

Report to / Rapport au:

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

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Submitted by / Soumis par:

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SUBJECT: 2025 BUDGET CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT

**OBJET: RAPPORT DE SYNTHÈSE DE LA CONSULTATION SUR LE BUDGET
2025**

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

In alignment with the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA) and Ottawa Police Service Board (OPSB) policy CR-6 Public Consultation, the Ottawa Police Service has undertaken broad consultation to ensure the voices of Ottawa's diverse communities are reflected in the development of the draft budget for 2025.

The consultation results presented in this report complement ongoing engagement efforts throughout the year. The Board, Chief, Command Team, and various operational sections actively connect with a diverse range of stakeholders, as highlighted in the CSPA, including:

- Municipal council members
- Indigenous communities

- Diverse community groups
- School boards, community organizations, and businesses
- Members of the public

This collaborative approach ensures that multiple perspectives are considered in shaping effective policing strategies and community initiatives.

Several sections within OPS are dedicated to engagement with diverse groups across the city. These include the Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRT), Community Police Officers (CPOs), Youth Section, Diversity Relations and Resources (DRR), and Strategic Partnerships and Engagement (SPE). Each plays a critical role in enhancing OPS connections with the community.

These areas strengthen relationships and partnerships by participating in community events, targeted outreach efforts, and one-on-one interactions. These efforts are vital in fostering trust and ensuring community needs inform OPS services. Feedback from this work provides valuable insights for the Board and OPS leadership, helping to identify emerging trends, address key community concerns, and find new opportunities for collaboration.

The Budget Consultation Report consolidates feedback from thousands of respondents gathered through diverse methods, including direct community outreach, the Advanis Citizen Perception Survey, and an OPSB Community Needs Survey. This report highlights current public sentiment, covering key areas such as trust in police, perceptions of public safety, and community priorities. Additionally, it integrates a detailed demographic and socio-economic assessment of all 24 City of Ottawa Wards conducted by Environics Analytics.

This comprehensive approach offers valuable insights into the unique challenges and concerns across the city, helping to inform budgetary decisions and guide resource allocation based on data-driven community needs.\

This Budget Consultation Report also updates the results gathered for the OPSB 2024-2027 Strategic Direction. It helps assess the effectiveness of current initiatives to improve public safety, enabling the OPS to evaluate the impact of its programs and strategically direct resources where they are most needed.

This report emphasizes the essential role of community engagement in advancing the strategic direction and refining the approach to policing in Ottawa. The evolution of the OPS's community engagement practices exemplifies the commitment to enhancing service delivery and aligning with community needs.

DISCUSSION

This section presents key findings from the consultation efforts, including Community Outreach, the Advanis Citizen Perception Survey, the OPSB Community Needs Survey, and the Environics Analytics Ward-Based Analysis.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Throughout the year, the Chief, Deputy Chiefs, and Senior Leadership actively engage with the community through personalized one-on-one discussions with Councillors, residents, and key stakeholders. These efforts are reinforced by operational teams such as the Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRT), Community Police Officers (CPOs), Youth Unit, Diversity and Race Relations (DRR), and Strategic Partnerships and Engagement (SPE). To ensure diverse voices are heard, these teams use various engagement methods—meetings, surveys, and multilingual outreach across multiple platforms. This comprehensive, community-centered approach emphasizes the consistent presence of leadership across all areas, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to listening, consulting, and learning about local issues.

Neighborhood Response Teams (NRTs) work to increase police visibility and provide tailored support in high-need areas. Community Police Officers (CPOs) build trust by hosting community-focused events like "Coffee with a Cop" and delivering educational programs. Last year, the CPO team in the west held 16 fraud and safety presentations and 12 town hall meetings and organized vital initiatives such as Crime Prevention Week, Police Week, and summer programs. The Youth Unit provided outreach across four school boards, addressing issues like bullying and youth violence prevention. The Youth Diversion program saw a 58% increase in participation, guiding 90 youth, including nine under 12, away from legal trouble. The Diversity Resource and Relations (DRR) team worked to strengthen relationships with Black, Caribbean, Chinese, and Sikh communities through events like Kwanzaa, a Chinese community fundraiser, and Ottawa's largest Sikh-led food drive. The DRR and SPE teams also deepened partnerships with religious groups, launching initiatives like the Digital Flag and Banner program and the Religious and Cultural Guidebook, along with training programs aimed at combating hate-related issues.

The SPE Unit leads public consultation and engagement strategies by developing innovative approaches and tools for key community initiatives. SPE supports the Public Consultation Policy by creating engagement plans that ensure stakeholders are actively involved in shaping OPS projects and policies. These efforts are essential in building trust and addressing issues such as rising hate, Use of Force, and systemic racism.

SPE's work is critical to OPS's goal of fostering a safer, more inclusive community. By ensuring that diverse voices are heard, the OPS can better reflect and respond to the needs of all residents. Recent consultations, led by SPE and Diversity Resource and Relations, have emphasized the need for greater transparency, equity, and collaboration. These themes, consistently prioritized in OPS outreach, reflect the organization's commitment to supporting an engaged and inclusive community where the police play a collaborative and responsive role.

Diversity and Inclusion

A significant focus on ensuring the inclusion of traditionally marginalized communities emerged as a strong theme and need. Due to increasing tensions overseas, communities in Canada need more attention, support, and a sense of belonging and protection. This is evidenced by engagement with diverse racialized groups (e.g., Black, Somali, Jewish, Palestinian, and Muslim communities), LGBTQ+ communities, faith-based organizations, and Indigenous groups. Initiatives such as the OPS Diversity Celebration, Pride Flag Raising, and addressing race-based issues illustrate the effort to foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the community. However, the crisis in the Middle East affected these engagement efforts and events as well – which means more concerted efforts from the DRR and SPE teams.

Community Safety and Crime Prevention

Many initiatives centered on public safety, crime prevention, and reducing community tensions. Examples include:

- **Hate crime presentations** (e.g., at Ottawa Main Mosque, Korean Community Church, and Jewish organizations) to address hate-motivated incidents and training and education around hate crime and hate incidents reporting.
- **Gun Violence** affected our black communities (Congolese, e.g.). The launch of new strategies (CORE Strategy) to improve community safety and well-being in downtown Ottawa and the engagement around gun violence, especially with affected communities.

Strengthening Relationships

Feedback from the community suggested that more trust building work with the community is needed. There is a clear emphasis on trust-building between the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) and the community. In response, we have increased our efforts. This is demonstrated through events like the Community Conversation Meeting, Listening Circle with black youth, engagement with the Burundi Alliance, and meeting

with other communities and faith groups. The outreach aimed to address issues like police interactions with racialized youth and foster open dialogue to improve relations between the OPS and these communities.

Education and Awareness

A theme of public education on policing, rights, and diversity emerged from our interaction and feedback from the community. The DRR Unit has focused on providing expertise to OPS personnel on policing in a diverse society while offering educational outreach to the broader community, including immigrants and newcomers. Examples include sessions at the Catholic Centre for Immigration and school board meetings aimed at fostering mutual understanding.

Use of Force Data

Community interest in participating in consultation and knowing more about the use of force report emerged through various surveys, calls for feedback, and stakeholder engagement. Efforts such as the Community engagement consultation survey and the call for applications to the new use of force review panel highlight this. We invited community members to have a voice in decision-making processes and shaping OPS practices.

Transparency and Accountability

The community wants transparency and accountability. Therefore, several initiatives have been focused on ensuring greater transparency and accountability within the OPS. These include the release of the 10-year traffic stop race data collection report, the 2023 annual report, and efforts to recruit members for oversight panels like the use of force review panel. These initiatives build community trust by being open about police practices and policies.

Celebrating Diversity

The theme of recognizing community contribution and celebrating diversity also emerged during our engagement with the community. Our response is evident in events like the OPS Diversity Celebration and participation in the Pride Parade. These events serve not only as symbolic gestures but also as opportunities for the OPS and community to come together in recognition of shared values and to highlight the importance of diversity within both the OPS and the broader community.

Youth engagement

We heard from various communities that youth engagement in positive activities and programming is their priority. They believe OPS has a role to play in both the community/neighbourhoods and school settings.

PUBLIC OPINION

Two surveys were conducted to give the Board and Service insights into current public sentiment and inform discussions on the Draft Budget. The 2024 Advanis Citizen Perception and OPSB Community Needs Survey offers a comprehensive framework for measuring public attitudes toward policing. These surveys highlight critical areas such as trust and confidence in the police, public safety perceptions, service quality, and community relations.

Advanis Methodology

This national opinion poll has been conducted annually since 2020. It uses standardized questions developed by Public Safety Canada, offering a consistent data standard for measuring public attitudes toward police, enabling benchmarking across jurisdictions. This year's study, conducted between May and June 2024, surveyed over 1,700 Ottawa residents, offering valuable insight into public perception of the Ottawa Police Service. The survey's methodology is scientifically sound. It utilizes a random sampling method, ensuring a representative sample of the Canadian population, and employs weighting techniques to reflect population demographics. This ensures the results are statistically significant and reliable.

In addition, the Police Service requested an oversampling of the postal code K1N in downtown Ottawa, which includes the ByWard Market, Lowertown, and Sandy Hill. The targeted oversampling will help provide a baseline to measure the impact of numerous strategic initiatives and investments in these neighbourhoods.

OPSB Community Needs Survey Methodology

The Community Needs Survey was conducted between August 7 and September 7, 2024, to gather feedback from Ottawa residents. To promote accessibility, the survey was offered online in multiple languages. Among the over 1,600 responses, 93% were submitted in English, 4% in French, and 2% in Arabic. Other languages included Chinese, Spanish, and Somali, each comprising less than 1% of responses, while Farsi and Inuktitut had no respondents. The survey utilized a non-randomized method, meaning it was not a scientific poll. Instead, it was designed to be more accessible and encourage open participation.

The results are categorized under the following subheadings:

- Satisfaction with Policing Services
- Trust in the Police
- Response to Violent Crimes and Mental Health Needs
- Equitable Service
- Community-Specific Needs
- Trends in the Perception of Safety

Satisfaction with Policing Services

Public satisfaction with OPS performance has improved. The Advanis results show that 65% of citizens rated OPS's performance as "good" or "excellent," up from 57% in 2023 and 52% in 2022. This increase suggests that OPS has made progress in addressing community concerns. Additionally, the Community Needs Survey indicates that 42% of respondents believe that leveraging technology and data-driven solutions could further enhance OPS effectiveness and transparency, signaling a desire for modernization in policing practices.

Trust in the Police

The Advanis results indicate a positive shift in the public's perception of OPS. About 80% of respondents reported a moderate or higher level of trust in the service, with 51% expressing a high or very high level of trust. This reflects a consistent level of confidence compared to 2023 and an improvement over the 2022 results. Similarly, the OPSB Survey also shows that 68% of respondents trust the OPS, which aligns with last year's result. This growth suggests that OPS's community rapport and accountability initiatives positively impact public sentiment.

Response to Violent Crimes and Mental Health Needs

The 2024 findings show progress in how the public perceives OPS's response to violent crimes and mental health needs. The Advanis results highlight improved views on OPS's ability to resolve violent crimes and respond to calls for assistance. There is also an increased rating for OPS's sensitivity to individuals with mental health issues compared to 2022 and 2023. The OPSB survey results underscore the importance of alternative mental health and addiction approaches.

Equitable Service

Despite improvements in overall satisfaction, equity in service delivery remains a concern. The Advanis results reveal that 32% of citizens disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that OPS provides equitable service to all residents. However, this figure

represents an improvement from previous years. The OPSB survey results similarly highlight the need to increase engagement with diverse communities and enhance sensitivity to various cultural and social needs.

Community-Specific Needs

The Advanis results and the OPSB survey indicate a need for a more decentralized policing model to address community-specific needs. Support exists for a district policing model to enhance problem-oriented policing strategies and tailor responses to unique community requirements.

Trends in the Perception of Safety

The perception of safety in Ottawa shows positive trends. The Advanis results indicate an increase in the number of citizens who feel safe walking alone after dark. There has been no significant change in the percentage of citizens worried about crime most of the time or always. However, focused sampling in the K1N postal area (ByWard Market, Lowertown, and Sandy Hill) reveals lower perceptions of safety compared to non-K1N areas. The OPSB survey results show mixed responses regarding personal safety, with 40% expressing satisfaction and 36% reporting dissatisfaction. This highlights a need for ongoing attention to specific areas to improve the perception of safety.

Improvement Opportunities:

This section outlines areas for improvement to meet Ottawa's evolving needs.

Focusing on Crime Prevention and Public Safety Priorities

The Advanis results identify crime prevention and personal safety as top priorities. The OPSB survey results emphasize concerns about gun and gang violence and road safety and suggest increased investment in mental health response models and community policing.

Improving Responsiveness

Ratings for OPS responsiveness have improved but continued focus on adequate staffing, training, and resource allocation is needed. Residents call for increased police visibility and faster response times in high-crime and disorder areas.

Investing in Modernization

Both reports stress the importance of investing in technology to enhance efficiency and transparency. The OPSB survey identified that 42% of respondents see technology, such as body-worn cameras and data platforms, as critical to improving OPS effectiveness.

Fostering Partnerships and Collaboration

Strengthening partnerships with social services, community organizations, and other government agencies is crucial for addressing complex social issues such as homelessness and mental health. Community feedback highlights the need for collaborative, community-based solutions.

GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Environics Analytics Ward-Based Analysis comprehensively examines all 24 wards within Ottawa, focusing on key indicators such as trust in police, public safety, demographics, and socio-economic factors. This report offers insights into how various wards perceive the police and public safety, with data drawn from demographics, psychographics, and social values. It helps identify areas where public trust is high, where concerns about safety are more prevalent, and where improvements can be made in policing strategies.

Confidence in Policing Services

Most wards demonstrate moderate to high confidence in the Ottawa Police Service. Wards such as Kanata North (67%), Knoxdale-Merivale (65%), and Beacon Hill-Cyrville (64%) report the highest levels of confidence. In contrast, Rideau-Jock (18%) and West Carleton-March (13%) show significantly lower confidence, indicating a need for focused community engagement and outreach in these areas. These findings suggest that while many communities maintain strong trust in the OPS, there are notable pockets where trust is eroded, and further action is required.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Insights

The analysis shows that confidence in the OPS varies significantly depending on each ward's demographic and socio-economic composition. Wards like Gloucester-Southgate and Barrhaven East, which have a significant proportion of racialized populations, show strong confidence in policing services despite concerns about discrimination. This highlights the importance of ensuring culturally competent policing practices, as trust in the OPS persists even amid broader concerns about equitable treatment.

On the other hand, wealthier wards such as Rideau-Jock and Osgoode report lower confidence in the OPS despite their higher household incomes. This suggests that economic prosperity does not always correlate with trust in public institutions. These areas may benefit from specialized engagement strategies that address specific community concerns beyond just economic factors, perhaps focusing on improving local safety perceptions and addressing potential service delivery gaps.

Perceptions of Safety and Crime

The analysis reveals mixed perceptions of safety across the wards. Residents in wards like Beacon Hill-Cyrville and Bay report feeling relatively safe, with lower perceived levels of aggression. Conversely, in Rideau-Vanier and Somerset, there are higher concerns about violence and crime, which likely contribute to the lower trust in policing services in these areas.

Interestingly, Orleans South-Navan has a high rate of security system purchases, reflecting underlying concerns about safety despite reasonable trust in the police. This insight suggests that in certain wards, residents may feel the need to supplement policing efforts with their own security measures, pointing to a potential area where police visibility and response could be improved.

Social Values and Public Sentiment

Wards like Kanata North and Barrhaven West, which exhibit high confidence in policing, also hold strong values related to social status and confidence in larger institutions, such as big business and the justice system. In contrast, wards like Rideau-Jock and Osgoode lean toward more conservative values, such as cultural assimilation and financial conservatism, and demonstrate lower levels of trust in the OPS and other public institutions.

This divergence in social values suggests that effective policing strategies should be tailored to each ward's cultural and social makeup, ensuring that engagement and communication align with community expectations.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Environics Analytics has recommended the following strategies to improve public trust and enhance policing services across Ottawa's diverse wards.

These recommendations are being incorporated into the District Revitalization Project, which is creating a deployment model to strengthen the services' ability to address the unique needs and concerns of each Ward. This approach will provide more tailored and localized services that better align with the specific challenges faced by individual communities. For example, as part of Phase 1 of the DRP Implementation Pilot, the District Inspectors have initiated the ACCESS and AFFECT components of the Community Policing Strategy, liaising with and listening to councillors about Ward concerns and priorities. Inspectors have been actively attending community meetings and listening to residents.

Enhanced Community Policing in Low-Trust Wards

In areas such as Rideau-Jock, West Carleton-March, and Osgoode, where confidence in the OPS is low, targeted community policing initiatives should be introduced. Increasing police visibility, hosting public forums, and collaborating with local organizations to address specific concerns will help rebuild trust. Regular outreach programs can also improve relationships with community leaders and residents.

Focus on Cultural Competency and Anti-Discrimination Initiatives

In wards with significant racial diversity, such as Gloucester-Southgate and Barrhaven East, OPS should increase training on cultural competence and anti-discrimination practices. Regular dialogues with community leaders from diverse racial backgrounds and establishing advisory boards could ensure that residents feel heard and supported by the police.

Youth Engagement and Educational Outreach in Progressive Wards

Wards like Kitchissippi and Capital, with younger and more progressive populations, would benefit from tailored youth engagement programs. Partnering with local schools, universities, and youth organizations to co-create public safety programs could foster positive relationships between the police and younger residents. This would help reduce skepticism and build long-term trust with the younger generation.

Tailored Communication Strategies

As trust in public institutions varies widely between wards; OPS should develop customized communication strategies that align with each community's social values and concerns. For example, wards that prioritize traditional family values may respond better to messages emphasizing community safety, while progressive wards may appreciate transparency and inclusivity in OPS outreach efforts.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 - Advanis Police Service Benchmarks 2024 - OPS Focus

Document 2 - Advanis Police Service Benchmarks 2024 - OPS Comparing Downtown to Rest of Ottawa

Document 3 - Ottawa Police Service - Ottawa Ward Analysis Combined Report 2024

CONCLUSION

The Budget Consultation Report complements ongoing outreach and expands with three core sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of community needs and concerns:

- 1. Advanis Citizen Perception Survey:** This national survey, conducted annually, measures public attitudes toward the OPS, including trust, perceptions of public safety, and service quality. With a sample size of over 1,700 Ottawa residents, the survey provides statistically significant insights into the community's views, enabling benchmarking against other jurisdictions and assessing the OPS's performance.
- 2. OPSB Community Needs Survey:** Conducted between August and September 2024, this survey captures feedback from over 1,600 residents. Unlike the Advanis Survey, it takes a more inclusive approach, offering the survey in multiple languages and focusing on open participation. While non-randomized, it serves as a vital tool for gathering diverse perspectives from various communities, helping to ensure inclusivity in the consultation process.
- 3. Environics Ward-Based Analysis:** This report delivers a geographic perspective, analyzing key indicators such as public trust, safety perceptions, and socio-economic factors across Ottawa's 24 wards. The analysis highlights variations in how different wards perceive the OPS, enabling the service to align its resources and strategies better to meet local needs. While many wards show strong confidence in the OPS, others require targeted action to build or restore trust and/or confidence. By focusing on community policing, cultural competencies, and youth engagement, the OPS can better align its services with the diverse needs of Ottawa's population, fostering stronger relationships and a safer community for all. The Ward Analysis provides actionable insights into public trust, safety concerns, and community dynamics across Ottawa's 24 wards.

In conclusion, the numerous Community Outreach initiatives and these studies provide a comprehensive view of community concerns, satisfaction, and expectations that will guide the 2025 budget and future strategic initiatives.

To equip the Board with the necessary information for effective oversight, it is crucial to integrate these survey results with other relevant data points, including crime statistics, community reports, and insights from elected officials. This holistic approach will empower the OPSB to make informed decisions and refine strategies that better serve Ottawa's diverse communities.

As the OPS continues to gather and analyze information, it will present further insights to the Board to support ongoing budget deliberations, ensuring that community voices remain central to policing strategies and budgetary decisions.