

# THE SEARCH FOR OTTAWA'S NEXT POLICE CHIEF

## The Community Engagement Report

By



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## 1.0 Background and Introduction

Following the resignation of the previous Police Chief in February 2022, during a ‘Freedom Convoy’ demonstration that occupied the downtown core and paralyzed Ottawa, the City’s police service has been without a substantive chief. The Ottawa Police Services Board (OPSB), which has the authority to hire Police Chiefs and deputy Police Chiefs, contracted an executive search firm, Odgers Berndtson, to help them with the recruitment process. OPSB wanted the people of Ottawa, particularly the racialized communities, to engage in the process by providing input into the characteristics, qualities, and experiences they desire in the next Ottawa Police Chief. With the approval of the OPSB, Odgers Berndtson hired Hefid Solutions, an Ottawa-based firm, to engage residents of Ottawa and hear directly from them about what they wanted to see in their next Police Chief and what deliverables the next Chief should prioritize. This report reflects the engagement process and what the participants in the engagement process wanted in their new Police Chief, as well as what changes they thought ought to take place in the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). The following report summarizes these efforts.

### 1.1 Communication and Promotion

The engagement process was launched in June 2022, with a press release issued by the OPSB and carried out by the media. The press release detailed how the people of Ottawa could participate in the engagement process. It included links to an online survey and a public consultation process that was open to all. In addition, we promoted community engagement on different community newsletters and platforms, as well as the website: [letshearyou.ca](https://letshearyou.ca), which provided more information on the process. Partner organizations and some City Councillors also promoted the information in their newsletters. We shared the survey links through various channels, including third-party summer events and festivities.

## 2.0 Engagement Techniques

The engagement process consisted of online surveys in both official languages, targeted community forums and focus groups within those communities that had been historically ignored in public consultations, albeit having significantly higher encounters with the Police. The black community, the middle eastern community, and the indigenous community are cases in point. There were also special engagements with youth, seniors, and the Afro-Francophone community. Additionally, a public forum was organized to allow residents who wanted to participate in the process beyond the survey. We also conducted one-on-one interviews with notable and respected leaders in the Ottawa community and individuals whose voices are often not heard. The intention was to gather input from broad categories of people from all backgrounds, professions, and faith affiliations. The individual interviews also included interviews with five (5) members of the OPSB. Finally, we created an online form to allow residents to share their inputs through the website.

### 2.1 Online Survey

The online survey was launched on June 22, 2022, and closed on July 15, 2022. The bilingual survey was a great tool to get as many people as possible to contribute their views on what

they wanted to see in the next Police Chief, focussing primarily on attributes, experience, leadership traits and personal characteristics.

### 2.1.1 Online Survey Summary

As part of selecting the next Police Chief, residents of Ottawa were invited to complete an online survey. The survey was conducted in English (n=1366) and French (n=85). The survey was composed of 22 questions. The response rate is 79%, with the standard error calculated by dividing the standard deviation by the square root of the sample size to obtain 4.1.

Demographic characteristics are indicated as follows:

| Age                     | Ethnicity   |
|-------------------------|---|
| ➤ Younger than 30 = 10% | ➤ Asian – East (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean)=1.10%                  |
| ➤ 30-49 years= 35%      | ➤ Asian – South (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)=1.83%             |
| ➤ 50-69 years= 42%      | ➤ Asian – South East (e.g., Malaysian, Filipino, Vietnamese)=0.59%      |
|                         | ➤ Black – African (e.g., Ghanaian, Kenyan, Somali)=6.44%                |
|                         | ➤ Black – Caribbean (e.g., Barbadian, Jamaican)=2.71%                   |
|                         | ➤ Black – North American (e.g., Canadian, American)=1.68%               |
|                         | ➤ First Nations=1.24%   |
|                         | ➤ Indian – Caribbean (e.g., Guyanese with origins in India)=0.15%       |
|                         | ➤ Indigenous/Aboriginal not included elsewhere=0.95%                    |
|                         | ➤ Inuit=0.44%   |
|                         | ➤ Latin American (e.g., Argentinean, Chilean, Salvadorian)=0.29%        |
|                         | ➤ Métis=0.88%   |
|                         | ➤ Middle Eastern (e.g., Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese)=4.10%              |
|                         | ➤ White – European (e.g., English, Italian, Portuguese, Russian)=14.93% |
|                         | ➤ White – North American (e.g., Canadian, American)=42.39%              |
|                         | ➤ Mixed heritage (e.g., Black-African and White-North American) =2.12%  |
|                         | ➤ Prefer not to answer=14.64%   |
|                         | ➤ Do not know=0.44%   |
|                         | ➤ Other Responses (please specify)=3.07%                                |

| Sexual orientation  | Gender  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bisexual= 2.3%</li> <li>➤ Gay= 1.8</li> <li>➤ Heterosexual= 68%</li> <li>➤ Lesbian: 1%</li> <li>➤ Two-spirit = 0.5%</li> <li>➤ Prefer not to answer: 22%</li> <li>➤ Do not know: 0.5%</li> <li>➤ Others: 5.5%</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Woman=45.88%</li> <li>➤ Man=38.81%</li> <li>➤ Transgender woman =0.00%</li> <li>➤ Transgender man =0.15%</li> <li>➤ Non-binary/non-conforming=1.55%</li> <li>➤ Prefer not to answer=11.63%</li> <li>➤ Other (please specify) =1.99%</li> </ul> |

Also, most respondents (94%) don't work for OPS. In comparison, the age representation is quite balanced, with people aged 50+ being the group most represented, with an average of 39%. This shows a significant interest in the topic by that age segment since they are less enthusiastic about the data capture tool (online survey). This is also confirmed by findings from Statistics Canada (Dec 2020), where it is reported that seniors (53%) were more likely to report having a great deal of confidence in the Police compared with young Canadians aged 15 to 24 (36%).

Participation in these surveys also contradicted past research on women's perception of policing issues, such as Archbold & Schulz (2012), and most recently Diaz and Nuño (2021), where it is demonstrated that women are less interested in police matters than men. In our surveys, women are represented within the two surveys with an average of 44.88%, while men identified as 38.81%. 11.66% of people surveyed refused to reveal their gender, 1.55% identified as binary, while 1.99% chose to be recognized as 'others' with no precision. Women's participation is higher than men's. The cross-tabulation and filters on question Q14 show that they have somehow the same preoccupation as men. Women on Q3 - focus on community (71%); they are most represented on Q6 – clear communicator (65%), and on Q7 - approachable and empathetic (88%). This leads to the inference that a higher level of female participation has contributed to balancing the focus between hard policing (more staffing, tough on crime) and social issues. Even if more than 14% of respondents declined to reveal their origins, the most represented population segment on the survey was white – North American (e.g., Canadian, American) =42.39%, followed by white – European (e.g., English, Italian, Portuguese, Russian) =14.93%, then Black – African (e.g., Ghanaian, Kenyan, Somali) = 6.44%. All other ethnicities have a representation balanced between 3 and 0%. Overall, people who identified themselves as black represent almost 11%. To understand that level of participation, two steps are necessary regarding background. Research from Giacomantonio et al. (2019) and Ibrahim (2019) have identified severe trust issues between this segment of the population and the Police. The second point of the background is related to the focus groups and interviews. People identifying as blacks have expressed severe doubts about the outcomes of the process. More than 37% have said that they have been part of collecting information processes to improve policing in the City without seeing the results, and they were not confident that their perspective had been considered.

### 2.1.2 Findings

We used the Response styles approach to assess respondents' answers and univariate and multivariate data distributions. Except for Q12, relating to bilingualism, and Q14, relating to top three priorities, most of the responses provided could be ranged under the categories: Extreme Response Style (ERS), which is a tendency for survey respondents to answer categorical rating scales in the extreme, and end-most intervals, across a wide range of item content. In such survey ranking questions, the term 'important' or 'somewhat important' came on top, as displayed by the following table:

| Question | Combination                      | The average percentage of the two surveys |
|----------|----------------------------------|---|
| Q1       | Important and somewhat important | 89%                                       |
| Q2       | Important and somewhat important | 90%                                       |
| Q3       | Important and somewhat important | 92%                                       |
| Q4       | Important and somewhat important | 92%                                       |
| Q5       | Important and somewhat important | 95%                                       |
| Q6       | Important and somewhat important | 97%                                       |
| Q7       | Important and somewhat important | 92%                                       |
| Q8       | Important and somewhat important | 86%                                       |
| Q9       | Important and somewhat important | 94%                                       |
| Q10      | Important and somewhat important | 95%                                       |
| Q11      | Important and Somewhat Important | 98%                                       |

This demonstrated that respondents have higher expectations for the next Police Chief and strongly feel that change in policing, community relations, and position on crime is highly needed. People's expectations of the new Police Chief are at two levels: character and actions.

### 2.1.3 Attribute Rating

In terms of personality, they would like the OPS chief to be a change agent (89%), an experienced person dealing with complex issues (90%), ability to build and maintain relationships with the community (92%), and a capable administrator (92%). They are also expecting the Chief to display strong ethical character by being transparent and fair (98%), culturally aware of diversity (86%) and approachable and empathetic (92%). The Chief is expected to be both efficient by demonstrating the police capability while showing a human side of the Police. According to the

survey, the Chief should communicate effectively with critical stakeholders like the media, communities, and other departments. The survey results bridge two dialectical positions on opinions about Police and policing issues: the 'tough-on-crime' vs social approach to crime prevention. Respondents are expressing the need for the City to have a Police Chief that can combine these two approaches. Unsurprisingly, Francophone respondents (81%) rate the next OPS Chief's bilingual capacities higher than Anglophone respondents (58%).

#### 2.1.4 Deliverables for the next Police Chief

The next Chief will be expected to deliver on:

- Internal Management of OPS

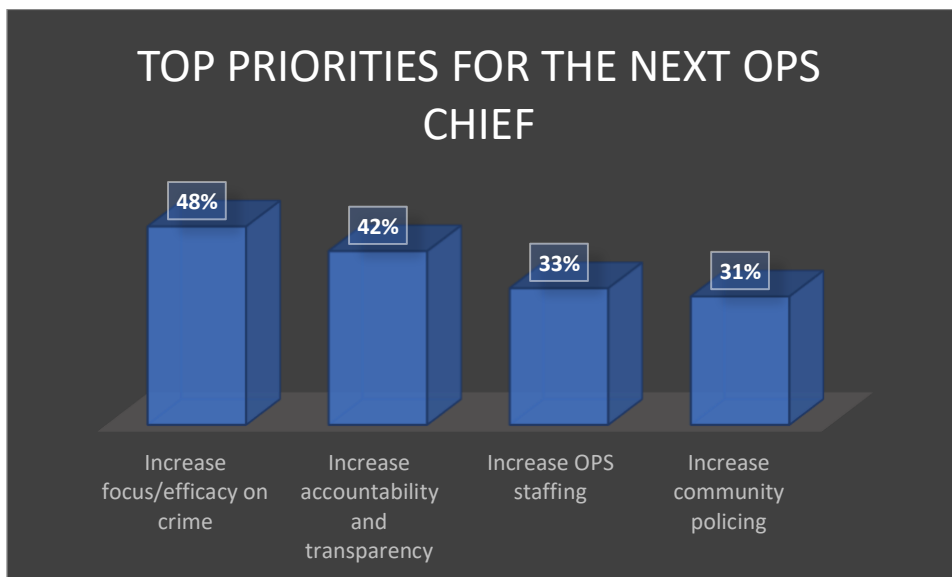
The Chief is expected to develop a sound budget and be able to recruit, retain and promote competent personnel. In addition, 95% of respondents would like the next Chief to take action to boost officers' morale and have men and women in the Police who are proud to wear their uniform and go to work serving the community, knowing fully that their efforts are making the City better and safer.

- External Relationships

In 94% of the cases, respondents would like the next OPS Chief to understand the political and complex nature of the City of Ottawa and thus develop mechanisms for better coordination with other security forces and political level leadership involved in managing this Federal Capital city. Respondents would like to see the Police have increasingly efficient community relations (92%), with OPS officers working with local organizations, leaders and ordinary citizens to create and maintain comfortable and safe living conditions. Officers might work with community groups to address specific problems or work toward certain goals.

- Top priorities

The following topic has been ranked as top priorities by respondents:



This demonstrated that respondents are more focused on having an efficient police service that delivers on its mandate while maintaining strong and meaningful relationships with the community.

### 2.1.5 Select Individual Comments

“We would like to see an Ottawa Police Chief that considers the troubled relationship many vulnerable populations have with police officers and work towards mending those broken fences by engaging in intentional, effective and equitable change. We would also like a Chief who prioritizes reforms in policing and police tactics that are used to perpetuate racial violence and police brutality toward Ottawa's vulnerable identities. Finally, we are looking for a Police Chief that is committed to the promises that they make, rather than making unattainable promises that go unaccounted for.”

“ A Chief who stands for the rights of all citizens, and stands to protect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, regardless of pressures from government and outside agencies.”

“Clear separation from the mayor’s office. Let the Police manage the Police—clear governance roles and responsibilities. The Nation's capital got a black eye with the heavy-handed response (due to political interference) during the Convoy protests that clearly showed that the Police Chief was not allowed to do his job with a calm, steady hand. This tarred OPS with the messy aftermath and hurt its reputation. The OPS is not the mayor’s security force, for it serves all the PEOPLE of this city”.

“Strategic thinker and skilled leader who can manage the tensions between internal challenges (toxic work culture; us (officers) vs them (the brass); address systemic racism while building bridges to the front line) and external challenges (responding to the vocal and serving the voiceless; competing expectations from the community); that focuses on quick wins and immediate needs with the ability to look forward. Needs to have some experience with strategic frameworks (not plans - plans change!) and adaptive action - the ability to "pivot" depending on unanticipated changes in the landscape and opportunities that arise - while keeping an eye on the long-term vision (needs to be able to communicate this vision too). (You need leadership allies in the community - both the visible and publicly stated ones - and the private ones that can advance mutual goals without always publicly stating their "support" of the Police.)

“The next Police Chief should also be adaptable to the risks and opportunities presented by changing dynamics of crimes and available technology. Therefore, such a leader must learn to trust and support experts in these fields to lead those changes. The next Police Chief should be a great listener to its membership, including the Association, Board and the community. Finally, the next Police Chief must not be scared to take on the paths less travelled.”

"The next leader will have his/her work cut out for them as all the elements mentioned in the survey are important. They must be able to navigate the emerging and existing social tensions between privileged and marginalized groups, especially those who have already suffered injustices from the justice and police systems (e.g. Blacks and Indigenous)."



"It is important that a Chief is selected based on their ability to 'lead the troops' and earn their respect. When this has been accomplished, many other pieces will naturally fall into place. The OPS is a battered organization on the brink of imploding itself. Resources are taxed beyond capacity, and until members of the public and the community understand what it's like to work here, they will never truly comprehend the day-to-day struggles. Therefore, hire a "Commander in Chief" first and foremost--not a political puppet whose primary interest is to appease the Mayor, the Board, and the community. Tough times call for a well-rounded individual to take the helm, not a leader whose motivations are self-serving to win political points with far-left or far-right community members. The men and women of this organization - both sworn and civilian - deserve nothing less."

"The Police Chief should look inwardly into the officers that have been employed for a very long time and see if there are ways in which they can adopt new skills and more expansive ideologies. We don't doubt that the Police work tirelessly to protect public civilians; however, failure to expand and grow can result in old ideologies being perpetuated in modern-day times, negatively impacting the public. I think a priority should be specifically looking at response times when addressing mental health crises and over-policing black and indigenous communities. Failure to take your time and to be patient during mental health calls results in much escalation. An individual with debilitating mental health will not respond positively to a bunch of officers pointing guns, with a bunch of lights, shouting orders at them. Focusing on intervening with caution and not using a rushed timeline could greatly improve the effectiveness of police presence on mental health calls."

## 2.2 Targeted Engagements

To ensure that communities often ignored in public consultations were part of the process, a deliberate attempt was made to target people from diverse racialized communities. In all, 214 people participated in the targeted engagement sessions. Nine targeted engagement sessions took place either face to face or virtually. Our team met with individuals from the Middle Eastern community, the Somali community, youth, the Afro-Francophone community, the Indigenous community, and the Black community. The views participants expressed were their own and did not represent that of their affiliated organizations, employers, or their communities.

### **Test Engagement**

We piloted the community engagement sessions with a mixed group of people. In addition, our consultants engaged a group of 20 individuals of various ethnic backgrounds (about 65% were of South Asian descent between the ages of 19 and 63). The meeting was convened on Saturday, June 12, 2022, to offer feedback and commentary on the search for a new OPS Police Chief. Below are key takeaways from the discussion:

- A vast majority (over 60%) found the ability to address community issues, respect for diversity, inclusion and equity, and ethics and transparency as the most important traits needed in the next Police Chief.

- Many mentioned the case of Ejaz Ahmed Choudry and Abdirahman Abdi as primary sources of heightened distrust in Police and that the next Chief should work to build better relationships. They indicated that they were always afraid and apprehensive when interacting with law enforcement, which needs to stop.
- High-profile cases of Police misbehaving and the apparent laxness of the Ontario SIU were also commented on, with many expressing the need for a culture change in police departments.
- Many of the participants offered anecdotes of perceived disparate treatment by law enforcement and expressed support for a Police Chief that ensures the enforcement of laws equally.
- Race and gender of the next Police Chief were not a primary concern, with many stating that the traits needed were not correlated to identity.
- The ability to be bilingual was not a significant concern; however, having officers who speak other languages (Somali, Arabic, Urdu, etc.) was considered an asset.

Following the test, nine other engagement sessions occurred between June 23 and July 19, 2022. Again, the participants expressed views similar in nature to the test group. **The responses have been grouped under four (4) topics and can be accessed in Appendix 3.**

### 2.3 Public Consultation

There was an open public consultation process on July 13, 2022. Forty-eight people attended the event, initially scheduled for July 8 but had to be postponed due to Rogers' nationwide outage. Some members of the media, as well as OPSB, attended the event. There were five (5) Breakout Rooms, each room facilitated by a Hefid Solutions team member. The attendance was lower than expected. The presence of the media also influenced engagement in some Breakout Rooms. Some people felt uncomfortable speaking, indicating later that they did not want to be quoted in media stories. Despite the flaws of the virtual meetings, the meeting was successful. Some participants were very engaging and provided their views on how the process should unfold. Others criticized the timing of the engagement and the entire hiring process. Some believed it was prudent to allow the process to determine the Police's inaction during the 'Freedom Convoy' and what led to the resignation of the previous Police Chief to complete before hiring a new chief. A few others shared this view in the select one-on-one interviews. Some of the forum's highlights included participants calling for de-tasking the Police (de-tasking is not the same as defunding the Police). It is a process of making the police focus on what they are trained for and tasking other training professionals in the community to perform those tasks. Proponents cited removing the Police from mental health calls as an example of de-tasking. There were meaningful discussions that ensued during the forum.

### 2.4 Select Individual Interviews

In all, 36 individuals were selected and interviewed, including 5 OPSB members. They come from all backgrounds and ethnicities, with varied life experiences, from security and intelligence professionals to school council members. They included faith leaders, school board trustees, shop owners, heads of organizations, city councillors, teachers, youth advocates, and others. The common thread is that we are heading in the wrong direction and must change course. Building

the effective and efficient police service that people are looking for is everyone's responsibility. An organizational change, they admitted, takes time and must be planned and frequently evaluated. Many who spoke to our consultants also acknowledged that the current system is not set up for success yet, but that we could collectively get there. A cross-section of interview participants indicated a lack of proper communication and sloppy customer service as OPS's Achilles heel.

### 3.0 Emerged Themes from the Engagements

The community engagement process, including the online survey, targeted engagement and the select individual interviews and submissions, produced these themes:

#### 3.1. Internal Management of OPS

Most participants stressed the need for change and that whoever becomes the next Chief should be a change agent with demonstrable experience that is broad and multi-dimensional, including experience engaging other communities other than their own. The change people are looking for must be planned and evaluated. The next Chief should be a respected leader who can carry the members of the Ottawa police service along. They acknowledged that this was an almost impossible task for any person, but they believe that a decisive leader who is not afraid to 'break the egg to make a new omelet' can deliver the needed change if they can carry the people of Ottawa along in the journey. They expect the next Police Chief to comprehend the enormity of the task at hand and temper expectations with reasonable assurance and sustained incremental progress. Several participants also indicated that for the next Police Chief to succeed, they must understand the likely resistance and pushback from within the service.

##### 3.1.1 Racism Within OPS

Most forum participants spoke candidly about the systemic racism within the service. They believe the culture of policing institutions is fraught with systemic racism, and the next Police Chief should recognize that and publicly acknowledge it, even if that makes them unpopular. People believe no Police Chief, black or white, woman or man, can bring a sustained and progressive change of culture while the existence of racism within the service is fundamentally denied.

##### 3.1.2 Lack of Promotion for racialized staff

To make the policing profession attractive for people of all races, ethnicities and faiths, the promotion of officers should be based on merit, not skin colour or race. Many people who participated in the forums believe racialized officers are sidelined for promotions and leadership opportunities because of racism and cliques in the service. They wanted the next Police Chief to use a well-defined merit-based system to promote personnel.

##### 3.1.3 Accountability

The perception is that Police look out for their members, a position adopted by their Association, making it difficult for senior leadership to discipline even the worst offender. The next Police Chief should be a decisive leader who will not conform to this culture of protecting our own at all costs. Though participants recognized that the Police Services Act invariably ties the hand of the Chief when it comes to disciplinary actions, the Chief can communicate the extent allowed by the Act

and let the public know the limits imposed by the Act on their ability to appropriately sanction culprits within the service.

#### **3.1.4 Training of Officers**

One of the recurring themes in various interactions is the training of officers. One participant submitted: "Officers must be thoroughly trained as frontline police officers. It requires schooling, patrolling, interaction with the community, crime prevention strategies, and encouraging young people of all ethnic groups to consider policing as a career. Thorough knowledge can only be acquired with daily application - and yes, officers will make mistakes, e.g., operational shortcomings like an incomplete report or not calling for backup. We're not talking about the more serious incidents such as excessive use of force. The training process includes instruction, correction, encouragement, and confirming good practices. When officers move up the ranks into specialized areas, either traffic, forensics, or criminal investigations, they should be well-seasoned and experienced, and their suitability is such that they will be deemed a good fit. However, observation of their job performance will be seen over time if that fit is the right fit. A Police Chief must stand his ground in the principles of policing to ensure that the Ottawa Police Service has what it takes to get the job done right, to respond to the community's needs and not the political whims of the day. Again ... this city council, including the Police Board, has reacted to pressures it should not have had to."

#### **3.1.5 Data-Driven / Evidence-Based Decisions**

One of the crucial comments from the select individual interviews was the need to make informed decisions based on evidence. The Police are mandated to collect data on many issues, but they cannot make the data speak. As a result, people believe the Police, as a service, lags behind other ecosystem sectors to function in the digital world fully. This should be a priority for the next Chief.

#### **3.1.6 Effective Communication and Improved Customer Service**

Communication was the central theme. Most participants believe OPS has significant communication problems that have to be addressed. Others indicated their communications often appear condescending - with a 'we know better attitude' - dotted all over. Effective communication is also a tool for trust building; an area OPS seems to have failed woefully. One participant said during a telephone interview that they need to have communications experts working for them. Another participant who called our confidential telephone line to give their opinion indicated that following up on complaints is very tasking and often victimizes people as they have to retell their stories over and over each time they called. This customer service issue could quickly be addressed with something as simple as installing speech-to-text software to record and save in a way that is accessible to other staff who work the telephones.

#### **3.1.7 120-Days Police Complaints Transparency Bill Of Rights**

Few participants supported the proposal submitted that will require the next Police Chief to commit to being transparent on complaints against police officers. It calls for "a public online anonymized copy of every misconduct or policy accepted or rejected the complaint, with redactions if necessary, police investigator decision, the reason for extending any investigation beyond 120 days if applicable, and the reason for any redaction that is contrary to victim consent if applicable so that the public can hold OPS Chief / OPSB / Council directly or indirectly accountable for inciting police misconduct by covering up misconduct. Other recruitment criteria

are a symptom of one root cause: the lack of a Police Complaints Bill of Rights. Implementing a transparent police complaints process will deter misconduct; it is cheaper than millions wasted settling with accused officers and victims."

## **3.2 External Relations with the Community**

### **3.2.1 Improve Relations with the Community**

Several participants in the community engagement call on the next Chief to make community engagement a critical focus. Relationships and partnerships should be cultivated and maintained. The current level of trust is at an all-time low, especially after the resignation of the previous Chief, whom the community saw as the most qualified and progressive Chief hired to bring about change. The next Chief has their work cut out for them. The community needs genuine relationships and not superficial ones. One participant wrote, "Our SPECIAL CONSTABLES are incredible resources within the communities they serve and could be leveraged to understand better the various communities within our larger Community of Greater Ottawa. They should be paired up or attached to specific areas and officer contingents to maximize interaction with the community starting at the neighbourhood and school levels. An old saying in policing is that 'the police are the people and the people are the police.' This can only be made a reality when, over time, through dialogue, practical day-to-day interaction when things are not tense and difficult, there is a growth in relationships. After all, we are all people. They can be our Police Chief's hand extended into the community daily and at least three times a year, providing a report highlighting concerns and issues and the wins and improvements. The focus on community partnerships needs to be informed to be effective." Participants believe the next Chief and their leadership team will need to set realistic expectations - underpromise and overdeliver. Unrealistic expectations will further erode confidence and impair trust.

### **3.2.2 De-task Ottawa Police Service**

The next Chief, the community expects, must put in measures to increasingly remove some tasks and have the experts in the community handle them. One area the call to de-task the Police has focused on is the police response to mental health calls. Most participants said Police should only be allowed to do what they have been trained to do. Most of the time, mental health calls are not within their training mandate.

### **3.2.3 Humility to Ask for Help**

Several people who participated in the process want to see a Police Chief who is humble enough to ask for help from leaders in the community and people who have the skills to offer support. Solutions to most of the problems facing OPS now lie outside the service itself, but it would take a humble leader to ask for help.

### **3.2.4 Public Education and Intentional Public Forums**

The public needs to know what the vision and plans are. Ottawa needs a Police Chief who will share their vision and strategy for effecting change with the public. They also want the Police to be proactive in educating the public and sharing information. OPS must organize regular public information sessions and forums. This is one area participants indicated will help build trust. Regularly scheduled public events that allow the community to know what is happening and how to protect themselves, for instance, are key the next Police Chief has to prioritize.

### **3.2.5 Youth and Policing**

Most racialized youth do not feel safe interacting with the Police and do not trust them. There is the sense that police officers do not understand our youth. Most youth participants wanted to see police officers trained on youth matters. They don't want to be policed like adults. The indigenous community wanted to see young offenders transition to community programs that address their real needs instead of the criminal justice system that tend to harm them. They wanted a Police Chief committed to redirecting young offenders to community programs and a Chief who understands the relationship with the Land.

### **3.2.6 Mental Health**

Do not respond to mental health calls with your guns drawn and with many officers. Where is the compassion? Some participants asked. There is an increasing risk of Police making mistakes when they decide their own lives are at risk with mental health calls. Many people spoke passionately about how Police respond to mental health calls even when no one is in apparent danger. One confidential caller who had complained about these issues says the entire process is nerve-racking. "I felt like my life was in danger when heavily armed police officers showed up at my home and banged the door with brute force even though I called them to help calm my daughter. It is frightening, and I support de-tasking the Police." He said. Others felt the response is designed to intimidate and stigmatize rather than to help calm people.

## **4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The community engagement sessions, the online survey, individual submissions and interviews ensured that people had a variety of ways to participate in the process that will eventually lead to the hiring of the next Police Chief and the Deputy Police Chiefs. The community participated freely with limited barriers. This report summarizes all the information the consultants received and collated. The people of Ottawa want the Ottawa Police Service to be tough on crime and stem the senseless gun violence plaguing the City. They also wish to be accountable in the service. They want a solid but firm and fair chief in their approach to weed out 'bad apples' from the service. They also want more police officers, not less Police, to reflect a growing city. This is seen in the number of respondents who rated increased OPS staff and neighbourhood policing as priorities for the next Police Chief. However, participants in the interviews and focus groups wanted to see more efficiency around resource deployment. People want to see officers walking in the neighbourhoods rather than on construction sites.

The 12 attributes all scored high ratings, but having one person possessing all the attributes is impossible. For instance, while many indicated they wanted to see a Police Chief who is more approachable and empathetic, others recognized that the Police Chief could not be all the time accessible to the public because they have work to do and may not be able to attend every community program they are invited.

## 4.1 Recommendations

It is evident from the data that the people of Ottawa have expectations about the qualities that the next Police Chief should have. Given the critical role the next Police Chief will play in bringing various communities of Ottawa to collaborate and collectively build a safe, inclusive, diverse, and prosperous Ottawa where all citizens feel valued and belong, we recommend that:

- The Executive Search Firm, Odgers Berndtson, considers these essential qualities when choosing the next Police Chief.
- The search team will have a methodical approach to selecting the best qualities within the qualities desired by the people of Ottawa.
- The highly rated attributes and desired qualities should be considered when developing the interview questions and the job description for the chief position.
- To have community representation within the search team, even if that role is for observation.
- Consider constituting a panel of diverse people to review and provide input to the interview questions.
- The interview panel should have a diverse representation of subject matter experts from the community.

## 5.0 References

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## 6.0 Appendices

### Appendix 1. Dates of Focus Groups and number of Participants

| Date            | Group                                       | Number of Attendees | Mode                  |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------|
| June 12         | Mixed Ethnicity                             | 20                  | Pilot – In person     |
| June 23         | Mostly Middle Eastern                       | 36                  | In-person             |
| June 26         | Mixed (Arabs, Blacks, Youth)                | 31                  | In-person             |
| June 28         | Indigenous Leaders – all women              | 6                   | In-person             |
| June 26-June 29 | Somali Mothers, Youth and Francophone Youth | 51                  | In-person and virtual |
| July 5          | Mixed Seniors                               | 20                  | In-person             |
| July 7          | Youth Advisory Council                      | 11                  | Virtual               |
| July 13         | Open Public Forum                           | 23/48               | Virtual               |
| July 15         | Afro-Francophone                            | 34                  | Virtual               |
| July 19         | Indigenous Leaders from OAC                 | 11                  | Virtual               |
|                 |   |                     |                       |

Total Participants in Targeted engagements: **214**

Open Public Zoom Meeting - **23**

Select Individual Interviews - **35**

Online Survey - **1451**

### Appendix 2. Links to Survey Analysis and Graphical presentation

English Survey Raw Data presentation [https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-J41jYCqzmwrOuSUsLpPkPA\\_3D\\_3D/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-J41jYCqzmwrOuSUsLpPkPA_3D_3D/)

French Survey Raw Data Presentation:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-pZJMiCrOp4mAjfkztZVSZA\\_3D\\_3D/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-pZJMiCrOp4mAjfkztZVSZA_3D_3D/)

### Appendix 3. Wishlist of Participants from the engagement sessions

#### 1. Asked what characteristics they would like to see in the next Ottawa Police Chief, respondents answered with the following wishlist characteristics:

- a. First, hire a local if possible (someone from Ottawa).
- b. Address tokenism (when police officers get hired because of a quota, their fellow police officers don't respect them because they think they don't have the skills and were just hired for their diversity.)
- c. Hire someone who has post-secondary education in psychology, law, or criminology. This powerful recurring theme has surfaced at various times and in different forums. It has merit because other police jurisdictions require subject-matter university education to join senior policing ranks.
- d. Hire someone with experience outside of policing – who has 'branched out' (of the status quo straight jacket).
- e. Truthfulness at all times.
- f. Empathy with diverse populations served.
- g. While not necessarily needing to be a visible minority, the Chief must be able to stand up to entrenched clannish interests and uphold the Constitution and Charter of Rights in an equitable application of law and justice to all and sundry.
- h. Said Chief must be upright and firm and not allow themselves to be influenced by political vagaries reflecting entrenched selfish interests.
- i. Must liaise with the rank and file in earnest, building a team spirit founded on a transparent, concise, and well-defined collegial approach to SERVICE, not the promotion of narrow, selfish, personal interests as cultivated by union mandates
- j. Someone who genuinely works to rebuild the troubled police relationships with vulnerable populations, mending those broken fences by engaging in intentional, effective, and equitable change. S/he must prioritize reforms in policing and police tactics used to perpetuate racial violence and police brutality towards Ottawa's vulnerable identities and be committed to their promises, rather than uttering unattainable promises that leave the people in a lurch, time and time again.
- k. Must establish a clear separation from the mayor's office. Let the Police manage the Police—clear governance roles and responsibilities. The Nation's capital got a black eye with the heavy-handed response (due to political interference) during the Convoy protests that clearly showed that the Police Chief was not allowed to do his job with a calm, steady hand. This tarred OPS with the messy aftermath and ultimately damaged the Police's reputation. The OPS is not the mayor's security force; it serves all the PEOPLE of this City.
- l. They should have the strength and courage not to be bought, threatened, or coerced by corrupt government officials. Have the people's best interest at heart.
- m. They have a proven crime-fighting track record.
- n. The Chief should focus on the victim's side to avoid revictimization.
- o. Often when the Police get involved, victims end up worse off after their interactions with them, leaving behind a powerless feeling.

- p. The Chief should be willing to hold police officers **accountable** for bad behaviour – not just a slap on the wrist.
- q. Nothing ever comes from investigations against the Police, especially those related to racism and sexual harassment, and a new chief must address that head-on.
- r. Someone with experience with change management and restructuring – a change agent! "We can keep changing Chiefs, but it's not just the Chief that decides; the entire apparatus needs to change."
- s. Someone with the courage and willingness to challenge the status quo in policing.
- t. We need a Chief who will challenge the police union. The last Chief had his hands tied for so many things. You need a leader who needs to take down those roadblocks. One who is:
  - i. Not afraid to have conversations with usually sensitive police topics.
  - ii. A Chief that will seek out different contrary opinions.
  - iii. Chief who understands the PR aspect (genuinely and honest, not performative, and fake).
  - iv. Someone who acknowledges systemic discrimination - we can't ignore the rampant racism and sexism that exists.
  - v. Culture change and reform (we can bring in the best recruits, but they are spoiled by the culture and the older officers who were extensively trained into holding different views).
  - vi. Someone who will address indigenous rights.
  - vii. Someone who can use a gender-based violence lens (not just for sexual assault but for domestic violence).
  - viii. People had a favourable view of Steve Bell, but some felt he maintained the status quo.

**2. On future-looking considerations following the successful hiring of the Police Chief, younger respondents (Youth Advisory Council) had this to say:**

- a. A desire to be more involved.
- b. Establish a formal link to the CEC.
- c. Meet with other committees quarterly for cross-collaboration.
- d. Maintain quarterly meetings Chief Sloly initiated.
- e. Need for transparency and involvement in the recruitment process.
- f. Current practice cuts off community outreach right after the initial public engagement process, and folks just hear about a new hire in some social media posting.
- g. There is no interest in giving feedback and wish lists that don't make a difference.
- h. It's often too late to provide a Chief with a wish list after being hired.
- i. The YAC wants to consult and influence the outreach, recruitment, and selection process (including participation in crafting interview questions and job description drafting).
- k. The process should be shared with the public in real-time.

- I. Proper vetting must be front-loaded to avoid ending up with a hip salesperson who cannot deliver.
3. **Concerning mental health and similar areas of police involvement, there are proposed processes to be considered:**
  - a. Dealing with mental health and addictions should not be led by the Police. Instead, non-police partners should play a heavier role in crisis response, a proposed path on which the former Police Chief had already engaged.
  - b. Non-police participation should include domestic issues, a practice already adopted in other North American jurisdictions. For example, replace police officers with civilian staff, such as social workers. Officers need more support with their mental health issues and are not primary frontline candidates for intervening in such scenarios.
  - c. Replace the current community neighbourhood policing model, which is perceived as a community surveillance/spying intrusion (that's how it's perceived, especially in racialized areas).
  - d. Community policing should have police officers who live in the neighbourhoods they are policing. They should be part of those communities to understand them and be trusted. They should show up in the community without uniforms. They should represent the diversity of that community (e.g., language, race). Police officers are never to be seen in those communities after their shifts.
  - e. Focus on rebuilding public trust – this is critical to the ability of the police service to actually 'serve and protect' rather than appear to be a reactionary enforcer.
  - f. They need to avoid being hostile in the face of public scrutiny.
  - g. Major recent events (locally and across North America) have highlighted police issues (Freedom Convoy, defund the Police, police brutality, and Black Lives Matter.)
  - h. Youth must be part of reparations as future policy leaders and shapers.
  - i. SRO is not the answer, but Police need to understand you can't police youth the same way as adults, e.g., how the Police handled the protest about short skirts.
  - j. Share the goals of the OPS and progress on the plans for accountability and trust-building.
4. **Concerning ACCOUNTABILITY, a 2015 documentary on sexual harassment within the OPS was cited.**
  - a. The Police have a "culture of protecting their own," which leads to distrust and a sense that Police are above the law and abuse their power.
  - b. They should be held to a higher standard than even the public.



## OTTAWA ABORIGINAL COALITION

2323 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa, ON K1G 4J8

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*The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition acknowledges that we are unceded Algonquin-Anishinaabe territory*

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Re: Feedback from the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition on the selection criteria for the next OPS Chief of Police**

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On July 19<sup>th</sup>, the members of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition met and had the opportunity to respond to the question of what would they like to see in the new Chief of Police.

1. Someone who has the capacity to build relationships with the Indigenous community. The expectations is that they work on an ongoing relationship that build a foundation for when difficult issues arise.
2. In June of 2020, the OAC submitted a letter to Chief Sloly that laid out the key issues that we wanted to work with the OPS on. We sent another letter in September 2020 which provided more details and actual recommendations to support this work. We offered to work with the OPS on all of these issues. (the letter is attached). In April of this year, that same letter was sent to Chief Bell when we acknowledged him in taking up the Chief role. We also outlined our expectations and our understanding of the role of the police as protectors and people who provide us with a service in the community. It is our expectation that the new Chief will work with us to respond to each of these key issues.
3. We have observed that there are many forces within the OPS, including the relationships with the Police Association. The OAC is looking for someone that can establish working relationships with the Police Association and shift them in some of their systemic biases and positions.
4. There is a perception by some members in our community that there is a level of corruption in the OPS that is managed but not directly addressed. It does not make sense to have OPS members being charged for crimes.
5. We would like to see a structure where there are two Chiefs (collaborative leadership) or a structure where it is clear that there is a clear infusion of community perspective at the leadership table.
6. A person who is actively doing their work in addressing racial bias and is an advocate for anti-racism. That includes understanding what Indigenous racism is and how it is embedded in all systems and practices that were created based on a colonial framework.
7. A person who honours and respects women and does not have misogynist practices.
8. Someone who has a deep relationship with the Ottawa community and is already connected to the Ottawa community.

We also wanted to note that the Chief of Police succeeds, in part, when Board Governance is strong. We strongly recommend that the Ottawa Police Services Board be depoliticized and emphasize their board role to govern a service that needs to serve all Ottawa citizens, including the 40,000 Indigenous community members that make Ottawa their home.