

City cops add a fifth division

Chief wants officers closer to the community

By **MAX MAUDIE, EDMONTON SUN**

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Police Chief Mike Boyd yesterday announced a "new paradigm" in the way city cops patrol Edmonton streets.

Boyd last night told a police commission meeting that, given the city's tremendous growth, the current four-quadrant breakdown of the city simply wasn't getting the job done.

"The result," said Boyd, "is being reactive rather than proactive."

The new plan, launching April 29, will see the city broken into five divisions.

The north, west and downtown divisions remain but the south division will be broken into southwest and southeast.

Each division will have its own main station and all community police stations will remain.

The four quadrants' existing divisional headquarters will remain while a presently unused EPS building will be reopened in the southwest.

Each division will further be broken down into four districts.

The divisions were designed with the assistance of a computer program to ensure resources in each division are equitable.

A computer program will also ensure a police presence is in the right place at the right time based on historical data.

"The goal," said Boyd, "is a seven-minute response time to high-priority calls."

According to a report supplied by the EPS, between May 2005 and April 2006, the average emergency response time through the city averaged nearly nine minutes at various times Monday through Thursday, while the remaining days were closer to eight minutes.

Further, Boyd said officers will be assigned regular patrol areas, allowing them to "better understand the crime and the people in the community that

can help (police)."

Boyd said the division shift wasn't going to be a magic bullet, but "a foundation upon which community policing will be built."