

## DOCUMENT 6B: OPS INTERNAL MEMBER DISCUSSIONS

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As part of the strategic planning process, internal consultation and outreach was completed to supplement feedback from the Internal Member Needs Survey. This included in-depth interviews and focus groups with the membership.

Throughout June and July, engagement sessions were held with Executive Command, Senior Leadership Team, Employee Resource Groups (ERG) (including the ethno-cultural and religious diversity, women's internal network and support, and 2SLGBTQIA+), the Ottawa Police Association (OPA), the Patrol Advisory Group (PAG), the Staff Sergeant/Sergeant Advisory Group (SAG), Duty Inspectors, and several civilian members.

Interviewees were asked a series of five questions about the Service's current strategic direction, its challenges, top priorities looking ahead, how to improve the perception of the service, and the steps needed to stabilize the organization.

The results of this engagement highlight that members want a rejuvenated police service that delivers innovative public safety approaches and protects Ottawa's most vulnerable. Members firmly believe that change must occur to improve how the organization serves the public and supports its members going forward.

### KEY THEMES

- Support all members and stabilize the organization by improving staffing levels and enhancing member wellness.
- Maintain focus on modernization of the Service through continued investment in new technologies that will create efficiencies and improve public safety; and
- Tell our story – to members of the public, to the media, and to the Board.

### RESULTS

During the engagement sessions, the interviewees were asked for their input on several questions. The following is a breakdown of the information gleaned.

**Question #1: “The current strategic priorities have been in place since 2019. Do you think there is significant work to be done on the existing strategic areas or should they change?”**

For the vast majority of those interviewed, many of the strategic priorities remain relevant. They also acknowledged there is still more to do as the Covid-19 pandemic and events surrounding the 2022 unlawful protest contributed to an inability to progress on all the priorities.

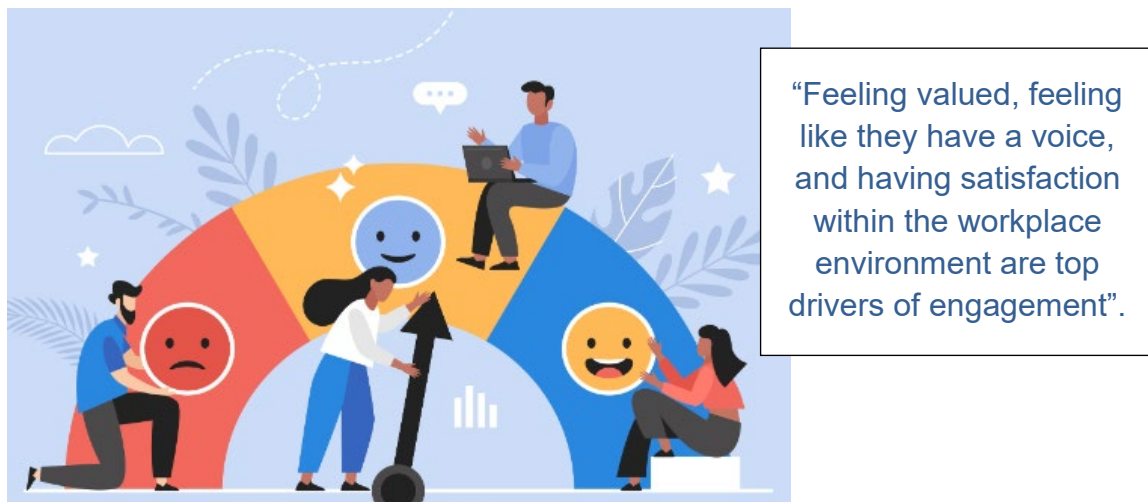
The interviewees indicated that the strategic priorities should be clearly defined with indicators of success. There was also a reflection that the organization requires more discipline in fulfilling its commitment internally and externally.

### **Support our Members**

In terms of wellness support(s), the majority of those interviewed believe that members are well supported when a person is in crisis but that we do not have enough support in place in terms of *prevention*.

Many offered that supporting member is more than just offering wellness programs – it is about how we treat people daily.

Most believe it is essential for Supervisors and NCOs to be supported with appropriate training and development to help them manage employees effectively.



“Feeling valued, feeling like they have a voice, and having satisfaction within the workplace environment are top drivers of engagement”.

### **Modernize the Work Environment**

Many interviewed continue to see this pillar as a priority for the OPS, not just regarding technology. Modernizing the work environment is about the continued evolution of policing practices.

Comments included:

- Create a new and improved recruitment strategy
- A focus on continuous improvement
- Modernize our service delivery model tailored to diverse community needs
- Adopt a modernized Cyber Crime response that addresses cyber-security, cybercrimes, and cyber-bullying

## **Advance Community Policing**

Neighbourhood policing was reintroduced through the Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRTs) in priority areas across the City. The NRTs work collaboratively with partners to develop community safety strategies and responses at a local level.

Through the consultation, there was a consensus that the NRTs program is effective but needs more support to achieve its mandate.

Comments included:

- “Staffing challenges are so significant we aren’t realizing the anticipated success of the NRTs.”
- “Struggles with this priority ... needs to be interwoven into our operations, but we can’t do that if we don’t have staff.”
- “Community relations are fractured – we need to continue to advance it.”

## **Make Meaningful Progress on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

Throughout consultation sessions, many felt that the OPS had completed most of the activities under this pillar as part of the EDI Action Plan. Some members believe it should be operationalized through the leadership of the Respect Values and Inclusion Directorate.

Comments included:

- “Should be embedded in everything we do – we have made good strides towards this initiative.”
- “Continued need for continued education and awareness.”
- “There is still progress to be made to reflect the community in all our sections and levels.”

Some of the information shared highlighted a lack of awareness of the progress made toward improving equity, diversity and inclusion.

## **Question #2: “What do you believe should be the top 3 priorities of the OPSB / OPS (that would help focus the organization in the next 3 years)?”**

The following priorities were most often reflected throughout the engagement sessions:

### ***Recruitment/Hiring/Retention***

Our work, people, and community should be the foundation for all of our strategic priorities moving forward.

Traditionally, retention has not been a problem for policing. However, generational workers have different impressions of a work/life balance and meaningful, authentic work. In partnership with the OPA, the OPS should work together to explore what that might mean for the next generation of OPS membership.

### **Invest in our Members**

Members are concerned that what matters most to them never seems to get actualized: meaningful progress on acquiring appropriate staffing levels, effective decision-making, accountability, and authentic leadership.

Comments included:

- Take meaningful steps to improve morale
- Address organizational culture (civilians/sworn, we/they)
- Understand that training, career development, mentoring, and succession planning are fundamental to future success
- Defend us – tell our story! (to OPSB, media, community members, etc.)
- Understand the consequences of decisions that affect morale (e.g. civilian JE exercise, reduced FDS hours/FTE cuts,



A workforce that feels valued and invested in is more likely to be productive and committed to their work and, in fact, increases employee satisfaction and retention.

### **Improve Stabilization**

Stabilization was key to making meaningful progress on any strategic priorities. Respondents characterized stabilization as ensuring appropriate staffing levels, having well-established leaders, and a process for internal healing.

Comments included:

- Build capacity to support all units – stabilization of our workforce is first and foremost
- Leading with empathy, humility, and authenticity
- Healing internally through investing in members
- Non-criminal work has significantly increased and strains resources

## **Modernize the Work Environment**

There was strong support that the organization must continue to modernize the work environment—not just from a technological vantage. Members believe modernizing the work environment requires a better understanding of ‘modern-day’ policing attitudes and trends. This will require leveraging data and analytics to identify better and allocate resources.

Comments included:

- “Modernizing is not just about new technology - we need to create a more nuanced policing response as it is no longer a one size fits all profession.”
- “OPS needs to deliver on what it says it will – any established priority should be aligned to appropriate funding.”
- “Look for opportunities to civilianize some roles within the organization that typically fall to sworn members.”

### **Question #3: “What do you think are the biggest challenges the OPS faces?”**

Many believe the OPS faced some of its biggest challenges over the past 18 months. The significant disruption caused by the unlawful protest in 2022, coupled with the transition that occurred to recruit a new Command Team, had a significant impact on the organization—especially in terms of making steady progress on its strategic priorities.

Comments included:

- Expectations of working faster, smarter—but with the same resources and technology as years ago due to minimal budget growth.
- An ability to consider new ways to deliver service beyond traditional policing
- Lack of trust and support of the membership.
- Consider new service delivery mechanisms

### **Question #4: “In your opinion, what are the most important results that need to be achieved to help create a better perception of Ottawa Police?”**

Many of those interviewed indicated the organization has to improve customer service. As a municipal police service, they believe the OPS’s primary goal is serving the public. But many felt the Service had inadvertently created negative perceptions through its own actions.

Comments included:

- “Improve the way we engage with the public – focus on customer service to include improved response times and clearance rates.”
- “Listen to the community and their expectations”
- “Stop minimizing interactions with members of the public/the community through our efficiency efforts – we are here to serve them.”
- “Communicate to the public ... they want to know what OPS is doing and why [we are] doing it.”

**Question #5: “If you were going to try and “stabilize” the Service, what steps would you begin taking in the near term?”**

Members consulted want a rejuvenated police service that delivers innovative approaches to public safety. There is a recognition that transformation takes both time and resources.

Comments included:

- Focus on current staffing and put place; aggressively identify OPS as an Employer of Choice
- Offer better opportunities to improve resiliency – exposure to job function is difficult
- Correct inaccurate and false messaging
- Examine the service delivery model - it is no longer effective for a city of our size
- Improve recruitment to focus on a new generation of police officers and their values
- Focus on technology, and automation;
- Establish a more cohesive organizational structure;
- Create a culture of teamwork
- Humanize” the roles and responsibilities of both sworn and civilian positions

In conclusion, this consultation exercise has offered members a platform to articulate their concerns, aspirations, and outlook for the organization’s future. The level of engagement throughout this process underscores the vital connection between organizational success and the sustained engagement of its members.