be having unintended negative psychological impacts. For example, interviews with SHOs suggested the program may be adding to their feelings of persecution, rejection, low self-esteem and anger, possibly rendering rehabilitation efforts more difficult. Furthermore, the active undermining of their social support network may contribute to SHOs going "on the run" where, by their own admission, they are more likely to engage in crime sprees.

4.5 Program Crime Containment Effects

It has been assumed that the enhanced attention from police, justice and community resources will ultimately increase the accountability of SHOs for their actions and reduce their opportunities to engage in criminal activity, thereby reducing the frequency and severity of the crimes they commit. SHOs agreed they offend less frequently, mainly because they are in custody more often. Some also suggested the program influences their criminal behaviour while on the street, making them more careful about their crimes and associates, but also curtailing the frequency and severity of crimes some choose to commit. Others indicated, however, that the program has no effect on their behaviour in the community, and some suggested they were even more likely to go on crime sprees because of police tactics which undermine their social support network.

The containment effect of SHOP was further estimated by analyzing trends in rates of police contact for a random sample of SHOs and non-SHOs. Highlights are as follows:

- SHOs demonstrate a much higher initial rate of contact with police than non-SHOs, and this rate rises dramatically in the second and third years from the date of initial contact. SHOs demonstrate a marked decline in rate of contact beginning in their fourth year from initial police contact. The rate of police contact for non-SHOs increases only moderately in the second year and then remains relatively constant before decreasing.
- Analysis of the ages of SHOs in the sample indicates the beginning of the decline in rate of police contact roughly coincides with the point at which these offenders were designated as SHOs, suggesting a possible deterrent effect of the program.⁴

⁴Other studies have demonstrated age-related patterns in criminal career histories that might partially account for the decline over time in SHO rates of police contact; however, the short-range pattern exhibited by SHOs and non-SHOs is markedly different, suggesting offenders targeted by the program (i.e., SHOs) do not follow the same age-related pattern as offenders who are not targeted by the program (i.e., non-SHOs).

- For SHOs, the containment effect is most evident for property crimes. No appreciable decline in rates of contact for violent or other crimes is apparent. Non-SHO rates of contact and patterns of decline do not differ significantly by type of crime.

These results, along with the opinions expressed by stakeholders and young offenders, suggest that SHOP has had some success in containing the criminal activity of young offenders designated as SHOs, although it may not be significantly shortening the length of their criminal careers.

5.0 SHOP DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

The comparison of SHOP in Calgary to SHOCAP in the U.S. highlighted a number of design concepts that might be considered for SHOP in the future. Participants in Calgary were also asked their opinions regarding program enhancements they felt were desirable. Interestingly, many of their suggestions reflect aspects common to one or more SHOCAP sites in the U.S.

Some of the more common suggestions made by participants in Calgary included:

- Program Mandate - Expanding the program to embrace coordinated inter-agency efforts in early intervention with pre-SHOs as well as rehabilitation/after-care for SHOs;⁵
- SHO Designation - Returning to an interagency team approach in designating offenders as SHOs;
- Maintenance of SHO Information - Using civilians (possibly in a participating non-police agency) to gather, maintain and disseminate SHO information; establishing formal information sharing agreements and protocols between agencies; encouraging agencies to provide information on a routine and unsolicited basis;
- Monitoring/Investigating SHOs - Greater participation of community agencies in early intervention, monitoring and rehabilitation functions; a greater operational role for SHOP constables (i.e., gathering information, investigating and arresting SHOs); increasing teamwork between SHOP constables and regular patrol officers in monitoring SHOs; implementing standardized methods across the police service for dealing with SHOs;
- Prosecuting SHOs - Assigning the same prosecutor to handle all hearings and trials for a given SHO (i.e., going to complete vertical prosecution);

⁵What became apparent is that many would prefer to see a comprehensive and integrated program that escalated its intervention with offenders, beginning with positive/supportive programming for youth at risk, continuing with intensive rehabilitation for repeat offenders, and ending with more negative containment strategies (current program focus) for the most serious habitual offenders who have clearly demonstrated a lack of response to prevention and rehabilitation.

- Sentencing SHOs - Implementing stronger and more consistent sentencing of SHOs;
- Programming for SHOs - Establishing specialized facilities and programs dedicated to the needs of SHOs; implementing case management teams⁶ to develop rehabilitation/containment strategies for individual SHOs and to coordinate the specific role each agency plays in relation to these strategies.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Police services across Canada are increasingly moving towards "community-based policing" as a model for dealing with crime. Community residents are beginning to take greater ownership of crime and to accept a role in working with the police to deal with crime. The police themselves are learning how to work with community agencies and individuals to mobilize more coordinated responses to crime. SHOCAP is potentially a text-book example of "problem-oriented policing" in action, where agencies, through the leadership of the police, work together to identify the causes of crime and develop specific strategies to address the problem. Despite the appeal of SHOCAP, however, jurisdictions contemplating the implementation of such a program will need to carefully consider the implementation experience in Calgary and the U.S. and the important policy issues involved before committing to such an undertaking.

6.1 U.S. Implementation Lessons

In interviews with representatives from U.S. SHOCAP sites, the factors that were found to have contributed to successful programs include:

- Key Initiator - It is often one person who is the driving force behind the program. This person is usually committed to ensuring program success and works diligently to overcome barriers encountered along the way.
- Inter-Agency Cooperation - An inter-agency committee that meets on a regular basis and works toward the continued success of the program is also important. When agencies work together, they form a strong chain with the power to implement effective prevention and containment strategies. If a key agency or "link" is missing, it makes the overall program less successful.
- Resource Commitment - SHOCAP has to become a working part of every agency involved. This requires not only the designation of agency personnel to be involved, but also a continuous re-education of new people coming into the system. It is also important to keep front-line staff informed, involved and enthused about new efforts developing within the program.

⁶The team would comprise staff from participating organizations having the SHO in its caseload, such as the police, probation, corrections, the school, addictions, and child welfare. There was also support for including the SHO and a parent, guardian or relative, and possibly a community "mentor". Participants suggested that client confidentiality concerns would be much easier to overcome within a "treatment team" setting, citing examples of information sharing protocols that exist between agencies in other team environments.

- Strong Information Coordination - SHOCAP must have the technical capability to collect, maintain and disseminate data in an efficient manner. On-line computer systems that allow direct access to information are becoming the most expedient method of collecting and disseminating information.
- Information Sharing Protocols - It is best if formal and legal channels are developed that allow SHO information to be collected, maintained, and disseminated. This has been achieved by changing state and agency legislation that had restricted the release of information on juvenile offenders, or by having a judge who supports the program issue court orders to allow for information to be exchanged.

6.2 Calgary Implementation Experience

Participants cited a number of issues during implementation that have hampered the effectiveness of the program in Calgary:

- Image - SHOCAP was initially investigated and selected by the Calgary Police Service and subsequently promoted to other agencies as an appropriate response to the problem of youth crime in Calgary. No other alternative models were investigated or discussed with community agencies in advance, and implementation efforts essentially concentrated on adapting the SHOCAP model to fit the Calgary environment. SHOP never completely shook its image as a police program, even though it was originally conceived as an inter-agency initiative. Participants with philosophical reservations about the program did not feel enough time was taken to work out the roles that each agency could legitimately play within the program.
- Commitment - Philosophical reservations prevented certain agencies from whole-heartedly endorsing the program and committing to the significant implementation challenge. It was felt that formal endorsement from the most senior levels of each organization should have been obtained at the outset, although it was also recognized that this endorsement would not have been likely until specific agency roles had been agreed (i.e., "chicken and egg").
- Experience - There does not appear to have been a tradition of collaboration among participating agencies in Calgary, at least not on the massive scale required to implement SHOP. Collaborative programs and information sharing agreements have been established between some of the agencies, but typically on a much smaller scale between pairs of organizations (e.g., police and schools; child welfare and probation).
- Continuity - The departure of the CPS staff member serving as the original SHOCAP Coordinator was seen by many agency participants as an important event in the implementation process. Although little progress was being made

by the inter-agency planning committee in resolving the difficult confidentiality issue, efforts were continuing. The change in police responsibilities, while justified for internal reasons, was perceived by some participants to signal a shift in emphasis on the part of CPS away from the interagency component of the program to concentrate on internal operational aspects already in place (i.e., SHOP teams, the information system).

- Legislation - By far, the most frequently mentioned obstacle facing SHOP continues to be information sharing between agencies. This is seen as a major impediment to enhancing the program and allowing fuller participation of community agencies. Notwithstanding other difficulties, it was felt that confidentiality restrictions perceived by the federal Young Offenders Act were a major structural impediment hampering efforts to operationalize the program as originally conceived.

6.3 Key Policy Considerations

In reviewing the implementation experience in both Calgary and the U.S., the key policy issues a jurisdiction should keep in mind when considering such a program include:

- Program Justification - SHOCAP should not be seen by jurisdictions as an automatic response to the problem of youth crime in their community. SHOCAP is clearly predicated on the existence of a small, identifiable group of youth who offend at a significantly higher rate than others. Research in the United States (Wolfgang, 1975) showed that, while less than 10% of offenders were chronic recidivists, this group accounted for the majority of serious crimes committed by youth such as robberies (73%), aggravated assaults (65%), rapes (75%) and homicides (61%). The youth crime situation in most Canadian jurisdictions is much less severe than that in many of the jurisdictions in which SHOCAP has been implemented. Analysis of crime statistics in Calgary suggests that habitual young offenders are responsible for less than 25% of crimes committed by youth. Furthermore, they tend to be involved in property crimes (e.g., break and enter, car theft) much more frequently than violent crimes.

This is not to suggest that Canadian communities are not justified in taking action to combat youth property crime; however, jurisdictions contemplating a SHOCAP-style intervention should first determine whether the proportion of such crimes committed by chronic young recidivists in their community is large enough such that targeting these individuals for containment would have a significant impact on community victimization.

- Program Mandate - The feasibility of implementing a coordinated inter-agency program such as SHOCAP hinges on whether a mandate can be agreed upon among participants. Reactive programs focusing on apprehension, prosecution and containment of SHOs should expect limited support from community

agencies that traditionally have the welfare of the client (as opposed to protection of the community) as their primary purpose. Mandates that include more proactive prevention, early intervention or community after-care components (in addition to containment) are more likely to be formally endorsed by non-justice agencies. The definition of mandate will, therefore, directly affect the scope and nature of inter-agency involvement that is feasible within the program.

- SHO Definition - The mandate chosen for the program will influence the definition applied to the term Serious Habitual Offender. In view of the very serious ethical implications of labelling a set of offenders and singling them out for special treatment, significant care should be taken in establishing the criteria an offender must meet in order to be designated. In particular, a distinction should be made between offenders who commit serious/violent offences and those who commit frequent, but less serious, property offences. Similarly, where a points system is used, care is required in establishing the relative weights applied to various types of crime, and the extent to which other factors are to be incorporated in the decision-making process (e.g., time span of the crimes, family history, past or expected responsiveness to rehabilitation, likelihood of re-offending, etc.).

It is imperative that the program clearly identify and articulate the kind(s) of offender intended to be targeted for intervention, and that this choice be based on a sound knowledge of the population of young offenders in the community and their respective offence profiles. It is also important that the program regularly report on the profiles of youth referred to the program, those designated and those screened out, to ensure that the designation function properly selects those offenders intended to be targeted by the program.

- Participating Agency Roles - Mandate will influence the types of agencies that can become actively involved, and great care is required in establishing the specific role each agency is to play. This should include, where possible, a reasonable commitment of tangible resources (e.g., staff time, facilities, programs or funding) to support the agency's role and to validate the program as a true inter-agency collaborative effort. In addition, agencies may need to commit to pursuing changes in their governing legislation or policy to enable legal information sharing agreements and protocols to be established, since the program cannot function to its potential without such protocols.

The definition of roles will have a significant impact on the image the program acquires and subsequently carries, both with participating agencies as well as with offenders who come into contact with the program. Critical program functions that appear to have the greatest scope for alternative role definitions include:

1. Intake - the process followed and participants involved in deciding which offenders are formally designated by the program;

2. Case Management - the way in which agencies are involved in developing strategies for individual offenders and coordinating the interventions of agencies having contact with the offender;
3. Programming - the involvement of agencies in specific interventions such as monitoring, supervision, treatment and rehabilitation;
4. Information Management - the assignment of responsibility for collecting, maintaining and disseminating offender information.
5. Geographic Scope - Communities that are not geographically isolated from neighbouring communities may have difficulty tracking individual SHOs who tend to move freely between jurisdictions with different policing authorities. Such situations may call for the establishment of a regional rather than local information network.

In this regard, the feasibility of a provincial government role in maintaining and disseminating offender information should be investigated. Provinces have some authority under the Young Offenders Act governing the communication of information on young offenders. The provinces also have a significant role in the courts and corrections systems, and therefore have better access to this important subset of offender data. Jurisdictions need to carefully consider the most cost-effective way of setting up the information system to minimize duplication with existing systems while providing users at various levels with access to the information they require to fulfil their specific roles.

- Linkage To Existing Programs - It is likely that most jurisdictions will already have implemented (through the police, the schools and other community groups) programs targeting problem youth. Duplication of record-keeping and resources by the police and other agencies with regard to these individuals should naturally be avoided. Whether existing programs should be interfaced with or integrated within SHOCAP will depend on the mandate selected, particularly the extent to which the mandate includes a preventive component for youth at risk, or after-care for offenders released into the community.

A procedure should also be developed to refer offenders considered "at risk" but not yet eligible to be designated as SHOs to other agencies so such youth do not fall between the cracks. Linkages to existing or planned adult repeat offender programs should also be considered.

- Police Organization and Procedures - A key issue for the police service will be whether to establish a specialized tactical unit to deal with SHOs and to support the Crown, or whether to delegate/decentralize these functions to zone operations. If a centralized tactical unit is preferred, their working relationship with zone operations should be defined. In either case, standard procedures should be developed for all police members to follow in relation to contact with young offenders in the program.

- Justice Organization - Jurisdictions should explore the extent to which vertical assignment of Crown Prosecutors can be implemented. Canadian justice tradition precludes judges from getting actively involved in the program to the extent seen in the U.S.; however, more consistent and more appropriate sentencing of SHO's may result if vertical assignment of Youth Court Judges could also be entertained.
- Agency Organization - The feasibility of vertical assignment of staff within other participating agencies, particularly probation, should also be considered.

Jurisdictions contemplating the implementation of a serious habitual offender program should not underestimate the difficulty of negotiating an agreement among agencies relating to the issues outlined above. Careful and thoughtful planning is required to bring about a collaborative inter-agency response of the complexity implied by such a program.

In view of this complexity, jurisdictions should consider establishing a small-scale pilot project where organizational, procedural and legal aspects of the program can be worked through before committing to wider-scale implementation. At a minimum, the pilot should establish:

- a tentative mandate;
- a clear SHO definition, intake criteria and designation process;
- roles and responsibilities of participating agencies;
- a case management team and process; and
- an information system and supporting information sharing protocols.

For purposes of the pilot, the jurisdiction should seek formal designation for the case management team under the Young Offenders Act permitting the sharing of information on young offenders involved in the pilot, or a court order allowing information on selected offenders to be shared for purposes of the pilot⁷. In addition, participating agencies should seek exemption under their governing legislation or policy to share information with regard to their clients. Client or parental consent should also be obtained, where possible.

The jurisdiction should also consider establishing a rigorous evaluation of the pilot project to assess the impact of the program on offenders and on agencies involved in the pilot project. Results of the pilot project should be used as a basis for ongoing discussion and negotiation between participating agencies regarding the design of a permanent serious habitual offender program for the community.

⁷This requirement may be affected by forthcoming amendments to the Young Offenders Act.

7.0 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

During the course of this study, a number of important questions were raised by stakeholders and observers which could not be dealt with adequately within the scope of the study. Some of the issues where further research or investigation would be useful include:

- **SHO Profile** - Limitations in extraction and conversion of offender data from existing databases prevented detailed profiling of SHOs with regard to demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, family background, etc.) and historical events that may predispose them to become chronic recidivists. Research on young offenders in Canadian environments is needed to assist in early identification of youth at risk who may go on to become serious habitual criminals.

In addition, a more refined analysis of offence histories would help to better distinguish between more and less serious types of offences than were provided in the offence profiles prepared in this study. For example, while it was shown that the proportion of offences involving violence was similar for SHOs and non-SHOs, it is not known whether SHOs are involved in more serious violent offences than non-SHOs (e.g., aggravated/sexual assault versus common assault). It is also not known whether violent or serious offences committed by SHOs are being perpetrated by relatively few offenders in the group. Additional profiling will help to determine whether there are discrete sub-classes within the population of serious habitual offenders who could be targeted with different interventions based upon their unique offence profile.

- **SHOP Impact** - It would be useful to assess the impact of SHOP using more rigorous control group procedures, possibly including an experimental design which follows the criminal careers of a group of offenders in the same environment who would have qualified as SHOs but were not so designated. This may only be feasible in larger centres where a sufficient volume of cases can be tracked over time. Alternatively, more focused analysis could be performed on the criminal histories of SHOs in the periods before and after their designation as SHOs (i.e., a pre/post design) to test the impact of SHOP on their behaviour. Such analysis should ideally be complemented with one-on-one interviews with offenders to obtain more precise measurement of the impact of SHOP on their attitudes and behaviour.

In this regard, it would be well to assess the psychological impact of the program on offenders, since concerns have been raised that program interventions, particularly police tactics, may be contributing to feelings counterproductive to rehabilitation (e.g., rejection, anger), and may also be encouraging some offenders to go on crime sprees. It is also important to determine whether the program contributes in any way to the "hardening" of young offenders, making them more careful and effective in escaping detection rather than rendering them more compliant to rehabilitation.

- Legal Issues - Although defence counsel have not as yet challenged the legality of program activities, it would be well to obtain an opinion on whether police tactics (e.g., frequent questioning/observation, undermining of social networks) might constitute harassment or otherwise infringe upon the civil liberties of offenders.

The limitations imposed by the Young Offenders Act on the sharing of offender information among program participants is also an outstanding legal concern. In this regard, defence counsel may challenge the way in which information used in court has been obtained. Research is needed into avenues within the Young Offenders Act that would permit information sharing. This research should clearly set out the kinds of information that can be shared and the specific circumstances under which this may occur.

- Alternative Models - Concern was expressed by a number of observers that SHOP is based on a U.S. program designed within a legal, justice and crime environment that is different from that found in Canada. Research is needed into program models that may provide additional alternatives for Canadian jurisdictions to consider in their search for responses to youth crime.

In view of the Calgary experience, it seems appropriate that such research focus on programs that target habitual perpetrators of property crimes, with more positive/supportive community-based interventions (e.g., recreation, vocational training, employment/income assistance, mentoring, etc.) that complement police enforcement and containment strategies. Models should also be considered where program interventions escalate from early intervention with youth at risk through to containment of the most serious habitual offenders.

Clearly, the learning experience in Calgary will also contribute greatly to Canada's search for effective programs to address the problem of youth crime.

