

Report to / Rapport au:

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

22 July 2024 / 22 juillet 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 Ottawa Police Service (OPS) is working closely with the City of Ottawa and the Ontario Government to develop a robust plan to address public safety and downtown revitalization. Ontario Government's 'New Deal' for Ottawa provides for investments in police initiatives in and around the ByWard Market. 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, enforcement solutions, and proactive management of community issues. The CORE makes effective use of local resources and partnerships 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 and service providers, community agencies, and City departments, each contributing their unique skills, resources, and expertise.

The OPS has presented the CORE Strategy to the Board in reports tabled in both December 2023 and April 2024, and in a presentation to the Board in May 2024. This report provides an update on new developments from the second quarter of 2024 (April-June).

DISCUSSION

As previously noted, 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 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. A Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Initiative will also support proactive efforts in the downtown.
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** will lead the CORE Strategy, coordinating efforts across agencies for multi-agency improvements and long-term solutions.

Key Updates

- The NOC officially opened on June 26, 2024
- Partnered engagement and patrols amongst the OPS with CPOs, NRTs, OC Transpo Special Constables, and City of Ottawa Community Engagement Team members have begun

- The ICST meets every other week; 30 partners are fully on board. This quarter, 11 individuals were referred for interventions, which were conducted with an average of five partners each
- Funding arrangements and processes are being developed for the CPTED Initiative in partnership with the ByWard Market District Authority and Rideau BIA

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), located on the ground floor of the Rideau Centre, serves as a 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. The NOC provides police and Special Constables with an accessible base of operations and improves resource efficiency by reducing displacement to and from Elgin Street Headquarters.

The Ribbon-Cutting ceremony for the NOC took place on June 26, 2024. Speakers included His Worship, Mark Sutcliffe, Mayor of the City of Ottawa; the Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General of Ontario; Salim Fakirani, Chair of the Ottawa Police Service Board; and Chief Eric Stubbs. A/Sgt Paul Stam served as master of ceremonies. Invited guests included municipal and provincial political elected officials, and leaders of stakeholder organizations (e.g., ByWard Market District Authority, Rideau BIA, Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, and the Ottawa Police Association).

Beginning on June 25, 2024 the NOC became home to the new CORE Frontline Task Force (FTF) which so far consists of representatives from the following partner agencies:

- Ottawa Police Service
- Ottawa Community and Social Services – Community Engagement Teams
- OC Transpo Special Constable Unit
- Ottawa Paramedic Service
- Ottawa Bylaw
- Ottawa Public Works Dept.
- Ottawa Public Health

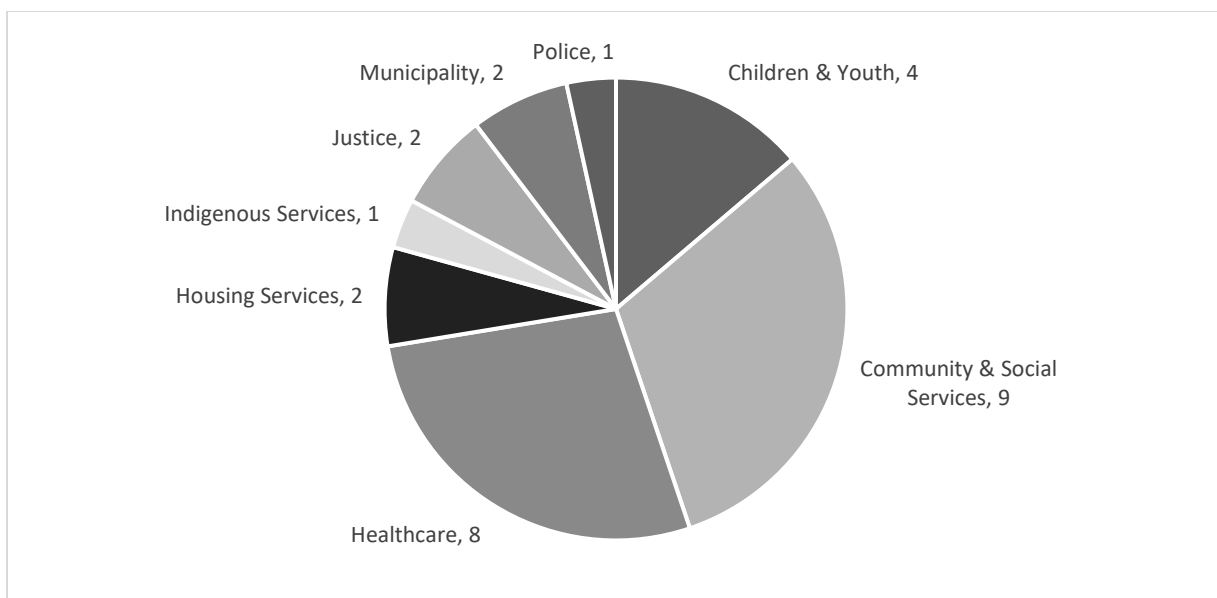
Comprised of frontline workers, supervisors, and managers from each partner agency, the FTF convenes weekly at the NOC to coordinate efforts by sharing real-time information, data, and intelligence. Effective integration is ensured through regular meetings, consistent feedback, and shared communication channels. This includes organizing integrated foot patrols between police, the Special Constable Unit, bylaw officers, and Community Engagement Teams. Collaboration with local businesses, community associations, social services, city departments, and other agencies will allow the FTF to proactively address ongoing issues. Command Staff from each agency will attend the first weekly meeting of each month to facilitate oversight, guidance, and follow-up on action items.

Work has begun to ensure each partner has full access to the shared space. The NOC's interior will soon feature representative imagery, storage areas, and signage for each partner agency. The creation of the FTF clearly demonstrates that the NOC is achieving its purpose of being a shared space, facilitating seamless integration and coordination among all partners.

Integrated Community Support Table (ICST)

The ICST brings together the expertise and resources of community partners who are directly engaged in providing services to people in Ottawa's downtown. To date, 30 organizations are fully on-boarded with the ICST. This includes 22 active members who meet every other week, as well as eight additional members available on an ad-hoc basis. Their services include medical treatment, mental health and addictions support, housing, and shelter (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: ODICST Partner Sectors



The ICST is led by 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. The role of coordinator/administrator is currently being filled by OPS Constable Nicole Barber but will be transferred to a community partner with funding support from the OPS as part of the CORE's budget from the SolGen's 'New Deal'.

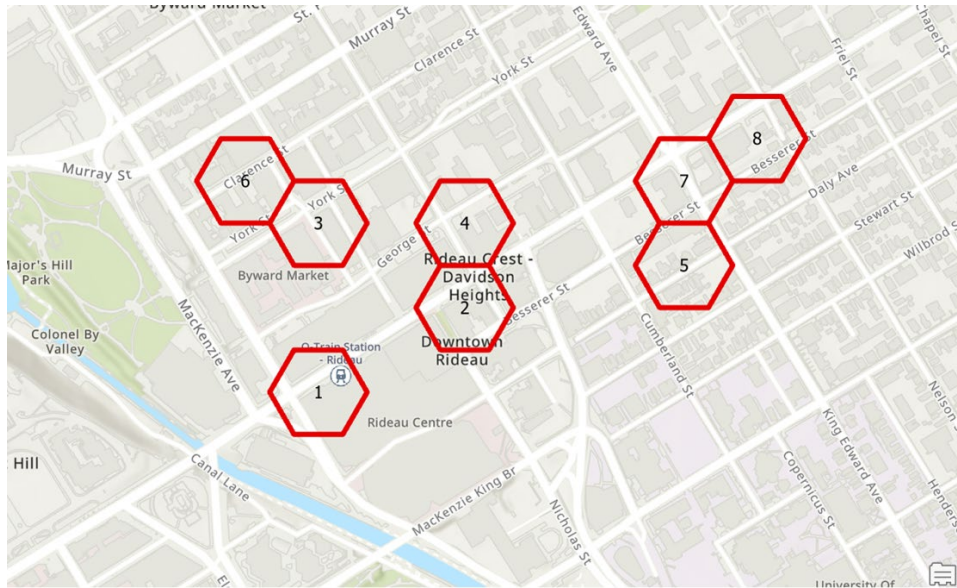
Since April 17, the Ottawa Downtown ICST has been meeting to assess and manage cases involving individuals identified as being at acutely elevated risk of harm due to mental health issues, problematic substance use, housing insecurity or criminal involvement. Individuals identified as being at acutely elevated risk are provided with a coordinated intervention within 48 hours of the meeting. As of the end of the second quarter (June 30, 2024), 11 individuals have been referred to the ICST for intervention, with an average of five agencies collaborating on each intervention (range of 2 to 10). The OPS has participated in five interventions.

We continue to be 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.

Hot Spots

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'. 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.

Using advanced data analytics, CORE data analysts identified areas with high volumes and severity of crime. Operational decisions were made about which areas should be targeted for direct police interventions such as increased police presence or problem-oriented policing protocols (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Map of patrol hot spots

Hot spots shown in this map will be areas of focus for increased police and partnered presence in the summer of 2024.

The OPS will deploy intermittent, highly visible patrols in the chosen hot spot areas. Partner agencies like OC Transpo and the City of Ottawa Community Engagement Team will also direct their efforts to these hot spot areas to deter crime.

CPTED Blitz

To support crime prevention and deterrence in the downtown, the CORE is also conducting Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). CPTED is an approach to crime prevention that involves the management of built and natural environments to deter crime, reduce victimization, and improve perceptions of safety. Strategies often include maximizing visibility to improve surveillance and control access.

The CPTED project involves having trained OPS members conducting CPTED audits for residences and businesses that have been particularly impacted by the crime and social disorder in the downtown. Additionally, funding will be provided to implement audit recommendations and will be distributed through partner agreements with the ByWard Market District Authority and the Rideau BIA. The intent of this funding is to invest in crime prevention initiatives that make business owners, employees and residents of Ottawa's downtown core feel safer.

A list of approximately 20 residences and businesses that will be offered CPTED audits in the coming months is being developed by leveraging OPS data on concentrations of crime and calls for service, as well as in consultation with community partners and stakeholders.

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.

High-harm offenders are identified through analysis of criminal offenses and their severity. The OPS Crime Intelligence Analysis Unit (CIAU) provides NRT officers with weekly analysis lists of actionable items, including information on high-harm offenders that can be addressed by the NRTs.

Community Advisory Board

Plans for the CORE Strategy included the formation of a Community Advisory Board that would ensure community stakeholders have oversight on the efforts and initiatives of the CORE, while not duplicating other efforts currently being developed.

It was anticipated that the Board 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. Efforts to develop this Board should resume in the fall.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 - CORE Frontline Task Force - Terms of Reference

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 the integration of community-led initiatives and strategic partnerships, the Strategy emphasizes a collaborative 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 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.