

**Report to / Rapport au:**

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE BOARD  
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

**22 April 2024 / 22 avril 2024**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

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**SUBJECT: CORE STRATEGY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD OPERATIONS CENTRE  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**OBJET: PLAN DE MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA STRATEGIE DU CORE ET DU  
CENTRE DES OPÉRATIONS DE QUARTIER**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Police Service Board receive this report for information.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

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

**BACKGROUND**

The Ontario Government recently announced a 'New Deal' for Ottawa to invest in the City's unique needs. Funding is targeted toward various initiatives, including public safety, the opening of the Neighbourhood Operations Centre (NOC) in the ByWard Market area, increased uniformed police presence, and improved alternative mental health supports. The City of Ottawa must submit a plan to improve safety for residents, tourists, and businesses in the downtown. The Community Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) Strategy is a central element of this plan.

The CORE Strategy is a comprehensive action plan for the safety concerns in Ottawa's Byward Market and Rideau Street corridor. It is focused on sustainable prevention, deterrence, and enforcement solutions, and marks a shift from reactive policing to

proactive management of community issues. As an evidence-based strategy, CORE makes effective use of local data and resources to identify areas where police engagement will be most effective.

The CORE brings together various OPS directorates, including Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRTs), Community Police Officers (CPOs), Police Liaison Officers (PLOs), and Frontline. It also leverages a diverse group of local partners, including business owners, non-profit organizations, community agencies, and City departments, each contributing their unique skills, resources, and expertise.

## DISCUSSION

The CORE Strategy aligns with key elements of the OPS strategic plan, the Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) framework, and the Ontario Mobilization and Engagement Model (OMEM) of Community Policing. It lays out a plan for immediate, actionable steps that will yield tangible results and measurable outcomes addressing community concerns.

The CORE supports the strategic priorities of the Police Service Board in multiple ways.

- **Enhance community safety:** Targeting policing efforts at the places and people causing the highest levels of harm and disorder will effectively lower crime severity and improve public safety.
- **Build trust through strong partnerships:** Actively engaging multiple partners, including City departments, social service agencies, and security agencies, fosters holistic responses to the complex problems in the downtown area.
- **Strengthen OPS's commitment to human rights:** Collaborative, respectful engagement with community members and service providers, particularly those that are marginalized and vulnerable, will support OPS efforts to uphold human rights.
- **Advance and support a resilient thriving membership:** Providing OPS members with the effective, evidence-based solutions to entrenched problems, and leveraging the knowledge and experience of members across the organization, will improve morale and member engagement.

The CORE incorporates the following five interconnected initiatives, which will be discussed in more detail below.

1. The **Neighbourhood Operations Center (NOC)** functions as the CORE Strategy's hub and physical home, enabling collaboration between OPS and local partners.

2. The **Integrated Community Situation Table (ICST)** employs partnerships and community support to provide immediate, coordinated interventions for the most vulnerable, at-risk individuals.
3. **Hot Spots** target areas of high crime concentration with increased visibility of law enforcement officers and community partners with the intent of deterring crime and improving perceptions of public safety.
4. **Focused Enforcement** involves identifying the high-harm offenders and directing swift enforcement action to curtail and deter further offending.
5. The **Community Advisory Board** leads the CORE Strategy, coordinating efforts across agencies for multi-agency improvements and long-term solutions.

### **Key Benefits & Outcomes**

By implementing a multi-pronged approach to the problems in the downtown core, we anticipate multiple benefits.

Short-term benefits and outcomes:

- Increased and strengthened partner communication and information sharing, and partner mobilization in addressing crime and social disorder
- Increased police visibility in high harm areas
- Improved, nuanced understanding of community crime and disorder concerns, and mitigation of conditions that facilitate crime and disorder

Medium-term benefits and outcomes:

- Enhanced community safety and well-being and improved community perceptions of safety
- Increased trust and collaboration with community partners, and joint ownership of crime and disorder issues
- More efficient and effective allocation of OPS resources, and improved OPS member morale

Long-term benefits and outcomes:

- Strong, productive relationships with community partners
- Healthy, resilient, and safe communities
- Efficient, effective OPS service delivery that addresses community priorities
- Trust and confidence in the OPS

## **CORE Initiatives**

The following section of this report provides updates on each of the CORE initiatives. While these initiatives are presented separately, they are interconnected and interdependent.

### **Neighborhood Operations Centre (NOC)**

The Neighbourhood Operations Centre (NOC) serves as the physical hub that supports the CORE initiatives and partner engagement. It is designed to function as a base of operations to coordinate and launch proactive patrols and focused enforcement efforts.

Strategically situated on the ground floor of the Rideau Centre, the NOC faces onto Rideau Street, with an external entry point adjacent to a mall entrance. This centralized location in a busy area near the ByWard Market provides police with an accessible base of operations, improves perceptions of safety with an established police presence, and improves resource efficiency by reducing displacement to and from Elgin Street Headquarters. The NOC will also allow OPS to directly support local community partners like the Byward Market District Authority (BMDA), Rideau BIA, and Ottawa Community Engagement Teams (CET).

Currently the NOC is in Phase One of development. The OPS has taken possession of the space and is renovating it to prepare for opening at the end of May. Day-to-day functions will see NRT and Community Police (CPO) use this space to coordinate operations, hold briefings, process reports, access the OPS computer system, and host community meetings. The NOC will also be used to host meetings with community partners, such as those involved in the ICST.

The OPS is currently in conversation with the City of Ottawa and other community partners to develop agreements and plans on how we can share this space. Our aim is to transform the NOC into a community-led hub for a variety of services, highlighting the importance of community leadership in safety and problem-solving initiatives. When phasing the NOC into the Community Hub model, public access will also be considered, centralizing both police and community services within one accessible facility.

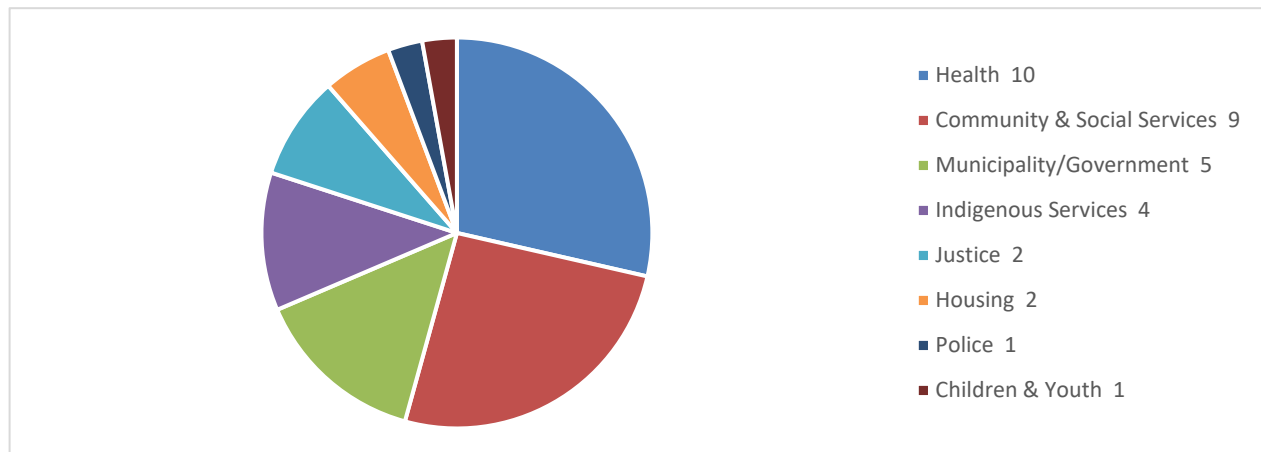
Due to OPS staffing limitations, the facility will not be accessible to the public during this first phase of operations.

### **Integrated Community Support Table (ICST)**

The ICST was created in response to a need for better system coordination and evidence-based approaches to meet the needs of individuals who frequently interact with the criminal justice system. Their interactions are often the result of unresolved risk factors, including housing insecurity, mental health challenges, and addictions.

The ICST brings together the expertise and resources of more than 30 community partners who are directly engaged in providing services to people in Ottawa’s downtown. Their services include medical treatment, mental health and addictions support, housing, and shelter (see Figure 1). Although the primary area of focus is the downtown core, there are no geographic boundaries for the ICST, such that the Table can accept referrals of individuals anywhere in the City. Our shared goal is to disrupt ongoing cycles of criminalization.

Figure 1: ODICST Partner Sectors



As a Multidisciplinary Risk-Driven Intervention Table, the ICST strictly adheres to guidelines and best practices around privacy and data sharing, using the risk-driven tracking database provided by the Ministry of Solicitor General and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. It forms a key part of Ottawa Public Health’s newly released Ottawa Opioid Response Strategy.

The ICST also supports the work of the Ottawa Guiding Council for Mental Health and Addictions, which has developed a ‘Safer Alternative Response Prototype’ to mental health calls. The ICST is well positioned to support that project by facilitating the provision of wrap around services to individuals identified through the Safer Alternative Response.

Over the past quarter, the Ottawa Downtown ICST has completed preparations and processes required to begin accepting referrals and coordinating interventions. These completed preparations include:

- Appointment of two volunteer co-chairs (Wendy Stewart, Director of the OASIS Program at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre Oasis Centre, and Mikyla

Tacilauskas, Manager of Outreach and Housing Services with the Salvation Army) through the agreement of ICST partners.

- Development of website (interventionottawa.ca) with a sign-in portal and online referral form.
- Appointment of a Constable from the OPS to serve as the initial ICST Coordinator until funding is secured to hire a coordinator from the community.
- Coordination and tracking of partner on-boarding (completion of requisite training, signing of Non-Disclosure Agreement, and designation of Table member).

As of April 17, the ICST will be meeting biweekly to assess and manage cases involving individuals identified as being at acutely elevated risk of harm due to mental health issues, problematic substance use, housing insecurity or criminal involvement. Individuals identified as being at acutely elevated risk will be provided with a coordinated intervention within 48 hours of the meeting.

We are grateful to all the community partners who have stepped forward to join this initiative and work alongside the OPS to address the needs of our most vulnerable community members. Please see Appendix A for an attached letter from Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, endorsing th.

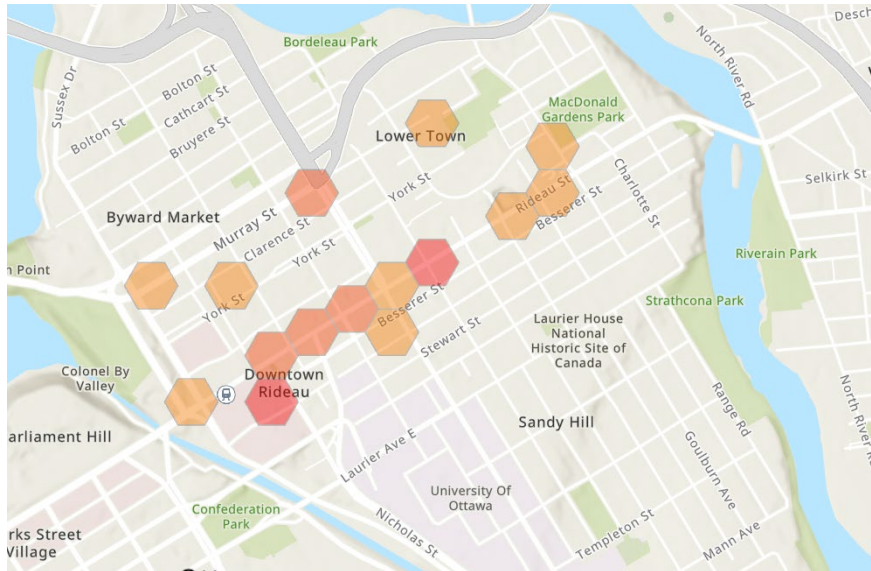
### **Hot Spots**

Research shows that crime and disorder are not evenly distributed across the community but are concentrated in specific areas, referred to in academic and policing literature as 'hot spots' (Harinam 2022; Weisburd 2012; 2015). A sustained and visible police presence in hot spots is proven to prevent and disrupt crime. Evidence also indicates that rather than displacing crime to surrounding areas, the hot spot approach has a diffusion effect, improving safety and security throughout the wider community. The hot spot approach ensures an efficient and effective deployment of police resources and functions as a force multiplier, providing greater crime reduction benefits with limited resources.

Using advanced data analytics, CORE analysts are identifying areas where focused police attention is needed. Key to our analysis is the Crime Severity Index (CSI), a measurement of the overall seriousness of crime. The Index is produced by Statistics Canada, based upon sentences handed down in Canadian courts over the previous five years.

Preliminary analysis of hot spots in the downtown core (see Figure 2) identifies areas of the highest concentration of crime harm.

Figure 2: Example of Hot Spots Map



Hot spots shown in this map are based on highest CSI of primary offences between Feb 19 and Mar 17, 2024.

The OPS will deploy intermittent, highly visible patrols in these identified areas. Additionally, by leveraging data and information sharing agreements with our partners, other stakeholders like OC Transpo and the City of Ottawa Community Engagement Team, will also direct their efforts to these hot spot areas. Our combined efforts will both deter crime and direct supports to vulnerable individuals.

Specific initiatives include a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Blitz planned for the late spring. This will involve the use of data analytics and community partner engagement to identify locations and businesses most affected by crime and social disorder. OPS officers will offer CPTED audits to identified locations and provide follow-up engagement to identify and address environmental and situational factors impacting crime and social disorder.

OPS officers are also partnering with the City's Community Engagement and Outreach Teams to support the needs of the vulnerable and street-involved population in high priority areas.

### **Focused Enforcement**

Similar to the law of crime concentration that applies to hot spots, a small number of repeat offenders are responsible for a large percentage of all crime (Weisburd 2015). Using data analysis, OPS is identifying repeat high harm offenders, especially those

involved in serious and violent crime such as random assaults, robberies, drug trafficking, and gang activity.

High harm offenders are identified by analysis of criminal offences and the associated crime severity. By using the CSI to examine incidents and the individuals involved in them, the OPS is able to provide insight into the impacts of particular individuals on the community.

These offenders will be the focus of direct and swift enforcement actions by specialized police units such as our Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs). These focused enforcement efforts will begin in the second quarter of 2024.

### **Community Advisory Council**

The formation of the downtown Community Advisory Board is still in its planning stage as work is underway to clarify how the CORE fits within the City's ByWard Market Initiative. The aim is to ensure community stakeholders have oversight on the efforts and initiatives of the CORE, while not duplicating other efforts currently being developed.

It is anticipated that the Council would also serve as a platform for exchanging information, offering feedback to OPS, and applying community guidance to continually enhance the effectiveness of the strategy.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 – Letter of Support from Integrated Community Situation Table Chairs

### **CONCLUSION**

The OPS CORE Strategy represents a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to addressing the challenges of crime and social disorder in downtown Ottawa. Through its alignment with the OMEM and the integration of community-led initiatives, the Strategy emphasizes a collaborative and evidence-based approach to public safety. The implementation of targeted initiatives like hot spot policing, focused enforcement, and the ICST demonstrates a commitment to adaptive and responsive community policing. The Strategy's focus on stakeholder engagement, data-driven decision-making, and the continuous evaluation of key performance indicators ensures that the approach remains effective and accountable.

The CORE Strategy has the potential to not only restore safety and well-being to downtown Ottawa but to also serve as a model for broader application across the city, thereby enhancing community engagement and optimizing police resources. OPS



remains dedicated to serving Ottawa with excellence and further enhancing public safety for everyone.