

Monday January 30, 2006. I met with Lt Murtaugh, crime statistics, regarding some questions I had with data analysis. Chief Carl approved this and attended the meeting. Bob was not able to attend. Below are the questions I asked and the answers provided.

1. Does the UCR data correspond to Framingham's Part I offenses? **Yes, they should, although earlier years might not be as reliable. We use the data when we have to but with reservations and full disclosure. I recommend that you use the departments numbers from 2000-2005. For this data we will actually go to the police department of the town we are comparing Framingham to and get the data right from them. I suggest you do that for the 2000-2005 years. Before that, even 2000, the numbers were not as reliable**
2. How accurate are the UCR numbers? **UCR numbers are the oldest comparable statistic but they have flaws that need to be recognized. The reliability varies with the departmental procedure for "cleaning" data, reporting data and recording data. We actually have that problem even when we get data right from the police dept. directly. There is no guarantee that any other town "cleans" their data like we do. Then there is the loss of precision in translation. NIBRS is supposed to be better but it is not fully up and running.**
3. The UCR is missing a month for 2000, is the Framingham number of 1528 part I crimes, compatible with the UCR totals? **Yes. It should be. The total part I crime for 2000 is 1528.**
4. How would I get this information for 2005 for Framingham? **Chris Murtaugh just finished a new report with statistics for the town from 2000-2005. He will send it as soon as the Chief approves it.**
5. UCR Data from other towns that are in our comparison with Framingham is sometimes incomplete, similar to the 2000 data for Framingham. Is there a strategy to use if a particular year in another community has only partial data? **Not really. Note the incompleteness and if it possible to adjust do so or choose different years. It is best to also pick a few towns and go to their police department and get exact numbers for 2000-2005 and compare that way.**
6. Is there a way to measure the trends over time which does not focus on any one year in particular? Doing this might weigh one bad year out of many good years.. **Not really. Look for anomalies and try not to use that year.**
7. Is it meaningful to consider the change in violent crime versus total crime especially for small communities when the numbers are small? **Didn't get an exact answer. Chief Carl answered that he thought the impact of social services would be seen more in property crimes than violent crimes. There is some discrepancy in the number of violent crimes for Framingham in the 2000 UCR data and the town number.**
8. How did you get the information for the other communities you studied? **UCR and they visited communities. They recommended Brookline and Waltham.**

**They urged we study these two communities in depth and suggested Fitchburg as well. Discussing the 2000-2005 numbers with the various departments will also offer insight and information into the data. Especially if there are some years with anomalies.**

- 9. Do all calls get responded to? No, but Framingham's CAD calls, Yes. Framingham data gets cleaned out. Non responded calls are taken out of the final number of calls, so all Framingham CAD calls are calls responded to. But other towns don't necessarily do that. It makes comparisons tricky. When you go to the departments for information, be sure to find out how they handle their data for calls.**
  
- 10. Are the list of numbers for the addresses we provided calls with responses? Yes**  
How does this relate to the total number of calls above? **The CAD calls include calls for accidents and alarms. The numbers provided are CAD calls for 23 months. It might be interesting to categorize the number of calls. Then you can get a cleaner number to compare to for non accident calls. ( they will attempt to get this info in a timely fashion)**
  
- 11. Do these numbers include calls for incidents caused by people who live at these addresses but might not occur at these addresses? If not, is there a way to get that information? No. There is no way to get that.**
  
- 12. Can you suggest a way for us to determine the average number of calls per address in Framingham so we can have a comparison for these numbers? Yes. One way is to determine, and divide total calls by, the total number of housing units and the total number of commercial units. That will give the average number of calls per unit. However, the CAD calls include accident calls. We will try to get a number of calls that are separated, i.e. subtract out the accident calls. Then the other calls would be the number to use when determining the average.**
  
- 13. What other measures of trends and potential impacts do you use?**  
**One difficulty is that we do not have specific information of who is responsible for some calls and if they are from an agency (see #11). From our studies and statistics online you can see where our downtown effort is focused and where the crimes are. For example, in the area we define as downtown, 25% of calls occur and 40% of crimes.(see study)**

**I recommend you call Jack McDermitt at Northeastern University. He is an expert on this issue and could give you advice. He has done many studies.**

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