



## **STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY**

### **Response to a City of Toronto Request for Information on the Number of Police on Patrol in Crime Problem Areas and the Number of Gun Crimes**

<b>Date:</b>	January 5, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Executive Committee, City of Toronto
<b>From:</b>	Pam McConnell, Acting Chair, Toronto Police Services Board
<b>Reference Number</b>	EX21.2

#### **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Committee with the Toronto Police Service's response to recommendation number 14 from City Council decision EX21.2 – City Based Measures to Address Gun Violence.

#### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications in regard to the receipt of this report.

#### **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of November 20, 2008, the Toronto Police Services Board was in receipt of a report dated October 28, 2008, from William Blair, Chief of Police, containing the Toronto Police Service's response to recommendation number 14 from City Council decision EX21.2 on the number of police on patrol in crime problem areas and the number of gun crimes.

#### **COMMENTS**

The Board received the Chief's report and agreed to forward a copy to the Executive Committee for information.

A copy of Board Minute No. P303/08, in the form attached as Appendix "A", regarding this matter is provided for information.

**CONTACT**

Chief of Police William Blair  
Toronto Police Service  
Telephone No. 416-808-8000  
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**SIGNATURE**

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Pam McConnell  
Acting Chair, Toronto Police Services Board

**ATTACHMENT**

Appendix A – Board Minute No. P303/08

A:city report gun crimes.doc

## Appendix A

### **THIS IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE TORONTO POLICE SERVICES BOARD HELD ON NOVEMBER 20, 2008**

#### **#P303. RESPONSE TO A CITY OF TORONTO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF POLICE ON PATROL IN CRIME PROBLEM AREAS AND THE NUMBER OF GUN CRIMES**

The Board was in receipt of the following report October 28, 2008 from William Blair, Chief of Police:

Subject: THE NUMBER OF POLICE ON PATROL IN CRIME PROBLEM AREAS  
AND THE NUMBER OF GUN CRIMES

#### Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Board forward a copy of this report to Toronto City Council for information.

#### Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications relating to the recommendation contained within this report.

#### Background/Purpose:

The Board, at its meeting of July 24, 2008, received a request from City Council (recommendation 14, City Council Decision EX21.2 refers) that the Board ask the Chief of Police to provide a report on 'the number of police on patrol in crime problem areas and the number of gun crimes' (Min. No. P198/08 refers).

#### Discussion:

The Toronto Police Service (Service) presently has a fixed establishment of 5510 sworn police officers who perform their duties in various capacities. Although the established number is fixed, the number of police officers attached to the Service increases and decreases based on regular hirings and separations. The complement of officers is distributed between the five (5) Commands. Over 4000 police officers are assigned to the 17 divisions in Divisional Policing Command (DPC). Officers are deployed to divisions based on criteria such as the number of calls for service, crime statistics, divisional population, and numerous other factors to determine divisional strength establishments and officer deployment. According to the 2007 Statistical Report, the ratio of police officers to Toronto population was one (1) officer for every 495 citizens.

Officers assigned to Divisional Policing Command are deployed in a staffing model that allows only 20% of officers to be assigned to non-uniform functions. Of the 80% of DPC officers assigned to uniform duties, the majority are assigned to a Compressed Work Week schedule which divides available officers into five platoons. Approximately one fifth of the 80% of uniform officers in DPC are assigned to be on duty at any one time and are assigned to various functions such as the Primary Response Unit (PRU), the Community Response Unit (CRU), and the Traffic Response Unit (TRU). The remaining 20% are assigned to a variety of investigative functions including Major Crime, Criminal Investigation, Youth Crime, Street Crime, and Family Violence. These officers support the uniform policing function. As part of their duties, all of these officers respond to and investigate crimes of violence.

In addition to DPC, specialty units throughout the Service including but not limited to the Emergency Task Force, the Integrated Gun and Gang Task Force, the Hold-Up Squad, the Drug Squad, and Police Dog Services provide support to the PRU function throughout the city for crimes of violence including firearms offences. As part of their duties, all members of the Service are responsible for having a presence and patrolling in problem crime areas.

A resource also available to all units throughout the city is the TAVIS Rapid Response Team (TAVIS RRT). With its main objective being to reduce violence, TAVIS RRT officers regularly patrol the areas in Toronto most prone to violent crime. There are presently 72 police officers dedicated to the TAVIS RRT. The TAVIS RRT is available to all divisions in support of their crime and disorder management strategies.

In addition, provincial TAVIS funding provides for regular divisional callback teams of officers who are deployed in specific areas. A callback is defined by article 5:04 of the Collective Agreement. A callback, in relation to TAVIS, is an assignment separate from regular duties when officers return to work during their off-duty hours to perform duties in relation to anti-violence activities. All divisions have been allotted funds to manage their TAVIS callback program so that focused crime management strategies can be undertaken. These callback teams are deployed to areas during times which have been identified as being prone to occurrences involving violent crime. As of September 15, 2008, there have been approximately 10,000 TAVIS callbacks conducted within Toronto neighbourhoods. These callbacks were in addition to regular policing operations and made for approximately 55,000 person-hours specifically directed towards community safety and crime management in high crime areas.

The deployment of officers is based on community and operational needs. Because random patrol has been identified as being much less effective than directed patrol, specific crime hotspots, or areas where crime is concentrated at higher levels over a period of time, are identified through analysis. Crime trends are analysed throughout the city in order to effectively deploy police resources for local and Service-wide crime problems. Because the need for police resources is constantly changing, no fixed number of police officers can be assigned to any specific geographic area that is prone to crimes of violence. The number of areas that experience violent crime often change based on numerous factors. Geographic, temporal, and seasonal fluctuations in violent offences necessitate an approach to officer deployment that is based on community needs rather than having a fixed number of officers assigned to an area. Areas prone

to crimes of violence, including firearms offences, are not static. They may overlap divisional boundaries or be localized. Areas prone to crimes of violence may encompass residential, commercial, and entertainment areas. The Service constantly conducts analyses to identify areas in the city which have crime problems that are greater than normal and monitors crime trends to deploy personnel as required to manage those problems.

Because of community needs, further analyses were conducted by the Analysis Support Section in June 2008 to identify areas in Toronto that have historically been most prone to violence. These analyses were conducted for the summer months in 2004 to 2007 to identify the areas that would most benefit from a Focused Neighbourhood TAVIS Deployment initiative to reduce violence. These analyses considered shootings, street robberies, and other occurrences that involved violence. Two divisions, 31 and 51, were identified as generally having the greatest problem with violent crime and as a result, 25 officers were redeployed from various divisions exclusively in these two divisions throughout the summer of 2008. These officers were not taken from the TAVIS RRT strength. They augmented regular divisional and extra-divisional Service resources and provided a further resource to address violent crime.

In relation to offences involving firearms, the most basic and prevalent of gun crimes are those related to unauthorized possession of a firearm. The most serious but least frequent of crimes committed with firearms are homicides. There is great disparity between the numbers of occurrences for these offences. By far the greatest number of charges in relation to firearms offences relate to the possession of a firearm without a licence.

The Crime Information Analysis Unit reported that the number of charges related to unauthorized possession of a firearm in 2007 was in the thousands. It must be kept in mind that the seizure of one unauthorized firearm from one person may result in a number of firearms-related charges being laid. The 2007 Statistical Report notes the number of genuine firearms, not including air guns, replicas, starters pistols or toy guns, that were seized by the Service in 2007 was 1753. Of those firearms seized, approximately 31% had been involved in crimes but the majority had not been involved in any criminal activity. The number of genuine firearms that were reported stolen to the Service in 2007 was 39. In relation to weapons in general, the number of violent crimes committed with a weapon other than a firearm far outnumbered those involving firearms.

Calls for service classified as gun calls involve incidents of shootings or a person armed with a gun. Police records show that to date in 2007 the Service responded to 1555 gun calls while to date in 2008 the Service responded to 1406 gun calls. The total occurrences involving shootings to date in 2007 was 159 while to date in 2008 is 182. The number of homicides committed with a firearm to date in 2007 was 32 while to date in 2008 is 31. The number of gun calls has been declining steadily for the past two (2) years and to date is approximately 20% less than it was in 2006.

According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, across Canada, firearms were used in crimes of violence approximately 2.4% of the time. However, physical force and intimidation were the most predominant types of force used in offences involving violence. When weapons

were involved in offences, the majority were knives, piercing instruments and blunt instruments. The rate of firearm victimization has remained stable for the years 2003 to 2007.

The Service has as one of its goals to increase prevention and enforcement efforts to address violent crime, specifically homicides and firearms-related offences. The results can be seen in crime rates. When compared to all other provinces, Ontario has the lowest crime rate in Canada. Municipally, Toronto has the lowest crime rate of all large cities in Canada with a population over 500,000 persons. As well, of all the large municipal police services in Ontario, Toronto has one of the highest police officers to population ratios. The continuous positive efforts of the Service to increase community safety can be seen in the data provided by Statistics Canada.

Conclusion:

The specific number of police officers available in any area at one given time is not one which can be quantified as a fixed number. Deployment of police officers is based on demand, identified need, operational exigencies and Service resources. All efforts are made to have sufficient officers available to respond to crimes in progress as necessary. Resources and programs are also structured towards crime prevention to proactively address firearm violence whether through direct enforcement intervention or community involvement. Strategies aimed at reducing gun violence are ongoing and adapted to changing needs.

Deputy Chief Kim Derry, Divisional Policing Command, will be in attendance to answer any questions the Board may have regarding this report.

**The Board received the foregoing and agreed to forward a copy to the City of Toronto – Executive Committee.**