

Report to / Rapport au:

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

27 October 2025 / 27 octobre 2025

Submitted by:

**Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police
d'Ottawa**

Contact Person / Personne resource:

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SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-25-08

OBJET: RÉPONSE À L'ENQUÊTE I-25-08

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.**

INQUIRY

WHEREAS collaborative encampment responses involve multiple partners and the
OPS posture has inter-agency implications;

WHEREAS at a recent Community Services Committee meeting, City staff advised that
the municipal service standard for clearing encampments of 5-6 business days is not
consistently achieved, citing the availability of Ottawa Police Service (OPS) resources
as a contributing factor amid increasing encampment volumes;

WHEREAS members of the community have raised concerns about timely, safe, and
compassionate responses to encampments, and this Board was not previously apprised
of the specific OPS resourcing constraints impacting the City's encampment workflow;

WHEREAS the Board is responsible for ensuring adequate and effective police
services, setting priorities, and reviewing and approving the annual police budget, and

therefore requires specific information to evaluate 2026 budget options related to this pressure;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ottawa Police Service Board request a written report from the Chief of Police that:

1. Describes the Service's current role in the City's encampment response, including trigger points for OPS involvement, average timelines, weekly capacity, and prioritization criteria.
2. Details staffing and scheduling constraints affecting encampment responses.
3. Provides the Chief's assessment of pathways to meet the City's service standard, including:
 - a. what levels of resourcing would be required for OPS to support the City in meeting the 5-6 day standard;
 - b. any alternative staffing approaches under consideration;
 - c. order-of magnitude resource and cost implications;
 - d. a brief historical context on resourcing decisions and demand trends relevant to OPS' current capacity to support encampment operations.

RESPONSE

1. Current Role in the City's Encampment Response

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) plays a supporting role in the City of Ottawa's coordinated response to encampments. The OPS is not responsible for selecting encampment sites or determining dismantlement timelines. These decisions are made by the City's Program Coordinator within the Unsheltered Task Force, once all partner agencies have confirmed availability.

OPS involvement is triggered when City partners identify a requirement for police presence to ensure public safety during planned encampment operations. This may include mitigating risks to workers, community members, or occupants.

The Central District Neighbourhood Resource Teams (NRTs) hold primary responsibility for OPS support to encampment responses as many of the encampments fall within its area. However, patrol and NRT resources outside of the core area of the city are also engaged in these efforts. These teams balance this duty with multiple competing priorities, including social-disorder calls, community safety patrols, and partnership meetings. Despite these demands, NRTs actively participate in the City's scheduling sessions and manage their workload to remain available for encampment operations

alongside other partner agencies.

On average, the OPS supports 3-5 encampment operations per week, depending on City scheduling and the scale of the sites identified. OPS attendance is typically confirmed once the City finalizes inter-agency coordination, ensuring deployment is proportionate to risk and public-safety needs. To note, Central NRT also support the NCC encampment response efforts.

In many cases, unless supports like housing are put in place, the encampments can re-emerge in the same or other locations, so ongoing work and monitoring is also required.

2. Staffing and Scheduling Constraints

OPS encampment responses are staffed primarily by Central NRT officers. These officers are also tasked with ongoing neighbourhood safety initiatives, foot and bike patrols, crime prevention projects, and responses to unplanned events in the downtown core. This creates scheduling pressures that require constant reprioritization.

Despite these competing demands, OPS maintains participation in regular planning sessions coordinated by the Unsheltered Task Force. NRT supervisors work closely with City partners to identify suitable time windows for safe and coordinated action.

To date, the OPS has not received feedback from Unsheltered Task Force partners indicating that police availability has negatively affected response timelines. The only recorded instance of a delay occurred when a significant unplanned demonstration required the redeployment of available resources. That encampment operation was rescheduled immediately and completed without further issue.

3. Pathways to Meet the City's 5-6 Day Service Standard

a. Resource Levels Required

Meeting a fixed 5-to-6-day service standard for every encampment response would require dedicated police resources assigned exclusively to this function.

b. Alternative Staffing Approaches

OPS currently has a liaison officer who works with the unsheltered Task Force. Alternative approaches could include:

- Utilizing on-call response models similar to those used for major events.
- Deploying overtime resources when NRT capacity is constrained by major events.

c. Resource and Cost Implications (Order-of-Magnitude)

Based on current demands, dedicated staffing would require an estimated 2–3 full-

time officers to ensure consistent coverage during the City's active encampment period. The costing for this work has not been formally completed but they would be significant and range into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

d. Historical Context and Demand Trends

OPS involvement has evolved from ad-hoc attendance to a more structured partnership within the City's Unsheltered Task Force despite no increase in staffing. Historically, these operations have been managed within existing NRT capacity.

The increased prevalence and complexity of encampments, combined with overlapping social-disorder and protest events, has placed additional strain on district operations.

CONCLUSION

The OPS remains committed to supporting the City of Ottawa's coordinated approach to encampment management while balancing competing operational priorities. Our role is limited to ensuring public safety and lawful order during encampment operations. Central NRTs have demonstrated flexibility, professionalism, and strong inter-agency collaboration, ensuring that encampment responses proceed safely and effectively without significant delays.