

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

22 January 2024 / 22 janvier 2024

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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SUBJECT: OPSB CR-6 PUBLIC CONSULTATION POLICY - ANNUAL REPORT

**OBJET: POLITIQUE DE LA COMMISSION CR-6 CONSULTATION DU
PUBLIQUE - RAPPORT ANNUEL**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

BACKGROUND

In alignment with the Ottawa Police Services Board (OPSB) Policy CR-6, Public Consultation, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS or the Service) is committed to public consultation as a key resource to improving community well-being, safety, and security through joint problem identification, analysis, response, and evaluation.

To optimize public consultation, the Service relies on a combination of community engagement methods which are founded on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) model which encourages best practices in engagement strategies. OPS applies industry trends and best practices respecting the internationally recognized core values for the Practice of Public Participation (IAP2), which mirror the goals and principles of the CR-6 Policy:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by, or interested in, a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Through thorough and ongoing identification of community assets, as well as the initiation of engagement activities, the OPS is able to work alongside community members, organizations, and leaders to:

- Develop partnerships and relevant engagement strategies,
- Identify problems, opportunities, and potential solutions to community issues and concerns, and
- Promote trust and confidence in policing.

DISCUSSION

The Ottawa Police Service recognizes the importance and value of meaningful public engagement and consultation as a means of providing responsive and fulsome police services to the many communities within Ottawa.

The daily efforts of OPS staff in engaging with community members, partners, and stakeholders allow the OPS to serve the community in a manner that is responsive to changing and developing community needs.

Developing, maintaining, and improving on positive community relationships is an essential part of policing, as it best informs how to understand and address community concerns and needs. It is not a passive process, but rather a proactive collaboration between all the parties involved.

Community engagement may be one-off or repeated over a long period of time. It can be formal or informal, focused on a specific issue or incident, on a neighbourhood/ community, on service delivery or, more broadly, on policing and strategy.

The OPS DRIVE² (Diversity, Respect, Inclusion, Values, Equity and Engagement) Strategy, approved by the OPSB in April 2023, supports this approach and is the organizational blueprint through 2023-2025 to direct tangible and actionable deliverables on OPS commitments to:

- Continually improve community engagement by gathering insight from Ottawa's many diverse communities and stakeholders to identify and evaluate changing community needs.
- Set continuous improvement measures for both service delivery and community engagement.
- Ensure expectations and objectives are clear, using tools and templates that define the terms, processes, and accountabilities to deliver change.
- Better identify and achieve community developed goals for positive outcomes.

Evidence has indicated that the potential benefits of effective community engagement and consultation include:

- an increase in public perceptions of safety,
- an increase in confidence and trust, and in community perceptions of the police, and
- an improvement in police/community interactions and OPS member job satisfaction.

Public consultation is key to positive change and can impact the ability of the Service to address and prevent crime.

CONSULTATION

The 2023 Public Consultation Policy Annual Report summarizes the opportunities over the course of the past year for the OPS to engage with the general public, OPS community partners, and organizations across the city. The OPS is determined to continue to be a leader in strategic community engagement. The following is not a comprehensive list of efforts, but rather a summary of key public consultations and engagement opportunities and activities.

Partnership in Action Portal

The Partnership in Action (PIA) Portal is a web-based online engagement platform focusing on virtual engagement with a broad spectrum of community members. Developed by a team of police and community members in 1997, the PIA platform is a key resource for OPS public consultation and wider community engagement. The platform involves various forms of electronic engagement opportunities, including forums, resources, and surveys. The platform is a key tool in building capacity to connect with local communities, acting as a one-stop shop to organize, track, and offer meaningful engagement. The PIA portal is an effective means to reaching marginalized, underserved, youth and young adult demographic groups. Throughout the reporting period for this annual report, the OPS continued to build on efforts to fully leverage the potential of the online engagement platform, as well as increase reach and ease of providing input to encourage meaningful engagement.

A key theme emerging from the continued use of the PIA portal this past year was the need to expand online engagement opportunities in support of accessibility and greater community inclusion. Community members have indicated they appreciate the use of an online platform, enabling participation from those who might face barriers to traditional forms of in-person engagement. The platform is accessible from any desktop or mobile device at pia.ottawapolice.ca

The Community Peacebuilder Program

The Community Peacebuilder Program was co-created by the Respect, Values, and Inclusion (RVI) Directorate of OPS, the Congolese Community of Canada - Ottawa Gatineau (CCCOG), and the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR). The program's goal is to restore trust, build conflict resolution competencies, and define a shared peacebuilding plan following a community-police incident or relationship issue. It involves a series of community consultation sessions, healing circles, dialogues, and a three-day Community Peacebuilder Workshop to inspire connections and train key agents of change in community safety, resilience, and peace. Three themes emerged through the Peacebuilder Program over the course of the past year:

1. **Restore Trust:** The community expressed a desire to mend relationships with the police service, with an emphasis on creating an open dialogue and fostering mutual trust.
2. **Build Conflict Resolution Competencies:** Participants emphasized the need for training to improve skills in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and violence reduction.

3. Define Shared Peacebuilding Plan: There was a collective call for a shared vision and plan for peacebuilding efforts, highlighting the importance of collective action and community resilience.

The 7th Annual Human Rights Learning Forum

The 7th Annual Human Rights Learning Forum, focused on the theme of “A Healing Journey: Understanding the Trauma of Hate and Bias”, took place on December 8, 2022, as both an in-person and virtual event. The annual forum provides attendees with the opportunity to gain insights into human rights issues impacting communities and offers a discussion platform to encourage positive change. Three community-related themes were identified through the forum discussions:

1. Some community members remained Impacted by the illegal protest: Participants discussed the effects of the 2022 illegal protest on different communities, promoting a shared understanding of its impacts.
2. Impact of Hate-motivated Incidents on Communities: Discussions highlighted the trauma and social disruption caused by hate-motivated incidents, underscoring the importance of prevention, response, and resilience-building measures. Participants discussed the rise in hate incidents within the community and suggested a need for collaborative approaches to address this issue. Forum discussions reflected the community's desire for active participation and cooperation among different groups to foster solidarity and collective action against hate-motivated incidents.
3. Youth Engagement: The inclusion of young individuals as both presenters and participants affirmed their role as crucial stakeholders in community development and peacebuilding.

2SLGBTQQIA+ Community Partnership Initiative

Dialogue sessions with representatives from organizations serving 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities in Ottawa were held with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding of specific community concerns and identifying action items to effect positive change through collaboration. Four themes emerged from this initiative:

1. Relationship Building and Accountability: 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities voiced the importance of strengthening ties with the police while emphasizing the need for police to foster safe spaces and protect rights.

2. Addressing Hate and Denouncing Intolerance: Conversations included calls for strategies to counter hate and intolerance, promoting respect and acceptance for all community members.
3. Making Changes at the OPS (including as an employer): There were suggestions to improve the OPS as both a service provider and employer, with an emphasis on encouraging and embracing diversity and inclusion.
4. Sharing Resources and Being Inclusive: Community members highlighted the importance of resource sharing, inclusivity, and collaboration in building a robust, united community.

Community Meetings with the Chief of Police

Over the course of the reporting period, community members and organizations have engaged in multiple discussions with the OPS Chief. Various social issues and concerns emerged from meaningful discussions with members of Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, Asian, Burundi, Congolese, Jewish, and Muslim communities, including the following:

- The need for regular community discussions: Regular meetings between the OPS and community leaders can help to increase mutual understanding. These meetings should be designed to address specific and current issues facing local communities.
- Officer engagement at the neighbourhood level: Officers should be encouraged and trained to engage more with community members. This could include walking around neighbourhoods, attending community events, or visiting places of worship. The idea is to make the police more approachable and less intimidating, thus fostering a greater sense of trust.
- Cultural Training: OPS members should receive training about the rich cultures of the communities they are serving. Collaborative training approaches with community partners can increase understanding of cultural nuances and lead to more sensitive and effective policing.
- Increased presence at places of worship: Community members expressed a desire for increased police presence, including proactive engagement, where officers can attend services and events at places of worship to build relationships that help to increase the sense of security for attendees and staff.

- OPS Paid Duty Policy: It was proposed that consideration be given to reviewing the effectiveness and equitable practices of paid duties for community events outside of those required by legislation.
- Collaborative efforts after incidents: There was expressed desire to involve both communities and police in collaborative safety planning following incidents, such as a shooting, which would help to resolve tensions, increasing a sense of security and fostering trust between local communities and the police.
- Transparent communication and accountability: Communities felt the OPS should maintain transparent communication, especially after incidents of misconduct. This would help to build trust with communities, as it demonstrates to community members that their concerns are being taken seriously.
- Neighbourhood Policing: Designating specific officers or teams to certain neighbourhoods was identified as helpful to building familiarity and trust. The same officers continually working in the same area could foster better relationships and understanding.
- Officer Diversity: Increasing diversity within the police service would help communities to feel more understood and less marginalized.
- Rising Hate: Community members expressed significant concern about rising hate in the city.

Additionally, since taking command in late 2022 Chief Eric Stubbs has been actively engaging with members of the community throughout the city's rural, suburban, and urban neighbourhoods. The focus of these discussions has been to build partnerships, trust, and understanding.

The Chief has conducted consistent outreach with Indigenous communities, including visits to Kitigan Zibi to meet with community leaders, attending numerous Inuit events, and discussions with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition and the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Ongoing community outreach also includes discussions with Mosque leaders, and discussions with the Jewish, Sikh, South Sudanese, Congolese, Somali, and Lebanese communities. These engagements are reflective of, and responsive to, the rich diversity of the city.

Chief Stubbs also meets with City Councillors in each Ward. Key themes emerging from the discussions have included the need for more police visibility and a focus on their

specific neighbourhood needs and priorities, such as traffic, auto theft, and disruptive behaviour in urban areas.

Chief Stubbs has also been engaging with partners in public safety, community services, school boards, hospitals, and other institutions to build common understanding and identify opportunities to work together.

All of this has resulted in several additional key themes: Most people want a more visible presence of police in their specific areas/neighbourhoods; they want to work with the OPS; hate-motivated incidents remain a priority; and under-housing, addictions, and mental health are key issues that the OPS needs to address with other community partners. Alternative models for delivery must be explored and actioned. Auto theft and traffic and road safety also rank high in importance to communities.

Participation in Various City-Wide Community Committees

Members of the OPS also engage regularly at city level coalitions and/or committees including (but not limited to) Community Development Framework (Steering Committee and six sub-committees), City of Ottawa, COVID 19 - Human Needs Task Force, Community Safety & Well Being, United Way East Ottawa (Collective Impact, Safe Neighbourhoods), Equity Ottawa, Ottawa Local Immigrants Partnership (OLIP), United For All, and collaboration with the Community Equity Council (CEC). These discussions help inform OPS direction through further understanding of community issues and concerns.

2023 OPS Budget Consultation

In development of the 2023 OPS Budget, the Service employed multiple consultation techniques throughout the year, including one-on-one conversations, group dialogues, third-party surveys, questionnaires, and studies. The OPS partnered with grassroots community members, faith-based groups, academics, and other stakeholders to ensure a range of perspectives and concerns were considered and included in development of the budget. In particular, the Service sought out engagement with Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and underserved and/or marginalized communities.

Additionally, to support the development of every budget, the OPS engages in targeted consultation to inform proposed budget direction and priorities. The four key consultation strategies utilized during development of the 2023 OPS Draft Budget were: the OPS Draft Budget Feedback Survey (February 1-20), City Councillor Budget Briefings (February 1-22), Finance and Audit Committee Delegations (February 15), and targeted outreach initiatives with key coalitions and city-wide committees (February 1-

20) such as Black Agenda Noir, Council of Imams of Ottawa, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, and the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition.

The final report provided a thematic summary of community feedback specific to the budget and to the OPS more broadly. As in previous years, key themes that emerged from the various consultation processes included the need to bolster public trust, divert police away from calls that would be better served by social or medical professionals, and improve community and road safety across the city.

Alternative Service Delivery Model for Collision Reporting Centres

As the OPS develops an Alternative Service Delivery Model for Collision Reporting Centres, it should be noted that while no formal public consultation took place, information from outsourcing already widely established across Ontario was utilized. Additionally, public consultation efforts have been established to obtain feedback from individuals who have previously utilized OPS Collision Reporting Centre services in the past. Individuals were invited to participate in a survey in order to benchmark their level of satisfaction and provide input regarding their user experience.

In terms of ongoing community input, Accident Support Services International Limited (ASSIL) will provide quarterly updates to the OPS that will include any issues related to service complaints as well as outlining customer satisfaction levels (obtained by administering periodic customer satisfaction surveys).

Neighbourhood Resource Teams and Physical Activity & Nutrition (PAN) Program

OPS's Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRT) participated in the annual "Their Opportunity" Physical Activity & Nutrition (PAN) program in partnership with the City of Ottawa. This hands-on program provides an opportunity for officers to engage with 74 participants aged 10-16 years, from economically disadvantaged communities.

Participants engage in combined physical activities, healthy meal preparation, and nutrition education. The program strives to:

- Build trust and sustained relationships with local youth and police in a fun and safe environment,
- Promote the importance of sport, recreation, healthy living, and good nutrition,
- Enhance leadership opportunities through quality grass roots programming,
- Strengthen sport participation opportunities, and
- Offer accessible, free, and sustainable programs that are innovative, safe, and fun which respond to the community needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

See Document 1 – Strategic Planning Consultation Summary Report Aug.25, 2023 (link provided)

CONCLUSION

The Ottawa Police Service remains committed to the principles and goals of public consultation and values the insights and input that community members provide to improve police services within Ottawa. At multiple opportunities, the Service leverages its EDI & Engagement Lens to ensure fulsome, diverse, and inclusive engagement practices.

The OPS will continue working with the OPS Board, partners, community organizations, and residents to ensure all community members have opportunity to provide input on police programs, initiatives, and service delivery. The Service will engage communities on a multitude of matters and levels to increase communication, develop mutual understanding, enhance service delivery, and embed the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion into the practice of public consultation.

As we look forward, public consultation and community engagement will remain a key priority in OPS projects and initiatives. In fact, in early 2024 the OPS will be reviewing and restructuring its community engagement processes and practices to ensure a more fulsome approach to, and understanding of, diverse community needs and concerns. The Service expects to have its revised community engagement strategy in place by Summer 2024, recognizing that effective community engagement and collaboration are critical to delivering meaningful and beneficial police services to the many unique communities the organization serves and protects. The value these consultations bring to effective change strategies is immense and crucial to the success of the OPS as well as the safety and security of the public.

Document 1

[Strategic Planning Consultation Summary Report – August 25, 2023](#)