



Office of the
Auditor General
City of Ottawa

Audit of the City of Ottawa's Response to the Convoy Protest



February 2023

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Message from the Auditor General



In January and February 2022, thousands of trucks and protestors from around the country came to Ottawa with what was said to be a protest against COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions. While the effects of this protest were felt across the country, the downtown core of our city was the most impacted. For a city well accustomed to large protests, this was an event unlike any the City had ever experienced.

In March 2022, I received requests from both the City Manager and the Ottawa Police Services Board (OPSB) to consider conducting a review of both the City of Ottawa's (the City) and the Ottawa Police Services' (OPS) responses to these events in our nation's capital. As an independent Statutory Officer, I felt it pertinent that I accept the requests and provide, to the oversight bodies and the residents of Ottawa, a depiction of key events and a description of how all parties could improve for similar future events.

With the downtown core residents and businesses being the most impacted, my Office embarked on our first ever public consultation from June 2022 to July 2022. To gain a better understanding of how Ottawa residents and businesses were impacted during the protest, we held two virtual consultations, released a survey and allowed those interested to provide direct written submissions to my Office. We received approximately 1,600 responses to our survey, among the highest response rates for a City of Ottawa survey. We are very grateful to those that took the time to share their feedback with us as it greatly assisted my team in the completion of their audit work.

It is important to note when reading the findings in our report, that my Office has the benefit of hindsight. We do our best to apply this lens when setting expectations as to what a reasonable person should have done with the information available to them at the time in question.

I would like to take a moment to thank City staff, current and former City Councillors and OPS staff that took the time to provide us with the key information we required to conduct our work and for all their collaboration. I would also like to thank the various experts that took the time to share their expertise with us (see [Appendix 4](#) for a list) as their insights were paramount to the conduct of our work.

Lastly, I would like to thank my team for their extraordinary dedication, application of exceptional professional judgement and their steadfast integrity in the conduct of their work.

Respectfully,



Nathalie Gougeon, CPA, CA, CIA, CRMA, B.Comm
Auditor General

Introduction

On February 7, 2022, City Council approved [Motion No. 69/13](#), requesting that the City of Ottawa (City) “commission an independent evaluation of the response to the occupation of the City of Ottawa with a view to better overall governmental agencies’ response to planning, coordination, communications, (and) sharing of resources, including deployment”. On March 29, 2022, City management requested that the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) consider undertaking the independent evaluation. The Auditor General accepted this request on March 29, 2022.

Background and context

Convoy Protest

It became known to the OPS in mid-January 2022 that a group that called themselves the “Freedom Convoy” was organizing a demonstration to be held in Ottawa on January 29, 2022. Organizers asked truckers and supporters to travel to Canada’s capital from across the country. The group intended to protest COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions, stating that they would not leave until all related restrictions and mandates were repealed. As various convoys travelled across Canada, there was widespread media coverage showing the vast number of vehicles on the road, including many tractor-trailers and other heavy equipment.

Table 1: Timeline – key events relevant to the City of Ottawa’s response

Date	Events
January 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Freedom Convoy started travelling across Canada, headed to Ottawa.
January 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City’s Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was mobilized to work with all City services to support the Ottawa Police Service (OPS).
January 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Capital Region Command Centre (NCRCC) was activated as the Area Command. • Protesters and trucks started arriving in Ottawa.
January 28 – February 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the convoy parked their large vehicles, blocking streets in Ottawa’s downtown core. • Many protestors engaged in behaviours that violated municipal by-laws. • City residents reported incidents of harassment and negative impacts on their well-being.
February 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor declared a municipal state of emergency in the City of Ottawa.
February 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ontario Superior Court of Justice granted a 10-day injunction

Date	Events
	banning honking in the area north of the Queensway. This injunction was brought on by a private citizen.
February 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Integrated Planning Team was established comprised of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), and OPS to coordinate a policing response.
February 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Premier of Ontario declared a state of emergency in Ontario.
February 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OPS established the Integrated Planning Command Centre.
February 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The federal government declared a public order emergency under the <i>Emergencies Act</i>. The City was granted an injunction against the violation of City by-laws (noise, idling, fireworks, open-air fire, and use and care of roads). The Unified Command Centre was stood up.
February 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Chief Bell indicated that police had the resources and a plan to bring the occupation to an end. The plan started with handing out leaflets to protesters, warning them to leave or face criminal charges.
February 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorities cleared much of the City’s downtown area of the Freedom Convoy’s vehicles and protesters.
February 20 - 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City staff cleaned up after the Freedom Convoy was cleared out.
February 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The federal government revoked its declaration of a public order emergency under the <i>Emergencies Act</i>. The Premier of Ontario terminated the state of emergency in Ontario.
February 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mayor terminated the state of emergency in the City.
March 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EOC demobilized and the City returned to normal operations.

Key entities and their roles

Key entities involved in the response to the convoy protest are defined in [Appendix 2](#).

As is the case for all protests within the City, the **OPS** was the lead for the overall planning and response to the convoy protest. The OPS’ priorities included traffic management; maintaining emergency routes; keeping peace and order; protecting monuments; addressing threatening and/or high-risk behaviours; and maintaining the safety of all individuals involved.

The **NCRCC** was the Area Command and the venue for coordinated police-led operations. Policing stakeholders included Incident Commanders from the five major Police Services (OPS, RCMP, OPP, Sureté du Quebec, and Gatineau Police Service). In addition, Parliamentary Protective Service (PPS) was represented at the venue. The

NCRCC was where police and agencies at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels collaborated to plan, respond to the situation and share intelligence and information. The City had representatives at the NCRCC including, Traffic, Paramedics, Fire, OC Transpo, and an EOC Liaison.

On February 12, 2022, the Integrated Command Centre (ICC) was established to coordinate the resources of the OPS, OPP and RCMP. From that point forward, the ICC planned and determined the overall enforcement and operational direction for the event.

The **City of Ottawa’s** response to the protest was coordinated by the EOC. The EOC had to align its activities with and seek direction from the NCRCC, the OPS and later in the protest, the ICC. The EOC had the dual role of:

- 1) Supporting the police in their protest preparedness and response activities, and
- 2) Overseeing and managing City service impacts resulting from the protest (and to mitigate impacts to residents, businesses, and essential services, where possible).

It should be noted that the OPS is a distinct organization that is separate from the City of Ottawa (the corporate entity of municipal government in Ottawa). The two organizations had distinct roles and responsibilities during the response to the convoy protest, as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Responsibilities of the OPS and the City during the protest

Responsibilities	OPS	City of Ottawa
Gathering intelligence from other agencies to inform planning	✓	
Overall planning for the protest	✓	
Planning for effects on City services using intelligence provided by the OPS and the NCRCC		✓
Creating and coordinating an operational plan for the event	✓	
Leading day-to-day decisions-making at the NCRCC	✓	
Obtaining information from the NCRCC to determine impacts on the City		✓
Traffic Management (with the OPS being the lead)	✓	✓
Communications to the public	✓	✓
Providing resources and assistance to policing as requested		✓
Providing emergency services to assist residents with basic needs		✓
Deciding whether to cancel / close City services and facilities		✓

Requesting assistance from other policing agencies	✓	
Requesting assistance from other levels of government	✓	✓
Enforcing municipal by-laws at the direction of police	✓	✓
Applying for an injunction		✓
Declaring a municipal state of emergency		✓

Since the OPS was responsible for the leading the planning for the event, decisions on whether roads should be closed were decided by the OPS. While the *Highway Traffic Act*, the *Traffic and Parking by-law* and the *Special Events on City Streets by-law* does give the City the independent authority to restrict access to public roads, the City could not have closed roads unilaterally without OPS agreement and cooperation. Road closures require police officers to be stationed at key intersections for enforcement.

Impacts on City of Ottawa residents and businesses

The demonstration caused traffic impacts including blockades and closures of many streets and interprovincial corridors for more than three weeks. Many businesses suffered financial losses during this time. Those living and working in the areas in and around the centre of the protest (known as the “red-zone”) were significantly impacted, and many residents did not feel safe in their neighbourhoods. There were other areas outside of the downtown core that were also impacted. For instance, the Overbrook Community was impacted as the Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (RCGT) Park parking lot on Coventry Road was used by protesters as a logistics camp.

During this time, protesters were observed engaging in numerous violations of City by-laws, including setting unlawful fires, discharging fireworks, committing noise infractions related to constant honking of horns, blocking and damaging highways, and idling vehicles.

Public consultation

The OAG conducted a public consultation in June 2022 and July 2022 to gain a better understanding of how City of Ottawa residents may have been impacted during the demonstration. As the OAG is a politically neutral office, we welcomed comments from all residents with different views. Over 1,600 City of Ottawa residents and business owners participated in the consultation and shared their personal experiences.

The majority of respondents described the three-week long protest as an extremely stressful time. Residents reported feeling trapped in their homes as they had no viable means of transportation. Road closures and blockades by convoy vehicles made it difficult to travel by car. Taxi services were no longer available within the downtown

core. Bus and Light Rail Transit (LRT) services were often cancelled, detoured or delayed. Even when LRT stations were open and running, residents reported feeling uncomfortable using the service because protestors were often crowding near the entrances and were aggressive to riders wearing masks. Due to the lack of transportation, some residents had to walk long distances in the winter weather to access grocery stores or pharmacies to obtain necessities. This was difficult for residents not only because of the winter weather and the lack of snow clearing in some areas blockaded by convoy vehicles, but many felt intimidated as they were honked at, yelled at and harassed for wearing a mask.

Residents reported numerous negative impacts on their health and well-being. The constant loud honking caused extreme exhaustion due to the persistent loss of sleep, headaches/migraines, an inability to concentrate when working from home, and anxious behaviour in household pets. Residents reported experiencing respiratory distress due to the diesel fumes from the protestors' trucks; not only outside, but also permeating within their homes. Compounding these issues was that many residents were not able to get access to needed healthcare. Individuals missed essential medical appointments including biopsies, MRIs, ultrasounds, wound care appointments and appointments with specialists to name a few. The cumulative effects of these stresses led to a decline in residents' physical and mental health. Many reported that they are still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety related to the events during the convoy protest.

Some respondents indicated that the event was misrepresented by the media and that while there were some people engaging in negative behaviours, there were many people protesting peacefully. These respondents indicated that the overall protest was safe, kind and even had people cleaning the streets and supporting local businesses. It was further noted that many protesters just wanted their concerns to be heard by government officials.

Please see [Appendix 3](#) for additional information obtained from our public consultation.

Impacts on City services

Various City services were impacted during the convoy protest. The City made operational decisions to temporarily close some buildings and services, including two daycares, the main library branch, City Hall and its amenities, community centres, vaccination clinics, etc. Many City departments had to adapt to the circumstances and make adjustments, as needed, to continue to offer City services.

Significantly impacted service areas such as Public Works, Fire Services, Paramedic Services, and Community and Social Services took steps to plan and consider the

potential impacts to City services prior to the convoy's arrival. Public Works assisted the OPS in fulfilling their traffic-related requests (e.g., setting up barriers, availing overflow parking lot). Fire and Paramedics communicated with the OPS to understand the locations of emergency lanes to enable their response. Community and Social Services established mitigation plans around staffing, food and supplies to physical distancing centres that were complementing shelter services in the downtown core.

Audit objective and scope

The objective of the audit was to assess whether the City of Ottawa's response to the convoy protest was timely and effective in supporting police operations, supporting residents, and ensuring the continuity of City services, to the extent possible.

The audit examined the City's actions leading up to, during and post the convoy protest. The audit focused on the approximately two-month period starting in early January 2022 when the Freedom Convoy publicly announced their intention on converging in Ottawa, to when the Mayor terminated the municipal state of emergency on February 24, 2022.

The scope of this audit **did not** include an assessment of the City's Incident Management System (IMS) structure used to coordinate emergency responses.

The focus of this audit was on the activities of the City of Ottawa. Specifically, the response of its EOC and of the individual departments that had a duty to support the OPS and City residents. While this audit comments on the collaboration between the City and the OPS, the focus is on the City's response. An assessment of the OPS' collaboration with the City of Ottawa will be reported on as part of a separate audit.

During our audit, we engaged with emergency management and legal experts. Profiles of the experts who were consulted during this audit are included in [Appendix 4](#).

Please see [Appendix 1](#) for detailed audit criteria.

Conclusion

The convoy protest in January and February of 2022 was an unprecedented emergency that converged in Ottawa, where the seat of Canada's federal government resides. While the subject matter of the protest had nothing to do with the municipal government, the City of Ottawa had a responsibility to support the OPS in their response to the event and manage the significant implications on the municipality and its residents. The protest came at a time when the City was dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, where City resources had been under stress for some time. The City was able to pivot to deal with the protest using the emergency structures established during the pandemic.

The audit noted the tireless efforts of City staff during the emergency, many of whom worked behind the scenes, but were integral to the continued operations of the City and its services. The City also readily supported and collaborated with the OPS throughout the demonstration until the final enforcement actions were taken. With the benefit of hindsight, the audit noted areas where the City faced challenges and areas for improvement that can better the City's future response to similar emergencies.

Prior to the convoy's arrival, the City's central coordination function for an emergency was not engaged early on by both the OPS and select City departments. This delayed the City's centralized planning and preparation for the protest. Further, the intelligence received by the City during the planning stage was insufficient, thus impacting the effectiveness of the City's response. While the OPS was the lead for the event, and the City's role was to support OPS, there are areas in which subject matter expertise resides within the City. One such area is in traffic management. When the OPS' Traffic unit did not sufficiently engage the City in traffic planning, the City did not request that the OPS involve the Traffic Management unit to fulfill their traffic incident management responsibilities and provide their expertise. The audit also noted that the City needed to have more open communication with Councillors to enable them to be adequately informed and engaged.

During the three-week protest, while the City created a process to assist impacted residents with access to basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, medication delivery), the means of accessing this support was not adequately advertised to some residents affected by the emergency. Further, due to the reliance on community partners to assist residents in need, the City should formalize the roles and responsibilities of both the Human Needs Task Force (HNTF) and of community partners during an emergency, to ensure there is mutual understanding and agreement on the expectations the City has, and the supports required.

The audit also noted the importance of engaging the City's senior leadership team and other key stakeholders in collective discussions to establish overall policy direction for the City's response to an emergency and discuss key decisions to be made by the City. Based on our assessment, in the early days of the protest, although an analysis had been undertaken, Legal Services did not present City Management with all possible options, along with the merits and potential downfalls of each option for which an injunction could be sought.

Another area for improvement we noted was the need for better documentation during the emergency to keep track of directions and requests made to the City to ensure each was actioned appropriately. A log was needed to serve as a reference point for City staff to consult and understand what directions and requests were made by the OPS. This would have helped clarify the directions given to by-law staff regarding enforcement

during the protest. The audit also found that numerous by-law service requests were reported but not addressed by by-law officers due to safety concerns and were closed without further communications to those who reported them. Improved communications with concerned residents are needed during an emergency.

Audit findings and recommendations

1. The City's Planning for the Convoy Protest

The OPS was the lead agency in planning and responding to the convoy protest. As such, key planning decisions were made by the OPS and supported by the City when requested.

The City was able to leverage the structures established during the pandemic to respond to the convoy protest. The EOC, the central facility that provides overall policy direction for the City's response and coordinates all resource requests, was set up for the pandemic and pivoted to mobilize for the convoy protest.

City departments took actions to plan prior to the convoy's arrival. Actions taken were commensurate with the initial intelligence received from the OPS that many vehicles were expected, there would be significant traffic impacts, and that the intention was to hold a peaceful demonstration for the weekend. While the City took actions to plan within each department, we noted challenges faced by the City and areas where there are opportunities for improvement.

1.1 Office of Emergency Management (OEM) was not considered a prime partner in pre-planning

The City follows its Emergency Management Program (EMP) to respond effectively to an emergency. The EMP addresses legislative requirements under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* with the goal of enhancing collaboration between all emergency partners prior to, during and after an emergency. The EMP includes the City's Municipal Emergency Plan (the Plan). The Plan governs the provision of necessary services during an emergency and the processes and procedures in which City employees and partners will respond to the emergency.

Mandated by the province, the City's OEM is responsible for managing the EMP and is the custodian of the Plan. The OEM has the responsibilities of planning and preparing prior to an emergency and ensuring the continuation of essential services during an emergency.

During the initial stages of planning for the convoy protest, the OEM was not considered a prime partner by the OPS. The OPS started planning for the convoy protest in mid-

January. Between January 14-23, 2022, the OPS only reached out to select City staff representing City departments including Transit Services, Public Works, Fire and Paramedics to involve them in pre-planning for the protest. The OEM was not included in the initial communications from the OPS. The OEM had to initiate contact with the OPS on January 24, 2022.

Despite receiving information that the protest would be considered high risk and that there would be significant traffic impacts, the City departments that were initially engaged by the OPS did not inform the Duty Officers representing their departments or notify the OEM directly. Had the Duty Officers been notified, they would have had the responsibility to inform the Corporate Duty Officer (a member of the OEM), for them to initiate City-wide planning for the event in a timely manner.

While the City of Ottawa deals with numerous protests annually and the OEM is not typically a partner in planning for these protests, once the magnitude of the event, the possibility of high risk and the likelihood of significant impacts to the City were known, the OEM should have been notified by both the OPS and other City departments who were contacted. Had the OEM been engaged sooner, they likely would have started centralized planning prior to January 25, 2022. Without adequate communication and sharing of information between City departments and the OEM, there was a delay in getting a central coordination function in place to plan for the event.

RECOMMENDATION 1 – OEM ENGAGEMENT IN SIGNIFICANT FUTURE EVENTS

The GM of Emergency and Protective Services (EPS) should work collaboratively with the OPS to develop a process to ensure timely engagement of the OEM (along with all other relevant City departments) when the size and nature of an event has the potential for significant City impacts. This will ensure that the handling of future similar events is grounded in the City's Emergency Management Plan to support a City-wide coordinated response.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 1

Management agrees with the recommendation.

Since the convoy protest, the OPS "Integrated Event Command Table (IECT)" has provided a consistent venue for engagement and information sharing between the OPS and the OEM. The GM of EPS will meet with the OPS Chief to formalize this process. This work will be completed by the end of Q4 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – ESCALATE ISSUES TO ENABLE EFFECTIVE CITY-WIDE PLANNING

The Director of Public Safety Service should leverage existing communication mechanisms to remind management of circumstances in which they have a responsibility to escalate issues they become aware of to the attention of Duty Officers. This would enable Duty Officers to inform the Corporate Duty Officer to initiate City-wide planning for an event.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 2

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The Director of the Public Safety Service will leverage opportunities to remind management about the Duty Officer program and the responsibility for issue escalation to the Corporate Duty Officer. This could include augmenting portions of the training that the Director already provides to new supervisors and managers, or sharing refresher “Duty Officer Program 101” information with departmental leadership teams (or extended departmental leadership teams). This recommendation is expected to be implemented by the end of Q4 2023.

1.2 Intelligence shared with EOC

While City departments were engaged by the OPS prior to the convoy’s arrival, the intelligence shared with the City was insufficient, thus impacting the effectiveness of the City’s response. The City is dependent on the OPS for intelligence collection as there is no function or ability to do this within the City. However, the OPS controls and limits the amount of intelligence shared outside the organization as intelligence sharing is strictly on a need-to-know basis. While the OPS was unable to share classified intelligence that originated from other law enforcement / national security agencies, the OPS could have shared, as they saw fit, unclassified intelligence and planning information developed within the OPS. In the days leading up to the convoy’s arrival, City departments received very little intelligence from the OPS and plans were informal and changing due to the fluid nature of the situation.

Given the large number of vehicles and protesters expected, a key aspect of planning for the convoy was traffic management. The OPS had developed a 46-page traffic plan dated January 26, 2022 but did not share the plan with the City. Only a brief single page plan showing police unit posts was shared with the City’s Traffic Management group on January 29, 2022. While the OPS’ plan was based on limited information that was rapidly evolving, sharing the traffic plan, when it was in a sufficiently finalized state, would have enabled the City to be better prepared.

Without being provided the detailed traffic plan, Transit Services did not get sufficient information to properly plan for bus service impacts. As a result, Transit Services had to re-route, create detours, post signage, and get information out to the public all at the last minute. Had the OPS shared the traffic plan with Transit Services in advance, they would have been positioned to plan for road closures, road restrictions, staging / stacking areas, and ingress and egress routes.

Furthermore, the intelligence the City received from the OPS and INTERSECT (a multi-jurisdictional emergency preparedness program within the National Capital Region) was very limited. The earliest information received by the City was on January 21, 2022, where a briefing came from INTERSECT indicating that the convoy's arrival was expected to have a major impact on City traffic and the intention was to hold a peaceful demonstration. The City only has access to the lowest level information at INTERSECT, receiving the same level of information as the airport and hospitals. This level of information was not sufficient to help the City adequately prepare and plan for the event.

In planning for the event, the City also received conflicting risk ratings from different sources. The whole range of high, medium and low risk ratings were provided depending on who provided the information. The City may not have adopted the appropriate planning and preparedness approach for the event because of the varying risk ratings received and the overall limited intelligence received.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – SHARING OF INTELLIGENCE WITH THE CITY

The GM of EPS should work collaboratively with OPS to develop a process to have OPS regularly share intelligence on matters that have City-wide impacts with select individuals (with security clearance) within the City's OEM. This will enable the City to receive more timely and detailed intelligence to aid in the development of adequate responses to future events.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 3

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The GM of EPS will meet with the OPS Chief to confirm if other options should be implemented beyond the IECT, such as a higher-status level for the City in INTERSECT. This work will be completed by the end of Q2 2023.

1.3 Traffic Management

While the OPS was the lead for the event and the City's role was to support the OPS, subject matter expertise on the topic of traffic management resides within the City. Hence, the City is usually engaged early on in planning for any event or protest. For the convoy protest, the City was engaged early on during planning; however, once traffic management moved to a different unit within the OPS, the City was no longer actively engaged for their expertise.

The City had the following traffic incident management responsibilities:

- Work closely and effectively to deal with major incidents with partner agencies including OPS, OC Transpo, Société de transport de l'Outaouais, Ontario Provincial Police, Ministry of Transportation of Ontario, City of Gatineau, Sûreté du Québec, and the Ministry of Transportation of Québec;
- Create and deploy special response plans and real-time traffic management strategies including signal timing modifications, police assistance, flexible lane designations controlled through variable message signs, installation of detour routes; and
- Communicate to the public the impacts to the road network of the incident via the web, media, and Variable Message Signs.

To carry out these responsibilities, the City's Traffic Management unit needed to be actively engaged in traffic planning with the OPS.

Prior to the convoy's arrival, the City's Traffic Management was initially engaged by the OPS' Special Events Unit in traffic planning. However, once traffic management was taken over by the OPS' Traffic Unit, the City was no longer actively engaged. The audit found that the development of the traffic plan dated January 26th was not collaborative between the OPS and the City. Further, once developed, the detailed 46-page OPS Traffic Plan was not shared with the City. In the first two weeks after the arrival of the convoy protest, the City's Traffic Management unit was only reacting to the OPS' traffic requests (e.g., assistance with setting up barriers). Traffic Management found the situation chaotic as requests were not always feasible and they were not privy to the communications related to the Traffic Plan behind the request. It was not until February 21, 2022, two days prior to the end of the protest, when the City's Traffic Management unit's expertise was utilized by the OPS, and the City obtained knowledge of the detailed traffic plan moving forward. Through our discussion with both City and OPS staff, it was identified that the benefit and cooperation received once the City's Traffic Management unit was engaged was crucial and positive.

While traffic management was police-led, given the magnitude of the protest having significant impacts on City roads, transportation and services, the City should have

been more actively engaged in traffic planning. Moreover, subject matter expertise in the areas of traffic planning and management lies within the City’s Traffic Management unit. The OPS could have missed key considerations, like the impacts on City departments and services (e.g., OC Transpo, snow removal, fire, paramedics, etc.) by excluding the City from planning and ongoing traffic management. In the first two weeks of the protest when the OPS’ Traffic Unit was not sufficiently engaging the City in traffic planning, the City did not formally request that the OPS involve them in order to fulfill their traffic incident management responsibilities and provide their subject matter expertise. We understand the City was not privy to the same intelligence that the OPS had access to, and as such in the early days of planning would not have known the extent to which their further involvement could have benefited the situation. However, once the protest had evolved and given the significant downstream impacts on City services, we would have expected that the City’s senior management reach out to the OPS to request more traffic management participation earlier in the event.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – COLLABORATION WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The GM of EPS should work collaboratively with OPS to develop a process to ensure that for future events of significant size and nature, the City is engaged in a timely manner by OPS for integrated planning. This would include actively engaging the City’s Traffic Management unit to carry out its traffic incident management responsibilities and make use of its subject matter expertise. City input should be sought when developing traffic plans. Traffic related documents should be shared, along with any changes throughout the event, as traffic management has significant implications to City services.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 4

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The GM of EPS will meet with the OPS Chief to confirm the City’s inclusion in the “Integrated Event Command Table (IECT)” as the formal model through which integrated incident planning will continue, including with respect to traffic management. This work will be completed by the end of Q2 2023.

1.4 Communication to Councillors

Since the response to the convoy protest was an OPS led initiative, it was agreed that OPS would be the primary contact to provide situational awareness and address Councillors’ questions. Many questions that were posed could only be answered by the OPS as they related to the convoy itself or the decisions around managing / removing the protest. However, with respect to City-related decisions / matters, the City had a

duty to communicate with Councillors to ensure that they were adequately informed and engaged. According to the EMP, the City has the responsibility to maintain open communications and have proactive engagement with elected officials.

The audit found that there was limited engagement with Councillors during the planning for the event. Councillors were provided with little information on what plans the City had made prior to the convoy's arrival. In turn, this hindered Councillors' ability to communicate decisions concerning services / issues to ward residents. For example, during the January 26, 2022 Council meeting (2 days before the convoy's arrival), the City made no presentation or discussion about the impending convoy protest. However, the media availability afterwards focused significantly on that topic.

Furthermore, key decisions made by the City were not always relayed to Councillors. For example, after the City had offered RCGT Park to the OPS for overflow parking, the Councillor representing the ward was not informed and instead learned of the matter through the media. As a result, the Councillor was unable to address the many questions and concerns from residents. While we understand this need arose from an OPS request, we believe it would have been pertinent to inform the Councillor of such a decision once it had been made.

Other examples of key planning information not communicated to Council included information about traffic flow, which streets were prioritized for emergency traffic access, designated parking locations for protesters, whether key City buildings were locked down and whether bus routes were anticipated to be impacted. The only communication to Council prior to the convoy's arrival was on January 27th and 28th, 2022, when brief situational updates were provided.

During the protest, the Councillors in the most affected wards did not receive direct communication from the City seeking to understand what unique challenges residents in their wards were facing and what help was required. Without this understanding, the City may not have fully considered what additional supports for residents were necessary.

The audit did find that the City provided Council with situational awareness updates during the protest, specifically on January 29th - 30th, 2022, February 8, 2022, and February 24, 2022. The City's Council Liaisons were also effective at answering email inquiries from Councillors that came through the EOC.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – OPEN AND TIMELY COMMUNICATION WITH CITY COUNCIL

The City Manager, in consultation with the GM of EPS, should establish protocols and criteria to enable open and timely communications with City Council both in the planning and response to an emergency. The communication should ensure Councillors are aware of key decisions made affecting their wards for them to effectively inform and support residents.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 5

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The City Manager will work with the GM of EPS to establish protocols and criteria aimed at identifying when Members of Council should be made aware of key decisions affecting their ward, both in the planning and response to a potential emergency event or situation. These protocols and criteria will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and members of SLT will be encouraged to share this information with their Departmental Leadership Teams (DLTs), to foster greater awareness of this requirement at all levels of the organization. These protocols and criteria are expected to be shared with SLT by the end of Q1 2023.

2. City's Response During the Convoy Protest

2.1 Overall collaboration between OPS and the City

The audit found evidence of positive collaboration between the City and the OPS during the three-week protest. The City readily supported the OPS throughout the demonstration, until the final enforcement action was taken. The City assisted the OPS in many ways, including providing equipment to block emergency lanes, providing hand-held radios, towing of vehicles blocking emergency lanes, providing buses to shuttle police, making City facilities available for use by policing agencies, assisting the OPS with media advisories, etc. Likewise, throughout the event, the OPS assisted the City when possible. Requests made by the City to the OPS were mostly for police to accompany frontline City staff that were required to access the red-zone. While OPS resources were stretched and limited, most City requests for assistance were satisfied.

2.2 Emergency services and resources provided by the HNTF

Residents and businesses in the downtown core experienced negative impacts during the convoy protest. The City was able to leverage the HNTF which was established as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response. The HNTF is comprised of internal and external partners collaborating to support at-risk residents in the City. During the pandemic, the HNTF was effective at addressing the many service gaps in the

community that included conducting wellness visits and phone calls to isolated and vulnerable residents, and supporting transportation needs to medical appointments and grocery stores for those with health or mobility challenges. When the convoy protest started, the EOC and the Community and Social Services Department (CSSD) leveraged the HNTF to engage with community partners (e.g., Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, United Way) to connect with and assist residents in the impacted area. The community partners proactively reached out to help the same at-risk / vulnerable populations that were identified and assisted during the pandemic.

During the convoy protest; however, the population of "at-risk / vulnerable" people changed as all residents living in the downtown core, especially within the red-zone, were facing a challenging situation and some may have struggled to meet their basic needs. The EOC did not reassess to identify the vulnerable population specific to this emergency, in order to understand what additional outreach and support may have been needed.

During the convoy protest, if a resident was experiencing challenges with food security, transportation, safety, and mental health, they could request assistance by calling 9-1-1, 2-1-1, calling / emailing the HNTF or submitting an inquiry through 3-1-1. However, these means of accessing support were not adequately advertised. Only Ottawa.ca and the convoy protest website (emergency website established by the City starting on February 6, 2022) had links to information on the HNTF. These links were embedded within the City's website and may have been difficult for residents to find. No advertising or information was provided through public service announcements or social media. The only public announcement with information on how to get emergency assistance was found in a statement made by Ottawa Public Health (OPH) in collaboration with the CSSD on February 14, 2022. However, this was already over two weeks into the protest. Further, a list of community partners and the services they were providing was not made publicly available, nor was there information provided to allow residents to contact community partners directly.

Instead of widely advertising how residents could obtain assistance, the City relied on community partners to contact their regular clients on their email lists during the event. Since the HNTF was originally set-up to help mitigate service gaps and, in particular, the at-risk / vulnerable population identified during the pandemic, only those individuals who were previously in receipt of their services were proactively contacted. Residents who were not normally in use of these services would not have been contacted and would therefore, likely not have been aware of the services available, unless they reached out to 3-1-1, 2-1-1 or 9-1-1.

The City's EMP requires that, during an emergency, the City "coordinate a framework within which arrangements and measures are implemented to ensure that basic needs

are met for people impacted by a situation”. As such, the City had a responsibility to ensure that help was made available and was adequately promoted to all residents that found themselves in need during the emergency. It is important to note, that while the City maintains a responsibility to ensure basic needs are met, individuals are also responsible to have adequate plans in place in case of an emergency.

The City did contemplate different ways to help residents, such as respite centres and wellness checks. However, they were ultimately not provided due to a variety of reasons including: lack of demand for the service, inability of residents to access the service and coverage by other organizations such as community partners.

While the mechanisms used by the City (e.g., reviewing 3-1-1 call themes) did not identify additional unmet needs of residents at the time of the convoy protest, it did not mean that residents' basic needs were met. Our public consultation received many reports from residents who experienced difficulty in acquiring food and accessing pharmacies for their medication. In many cases, residents could not access transit to get to grocery stores / pharmacies, grocery delivery services were limited due to the lack of access to downtown streets, and many were too afraid to walk in the downtown area for fear of harassment. A lack of access to medication would have further exacerbated the negative impact on residents as people were already reporting increased migraines and difficulty sleeping from the noise and fumes and significant anxiety due to the situation.

Reports through our public consultation indicated that some community organizations (e.g., local BIPOC organization) took the initiative to mitigate risks to members by setting up wellness checks, handing out earplugs, providing grocery delivery, and information updates. Residents found these community initiatives to be most helpful to them during the emergency. It appeared to them that none of these initiatives were City-led.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK TO ENSURE EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS

The Director of Public Safety Service should work with the GM of CSSD (or designate) to develop a framework to identify the affected population during a situation which results in a coordinated response from the City so that emergency social services to assist with people's basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, medication, etc., are mobilized specific to the context of the situation.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 6

Management agrees with the recommendation.

EPS in collaboration with CSSD will review and update the relevant City of Ottawa EMP document(s). Both departments will also develop an assessment checklist, along with existing monitoring and surveillance of a significant event, to assess impact and resulting key emergency social services that will be required for affected residents during the response and recovery phase of an event. This work will be completed by the end of Q2 2024, with any changes to City of Ottawa EMP documents rising to the City's EM governance by Q4 2024.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – ADEQUATE PROMOTION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND RESOURCES

The GM of CSSD (or designate), the Chief Communications Officer, and the Director of Public Safety Service should put a process in place to ensure that services and resources available to residents during an emergency are actively promoted through all available mechanisms, including City websites, mainstream media, and social media. Consideration should also be given to increasing general resident awareness of services offered through 2-1-1, and 3-1-1 in advance of any emergencies.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 7

Management agrees with this recommendation.

The Chief Communications Officer will work closely with the GM of CSSD (or designate) and the Director of Public Safety to actively promote the services and resources available to residents during an emergency, so they receive valuable information through all communications channels when a situation arises. PIMR's emergency response toolkit will be updated by the end of Q1 2023 to ensure that services and resources available to residents are actively promoted.

2.3 Inclusion of CSSD matters in the EMP

As demonstrated during the convoy protest, there are situations where the City relies heavily on the services provided by community partners during an emergency. Therefore, it is important to have mutual understanding and agreement on the expectations the City has, the roles and responsibilities of the community partners, and the supports required by these organizations from the City in order to carry out their responsibilities. The City's EMP and Municipal Emergency Plan have not yet formalized the role of both the HNTF and of community partners. This can increase the City's risk of being underprepared during an emergency and failing to support residents effectively.

During the convoy protest, whenever 3-1-1, 2-1-1, or the HNTF received a service request, the resident would be connected to a community partner and/or a City service. Approximately 30 community partners were involved in supporting residents during the convoy protest. The community partner would find a way to get to the resident, with the help of the HNTF and the NCRCC to navigate the best routes to take. Community partners did their best given the situation but faced similar challenges to City staff related to employee safety and difficulty accessing certain areas. Community partners also experienced some challenges in getting responses to their specific questions / concerns from the City, as there was no protocol in place to get clear information outside of the regular meetings held. Further, the City was unable to determine the number of residents assisted during the emergency because service delivery completed by community partners was not tracked and reported back to the HNTF.

There is a need to use the experience of the convoy protest to produce a preparedness plan that clarifies the role of community partners in municipal emergency responses. Preparation is required on topics such as protection of staff and property, maintaining access to critical services, ensuring the surge capacity of basic needs services (such as food delivery, wellness checks and crisis supports), consideration for additional funding to reimburse direct costs incurred as a result of the emergency, and expanding mental health and trauma supports as part of a community recovery plan.

RECOMMENDATION 8 – INCLUDE THE HNTF AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN THE CITY'S EMP AND MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY PLAN

The Director of Public Safety Service should work with the GM of CSSD or designate to formalize the roles and responsibilities of community support partners during an emergency in the relevant EMP document(s). Considerations should be given to the following:

- maintaining a current list of all community partners and the services they provide;
- formalizing the channels of communication during an emergency to ensure that questions or concerns can be addressed in a timely and effective manner;
- ensuring the ability to obtain adequate staff, supplies and equipment to meet the basic needs of residents during an emergency;
- seeking approval from Council and/or other levels of government, for additional funding, when necessary; and
- ways to track and monitor service delivery to aid the City in determining if services are being effectively deployed and to identify where additional resources may be required.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 8

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The GM of CSSD (or designate) will work with the Director, Public Safety Service and other internal partners to ensure the City's Emergency Social Services framework continues to be scalable to support a Human Needs response, as needed, during a significant situation. This will include key roles and responsibilities. The EOC's organizational structure during an emergency will include the appropriate coordination to support communication processes, resources (such as staff and equipment), tracking and reporting mechanisms, and access to relevant community partners' information. This work will be completed by the end of Q2 2024, with any changes to City of Ottawa EMP documents rising to the City's EM governance for approval by Q4 2024.

2.4 Communication of City service changes during the emergency

The audit found that there were effective structures and mechanisms in place to support emergency communications by the City. The City effectively communicated most changes to City services during the 3-week protest. This included announcing the closure of daycares, City facilities, clinics, delayed garbage pickup, etc. The City posted information through various streams including media advisories, media releases, public service announcements (PSAs), websites (Ottawa.ca, Convoy Protest Emergency page, OC Transpo site, etc.), and social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram).

An area where better communication was needed was in posting physical signage on OC Transpo bus stops that were cancelled. While online updates were posted, Transit Services did not consistently put physical notices on bus stops within the red-zone that were no longer in service. The lack of notices on bus stops caused confusion for residents that depended on OC Transpo services (particularly residents like senior citizens who do not know how to navigate the internet to look for transit updates), and in some cases, residents waited for extended periods of time for a bus that was not coming. This was especially problematic because the protest took place during the winter with frigid temperatures, making waiting for a bus challenging.

Out of concern for safety of Transit Services staff, signs were not consistently posted within the red-zone. We did, however, note that Transit Services did not ask the OPS or By-law and Regulatory Services (BLRS) for assistance in putting up signage to mitigate the safety risk identified. Asking for assistance in escorting staff with this one-time activity should have been considered to lessen the negative impacts on residents.

RECOMMENDATION 9 – COMMUNICATION OF TRANSIT SERVICE CHANGES

The GM of Transit Services should develop a process to communicate with residents to ensure that all residents (including those without access to the internet) be informed in a timely manner of service changes during events of this nature.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 9

Management agrees with the recommendation.

OC Transpo staff review the effectiveness of customer notifications on a regular basis and seek to continuously improve communications so that customers are aware of any service impacts from the moment they begin to plan their trip.

In the event of an unplanned disruption to transit service, OC Transpo informs its customers of service changes through a variety of print, social media and digital channels, including:

- On-site bus stop notices and posters at O-Train stations
- octranspo.com news items, important service notifications (webpage banners) and Alerts page updates
- Outreach staff on the ground at O-Train Line 1 stations and at key locations throughout affected areas
- Social media channels
- SMS text and email alerts
- Transit information screens at stations

In addition to digital outlets, OC Transpo provides ongoing information to traditional media outlets, such as newspapers, TV and radio.

OC Transpo has reviewed its processes in light of lessons learned from the convoy to identify areas of improvement. The following updates have been made:

- Formalized the on-street detour process that incorporates all transit service areas involved;
- Created a new on-site bus stop notice that is more durable and legible, using a rigid material affixed with zip ties. These improved notices are used by on-street staff when feasible; and
- Created an easy-to-print template for ad hoc signage that can be printed and installed by Rail Operations staff when feasible.

Additionally, during multi-day events, OC Transpo will collaborate with the City's Public Information and Media Relations team to share daily Public Service Announcements, including the latest information on impacts to transit service.

2.5 EOCCG only met once during the event

Effective internal communication within the City was also important to the ongoing management of the emergency. Information sharing within the City was coordinated centrally through the EOC. The EOC is comprised of two distinct groups: (i) the EOC Operations Group (EOC Ops Group) and (ii) the EOC Control Group (EOCCG).

The EOC Ops Group ensures continuity of operations across the City, supports departmental Command Centres, provides recommendations to the EOCCG, and develops strategies for implementing EOCCG objectives. The audit found that the EOC Ops Group met regularly (sometimes a few times per day) to provide situational awareness updates and discuss what challenges were being faced by City departments.

The EOCCG provides the overall policy direction for the City's response to an emergency. It is chaired by the City Manager and comprised of the City's senior leadership team and others including the Fire Chief, Paramedic Chief, Chief Librarian, Medical Officer of Health, and the Ottawa Police Chief. While the City's EMP does not specify the frequency of which the EOCCG must meet during an incident, it is understood that the EOCCG Chair and EOC Commander are to determine the meeting frequency based on the situation. The meetings should be frequent enough to enable the members to exercise the responsibilities of the EOCCG, which includes formulating strategic standing objectives, coordinating resource management needs and determining whether a State of Emergency Declaration is required.

We noted that only one EOCCG meeting was held during the convoy protest. According to the EMP, City Council and the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act recognizes the EOCCG as the group responsible for the response to an emergency and the implementation of the City's Municipal Emergency Plan. Without having regular EOCCG meetings with documentation of key decisions made, there is no evidence that the group carried out its responsibilities.

We understand that due to competing operational priorities, the Police Chief may have had limited time to attend these meetings. We were also informed that City management utilized other mechanisms to share information and had numerous meetings with specific departments to make key decisions. However, there was no evidence of collective discussions amongst EOCCG members to establish overall objectives and provide direction on City priorities and strategies. As such, key decisions were not made collectively, but among select members of management. The EMP holds the "group" responsible for the response and implementation of the City's Municipal Emergency Plan. As such, all members within the EOCCG are meant to have a say and provide input in the overall emergency policy and coordination. Key topics we would

have expected to be discussed at EOCCG meetings include: 1) a state of emergency assessment and 2) the City’s application for an injunction.

State of Emergency

Monitoring the situation and continuously assessing whether criteria for calling a state of emergency have been met is a specific role of the EOCCG and is therefore a standing item on the EOCCG agenda. Without holding EOCCG meetings on a regular basis, the City did not formally assess the situation against the criteria and collectively discuss the possibility of declaring a state of emergency. This was done only among a few City representatives, without formal consultation of all the EOCCG members.

While we understand that the City’s position was that no additional authorities would be gained from the declaration of a state of emergency to respond to the convoy response, had it been called sooner, this could have, at a minimum, signaled to the province the severity of the situation from the City’s perspective. The lack of ongoing assessment and collective discussion may have led to a delay in making a City supported recommendation to the Mayor. Had an emergency been declared earlier, the provincial and federal governments may have been compelled to provide Ottawa with help sooner.

Injunction

The EMP states that the EOCCG “directs the City’s mitigation and response activities in a situation by providing overall policy and strategic direction”. The application for an injunction was a key decision to be made by the City, which had the potential to mitigate some of the negative impacts on residents. There were varying viewpoints about the usefulness of an injunction and how it could be applied. This was only discussed with a small number of EOCCG representatives. We would have expected that the EOCCG be presented with legal options and discuss the application for an injunction to provide direction on the matter.

Without EOCCG meetings, there is no evidence of the EOCCG developing overall objectives and providing policy direction for the City’s response to the situation and no opportunity for the group to collectively discuss key decisions that needed to be made.

RECOMMENDATION 10 – EOCCG MEETING FREQUENCY

<p>In future emergencies, the EOCCG Chair and EOC Operations Group should determine, document, and communicate the meeting frequency based on the nature of the emergency. The frequency should be sufficient to carry out the roles and responsibilities of the EOCCG as reflected in the EMP.</p>

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 10

Management agrees with the recommendation.

While meeting cadence will be dictated by the specific context of each emergency, the Public Safety Service will enshrine the rationale for a regular cycle of EOCCG meetings in the City's relevant EMP document(s), which will occur by the end of Q4 2023.

2.6 City Injunction

An injunction is an order from a court that either prohibits a party from doing something or requires a party to do something. Failure to abide by the terms of an injunction can cause someone to be summoned to court to face a judicial hearing. The court could find the defendant in contempt and impose fines and/or imprisonment. These penalties are significantly more severe than the monetary fines for municipal by-law violations (up to \$1,000 for select by-law violations during the convoy protest).

A municipality has authority, pursuant to s. 440 of the Municipal Act, to seek an injunction to restrain acts in contravention of its by-laws. After the first weekend of the convoy protest (January 29 - 30, 2022), there was ample evidence of various municipal by-law breaches, including open air fires, fireworks, noise, and obstructing the use of highways that were ongoing in nature.

Based on support from the Chief of Police and upon the direction of the City Manager, the City Solicitor began considering the merits of an injunction on January 30, 2022. This included reviewing case law and engaging external legal counsel. Initially, the City's Legal Services, along with the OPS' legal team, discussed the possibility of injunctive relief focused on parked trucks and vehicles. In these early days, the option of an injunction for by-law violations was not pursued. On February 7, 2022 a private citizen led injunction was heard and granted for noise by-law violation.

The audit noted the City first engaged and instructed legal counsel to prepare draft materials in preparation for an injunction on February 4, 2022. At this point, what the injunction would be sought for had not yet been specified. The preparation of documents for an injunction motion specifically on the basis of municipal by-law violations commenced on February 9, 2022 and made use of the draft materials that were previously prepared. On that day, Legal Services started preparing certified copies of the municipal by-laws to introduce into evidence. On February 10, 2022, evidence of municipal by-law violations was being gathered and a hearing date was requested. From February 11 to 13, 2022, the City continued drafting and preparing the application and supporting documentation. On February 14, 2022, the City's injunction motion was heard and granted.

While the OPS expressed their support of the City pursuing an injunction and indicated that it would provide them with operational benefits and serve as another tool they could leverage, the timing of when to seek an injunction was not determined. In the first two weeks of the protest, the City was concerned about submitting an injunction application for a number of reasons, including: belief that there was limited value in applying for an injunction for which OPS did not have the resources to enforce and concern that an injunction could have negative consequences or could negatively impact the activities of police. The City, as they were not the lead in the protest response, was not privy to all operational information and plans, and therefore, continued to question how an injunction would fit into the operational plans of the police.

In the first ten days of the protest, we noted no evidence that Legal Services presented City Management with all possible options for which an injunction could be sought. Only on February 7, 2022, was a legal memo issued to the Mayor and City Council providing an overview of the legal authorities available and the implications of each.

Had the merits and potential downfalls of each option been presented in the early days of the protest to City management, the City may have decided to pursue an injunction against violations of municipal by-laws sooner. Having sought an injunction against municipal by-law violations earlier may have deterred some of the violations and eased the impacts on residents. However, we cannot state with any certainty the results of seeking an injunction sooner would have had on the protest.

RECOMMENDATION 11 – PRESENT LEGAL OPTIONS TO MANAGEMENT FOR CONSIDERATION

In future situations where an injunction is contemplated, the City Manager, with the assistance of the City Solicitor and external counsel (if deemed necessary), should assess all options for which an injunction could be sought (i.e., subject of the injunction) and present all options to management for discussion and timely decision making. Once a decision is made as to the nature of the injunction remedy being sought, timely action should be taken to apply for the injunction.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 11

Management agrees with the recommendation and management considers it complete.

When assessing options regarding the potential use of an injunction in response to a public order event, the City Manager, in consultation with the City Solicitor, will ensure that the timely presentation of options to management is properly documented. Options for the potential use of an injunction to assist in mitigating the impacts of a public order event will be presented with careful consideration of

the possible benefits and the potential risks of proceeding, including the possible impacts on the police-led response to the public order event.

2.7 Lack of documentation

The NCRCC was the Area Command where operational decisions were made by the OPS in collaboration with other stakeholders involved. The City had liaison officers embedded at the NCRCC to bring information and requests back to the City's EOC. At the NCRCC, the OPS communicated key decisions (e.g., posture changing to emphasizing enforcement in the second week), provided instructions (e.g., direct convoy-related by-law complaints to the OPS) and made requests of the City (e.g., secure space for policing partners, providing supplies).

The audit noted that the key directions, requests, and decisions made to / impacting the City, coming out of the NCRCC, were not documented by City staff. While some key decisions impacting the City were relayed by the EOC Liaison Officer at EOC meetings and as a result, captured in the EOC meeting minutes, there was no formal issues log for the emergency.

Section 6.15 of the City's EMP requires all individuals and groups involved in the situational response to maintain documentation and use an Activity Log (IMS Form 214). This log is meant to record details of notable activities during an emergency and provide a reference from which to extract information for inclusion in any after-action report. Staff were reminded to use this log at the EOC meeting on January 28, 2022. However, as the event progressed, there was limited use by City staff.

While the City would not be expected to document classified information relayed at the NCRCC, the City should have documented key decisions (related to the City), and directions or requests made of/from the City to ensure this information was relayed to the right departments for action and then tracking to their appropriate conclusion.

A lack of documentation makes it difficult to keep track of directions and requests made to the City to ensure each was actioned appropriately and to perform after-actions assessments. An issues and directions log would have also served as a reference point for City staff to consult and understand what directions/requests were made by the OPS.

While we note this area of improvement, this is not meant to take away from the dedication displayed by many City staff during the convoy protest. There were staff stationed at the EOC and EOC liaisons at the NCRCC who worked 15+ hour shifts for extended periods of time to respond to the emergency.

RECOMMENDATION 12 – APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION DURING EMERGENCIES

The EOC Commander should ensure that incident responders are reminded of keeping IMS 214 Activity Logs (as is required under section 6.15 of the EMP), and appropriate documentation is made at all important meetings related to an emergency to ensure key requests and directions are tracked in a central log. This will assist the City in tracking and completing requests in a timely manner.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 12

Management agrees with the recommendation.

While the City's Municipal Emergency Plan already includes a section on documentation, the Public Safety Service will augment language in the document specific to EOC Commander responsibilities regarding documentation oversight, and to reinforce these principles, which will occur by the end of Q4 2023.

2.8 By-law Enforcement

Ticketing of vehicles

Under the *Provincial Offences Act*, By-law and Regulatory Services (BLRS) officers can issue tickets for violations of municipal by-laws. These tickets must be served to the individual in violation, as the full name of the individual is required. During the convoy protest, BLRS deemed this to be too dangerous an activity to undertake without OPS support. BLRS officers can also issue parking tickets either directly to the driver or by affixing it to the vehicle.

Between January 28 and February 22, 2022, BLRS issued a total of 3,182 parking tickets within the downtown area where the convoy protest was being held. While a significant percentage of these tickets were issued to protesters, this total includes tickets issued to residents in the area during that period. In addition to parking tickets, BLRS issued tickets for by-law infractions under the *Provincial Offences Act* comprising of a total of 2 noise-related infractions and 1 encumbrance of highway by vehicle by-law violation during the 3-week event.

The OPS repeatedly warned incident responders not to be “the spark” that would incite riots or trigger violence from protesters. OPS resources were already stretched thin and would not have had the ability to respond without sacrificing resources elsewhere. Therefore, it was generally understood that BLRS would require OPS approval and accompaniment to issue tickets to convoy vehicles or protesters. Since the OPS was not always available to support BLRS officers, many convoy vehicles were not ticketed. Protesters also avoided being ticketed by removing their license plates and covering up

the VIN numbers on their vehicles. However, vehicles within the same area without convoy-related markings were ticketed by BLRS officers. A number of these vehicles belonged to residents or members of the media.

As of September 2022, the status of the 3,812 parking tickets issued is indicated in the table below.

Table 3: Status of parking tickets issued in the red-zone (as of September 2022)

Ticket status	Number of tickets	Percentage of tickets
Collected	2,139	56%
Voided	137	4%
In-Trial	360	9%
Outstanding	1,176	31%
Total	3,812	100%

The status breakdown shows that 137 (4%) tickets issued were later voided. Ticket cancellations were mainly done on “compassionate grounds” or due to officer error. Outstanding tickets represent tickets that have been ignored by the recipient. These tickets have neither been paid, nor contested. There is a better chance of collecting on tickets issued to Ontario and Québec license plates as drivers must pay outstanding tickets and fines before they can renew their licence plate and unpaid tickets can go to a collection agency. Out of the 1,176 outstanding tickets, 360 (31%) tickets issued to out-of-province vehicles (excludes Québec) remain uncollected. Since there are no reciprocal agreements between Ontario and other provinces (other than Québec) to deny license plate renewals for unpaid Ontario parking violations, the City will likely not be able to collect on these tickets. A collection agency is not used for out-of-province unpaid parking tickets because it is not cost effective for the City.

As for the three tickets issued for by-law violations, one was paid, one was cancelled, and one is in default and has been sent to collections.

Enforcement in and outside the red-zone

Within the red-zone, BLRS officers only started enforcement on February 4, 2022, upon OPS request. Since the event was a police-led response and there were concerns for staff safety, BLRS officers were only deployed within the red-zone when requested and escorted by the OPS. The audit is not concluding on whether or not BLRS should have engaged in additional enforcement in areas in or outside the red-zone. These decisions should be and were left to the judgement and discretion of the City and the trained officers in the situation. Ultimately, we understand that it was City management who made the decision at the outset of the protest and gave direction to BLRS not to enforce

if there were any safety concerns or if it could further agitate the existing fragile situation.

The directions given by City Management and the OPS at the time of the event were not documented by the City. Proper documentation of key decisions in a log that is accessible to incident responders is important because it allows for consistency of understanding and prevents confusion by providing clear instructions to all individuals involved.

By-law service requests were often not addressed

The audit found that numerous by-law service requests were reported through 3-1-1. Service requests were often not addressed by BLRS due to concerns for staff safety and closed without further communications to reporters. As part of our public consultation, 229 respondents noted that they reported a concern to the City and did not receive a response and/or action on their concern. Residents felt ignored and abandoned by the City as a result of the lack of enforcement and communication.

RECOMMENDATION 13 – IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH RESIDENTS DURING EMERGENCIES

In future emergencies, the Director of Public Safety Service, in collaboration with the Director of ServiceOttawa, should ensure that affected departments improve communications with concerned residents. When possible and practical, residents should be provided with the reason for why their concern / complaint could not be addressed.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 13

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The Public Safety Service will identify options for the EOC to improve communications with residents who have called 3-1-1, which could include Knowledge Base Article (KBA) templates that can be filled out specific to each emergency. This work will be completed by the end of Q4 2023.

2.9 Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS)

Currently in the City of Ottawa, individuals who receive a parking ticket can request a trial date to contest their ticket. When such a request is made, the hearing and adjudication is held at a Provincial Offences Court office. This represents a significant volume of work for the provincial court for relatively minor offences. AMPS is a municipal alternative to the provincial court system. It transfers enforcement of parking

and by-law violations from the provincial courtroom to the municipality. AMPS is meant to be a faster and more flexible process for payment, appeal and collection of by-law violation and parking penalties. Many Ontario municipalities such as Clarence-Rockland, Toronto, Markham, Mississauga, Oshawa, and Waterloo have adopted AMPS. One of the benefits of the system is that it enables by-law officers to send parking tickets by mail to the vehicle license plate owner’s last known address in lieu of physically handing a ticket out in person.

The City of Ottawa has not yet adopted AMPS as there are other effective mechanisms in place to keep cases out of the provincial courts. However, AMPS would have enabled BLRS to issue more parking tickets to Ontario / Québec vehicles while minimizing officer safety concerns as tickets from observed violations could be mailed to avoid confrontation.

RECOMMENDATION 14 – CONSIDER ADOPTING AMPS

The Director of Service Ottawa should perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the City of Ottawa should adopt AMPS. Amongst other advantages of dealing with minor offences within the municipality, adopting AMPS could allow BLRS to enforce by-laws while enhancing officer safety.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 14

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The City of Ottawa hired an external consultant in 2019 to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the City of Ottawa should adopt AMPS. At the time, the consultant determined that the adoption of AMPS would not produce better results, as AMPS was limited in the types of infractions to be addressed.

Recent regulatory changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* now allow for other charges beyond parking and by-law infractions to be reviewed, heard or adjudicated outside of the traditional Provincial Offences courts. As a result of the changes to the Highway Traffic Act, the Director of Service Ottawa has engaged consultants to re-visit this analysis. This work is underway and is estimated to be completed by the consultants by the end of Q2 2023.

2.10 Roles and responsibilities of City and OPS communications departments

Since this was a police-led event, with numerous downstream impacts on City services, it was important for the City’s Public Information and Media Relations (PIMR) department to collaborate with the OPS’ Communications department to ensure that all published communications were timely, appropriate, and accurate.

The audit found that PIMR and OPS Communications worked collaboratively throughout the event. For instance, PIMR would often help set up and coordinate logistical support for OPS media availabilities, and OPS would review and approve public service announcement content that fell under OPS jurisdiction before it was published. Both groups worked collaboratively by relying on the good working relationships that were already established. While this worked well during this event, working relationships can change over time and are dependent on the staff in those roles.

Currently, there is no documented process that provides guidance on how PIMR and OPS Communications should work together during an emergency. Roles, responsibilities, and authorities between both organizations should be formalized to ensure proper reviews and approvals are in place before messaging is issued publicly. This will enable both organizations to provide clear and consistent messaging to the public in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION 15 – FORMALIZE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY AND OPS

The Chief Communications Officer, in collaboration with OPS Communications, should document their respective roles, responsibilities, authorities and formalize guidance on how the organizations will work together during emergencies to ensure there is adequate review and approval of communications before they are published.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 15

Management agrees with this recommendation.

The Chief Communications Officer, in collaboration with OPS Communications, will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between OPS Communications and PIMR to formalize service offerings during an emergency, including when the IECT is formed. Further, an approvals process document will be developed to formalize communications roles and responsibilities and the process for reviewing and approving communications before they are published during an emergency. The Chief Communications Officer will complete the MoU and the approvals process document by the end of Q2 2023.

2.11 Formal inclusion of effects on equity deserving groups in the EMP

Some groups and communities were disproportionately affected during the convoy protest. As part of emergency planning, the City does not consider what impacts the event may have on equity deserving groups. Consideration of the effects of emergency incidents on these groups are not formally incorporated in the City’s existing EMP.

The City should have had greater acknowledgment of the acts of hate and trauma that racialized and religious communities faced and to have responded with greater support and safety measures for members of these communities.

RECOMMENDATION 16 – CONSIDER THE EFFECTS ON EQUITY DESERVING GROUPS DURING EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Director of Public Safety Service, in consultation with the GM of CSSD (or designate), should establish and document strategies to identify the effects of emergencies on equity deserving groups and determine how best to support them.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 16

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The City seeks to instill equity as a foundation of emergency management. The Public Safety Service has already committed, in the City's Anti-Racism Strategy, to investigate how the unique experiences of equity deserving groups are considered in the City's delivery of emergency social services. This work will be completed by the end of Q4 2024.

2.12 Towing Services

A significant challenge the City encountered during the convoy protest was in obtaining heavy-duty tow trucks and qualified drivers to assist the OPS in removing large vehicles parked on City roads. The City explored many options, including making available OC Transpo's two heavy-duty tow trucks. However, no drivers were made available as the union did not want to put staff in danger. City staff inquired of towing companies on the City's standing offer list and ones that were not on the list. After much negotiation, only one company on the standing offer list was willing to provide one tow truck. City staff also contacted other municipalities and the province for access to their tow trucks / service providers. However, no companies were willing or able to assist.

The City's standing offer specifically states that Service Providers "may refuse to accept a call-up and this does not affect their ranking for the future". As such, there was no contractual breach in their refusal to provide service. In addition, due to the possibility of safety issues for drivers, their refusal was understandable and there was no enforceable contractual solution.

RECOMMENDATION 17 – CONSIDER OPTIONS TO ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF TOWING SERVICES

While there may not be any practical solution to the challenge that was experienced, we recommend that the Chief Procurement Officer, in consultation with the GM of Emergency and Protective Services, perform an analysis to determine what options, if any, the City has to better ensure the availability of towing services in the event of a similar emergency / need in the future. In addition, a cost-benefit analysis of the options identified should be performed.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 17

Management agrees with this recommendation.

An analysis will be performed prior to the reissuance of a new solicitation document for towing services for By-law and Regulatory Services. The new solicitation is scheduled to be reissued Q2 2023.

3. Other Systems-Related Considerations

3.1 Transfer calls to 3-1-1

The 9-1-1 system is owned by the City of Ottawa. It is; however, operated and managed by the OPS in accordance with a Service Level Agreement. During the convoy protest, the OPS received more 9-1-1 calls than normal, some of which were fake calls, spam or calls related to 3-1-1 matters. Due to system constraints, when the OPS received a 9-1-1 call that should have been directed to 3-1-1, they were unable to transfer callers directly to 3-1-1. Instead, 9-1-1 operators had to tell callers to hang up and call 3-1-1. The caller would then have to call 3-1-1 to register their complaint. The reporter may have had to wait in two queues before relaying their concern. Residents may not have reported their complaint if they had to call yet another number (3-1-1) after calling 9-1-1 by mistake.

RECOMMENDATION 18 – CONSIDER ADOPTING 9-1-1 CALL FORWARDING CAPABILITIES

The Director of Public Safety Service and OPS, in consultation with the Director of Service Ottawa, should perform a cost-benefit analysis on whether to adopt call forwarding capabilities to transfer calls directly between 9-1-1 and 3-1-1.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 18

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The Public Safety Service will work with implicated stakeholders to determine the feasibility and cost-benefit of adopting call forwarding capabilities between 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 services. This review will be completed by end of Q1 2024.

3.2 BLRS service request tracking system

Throughout the 3-week convoy protest, numerous by-law related service requests were made to 3-1-1 and directed to BLRS. Respective departments to which 3-1-1 service requests were directed to are responsible for tracking the resolution of the inquiries in the systems they use.

BLRS was unable to provide overall information on the resolution of by-law related service requests. The system used by BLRS was only able to report whether a case was open or closed without going into each case individually. Closed cases do not necessarily mean they were actioned. The system does not have any reporting capability to indicate what cases were actioned/resolved and provide statistics on overall outcomes without a labour-intensive manual search. These system limitations do not allow for meaningful tracking of resolution and reporting nor for adequate performance measurement.

RECOMMENDATION 19 – CONSIDER BLRS SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

The Director of BLRS should perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether system changes / upgrades to enable better reporting would be value added to the City.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 19

Management agrees with the recommendation.

BLRS is working with Information Technology Services to replace the current system (MAP) with a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to better manage service requests. This is a priority for BLRS and will result in easier case tracking and reporting once the CRM system is fully implemented. Full implementation of the CRM system is anticipated by the end of Q3 2023.

4. Role of Council

4.1 Role Awareness of Councillors with Respect to OPS and OPSB

Police service boards, as governed by the *Police Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.15 (PSA), have been established as independent, civilian boards, separate from the municipality, to oversee the activities of the police service. The PSA states that a police services board can give direction to the chief of police but cannot direct the chief with respect to specific operational decisions or the day-to-day operation of the police service.

The Ottawa Police Service Board (OPSB or Board) includes the head of the municipal council (or, if the head chooses not to be a member of the board, another member of council appointed by resolution of the council), two members of council appointed by resolution of council, one person appointed by council (who is not a member of council or an employee of the municipality) and three persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, otherwise known as the provincial appointees.

Councillors who are not on the OPSB do not have a direct role in the oversight of the police service. While they may ask questions in public meetings of the OPSB and chief of police, they are not entitled to participate in closed meetings, have access to confidential operational information, or have input into Board decisions (such as hiring of the Chief of Police or Deputy Chiefs).

During the February 7, 2022 Council meeting, there was a motion asking for an independent evaluation of the response to the convoy protest which included questioning why the OPSB did not allow Councillors into in-camera meetings or share information from those closed meetings. Additionally, during the February 16, 2022 Council meeting, several Councillors asked about the authority of the OPSB in hiring an interim chief without consulting Council. Despite having been provided training on their role relative to the OPSB, this line of questioning demonstrated a lack of understanding of Council's role relative to the oversight of police.

During a crisis such as the convoy protest, it is understandable that Councillors wanted access to additional police-related information. However, it is important that Councillors clearly understand where their right to information ends and the role of the independent oversight board. Otherwise, Council involvement could be perceived as politicizing police services.

RECOMMENDATION 20 – COUNCILLOR AWARENESS TRAINING ON POLICE SERVICES

The City Clerk should provide ongoing, refresher training / information to Councillors on their roles relative to the OPS and the OPSB.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 20

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The orientation program for Members of Council following an election, by-election or Councillor appointment provides information regarding the roles of the OPS/OPSB. Orientation materials remain available on the City's SharePoint site throughout the term of Council. Members also receive information as relevant issues arise during the term. For example, the City Solicitor described limitations on Council's role with respect to the OPS/OPSB in a Response to Inquiry issued July 10, 2020, regarding policing reform. The City Solicitor also referenced Council's lack of legal authority with respect to policing, and related matters, in written communications to Members and verbal responses at Council meetings during the convoy protest.

The Office of the City Clerk will introduce new orientation refresher training for Members at mid-term (in or around Q4 2024) regarding matters raised by the Auditor General with respect to Members' roles relative to the OPS/OPSB, including the limits on a Member's right to information and the role of the independent oversight board. This refresher training will use current resources and may include other subject areas. Staff will also continue to provide information to Members regarding their roles should any relevant issues arise.

It is important to note that the OAG has not audited the content of management responses to our recommendations for accuracy. These responses are direct comments from Management. The status and completion of the recommendations will be assessed by the OAG at a later date.

Appendix 1 – About the audit

Audit objectives and criteria

The objective of the audit was to assess the City’s actions leading up to, during and post the convoy protest. Criteria listed below are organized by the timeline of activities and based on our assessment of the key impacts to City departments.

1. Roles and Responsibilities	
1.1	Roles, responsibilities, and authorities for the City’s response to the convoy protest were clearly established, communicated and documented.
2. Planning Prior to the Convoy’s Arrival	
2.1	The City took necessary actions to plan and prepare for the arrival of the protest, and the impacts it would have on City services and Ottawa residents.
3. Response During the Convoy Protest	
3.1	The collaboration between the City and OPS allowed the City to make timely and effective decisions, to support OPS as the lead, and to request assistance from the OPS to provide continuity of City services, when necessary.
3.2	The EOC effectively communicated with City departments and coordinated the City’s response to ensure the continuity of City services, to the extent possible.
3.3	Various mechanisms were used to disseminate City-related information to the public, with timely updates on service impacts and road closures.
3.4	The City performed the necessary outreach and provided practical support to residents in dealing with the impacts of the convoy protest.
3.5	The City leveraged its authorities to support the overall convoy response.
4. Post Convoy Response	
4.1	Enforcement opportunities and collection activities were pursued after the convoy protest was over.

Audit approach and methodology

Audit staff performed the following procedures to complete this audit:

- Reviewed relevant documents (e.g., meeting minutes, correspondence from custodians, media releases, memos to City Management / Council, etc.);
- Interviewed stakeholders including City and OPS staff;
- Performed detailed reviews and testing;
- Consulted emergency management and legal subject matter experts; and
- Performed other analysis and tests, as deemed necessary.

Appendix 2 – Abbreviations and Definitions

<p>Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS)</p>	<p>The AMPS is a faster and more flexible process for payment, appeal and collection of parking penalties. AMPS replaces the appeal process through the provincial judicial system.</p>
<p>By-law and Regulatory Services (BLRS)</p>	<p>BLRS is a department under the Emergency Protective Services (EPS). They are tasked with enforcement of municipal by-laws, including ticketing for violations.</p>
<p>Community Service and Social Development (CSSD)</p>	<p>CSSD oversees the programs and services provided by the following teams: Children’s Services, Employment and Social Services, Housing Services, Long-Term Care Services. The Gender and Race Equity, Indigenous Relations, Diversity, and Inclusion branch also resides within the CSSD.</p>
<p>Corporate Duty Office (CDO)</p>	<p>The CDO is the initial central point of contact responsible for coordinating with Duty Officers; monitoring, maintaining and sharing initial situation awareness, fulfilling the role of EOC Commander as required, initiating the corporate notification procedures, etc..</p>
<p>Duty Officers (DO)</p>	<p>Each City department has a DO who is the single point of contact for their service areas. DO are responsible for maintaining service area-specific situational awareness, notifying the CDO of situations that may have met the Response Escalation Level Guidelines criteria.</p>
<p>Emergency Operations Centre (EOC):</p>	<p>The City’s central facility responsible for making decisions that maintains public confidence, carrying out the principles of situation management at a strategic level and ensure the continuity of operations of City Departments.</p>
<p>Emergency Operations Centre Control Group (EOCCG)</p>	<p>The EOCCG directs the City’s response activities by providing overall policy and strategy direction. EOCCG also directs public information activities, approves extraordinary resource requirements, and recommends a State of Emergency Declaration when appropriate. EOCCG includes the City Manager, General Managers, Chief Librarian, Medical Officer of Health, and the Police Chief.</p>
<p>EOC Operation Group (EOC Ops)</p>	<p>The EOC Ops group is responsible for developing and implementing EOCCG objectives, ensuring continuity of City operations and supporting the Command Centers.</p>

Emergency Management Program (EMP)	The City of Ottawa has a comprehensive EMP, which includes the Municipal Emergency Plan (the “Plan”). The Plan is designed to be used by all City departments, partners and stakeholders, during planned or unplanned situations. City departments, partners and stakeholders that are under this Plan are required to develop their own supporting formal emergency plan and corresponding response.
Emergency and Protective Service (EPS)	EPS is a branch of the City of Ottawa that includes departments responsible for first response including: BLRS, Ottawa Fire Services, Ottawa Paramedic Services, Public Safety Service and others. EPS is responsible for providing emergency support functions.
Human Needs Task Force (HNTF)	A structure within Community and Social Services focused on responding to immediate, medium and long-term community needs on financial and food security, homelessness and sheltering.
INTERSECT	Is a multi-jurisdictional, all-hazards emergency preparedness program within the National Capital Region (NCR). Designed to enhance emergency management and preparedness initiatives in the NCR.
National Capital Region Command Centre (NCRCC)	The NCRCC is police-led and is comprised of representatives from the various organizations involved in the response, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Ottawa Police Service (OPS), Parliamentary Protective Services (PPS), and the City of Ottawa.
Office of Emergency Management (OEM)	The OEM is a branch of the Public Safety Service. The OEM provides operational, planning, logistical and administrative support to the Emergency Management Program including the Corporate Duty Officer and Emergency Operations Center Commander.
Ottawa Police Service (OPS)	The OPS provides policing services including but not limited to emergency support functions, search and rescue operations, law enforcement services and fatality management services.
Public Information and Media Relations (PIMR)	PIMR is a City department that manages City media releases, social media posts, public service announcements, advisories, and provides support on media availabilities.

Appendix 3 – Public Consultation

In July and August 2022, the OAG conducted an independent public consultation. Ottawa residents and business owners were invited to share their personal experiences and observations related to the City of Ottawa’s response to the convoy protest and the impact on City services (e.g., By-Law, Transit, Traffic, Social Services).

Individuals were invited to participate in the following ways:

- Providing responses to survey questions;
- Attending a virtual public consultation meeting on July 12 or July 13, 2022 to deliver a statement;
- Sending in a written statement to protestaudit@ottawa.ca or to the mailing address of the OAG.

The OAG reviewed the responses provided and identified several recurring themes. We have noted the themes and a sample of resident comments in the table below.

Lack of Access to Transportation & Public Transit
<p>OC Transpo bus service was often canceled or detoured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mode of transportation (the bus) was significantly delayed or did not show, causing lengthy walk during the winter”. • “Lost complete access to public transit including trains station due to protestors blocking off downtown bus routes and crowding in the train stations.” • “Unable to access bus to take disabled child to appointments in the community.” • “Couldn’t access the bus because many trucks were parked in the bus lane/stop, as a result the buses did not show.” • “Many times, the detours were not updated leaving persons to stand at an “out-of-order” bus stop for an hour and then having to walk 35 mins in the snow.” • “Over three weeks, transit was disrupted even further with more detoured routes and bus cancellations through downtown, and none of this was communicated adequately online or at physical stops.”
<p>The LRT was not a reliable means of transportation due to delays, cancellations and safety concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The train, my main mode of transportation was shut down or sometimes felt uncomfortable using the service because of protestors who crowded the entrances and were aggressive.” • “Trains were shut down into the downtown core and persons had to switch over to bus. In some instances, no transit to be found to take back home.” • “Westbound O-train did not go to the Parliament station on /or around the third week, did not go further than Via Rail Station.”

- “Trapped within the red-zone, could not access any LRT stations as they were blocked by protestors.”
- “Access to LRT stations was obstructed or felt unsafe.”
- “Walked several kms to access the train, as no buses were available in the core, as result osteoarthritis worsened.”

Road closures made travelling by car very difficult.

- “Uber and taxi service were impacted”
- “When we needed to go to the hospital, no taxis would come to the downtown area, so we had to call an ambulance, which placed an added strain on ambulance services.”
- “Road closures made it difficult to travel by car, didn’t know how to detour around the blocked roads. There was no one standing at the road closures to redirect traffic.”
- “My commute to work was tripled due to road closures.”
- “Delivery services were unable to deliver to our building most days due to road closures.”
- “It was nearly impossible to travel by car or receive delivery services because of road closures and road blockades by convoy vehicles.”

Negative Impacts on Mental and Physical Health

Persistent loud noise was damaging to health.

- “recovering from concussion had severe headaches during the occupation due to the stress of the noise which affected quality of life and mental health.”
- “Resident living with moderate PTSD, never experienced sound-induced symptoms, until the occupation - was unable to sleep for 5 days”
- “An air raid siren was played early morning which seems to intend to intimidate residents.”
- “The noise of the air horns became unbearable, persons couldn’t escape it, even using earplugs - protestors blasted horns non-stop.”
- “Heard phantom honking and had horrible sinus headache for a period even after leaving the red-zone.”
- “Physical and mental health declined due to the loss of sleep, had constant headaches/migraines all caused from the constant and extreme noise.”
- “The noise affected several dogs, they became incontinent after 3-4 days due to constant noise.”

Heavy smell of diesel fumes was damaging to health.

- “The inordinate amount of diesel fumes was dangerous for respiratory health.”
- “Affected by the constant smell from toxic fumes from the trucks running 24/7. Diesel fumes aggravated asthma.”
- “Apartment, clothing and blankets reeked of diesel fumes and grease-like film.”

- “During walks to access transit, experienced horrific smell from diesel fumes, intimidating environment and loud noises.”
- “The smell of diesel while trucks parked in the middle of Metcalf Street/ surrounding neighborhood was unbearable.”
- “Resident kitchen on Kent Street was filled with diesel fumes, was unable to work during the days.”

Residents experienced fear and anxiety because of the actions of protesters.

- “My household could not walk to any transit/get groceries without being incredibly anxious from being yelled at/honked at incessantly.”
- “My household including multiple pets were blasted with constant honking for days on end, which left us feeling anxious, angry, and irritable.”
- “Did not feel safe accessing public transportation due to the vulgarity, intimidation and hostility of convoy protesters.”
- “Kindergarten-aged children started bed wetting, had sleep deprivation due to stress and fear from the noise/honking of horns.”
- “Had to get professional counselling for the anxiety from the honking horns.”
- “For multiple weeks, myself and others were in an extreme and constant fearful state due to the occupiers of our city. We had to employ safety walks when going outside to make sure we had safety in numbers. The protection for people living in neighbourhoods affected by the convoy was minimal if any.”

The effects of the protest triggered and caused post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

- “I had to seek professional counselling for the anxiety that was created by the loud large honking horns from the vehicles.”
- “Have many PTSD symptoms after living through the convoy event; irritability, nightmares, lack of sleep, high anxiety.”
- “Still experiencing PTSD, anxiety and agoraphobia from the event.”
- “Child became terrified, still suffers PTSD from loud trucks, and is afraid to play outside.”
- “I still suffer lingering PTSD because of the convoy, including but not limited to nightmares.”
- “This triggered extreme PTSD and led to me being verbally assaulted constantly. I was unable to leave my home, but being home was extremely unsafe as well.”
- “We have developed PTSD, we were traumatized, we didn't sleep. I had to carry ear plugs with me everywhere, my grocery stores closed due to security reasons, and I had to constantly plan an escape route just going to the drugstore, because I knew no one was coming.”

Residents were unable to access essential healthcare.

- “Home patients were unable to get the usual services from clinicians due to the

- blockades and feeling unsafe to attend the downtown areas.”
- “Couldn’t access pharmacy or receive medical shipments.”
 - “Immunosuppressed individual (ongoing critical illness) had many appointments cancelled due to the protest.”
 - “Resident schedule for a biopsy, MRI, Ultrasound and other tests at the General Hospital Campus was unable to attend, couldn’t access bus and taxi service.”
 - “Disabled patient medical appointment at the World Exchange was cancelled, was unable to access the streets along Slater and Metcalfe, anyway.”
 - “I have ongoing chronic illness and had many of my hospital appointments moved because they didn’t feel it was safe for me to come out during the convoy. (I am immunosuppressed)”

Residents Feared for their Safety and Security

Residents faced harassment and intimidation from protesters.

- “Took the train at Lees station, was immediately harassed by people clearly on their way to downtown occupation. They were able to mark me as different from them because I was wearing a mask.”
- “I was yelled at and harassed just for taking the bus with a mask on and had to get off early from buses in the cold because I felt like my life was going to be threatened.”
- “Single woman in her community felt unsafe protestors hurled horrific comments when attending to grocery and pharmacy.”
- “Just on that first day I was harassed on the train. I was additionally harassed on Elgin Street (a man shouted/screamed at me for wearing a mask).”
- “I had difficulty going to grocery stores around Trainyards, Coventry Road, and Riverside for normal errands without being harassed”
- “My household could not walk to any transit/groceries without being harassed.”
- “Difficult to leave home since faced with harassment (being yelled at and threatened by convoy participants).”

Residents felt trapped in their homes.

- “There were days I was unable to leave house for necessities like groceries because of the demonstration.”
- “Never felt trapped until the occupation arrived, as a result became physically ill.”
- “Disabled persons trapped in home; citizens braved the streets to get groceries for them. “
- “Felt trapped in own home and unable to go shop or do any leisure activities, or even to walk around the neighborhood.”
- “Wheelchair user felt trapped in home.”
- “This experience pushed me to purchase a home in Kanata as I no longer wish to live in the area that this happened and the area where I and so many others were trapped in for weeks.”

Lack of By-law Enforcement

While numerous by-law violations (parking, noise, open fire, idling, fireworks) were observed, very little enforcement occurred.

- “On Feb 6 I called By-law services with a noise complaint in my neighbourhood. The By-law officer I spoke with told me that they were "not allowed" to go to my area as it was "too dangerous". I replied that my location was outside the official "red-zone". The officer said that the definition of the "red-zone" was dynamic. That was the moment it hit me that the city had no plan for this, that residents were left hung out to dry in the Wild West where lawlessness prevailed.”
- “Parking tickets issued to residents in neighborhood, but nothing for the trucks idling everywhere in residential areas such as pedestrian-only areas like the Queen Elizabeth Driveway.”
- “Resident living in an apartment observed there was no enforcement of by-laws including parking, illegal fireworks, idling trucks, and noise in the middle of the night there was extremely loud air horns.”
- “Residents called By-Law to complain about the excessive noise from honking, instead it was observed that by-law officers sat in their vehicles and did nothing.”
- “Laissez-faire approach to parking-truckers were not ticketed but zone as a resident, was ticketed to park in a no-parking zone on Wellington street.”
- “Throughout the convoy witnessed illegal parking - not once did By-law or any law enforcement officer visited the community until after the three weeks.”
- “For weeks, it appeared as though no enforcement actions took place while protestors violated laws including parking, but as a resident would be ticketed overstaying parking time, parking in a no-stopping zone, etc.”

Cancellation of City-run Programs

The following City services / programs were cancelled / closed / delayed:

Library services

- “Unable to access the Main Library”
- “Could not access local library, usually visited weekly.”
- “Thousands of people who depend on using the library for internet access, did not have access”
- “I was unable to access my local library branch, which I access regularly for my mental health, (quiet space, access to books, community events) as it was closed due to the convoy.”

Community Centre / Program

- “Recreational and Cultural Facilities (parks, ice rinks, country skiing paths) specifically around the City center and through the main venues/streets /corridors were not pleasant to use because of the noise, solid waste and air pollution.”
- “Cultural programming at the NAC was cancelled during the protests.”

Solid waste removal

- “Both garbage and recycling collection were delayed or cancelled.”
- “Garbage collection for residents in Kent area was impossible, roads were blocked.”
- “Waste collection was significantly delayed because trucks could not navigate through the convoy’s parked vehicles.”

Daycare programs

- “Access to day care was affected.”
- “Kid’s daycare closed a few times because of the effects from the convoy protest.”
- “Day cares were closed, inability to sitters to help and/or come downtown.”

Clinics

- “Unable to get to clinics, especially immunization clinics.”
- “I was scheduled to have my second covid vaccine but multiple vaccination clinics were closed which limited my access. I arranged lab work for very early on the morning. As a person with a disability these services are routine and are crucial to me but my access became severely limited in those weeks.”

Temporary Closure of Local Businesses

- “Closed businesses due to inaccessibility.”
- “Couldn’t visit businesses and retail shops usually attended because they were forced to close due to noise, vandalism etc.”
- “Business was closed/ hours reduced because staff did not want to leave their apartment and had issues getting transportation.”
- “Some of my staff were afraid to leave their downtown apartments. They also had issues getting public transportation to work which caused my business to close and offer reduced hours and reduced seating.”

Appendix 4 – Subject Matter Expert Profiles

The audit leveraged subject matter expertise throughout the project. We are appreciative of the support provided by these individuals and the extensive legal and emergency management expertise contributed. Profiles for each are outlined below.

David Boghosian, B.A., LL.B.

Mr. Boghosian is the Managing Partner at Boghosian and Allen LLP. With over 30 years of experience, Mr. Boghosian is an expert in municipal law, with an emphasis on municipal and police defence work. His reputation has been built on his professional experience in handling such matters (including in excess of 60 trials, 60 appeals to the Ontario Court of Appeal, appearances before the Ontario Municipal Board and an appearance in the Supreme Court of Canada in a leading case on police liability); co-authoring the leading text in the field of municipal liability; and regularly contributing to a national municipal risk management newsletter.

Joëlle Lépine, B.A.

Ms. Lépine has more than 12 years of experience in the field of risk and emergency management, specifically, business continuity and crisis response. Ms. Lépine has extensive experience in the planning, development and assessment of emergency management and crisis response plans. Her experience includes supporting numerous organizations in conducting operational impact analysis, updating and maintaining emergency plans and the provision of training and guidance. Ms. Lépine is a credentialed ISO 22301 Lead Implementer from the Professional Evaluation and Certification Board.

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