Hondo Police Department Embraces Patrolfinder to Transform Community Policing

Chief Justin Soza
Hondo Police Department, TX

When **Chief Justin Soza** took the helm of the **Hondo Police Department (TX)** in May 2022, he brought with him a vision rooted in accountability, visibility, and data-driven policing. Today, that vision is taking shape through the department's adoption of **Patrolfinder**, a cutting-edge patrol management solution that is already reshaping how officers serve their community.

The Challenge: Visibility and Coverage
Hondo, a small Texas city located 30 minutes west of San Antonio, has a police force of 26 officers tasked with covering a wide geographic area. While crime trends have stabilized in recent months—thanks in part to a dramatic decrease in human smuggling cases—the department still faces the perennial challenge of ensuring residents feel safe and see officers actively patrolling their neighborhoods.

"One of the biggest complaints I get as a police chief is, 'I don't ever see police officers,'" Soza explained.

It's a common complaint police departments receive and Soza had a suspicion why.

"I know when I was a cop I patrolled the whole city. But you know, in reality, when you look back to those days, I went through the path of least resistance. I did not go into neighborhoods with a lot of stop signs," he said.

The result is smaller streets and neighborhoods can often get missed.

Discovering Patrolfinder
Soza first encountered Patrolfinder at the Texas Police Chiefs' conference. What caught his attention was its ability to provide a real-time visual representation of patrol coverage and, more importantly, highlight areas that had not been visited.

"In looking at this (Patrolfinder), giving us the ability to really cover the entire city is huge to me," he said. "I've never seen anything that gives me the ability to see where we have not been."

Unlike traditional GPS systems that only show where officers are, Patrolfinder offers actionable insights. It tracks patrol points, identifies gaps, and empowers officers to adjust routes dynamically. For Soza, this was the missing piece in achieving comprehensive city coverage.

Implementation and Immediate Impact
The department went live with Patrolfinder in mid-November 2025. Within the first night, the results were striking.

Before Patrolfinder, Soza said officers were "missing a tremendous amount of the city. They're missing a lot of the neighborhoods. They're missing where the burglaries could happen and so on and so forth."

Patrol patterns were predictable and repetitive. Officers unknowingly mirrored each other's routes, leaving large portions of the city untouched. Patrolfinder changed that by introducing randomized patrol points and visual cues, ensuring officers hit every neighborhood—including the "veins," as Soza calls the smaller residential streets—rather than just the main arteries.

The results were nearly instantaneous.

"In the first night, the entire city was covered," Soza said. "And I'm like, 'That's exactly what I want!"

The department also set an ambitious goal: cover every part of the city twice within a 12-hour shift. "We moved our patrol goal down from 24 hours to 12," Soza said. "Now, with just three patrol officers, we can knock out the entire city."

From Perception to Proof: Quantifying Patrol Presence
Beyond improving coverage, Patrolfinder equips Soza with hard data to address citizen concerns and evaluate officer performance. When a resident recently complained about a lack of police presence, Soza pulled the numbers: officers had been at that intersection every 127 minutes on average.

Speaking on Patrolfinder

"Visibility prevents crime. Data drives accountability. Patrolfinder gives us both."

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"That's a big difference from we've never been there," he noted, praising the patrol efforts of his officers.

The system also helps identify areas where patrols can be more efficient and effective.

"It's not about micromanaging—it's about effectiveness," he said, Patrolfinder can help identify when certain initiatives are having positive results and where to focus resources. Patrolfinder also assists officers to meet their goals.

Community Perception and Officer Buy-In
The visibility boost was immediate. "I actually got calls asking if we hired more cops," Soza laughed. "No, we didn't hire any more police officers."

People see officers everywhere now, he said.
Resistance among officers was minimal, thanks to the system's autonomy-friendly design. "They have the freedom to choose how they hit the dots," Soza explained. "It's not me telling them what to do—it's the data showing them where they need to go."

One reason for the officer buy-in may be officers feel safer using Patrolfinder.

"They know where each other is," the chief said. "So, if they start calling for help, they can find them on the

map a lot easier."

Another reason is that officers can assist each other with patrols seamlessly.

Patrolfinder "also knows if one officer went north, I should probably go south or I need to go east so that we can share the workload, knock this out, get it done and move on, which I think is really an important aspect of it."

Patrolfinder A Game-Changer

While some departments focus on zones or hot spots, with Patrolfinder playing an active role, Soza said in small jurisdictions like Hondo those may not be effective approaches. He said Patrolfinder also supports a more "holistic approach" that helps officers "being able to just patrol."

"This is going to show guys where to go," he said. "That's a game-changer in itself."

It has also raised the bar for department discussions on policing, too. For Soza, Patrolfinder represents more than a technological upgrade—it's a cultural shift. "I see it having the ability to really affect change in law enforcement," he said. "If we want to be better as police, we have to really get out there and we have to patrol, we have to prevent crime. And I think that visual representation of police officers being out there is what's going to prevent crime."

In short: Visibility prevents crime. Data drives accountability. Patrolfinder provides both.

As the Hondo Police Department continues to refine its use of the platform, one thing is clear: the future of policing isn't just about responding to crime—it's about preventing it through smarter, more transparent strategies. And in Hondo, that future has already begun.

Key Features of Patrolfinder

1. **Visual Coverage Map**
   Shows real-time patrol points and highlights areas not yet visited.
2. **Randomized Patrol Points**
   Prevents predictable patterns and ensures comprehensive coverage.
3. **Data Analytics**
   Tracks patrol frequency and response times for accountability.
4. **Customizable Goals**
   Departments can set coverage targets (e.g., every neighborhood twice per shift).
5. **Officer Autonomy**
   Provides guidance without micromanagement — officers choose their routes.
6. **Community Visibility**
   Increased presence reduces crime and builds public trust.

While Patrolfinder has already delivered tangible benefits, Soza is thinking long-term. He plans a six-month data analysis to measure its impact on calls for service and crime rates. He's also collaborating with a neighboring officer pursuing a Ph.D. dissertation on the effectiveness of visible policing, using Patrolfinder as a case study.

He said having policies and procedures align with best practices in law enforcement is important, but none of that matters if your citizens don't like you, if your citizens are still calling and saying that they're not seeing police." Soza said.

Now with Patrolfinder, he can dispel those concerns by sharing that his officers have been in their neighborhood, say, every 127 minutes.

“If an officer hits a patrol point at a different time than another one, then it’s going to pop up at a different random time, which is phenomenal,” he said. “So that area is consistently being hit. And like with that one person that I had responded to regarding their complaint, in looking at their data we are hitting it at all these different random times. This works out really good because you have so many different officers just randomly hitting their area.”

To learn more about Patrolfinder’s patented and award-winning technology, request a demonstration by visiting www.patrolfinder.com or emailing getpatrolfinder@patrolfinder.com. You have a lot to gain for your community and officers.