

**PADUCAH 1878**

# Reducing Retail Theft and Demands on Police Service at Walmart in Paducah, Kentucky

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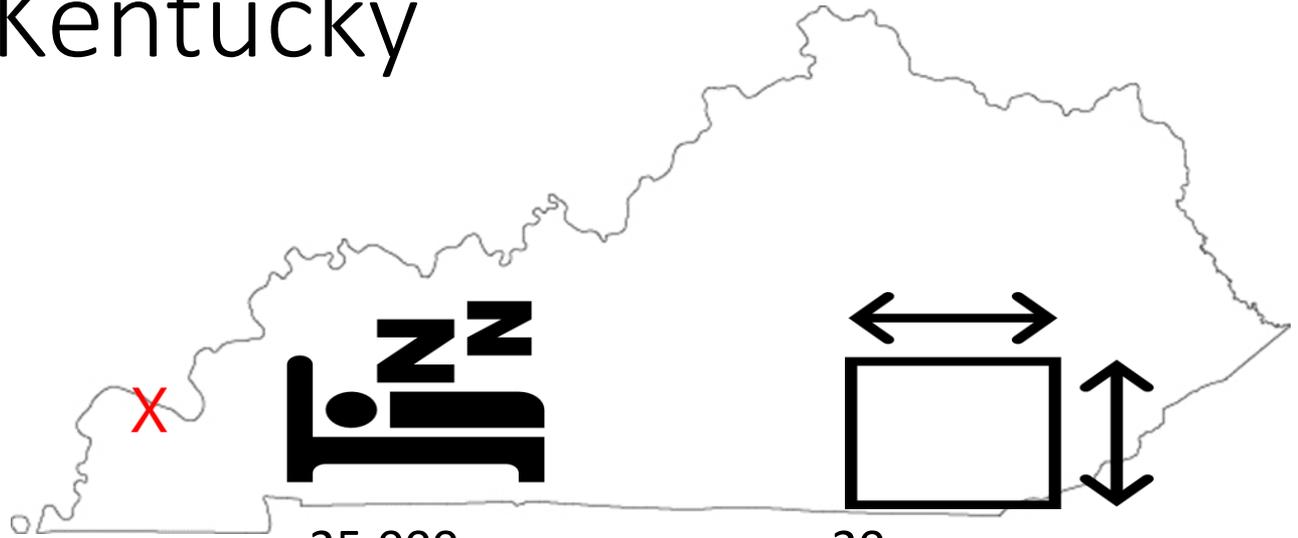
# Overview

- Sample site – Paducah, Kentucky
- Case study – Paducah Police Department
  - Comparison – Paducah compared to other Jackson Purchase cities
- Initial problem discovery
- Problem perspectives
  - The local perspective
  - The regional perspective
  - The national perspective
- Dissect the problem
- Response
- Results
- Conclusion and questions

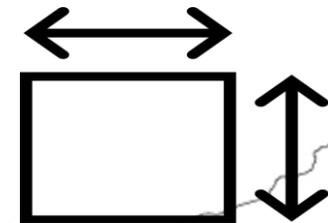
# Paducah, Kentucky



Up to 100K  
daytime  
population



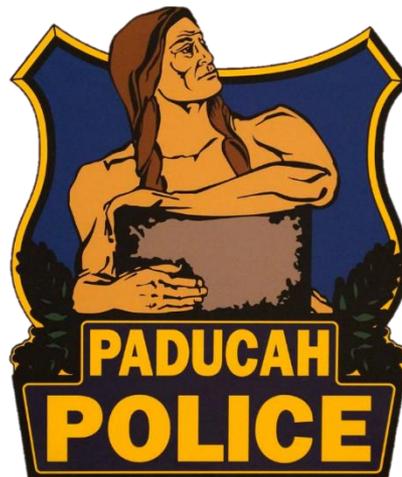
25,000  
nighttime  
population



20 square  
miles

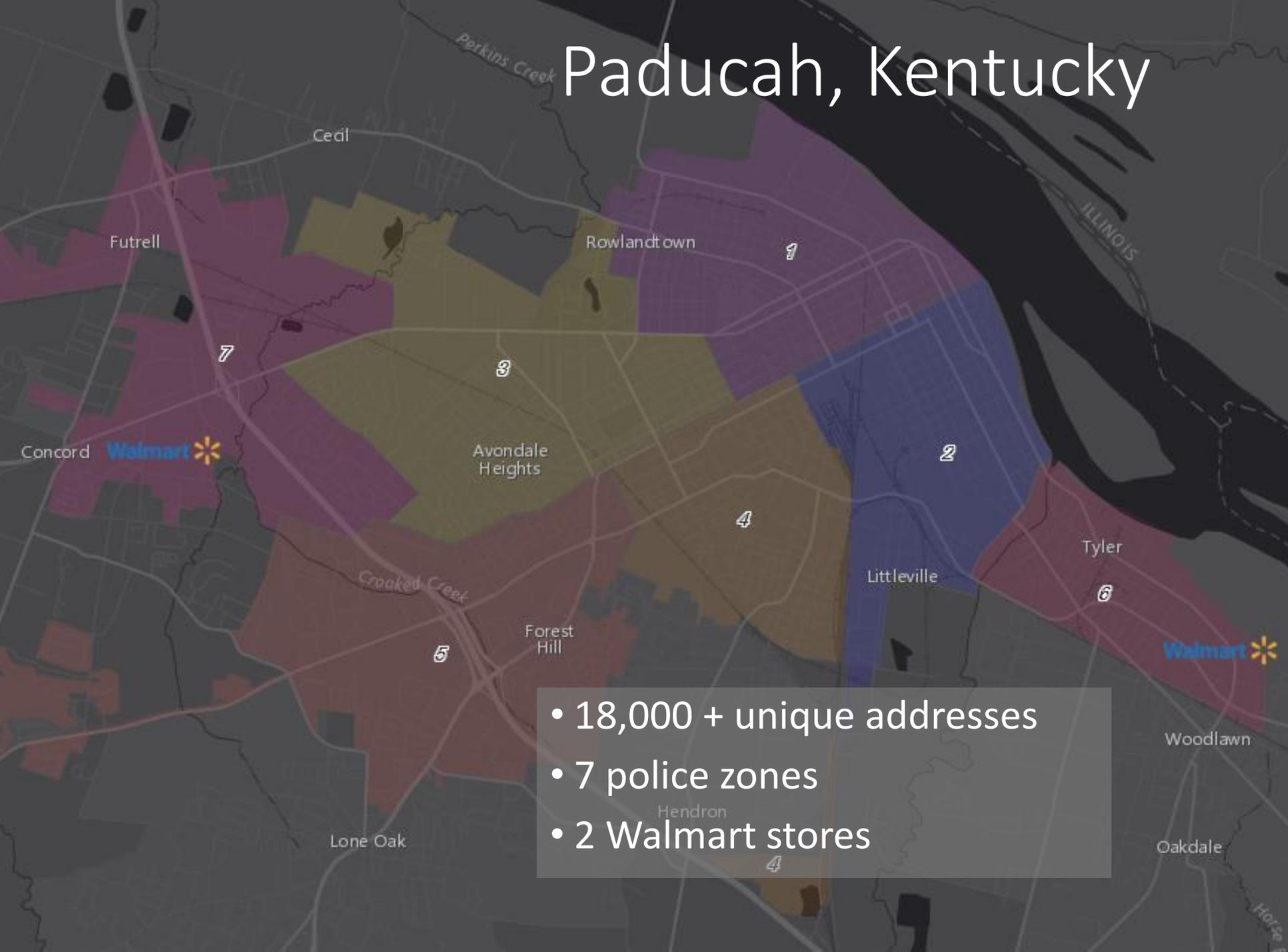


78  
sworn



8 non-  
sworn

# Paducah, Kentucky



- 18,000 + unique addresses
- 7 police zones
- 2 Walmart stores

# Initial Discovery

## Hiring an analyst

- Walmart crimes represented a large portion of crime in the hiring packet given to the applicants
- Response to the packet detailed possible problem-oriented strategies to address the problem

## Officer observations

- Zone 6 and 7 officers often complained about the amount of time spent at the Walmart stores
- “If you weren’t working an accident, you were at Walmart. I would spend whole shifts there.”
- The Police Department internal blotter almost always had two or three reports from Walmart



# The Local Problem

- During 2014 and 2015
  - Walmart represented **15%** of **all** reports taken by PPD
  - Walmart represented **67%** of shoplifting reports
- **15%** of crime reports in Paducah took place in a 1/10 of a square mile area

# Continued Analysis: Walmart's impact in other jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Walmart Locations	Percent of All Crime Reports	Percent of Shoplifting Under \$500
Paducah	2	15%	68%
Murray	1	8%	63%
Mayfield	1	10%	56%
Fulton	1	19%	68%
Benton	1	36%	82%

## The National Problem

The Tampa Bay Times found the Tampa Police Department received **2 calls per hour per day** from Walmart

Bloomberg Business Week found the Tulsa Police Department **1,700 more calls for service** at their Walmart locations than their next leading retailer

Wolfe and Pyrooz (2014) found counties with Walmart stores have **higher levels of property and violent crime**

# Situational Factors

## Poor Visibility

- Lack of overt monitoring of restrooms, dressing rooms, and blind corners
- Obscured main isles

## Lack of Personnel on the Floor

- One could have a complete shopping experience without speaking to a single Walmart employee
- No monitoring of exits or entrances

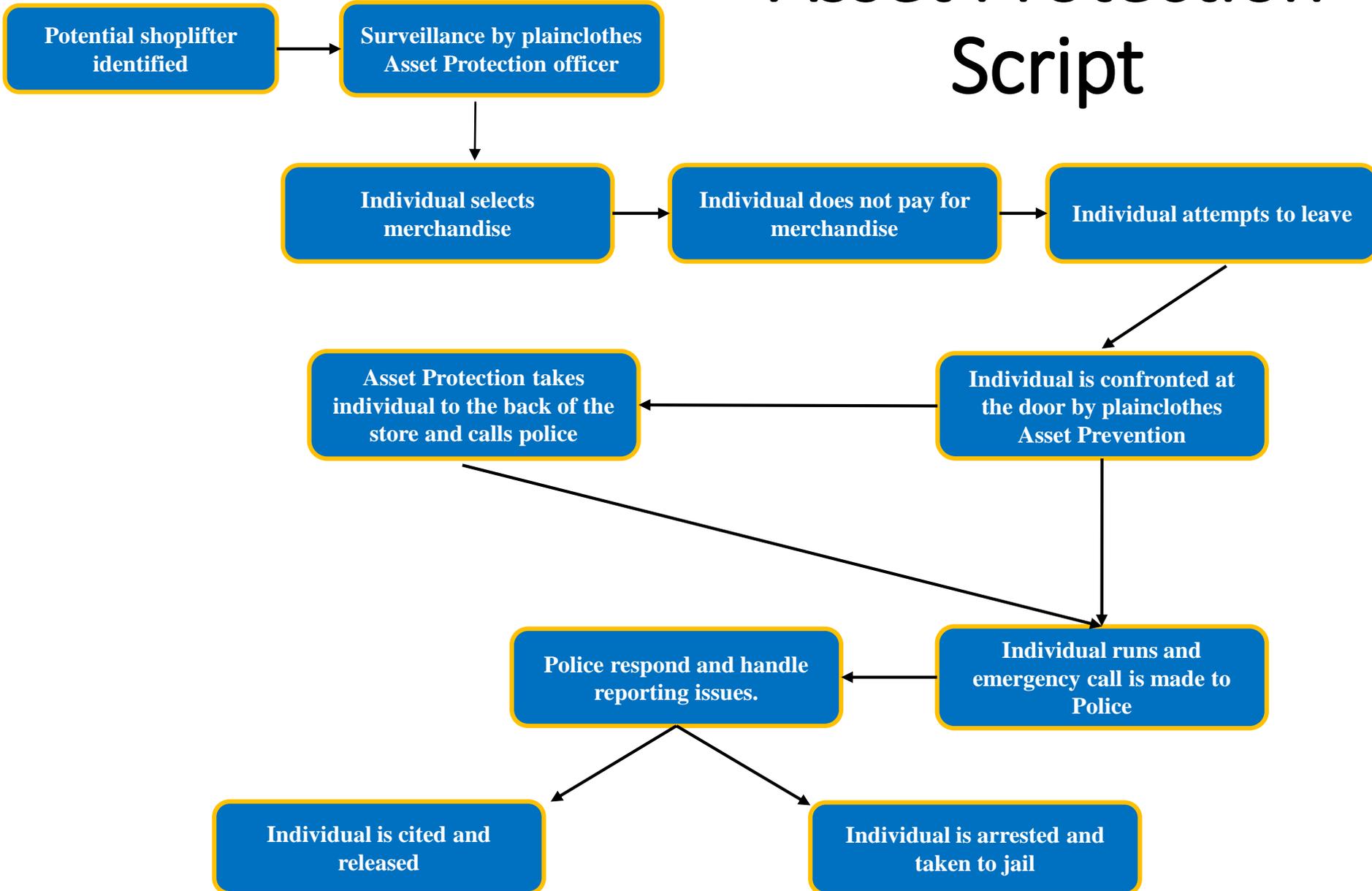
## Cost cutting measures

- Removal of Door Greeters
- Under staffed self-checkouts next to the door

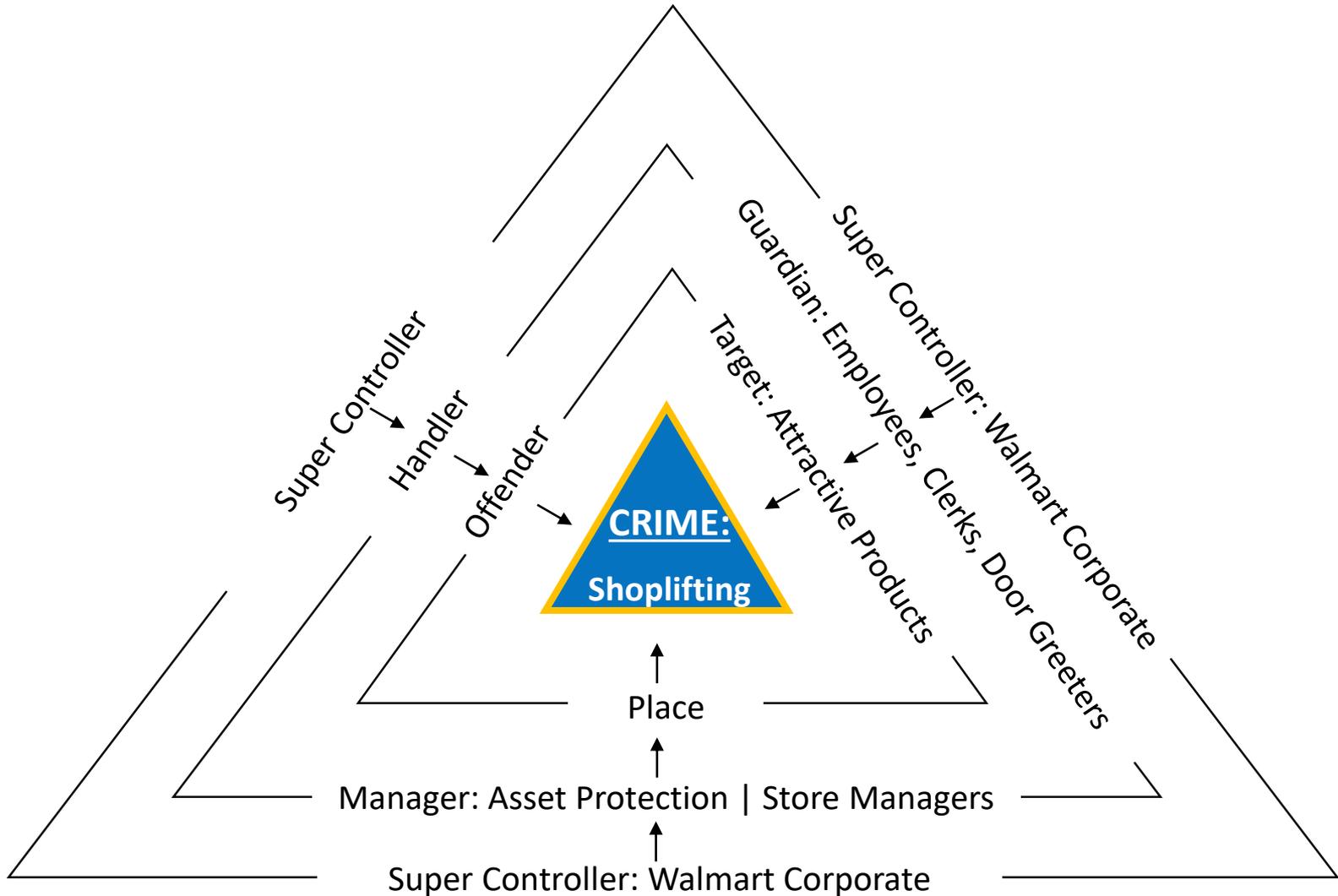
## Camouflaged Signage

- Security camera indicator and anti-theft signs are the same color scheme as the rest of the store

# Asset Protection Script



# Walmart Crime Triangle



# Summary of the Problem

- This is a **manufactured problem**
  - Asset protection practices incentivize catching shoplifters rather than preventing theft
  - No meaningful changes to the shopping environment would take place
  - The reduction strategy for the Walmart stores was for PPD to do more
- Understanding Walmart as a **resource problem rather than a crime problem**
  - Highlighted the need for PPD to change instead of relying on Walmart

# Response

Online reporting solution  
for thefts under \$500

Training to use system,  
build casefiles, and solicit  
information from  
offenders

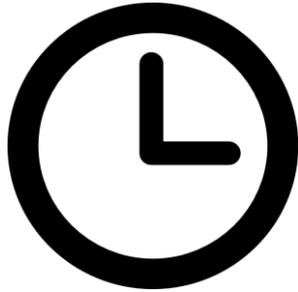
Monitoring calls for  
service, traditional crime  
reports, and online  
reports submitted by  
Walmart team

Asset protection would  
only call if there was an  
act of violence or if  
offender needed to be  
identified

Routine review of BWC  
footage and E911 call  
audio



# Results in the Year Post Intervention



On average PPD officers spent **35** fewer hours per month on calls for service at Walmart

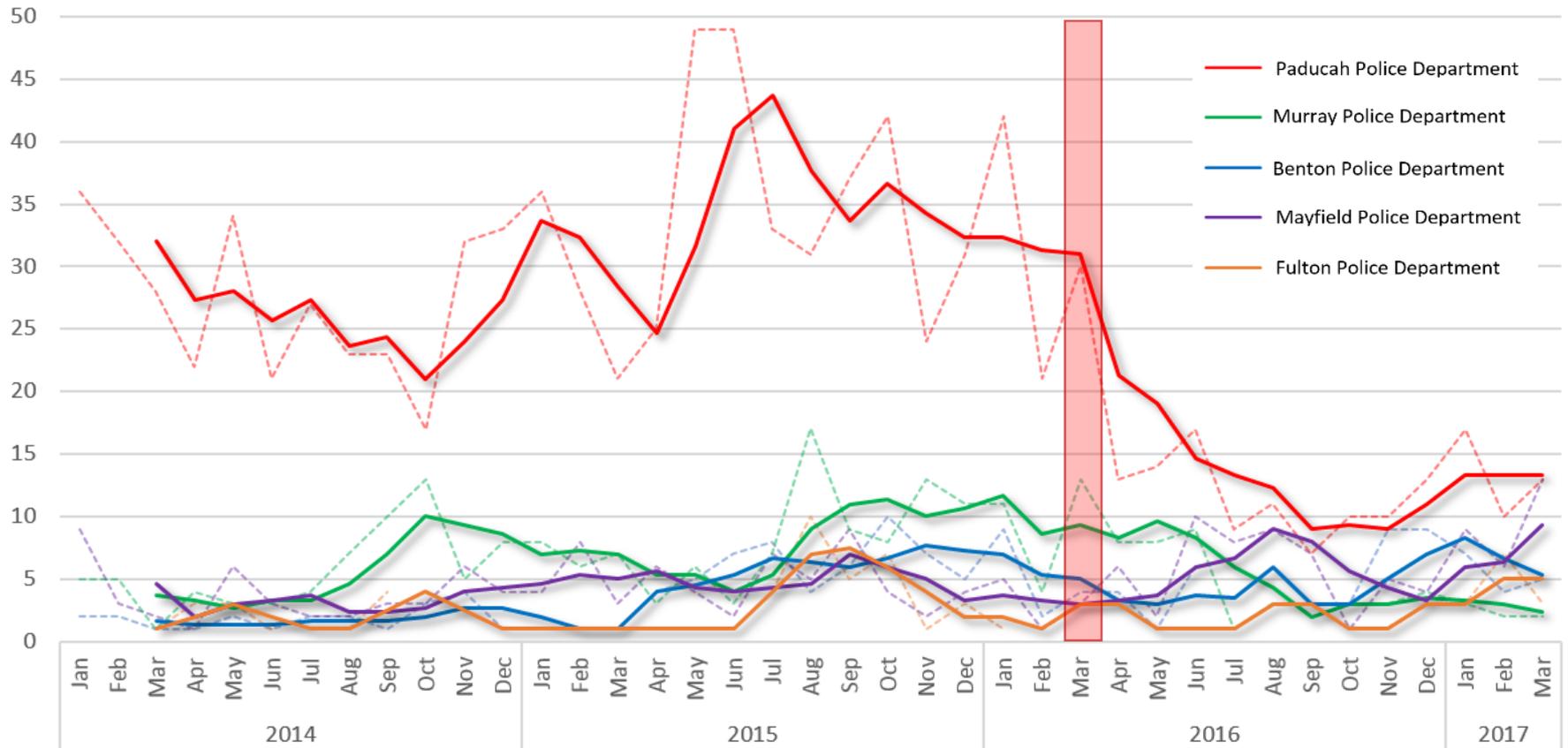


PPD spent an estimated **\$26,884** less in Walmart related costs

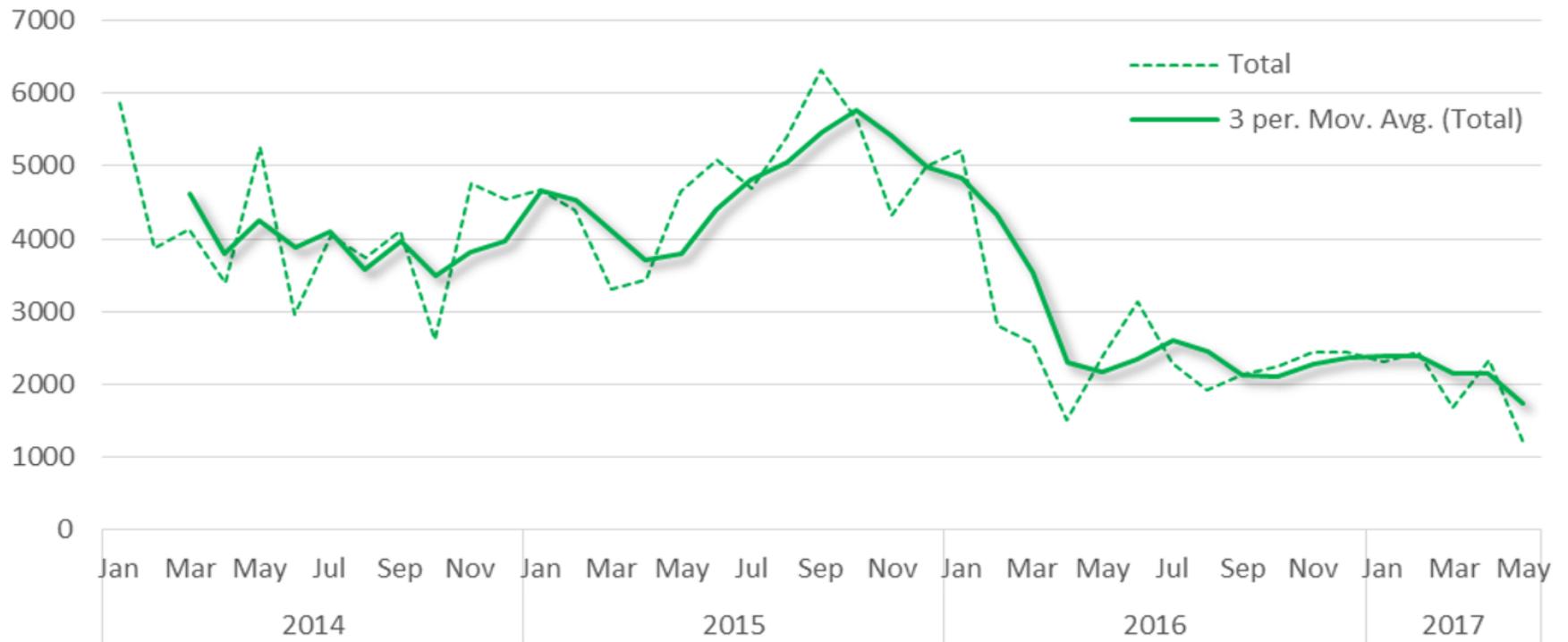


**45%** reduction in Shoplifting Under \$500

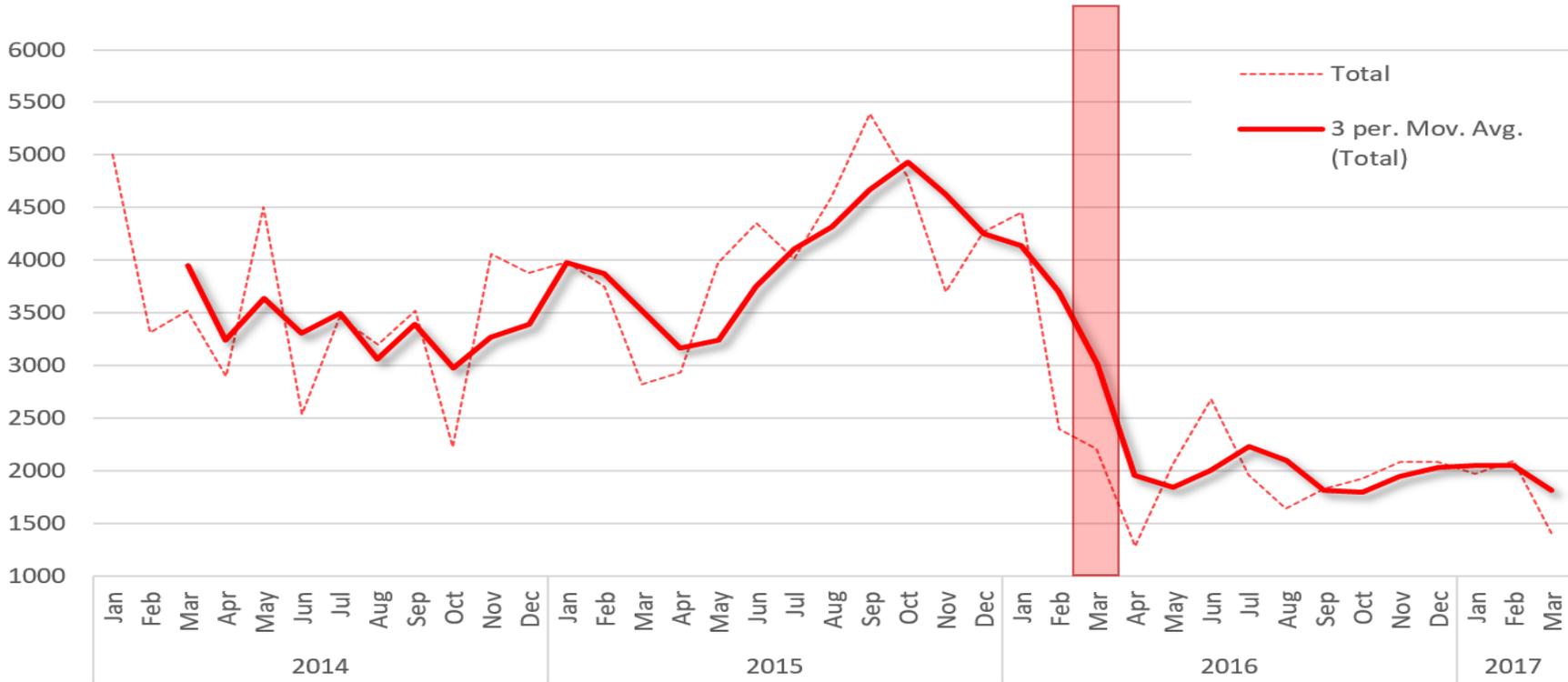
# Changes in Theft under \$500 at Walmart Stores in Jackson Purchase Jurisdictions



# Changes in Minutes Spent at Walmart Stores in Paducah



# Changes in Estimated Cost Accrued at Walmart Stores in Paducah



# Conclusions

- Going after the largest resource drains can pay off
- Sometimes problem frameworks need to be shifted to allow for non-traditional response
- Our problem is not unique

# Questions

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