

# **Ottawa Police Service**

# A Proposal to Enter into a Partnership with Accident Support Services International for Collision Reporting Centre Functions

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BUSINESS CASE TITLE: Accident Support Services International Limited Collision

Reporting Centres Implementation

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#### 1 Executive Summary

Most municipal budgets have experienced significant pressures—the City of Ottawa being no exception. In response to ongoing economic pressures, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) is constantly looking for ways to be innovative and efficient in terms of optimizing its budget.

For several years, municipalities across Ontario have been working to re-direct limited police resources to community priorities in which core policing functions are required for duties that are consistent with their training. Although some non-core policing activities can often be undertaken by civilian members, there is an opportunity to further generate financial savings through such mechanisms as outsourcing. Best practices research has indicated that among efforts to modernize the workforce and optimize the provision of core functions, police organizations utilize non-police personnel to find efficiencies.

The Service's current Collision Reporting Centre (CRC) model is inefficient and expensive and would require additional capital and human resource investment in order to remain viable for the OPS and satisfactory to the public. During bad weather events, the CRCs are quickly overwhelmed due to limited capacity; this often results in significant wait times and delays in processing reports as well as increasing calls for service from Frontline Officers (as the overflow is routed there). The current model has also proved unable to meet targets for the sale of accident reports to the insurance industry. This has resulted in an ongoing tendency to report large budget deficits each year.

At the end of 2019 and into 2020, the Service conducted a Customer Service Review Project (CSRP) that resulted in various recommendations that were approved for implementation at OPS in 2020. One such option—supporting a partnership with Accident Support Services International Ltd (ASSIL) as a third-party Collision Reporting Center (CRC)—was one of the pivotal recommendations that was viewed as being able to realize the modernization of services, improve efficiencies for the OPS, reduce demands on Patrol, and balance associated staffing and budgetary pressures.

This concept is one adopted by the majority of Municipalities across Ontario who are working to re-direct limited police resources to community priorities. Reducing the role of police in minor property damage collisions—those where there is only damage to vehicles, but no damage to private property or any injuries incurred—facilitates an enhanced response to these priorities.

Various service delivery business models were analyzed to determine the best approach the OPS could employ to provide a seamless yet effective method for reporting minor vehicle collisions. Three viable (3) options emerged as possible solutions which are as follows:

- Option 1 No Change/Status Quo
- Option 2 Outsourcing of CRC Service Introduction of ASSIL at OPS
- Option 3 Enhancement of Current State Towards a Hybrid Model

In recommending an outsourcing option, the Customer Service Review Project conferred with several police services in Ontario including York, Peel, Toronto, Kingston, Durham, and Waterloo (who provided invaluable insight as a police service who recently chose to outsource as an effective alternative to providing in-house services). The Edmonton Police Service was also consulted to glean any further best practices information as they too are conducting a similar review. Consultation was also held with internal stakeholders including ITS, Finance, Facilities, Human Resources (HR), Labor Relations (LR), Records Management, the Ottawa Police Association (OPA), and the City of Ottawa.

Finally, as part of public consultation efforts, individuals who had utilized OPS' CRC services in the past were invited to participate in a survey in order to benchmark their level of satisfaction, as well as provide feedback regarding their experience.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2 Business Need

In 2012, the OPS decided to implement and maintain its own Collision Reporting Centers (CRCs) based upon projections that they would be cost neutral to operate; create approximately \$1.6M in annual revenue derived from the sale of bulk collision reports to insurers; and maximize capacity for Patrol by diverting approximately 70% of collision-related calls for service to the CRCs.

The Service currently operates three (3) Collision Reporting Centers (CRCs) to serve the citizens of Ottawa. The East Front Desk Service (FDS) operates the east-end CRC located 3343 St. Joseph Blvd; Central FDS operates the central CRC located at 474 Elgin St.; and West FDS operates the west-end CRC located at 211 Huntmar Drive. Those drivers who are involved in a minor vehicle collision that does not require a patrol response must attend a CRC to self-report their collision. The number of self-reported collisions varies between each of the CRCs. Each CRC is primarily comprised of civilian FDS Agents, with Sworn oversight provided by various Sergeants who monitor activities for each site/each shift.

It is significant to note that in conducting an analysis of data over a one-year period, the Customer Service Review Project concluded that OPS' collision reporting framework is

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Collision Reporting Survey 2021 (chkmkt.com)

both "inefficient and ineffective", and that "workload exceeds staffing by 24%". This results in a requirement for both overtime and casual staffing costs to bridge the gap and exposes a small number of Agents to both burn-out and associated health risks.

Although the reporting of minor vehicle accidents (those involving no injuries) remains a core policing deliverable, it is primarily done for the benefit of insurance companies as part of their claims settlement process; it is also captured for the purposes of statistical information used by various partners such as the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) and the City of Ottawa.

Reducing the role of police in such incidents as minor vehicle collisions not only facilitates an enhanced and streamlined response to minor collisions, but such incidents can arguably be processed and managed more efficiently by a third party.

Recognizing that police continually have administrative burdens placed upon them, private organizations such as ASSIL have leveraged opportunities to remove those burdens where possible. As demonstrated throughout the province, ASSIL is a unique third-party company that is able to fund its operating model through the sale of specialized MVA reports to insurance companies—an income stream that the OPS has attempted to generate but has unfortunately failed to realize.

ASSIL is privately owned and is entirely funded by the insurance industry. It works in partnership with police services and insurance companies to assist citizens with reporting minor collisions. The success of ASSIL's model in over two dozen municipal police jurisdictions in Ontario further demonstrates how a partnership with OPS can contribute to enhanced policing services by reducing costs associated to the reporting of minor collisions. In fact, if the OPS were to limit its core accident reporting to only those incidents involving major vehicle damage collisions (those involving significant damage to property or where injuries are involved), it would be in complete alignment with its strategies to focus on core deliverables. Such alignment will also permit OPS to leverage both community and business assets as needed—especially when it makes more sense for police to be relieved of duties that present a significant administrative burden in favour of those which require a comprehensive police response.

#### ASSIL Business Model

Since 1994, ASSIL has been providing professional collision management solutions for police in partnership with the insurance industry. The concept of operation for ASSIL in Ottawa would see the introduction of their CRCs in the lobby of each of the three stations where CRCs are currently located and staffed by FDS Agents (although ASSIL's workspace in the lobby would be separate from the enclosed FDS space). It is believed

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Customer Service Review Project – A Strategic Plan to Balance Resources and Modernize the Customer Service Directorate, (April 2020), A/Inspector H. O'Toole – See Appendix A

that such a model would have the least impact to the community and provide the easiest transition to a new service model.

No costs would be borne by the OPS to establish these new CRCs as ASSIL is contractually responsible for all associated costs. Introduction of ASSIL's CRCs to OPS station lobbies is in keeping with other municipalities who also use their station lobbies; still, others have purpose-built facilities which have been taken over by ASSIL.

#### The Benefits of Outsourcing Collision Reporting

The Customer Service Review Project determined that there are many efficiencies and service improvements that can be realized by outsourcing the duties associated with minor accident reporting. These include, but are not limited to, the following benefits:

- Enhanced duty of care to the community by transitioning to a more effective and efficient customer service experience which culminates in reduced wait-times, and modernizes the Service's response to minor vehicle accident reporting
- Enhanced measures to prevent insurance fraud
- Introduction of process improvements by eliminating the current practice of closing CRCs when demand exceeds capacity, and by increasing capacity to process more than 70% of all collisions at the CRC
- Enhanced customer service by FDS Agents for all non-collision reporting matters
- Realization of significant staffing efficiencies within FDS since a reduced demand for service will be experienced at all three locations. This will offer the opportunity to \*reduce FTE positions or redirect resources more effectively within OPS. (Refer to Section 5 for an expansion of proposed efficiencies)

# 3 Strategic Alignment

Introduction and implementation of ASSIL at the OPS is expected to have the following impacts in support of OPS' strategic alignment:

#### Supporting Our Members

The removal of minor accident reporting from the FDS Agent portfolio will permit greater focus on duties more relevant to their role as front line report takers and likely increase job satisfaction. The current staffing model is not efficient and is often a trigger for stress and burnout as FDS Agents struggle to cope with extremely high reporting demands that occur—especially during bad weather. Even minor storms have resulted in overwhelming OPS' current CRC business model; staff have been forced to turn away members of the public by diverting them to a frontline patrol response (when they too are struggling to cope).

It should also be noted that the staffing model made possible through the utilization of ASSIL for collision reporting activities will allow OPS FDS Agents greater opportunities for training and development—something that should be viewed as positively aligning with OPS' Wellness Strategy.

Finally, the Customer Service Review Team has taken appropriate steps to keep the OPA well apprised of its efforts to find solutions to address issues with the current CRC business model. Outsourcing, among other options, was discussed as a viable long-term solution. Recognizing the drain the current CRC business model places on both FDS Agents and already stretched Frontline resources, the OPA did not oppose such a concept and were generally supportive of such an undertaking.

#### Modernizing the Work Environment

Since 1994, ASSIL has worked diligently to establish a "One Stop Collision Reporting" mantra through a unique partnership involving the police, the insurance industry, and private enterprise. Years of experience have helped propel ASSIL as "the standard" for professional CRCs. Of significant note, 29 of 30 major municipal police services in Ontario have already implemented ASSIL due to its effectiveness and efficiency; OPS will be one of the last agencies to take advantage of the benefits ASSIL can bring. Although the OPS was poised to enter into an agreement with ASSIL in 2020, the advent of a world-wide pandemic soon halted such plans.

Throughout the period the world has learned to live in a Covid-19 environment, ASSIL worked with the Ministry of Transportation to create a reporting form that is vastly superior to the one currently used by the OPS. It also implemented a seamless technological solution for sharing the resulting data with such key stakeholders as the Ministry of Transportation, the City of Ottawa's *Safer Roads Program* (used to improve public safety through better design of roadways and related infrastructure), and OPS' own Records Management System (RMS). Through ASSIL's efforts, those who require necessary data will receive it more efficiently and in a more useful format. The improved reporting form takes much less time and effort for a member of the public to complete, which directly translates into greater customer satisfaction and less time waiting in OPS lobbies.

#### Advancing Community Policing

Through the provision of modern, professional CRCs, the services of ASSIL can effectuate a reduced demand on precious front-line resource which, in turn, allows OPS the ability to ensure frontline resources are allocated to higher priority needs in the community. ASSIL will operate separately but in tandem with FDS, thereby creating a seamless transition from the current practice to ASSIL's reporting model. The only difference members of the public may notice when reporting a minor vehicle accident is that instead of reporting to an FDS Agent, they will be reporting to an ASSIL Agent using their self-service kiosks and process. All other matters possibly requiring police attention will continue to be reported to FDS Agents in the same manner as previously was the

case. With the introduction of ASSIL, customer service levels should remain stable. In fact, the contract between OPS and ASSIL will clearly stipulate that members of the public continue to enjoy a high level of customer satisfaction (which will be monitored through regular surveys and performance metrics). There will also be a contract stipulation that ASSIL is bound to report such metrics to the Ottawa Police Services Board on a quarterly basis.

#### 4 Options or Solutions Analysis

#### Option #1 - No Change/Status Quo

As previously discussed, the current CRC reporting model utilized by OPS is inefficient and ineffective. The burden of minor accident reporting is shared between FDS and Frontline (FLD/Patrol), and all to often FDS struggles to process minor vehicle collisions during normal weather conditions. When the current model experiences weather events that result in capacity overload within a few hours of opening, the balance of reports are sent to FLD for a response. There are simply not enough FTEs within the current staffing complement to maintain both the FDS/CRC schedule. At present, OPS has only a bare minimum of staff to provide service during daytime hours only at each of the FDS/CRC stations (East, Central, and West). While the current budget anticipates revenues of \$400K from the sale of MVA reports, the last three years saw averages of approximately \$305K per year (which suggests the budgeted projection of \$400K is neither realistic nor achievable).

#### Option #2 - Outsourcing of CRC Service: Introduction of ASSIL at OPS

With the introduction of ASSIL's CRCs at OPS, the company assumes responsibility for both the intake and processing of all minor vehicle accident reports by establishing a presence in the lobbies of the OPS facilities described previously. Their established "presence" consists of their staff and self-service kiosks, along with their own infrastructure including file storage and internet access via their own network. Previous site visits held with ASSIL throughout 2020 confirmed there is sufficient space within each of the three lobbies affected; all that is needed is access to a power outlet. Given that ASSIL has already developed a shorter, more efficient reporting process that includes a Ministry-approved form that significantly reduces reporting time, it is anticipated that those reporting MVAs will experience only minimal wait times. Finally, ASSIL's business model funds their entire operation through the sale of accident reports to insurers. Per the terms of a contract with OPS, however, ASSIL will be required to supply pertinent data to our partners (e.g. the City of Ottawa) by the same automated means currently used free of charge.

#### Option #3 - Enhancement of Current State Towards a Hybrid Model

This option would permit OPS to develop and maintain a hybrid type version of an accident reporting solution that would streamline internal and external reporting

processes. This approach could be achieved through an integration between Versaterm (OPS' primary *Records Management System* vendor), the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG), and the Insurance Industry of Canada. The goal would be to realize an actual profit from the sale of MVA reports to insurers—mirroring a business model similar to that of ASSIL's. While the revenue generated from the sale of MVA Reports has the potential to yield a good revenue stream and permit a more robust staffing model, there remain challenges with implementing and sustaining a hybrid type model. It remains that, to date, OPS-produced MVA reports have failed to meet anticipated revenue targets. This is likely directly attributable to poor quality reports viewed as "undesirable' by the insurance industry; longer than anticipated turnaround (borne primarily from fluctuating staffing levels/pressures); and the organization's inability to easily scale up or down its human resource pool to cope with unforeseen events.

#### 5 Financial and/or Non-Financial Benefits

#### **Financial Benefits**

The anticipated financial-related benefits are as follows:

**No Cost to OPS:** There is no cost to OPS to implement and support ASSIL-operated CRCs. Per the terms of the Contract/Agreement, all costs are borne by ASSIL in establishing their CRCs.

Reduction and/or Reallocation of FDS Personnel: A partnership with ASSIL will see CRCs mobilized as a standalone service separate from FDS. This new business model is going to significantly reduce the need for FDS Agents given that collision reporting is a core responsibility of their function. Therefore, maintaining the status quo would no longer be feasible or cost effective. As part of OPS' commitment to the Board to find \$7.1M in efficiencies, FDS will be directed to explore opportunities for how it can streamline services while maintaining an optimal level of customer service for those requiring simple interactions with police and/or police representatives. Such efficiencies could include consolidation of service locations or hours that better support times of high customer demand.

Statistical analysis undertaken throughout the Customer Service Review Project indicates that an adjusted deployment model should be given fulsome consideration once ASSIL's Collision Reporting Centers have been fully implemented within OPS. One possible deployment model put forward in the Customer Service Review is suggested below:

Table 1 - Potential Adjusted Service Level Requirements for OPS Front Desk Services

FDS Location	Service Hours	Required FTEs
Elgin	08:00 - 18:00 / 7-days per week	Ten (10)
Huntmar	08:00 – 18:00 / Monday to Friday	Four (4)
10 <sup>th</sup> Line	08:00 – 18:00 / Monday to Friday	Four (4)

Through a consolidation of weekend FDS services as described above, the OPS has the *potential* to realize a net reduction of eight (8) FDS Agent FTEs—an efficiency of approximately \$811K in compensation costs per year. This consolidated model proposal also reduces the number of FDS Sergeants required to supervise FDS Agents from six (6) to four (4). It should be noted that any positions identified as 'surplus' by reduced FDS service hours could potentially be redeployed/reassigned elsewhere in the organization; however, such options would be formulated as part of broader discussions with the OPA, LR, HR, and the Chain of Command.

#### Non-Financial Benefits

The anticipated non-financial benefits include:

Customer Service Improvement(s): Individuals attending an ASSIL-run CRC are expected to experience improved customer service due to their ability to provide greater resourcing capacity to complete collision reports—particularly during peak periods of high demand. Insurance Claim processing durations are also expected to be improved due to the relationship ASSIL has forged with the insurance industry. In partnership with ASSIL, insurance companies have implemented fraud mitigation measures including the use of decals to define areas of damage attributable to the collision. From the initial time of the report, ASSIL is able to generate a claim with partner insurance companies along with providing clients with a list of approved repair shop options endorsed by the partner insurance company. Finally, ASSIL's hours of operation permit an improved reporting window for CRC attendees; this should ultimately lead to a reduction in claim durations by days if not weeks.

#### 6 Risk Analysis

A Risk Analysis for each option was undertaken and may be found in the following tables:

# Option 1 – No Change/Status Quo:

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
1	Inability to tap into unrealized efficiency of \$880K in FTE savings	Н	H	Reassess business model to address staffing shortages; consider hiring of P/T workers to temporarily assist with demands	Customer Service Review Team Lead / Team
2	Inability to meet demand with existing infrastructure and staffing model, thereby resulting in poor customer service	Н	Н	Consider elimination of CRC hours of operation at East / West locations; or consider operation of one central CRC	Customer Service Review Team Lead / Team

# Option 2: Outsourcing of CRC Service - Introduction of ASSIL at OPS

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
1	Delays with City of Ottawa Procurement	M	M	ASSIL can adjust its anticipated project timelines to drive towards a Q3 implementation date; but OPS would continue to experience issues with demand	ASSIL's solid PM Plans are in place to easily pivot; operations are scaled to meet demand through the contract

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
2	Lack of buy-in from internal/ external stakeholders on new (or revised) approaches, responsibilities, etc.	M	M	Lack of support and buy-in may negate project objectives/benefits. Initiate early discussions about the transition with affected parties; take steps to create awareness through stakeholder engagement; develop a comprehensive HR/LR Plan, Comms Plans	OPS Team Lead(s); OPA; HR/LR; Corp Comms
3	Unplanned changes to scope throughout the project lifecycle	L	M	A rigid Project Management Plan will be prepared by ASSIL to implement their CRCs at OPS	ASSIL assumes sole responsibility for implementation of its CRCs

# Option 3: Enhancement of Current State Towards a Hybrid Model

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
1	A hybrid solution may only resolve some of the current issues; and create heavy reliance on internal and external integration	M	M	Participation in a Versaterm Pilot Project is a possibility. However, as there are no current viable business solutions, OPS would need to develop one	OPS (ITS), Versaterm, MAG, Insurance Institute of Canada

No.	Risk Description	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Planned Mitigation	Responsibility
2	Unknown timelines to develop new technology to improve processes, and with an unknown cost	H	H	OPS is reliant upon outside sources to develop new technology to improve upon its current CRC reporting capability (the cost of which would also be of significant concern given OPS' limited budget(s)). For the reasons above, mitigation planning would prove extremely difficult	OPSB, OPS / ITS

#### 7 Recommendation

#### 7.1 Recommendation

It is recommended that the PSB enter into a contract with Accident Support Services International Ltd. for the provision of collision reporting services at the OPS.

#### 7.2 Deciding Factors

The deciding factors for strongly endorsing the recommendation above include the following:

- There is no financial cost to the OPS to implement a partnership with ASSIL
- Efficiencies of approximately eight (8) FTEs can be realized through an outsourcing partnership with ASSIL following implementation of their CRCs (a direct result of restructuring FDS and services provided by FDS Agents)
- A higher level of customer service is anticipated through the partnership with ASSIL. This is directly attributable to ASSIL's increased capacity to process reports and substantially reduce wait times
- ASSIL's partnership with the insurance industry permits them to streamline the claims process and provide better controls with respect to insurance fraud.

#### 8 Implementation Plan

In consultation with OPS stakeholders, ASSIL's Project Manager will submit an implementation plan/schedule complete with a detailed list of all tasks required to support establishment of ASSIL CRCs at OPS.

As approved by OPS Facilities, ASSIL will be responsible for supplying and installing the CRC infrastructure within the lobbies of 10<sup>th</sup> Line, 474 Elgin, and Huntmar at no cost to OPS. The Project Implementation Plan is expected to be completed over a 90-day period from the time the contract is signed. It has been determined that OPS will be required to commit one (1) ITS person for a duration of approximately five (5) days in order to support the required network connection which will allow OPS to access the collision data collected by ASSIL.

Initial consultations between ASSIL and OPS were completed in September 2021 and agreed to "in principle" by the involved parties. The official Project Implementation Plan is pending subject to contract approval.

#### **High Level Timeline(s)**

The major phases and timelines pertinent to the implementation of ASSIL will be provided once a contract between the OPS and ASSIL has been signed.

#### **Assumptions**

Key assumptions include:

- Executive support for the implementation per ASSIL's Project Management Plan
- Contract with ASSIL has been approved and fully executed
- ITS infrastructure/compatibility to implement required software
- Resources will be made available, on an ad hoc basis, to support the project in a timely manner

#### **Dependencies**

Key dependencies pertaining to the successful implementation of ASSIL CRCs include:

- Availability of ITS resource for a duration of approximately five (5) days within the
  prescribed timeframe required by ASSIL to support the required network
  connection (specific details to be provided by ASSIL via their Project Management
  Plan)
- Implementation of the new process/business model must include an internal/ external communications component to alert both members and the public
- Internal process must be modified to support the new business model (e.g. SOP's, etc.)

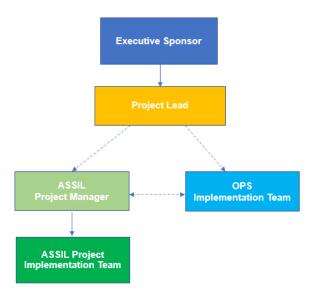
#### **Constraints**

Key constraints for consideration include:

- The ASSIL software must be compatible with existing OPS technology
- Any new legislative and/or legal requirements which may impede the use of the ASSIL-implemented CRCs

#### **Project Governance**

The following depicts the project's governance structure should any key decision points arise that directly affect the implementation of ASSIL's CRCs.



#### 9 Performance Measurement

ASSIL will provide the Chief of Police, on an annual review basis and in addition to any other reporting requirements provided for in this Agreement, statistical data and information regarding the CRCs. Reporting requirements will be approved by the Chief of Police or their designate.

As per the terms of the contract, ASSIL will be responsible for distributing surveys to customers and providing a quarterly report outlining survey responses (along with any proposed changes that may be required to address any issues that may have been identified). The contents of the survey will be approved by the Chief of Police or their designate.

Per the terms of the contract, ASSIL shall meet the objectives of CRCs/Collision Records Management Solution and any Performance Standards outlined.

#### 10 Documentation

A document entitled "<u>Customer Service Review Project – A Strategic Plan to Balance Resources and Modernize the Customer Service Directorate</u>" can be found as Appendix A.

# 11 Acceptance Sign-off

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# BUSINESS CASE APPENDIX A

