

Executive Summary:

Police services globally are facing unprecedented challenges, including calls for reform. In support the development of strategic directions and budget planning, the Ottawa Police regularly examines a range of factors that impact how policing services are delivered in the Nation's Capital, including: political, social, environmental, economic, technological, legal, and media. Research includes references from private and public sectors, internal and external to policing, and from International, National, Provincial and Municipal levels.

The greatest risk for police services is declining levels of trust and confidence. Without public trust, the police cannot legitimately exercise their duty, nor effectively deliver community policing. High profile interventions requiring force have led to strong advocacy for police reform and budget reallocation to social services.

Growing social inequity, mental health and addictions crisis and shortages of affordable housing are contributing to a need for harm reduction strategies that address the root causes of community safety and well-being.

Across Canada and locally in Ottawa, street violence continues to escalate. Despite a decline during the height of the pandemic, shootings continue to follow an upward trend. The number of hate crimes being reported have risen dramatically over the past five years. A dedicated hate crime unit and streamlined reported have helped improve access for Ottawa community members. Despite the increase in reporting, the OPS is aware that this is not the complete picture and must work with partners to eliminate hate and all forms of racism.

Road safety remains a top priority for residents locally. Throughout the pandemic, the OPS received record number of stunt-driving complaints and equally issued a record number of traffic infraction. The proliferation of mobile technology has led to a rise in distracted driving. As a Country, Canada has some of the highest rates of traffic fatalities among developed nations.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have a global impact for generations. In the near term, legislative requirements continue to evolve around items such as mandatory vaccination. This has an impact on the community and the human resources of the police service. The efficacy of the vaccine against future variants remains unknown. As such, the organization must remain prepared to respond with sufficient personal protective equipment to ensure member health and safety. Externally, the impact of the pandemic on employment levels, vacancy rates, crime patterns and budgets will continue to evolve.

The pandemic has accelerated e-commerce and the virtual environment. This has led to a rise in electronic crime, and an increase in social media driven misinformation. Growth in electronic crime has resulted in increased victimization of citizens, borderless crimes, and jurisdictional challenges. Achieving successful investigation and prosecution has also become more challenging. Lawful authority to collect evidence needed to detect, deter, and respond to crimes needs to be balanced with the protection of personal privacy.

The Ottawa Police Service has been listening and learning from the community to deliver needed organizational change. This relates to how the Service thinks and works. Several human resource related programs, policies and processes are being reviewed with sustained efforts to improve internal culture to make the OPS more equitable, inclusive, and diverse. This is being accomplished with in closer collaboration with the community to design and co-produce policing services that support community safety and well-being for all.

Introduction:

The purpose of the Environmental Scan (E-Scan) is to present decision-makers with information on factors that will influence how policing services are delivered in Ottawa. This research includes references from the International, National, Provincial and Municipal context. It is intended to inform community, Board, and management discussions around the development of strategic directions and budget planning for the police service.

The E-Scan offers a snapshot of the conditions and trends that will impact the delivery of policing services in Ottawa. The report considers the following areas:

- Political
- Economic
- Social
- Technological
- Legislative
- Environmental
- Organizational
- Media

<i>Political</i>	Example: Political Stability, Public Policy, Oversight, Partnerships, Demonstrations
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Context:

With the recent re-election of a Federal Liberal minority government in the fall and elections at both Provincial and Municipal levels in 2022, the political landscape will change again in 2022. The Liberal platform recognized the need for a Stronger Canada, which included a focus on hate motivated crimes, police reform, and changes to gun laws. Rising calls for police accountability and transparency are driving reform across North America. Driving this shift has been high profile incidents regarding use of force. This has led to policy and governance reviews and a strategic focus on police interventions requiring force, the need for greater training on de-escalation, and a focus on harm reduction.

Implications:

As the National Capital of Canada and the seat of the Canadian Parliament, Ottawa is home to over 300 embassies, diplomatic offices, and residences. The City of Ottawa hosts over 400 planned and unplanned demonstrations annually. Community safety falls under a multi-jurisdictional governance structure of Federal, Provincial and Municipal Partners.

Declining levels of trust and confidence in police have resulted in demonstrations throughout North America. Police reform has become a central component of the public policy agenda. This includes legislative change supported by governance and policy reviews. At the provincial level, the incumbent Conservative government has been supportive of police, while recognizing the need for innovative approaches to community safety and well-being. Depending on outcomes of the 2022 election, legislation and overall direction could change.

The solution to transformational change in policing requires the co-production of a new model with integrated service delivery. This includes expanded consultation and partnerships, that develop programs based on the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Economic	Examples: Budget, Inflation, Overtime, Unemployment, Income
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Context:

Budget constraints at all levels of government and calls for return on investment have a direct impact on policing. Calls for defunding and abolishment of policing have led to increased scrutiny of budgets and their allocation. Through the pandemic, inflationary pressures and collective bargaining agreements leave little discretionary funding to address police reform. There is financial uncertainty in transfers and grants from upper levels of government.

Implications:

Budgetary pressures require the OPS to identify efficiency opportunities to achieve strategic priorities. This also includes ensuring adequate and effective policing in Ottawa. Over the past decade, the OPS has identified more than 20M in savings through reductions and back-office integration with the city. Rising inflationary pressures, contract settlements, absenteeism and the cost of WSIB have created a challenging budget scenario. The organization will need to consider overall headcount, span of control, civilianizing sworn positions, fully or partially transitioning services to partner agencies and organizations. A review of policies and processes will help contribute to operational effectiveness while delivering service more efficiently.

Regardless of the budgetary situation, the OPS has identified important priorities that require investment. These include advancing community policing, evolving mental health response, enhancing member wellness, delivering focused training and development, and reducing sexual violence and harassment in the workplace. Financial pressures have required a discretionary spending freeze, no travel order, enhancements to overtime reporting and controls, and implementation of an annual leave utilization strategy. Due to mentioned pressures, the possibility exists that there will be a funding shortfall for noted priorities, negatively impacting the organizations' ability to achieve key strategic priorities.

Social	Examples: Population Demographics, Police Legitimacy, Diversity
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Context:

Global social forces have had and continue to have a significant impact on police services, including the OPS. From a population standpoint, the population continues to grow at a rate that outpaces police complement growth. The population is aging and is becoming increasingly

diverse culturally and linguistically. Urban densification is placing citizens in close proximity to one another, creating more opportunities for interaction, positive or negative.

Relations between police services and individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, those who are gender, racial, and/or culturally diverse, people facing disabilities, people living with war trauma, and those of various faiths or beliefs have been damaged by societal injustices and incidents in which police were accused of a lack of empathy and cultural sensitivity, of inequitable treatment or bias, and of systemic racism.

At the same time, the growing Land Back movement, calls for justice included in the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as well as the recent discoveries of indigenous victims of residential schools, demonstrations and protests, have all brought renewed attention to the intergenerational trauma of Indigenous communities and the role of police in these events.

Health and well-being challenges at a societal level continue; inadequate upstream support for mental health and addictions has contributed to an increasing number of people experiencing mental crises, addictions and overdoses, and increased interactions with police across various communities, including Ottawa.

At the national, provincial, and city level, crime patterns had trended upwards between 2012 and 2019 but declined in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, both the severity and number of crimes reported was far less than historical norms. However, based on crime patterns observed to-date, it is anticipated that crime will return to pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Of particular concern are the rebounding rates of gun violence, homicides, hate and bias motivated crime, and traffic and road safety infractions.

Implications:

Changing demographics have created a scenario where police services must be aware, understanding, and responsive to a more diverse population. This requires review and adjustment in how the organization operates internally and externally. Failure to do adapt will result in a continuation of anti-police sentiment and divide, accusations of widespread systemic racism in policing, and may trigger largescale demonstrations and protests as well as increasing demands for policing reform, defunding, or abolition.

Response to mental health and addictions calls for service results in a significant amount of officer time and effort. This prompted OPS to initiate a Mental Health Response Strategy to work with subject matter experts, those with lived experience, and mental health service delivery partners to co-design better alternatives to responding to people in mental health crisis. Ultimately, the goal will be to co-design an alternative service delivery model in which police play less of a role in response to mental health calls for service. Continuation of current practices is no longer an option and will lead to continued scrutiny, inefficient resource use, and poorer outcomes for members of the community.

Overall societal challenges have prompted the OPS to initiate discussions amongst community partners, subject matter experts, and others regarding the development of an alternative service delivery model in which community service providers will play more of a role in response to certain call types. In addition, efforts such as building relationships with diverse communities, increasing neighbourhood policing, integrating service models, and transitioning to intelligence led policing will go a long way to addressing challenges.

For building foundations of trust and legitimacy we must overtly acknowledge the community's trust and equity issues and be accountable for bad decisions or inactions. We must effectively address public concerns about our service delivery methods and the lack of duty of care and trauma informed approach that is evident by public protest. A final note, we must address the internal issue of the perception of reversed racism stated by a growing number of our members as was evident in the diversity audit.

Technological	Examples: Innovation, Automation, Digital Strategy, Cyber Crime, Data Sharing
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Context:

Technological trends influence both how crime is perpetrated as well as how police investigate crimes and support criminal prosecutions. The fourth industrial revolution has fundamentally altered how populations throughout the world live, work and connect with one another. The rate of technological change has outpaced government's ability to develop responsible regulation and mitigate risks. From a public safety perspective, the intersection of criminality and technology have created significant challenges for law enforcement. There is an electronic component to virtually every crime that police investigate.

Operationally, there have been technological advances that assist police including real-time data and business intelligence, robotics, facial recognition, body-worn cameras, automatic license plate readers, and artificial intelligence. Leveraging these new capabilities has also raised concerns about surveillance, protection of personal privacy and ethics. Other technological changes on the public safety horizon include the implementation of 5G Technology, NextGen 9-1-1, and the adoption of autonomous vehicles.

Implications:

Growth in electronic crime has resulted in increased victimization of citizens, borderless crimes, jurisdictional challenges. Achieving successful investigation and persecution has also become more challenging. Lawful authority to collect evidence needed to detect crime, deter and respond to crimes needs to be balanced with the protection of personal privacy. Investigating these crimes results in large quantities of digital evidence being collected, analyzed, stored, presented as evidence in court, and eventually purged. This increases the complexity and

workload related to criminal investigations as well as the training and tools required to assist investigators. Though investigation of these crimes may be challenging, efforts have been increased to build societal awareness and resilience to these types of crime as a form of crime prevention.

From an operations and investigations standpoint, there are new tools to enhance police operations. For example, NextGen 9-1-1 will mean improved coordination with First Responder partners and a projected shift to autonomous vehicles will create new opportunities in managing public safety. However, there are concerns with regards to cost, privacy and ethical use of technology. A response to electronic crime will require a more integrated response across jurisdictions and people with the skills and tools to support investigations.

Legal	Examples: Legislative Changes, Case Law, Inquiries and Inquests.
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Context:

The legislative framework governing public safety continues to evolve. At the federal level, the Liberal Government campaigned on a promise to toughen Canada's gun laws (Bill C-21). If implemented, this would give municipalities the authority to ban handguns. In 2019, the Conservative party introduced the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act (Bill 68) which included several reforms to policing. The Act includes a mandate for municipalities to develop a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, as well as strengthened mechanisms for oversight and accountability of police. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has also called upon the government to decriminalize simple possession of illicit drugs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to several legislative impacts for police services across Canada. Police services have been required to enforce public health measures (Quarantine Act / Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act).

Implications:

Legislative changes and case-law decisions have a direct impact on staffing, workload, training, caseload, clearance rates and may result in increased overtime. Each change requires police services to analyze and respond through training, and policy and procedural adjustments. Failure to manage these changes effectively may lead to many legal and regulatory breaches that will harm public trust and confidence.

While measures have been taken to address case backlogs due the pandemic, this has had operational and resource impacts across the organization. and resulted in a more judicious approach to bail and peace bonds for offenders. The pandemic has required many organizations, including the OPS, to consider their stance on vaccination requirements for

employees. This has led to difficult discussions and decisions where individual freedoms are considered while trying to best protect the health and well-being of service members.

Environmental	Examples: Sustainability, Climate Change, Urban vs. Rural, Development, Safe Streets
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Context:

The impact of climate change has been felt throughout the world, resulting in a growing number of severe weather events (flooding, tornadoes, windstorms, and ice storms). The pandemic has required the organization to adapt to scenarios never experienced before in terms of response, powers, health and safety, resourcing, and work methods and locations.

In the built environment, Canada has one of the highest motor vehicle fatality rates in the world. Road safety remains a top concern of Canadians. To this end, improvements to road engineering and initiatives that target poor driver behavior are a top priority in Canada’s Road Safety Strategy (2025).

Implications:

The unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had various implications for policing. This includes both direct and indirect impacts. Examples of direct impacts include increased enforcement responsibilities and support of public health orders and restrictions, and changes to Frontline service delivery to comply with public health restrictions, including physical distancing and use of PPE, increased disinfection of equipment and vehicles, changes in processes and procedures, and a reduction in hours and services at police facilities. As well, in order to protect member health and wellness and to comply with public health guidelines, a large proportion of OPS’s workforce has worked remotely, resulting in an increase in IT requirements, equipment and remote working tools, and an adaptation of processes and practices. In terms of indirect impacts, these are also far-ranging, and include the economic impact on the community and increase in unemployment, changes in crime patterns and volume, and increased pressures on federal, provincial and municipal budgets as well as the OPS budget.

In a similar vein, changing climate and weather patterns have required the OPS to review and enhance the level of emergency preparedness, review staffing models and response techniques, make environmentally conscious decisions, and consider the impact to and of existing and future infrastructure.

Organizational	Example: Organization Culture, Systemic Biases, Community Outreach, Engagement and Partnerships
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Context:

A variety of internal organizational changes and initiatives are underway that will impact “how we think”, “how we speak”, and “how we perform our duties. All of these will help to improve our organization and ability to enhance public trust, demonstrate improved duty of care, and contribute to community safety and well-being.

Various changes have been made to enhance outreach and recruitment methods, remove barriers to recruitment and strengthen community partnerships that have led to an increase in the quantity of applications, the quality of applicants’ skills and experience, and the diversity of candidates to more closely reflect the community we serve. Significant changes have been implemented already or are planned in various HR-related areas, including training and development, coaching and mentoring, transfers and promotions, competencies and performance management processes to ensure that members have greater access to training and development, that we are selecting and promoting the best leaders, and delivering excellent service to our community.

In addition, there is a lot of effort underway to make positive changes to OPS’s organizational culture to ensure that our workplace is respectful, healthy, and inclusive, and in which all members feel accepted and supported, which in turn allows them to better deliver service to our community. Some of that work relates to the Sexual Violence and Harassment project underway and the pilot project with Rubin Thomlinson for intake and investigation of complaints, and some of it is being led by the Respect Values and Inclusion directorate with support from other parts of the organization. This includes the implementation of anti-indigenous/anti-black racism training for all members. It will ultimately include wide ranging changes to policies, practices, procedures, communication, education and training, and sustained efforts over a long period of time to be successful.

At the same time, the OPS is placing greater emphasis on community engagement and collaboration and implementing new approaches to ensure that there is co-development and co-design of new programs and policies with the community.

There are a variety of social/societal trends coinciding that have a significant influence on policing. Pervasive issues that impact all of society, such as systemic institutional racism, discrimination, and workplace sexual violence and harassment, also impact policing. Recent heightened attention and awareness of these issues through social movements such as Black Lives Matter and the #MeToo movement have been a catalyst to both societal change and increased focus within the OPS.

Implications:

Unfortunately, implications of organizational trends and challenges are and have been far reaching for some time. For a variety of reasons, the organizations understanding of and response to these factors was delayed and implications were felt to significant degrees as a result.

As noted, significant effort is underway to address many of these ongoing and historical issues, yet the impact is and continues to be felt. Impact includes but is not limited to damaged member morale, an increase in injury and illness direct and indirect costs, recruiting and retainment difficulties, lost productivity, and perhaps most importantly, a growing sense of mistrust amongst the community, community partners and the OPS.

Efforts to address organization issues have been significant; however, they must continue, broaden in scope, and be achieved in a way that is in unison with the wishes and input of the community and partners as a means of ameliorating the damage done to date.

Media:	Examples: Social Media, Digital Activism
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Context:

The continued global rise of social media in recent years has created both opportunities and challenges for the Service. From a benefits perspective, social media has provided the OPS with new channels through which digital tips can be collected from the public, has provided a medium through which the service and public can engage in dialogue and open data sharing, and gives immediate insight to how the public perceives the service and its actions.

Social media has created numerous challenges for the service as well, perhaps none more significant than the creation and distribution of fake news. As many organizations have learned, the ability to counter fake news requires continuous attention, and significant time, energy, and a dedicated strategy.

Though not a challenge in and of itself, digital activism has gained traction in recent years. In most cases, the concerns of digital activists are genuine and their feedback is welcomed by the organization. Social media has given digital activists a voice and has created an immediate and permanent link between the public and the organization.

Implications:

Social media is a source of vast quantities of useful and meaningful information for the service and the public. While it is true that the service has benefited from information gathered from social media for investigative, relationship building, and outreach purposes, it is also true that information shared for fake news purposes or by disingenuous individuals has been damaging.

An inability to counter fake news and other forms of misinformation can do immediate and lasting damage to the efforts of the service to build public trust and confidence. Ongoing efforts to develop and nurture relationships with community groups and partners can quickly be erased by misinformation that is inadequately responded to.