

City Council**Motion without Notice**

MM22.32	ACTION			Ward:All
---------	--------	--	--	----------

**Re-examining the Toronto Police Service Scout Car Graphics Change -
by Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Pam
McConnell**

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Pam McConnell, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board, due to growing public concern about the military-style “stealth” grey police cruisers proposed for purchase by the Toronto Police Service, to retain the current white with red and blue colour scheme pending further review.
2. City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board to clarify the reasons why a change in the scout car colour and graphics is necessary and why the proposed grey scheme was chosen.
3. If a new colour scheme is required, City Council request the Toronto Police Services Board to initiate an independent, professional study, including consultations with community stakeholders, to determine the most appropriate colours and graphics for future police vehicles, and to have regard for City Council's expectation that the colours and graphics chosen will reflect the City’s values of diversity, inclusiveness and mutual respect.

Summary

The Toronto Police Service has recently announced that it will be phasing in a new colour scheme for police “scout car” cruisers over the next several years. Chief Saunders has indicated that the change of colour from white with blue and red graphics to grey with white graphics is being undertaken in an attempt to modernize the look of the vehicle fleet.

The public reaction to the proposed change has been largely negative, with many Torontonians wondering how the militaristic, “stealth car” look presented by the colour scheme can be in keeping with Toronto’s desire for an approachable, socially engaged police service serving the City’s values of diversity, inclusiveness and respect for all of its communities.

Studies of the psychology of colour reveal that specific colours have implicit values associated with them. For example, white connotes clarity, purity, simplicity, sophistication and efficiency. Red projects courage, strength, warmth and energy. Blue reflects intelligence, trust, efficiency, duty, logic, reflection, communication and calm. These are the main colours used for the current Toronto Police Service fleet.

Studies have also discovered that at its best, grey evokes neutrality and at its worst projects a lack of confidence, depression, remoteness and a lack of energy. Rather than a “modern” look, the proposed stealth grey colour scheme appears to be at odds with Toronto’s desire for a publically engaged, community-focused police service.

In many Toronto communities, police are viewed with suspicion, discomfort and even fear, making it difficult for police officers to earn public trust and gain cooperation. Stealth grey police cars will do nothing to solve this problem, and will likely make the situation worse. Police vehicles that are visible, recognizable, reassuring and approachable are a far better choice.

In the interests of due diligence, a more deliberative process should be followed to complete such a transformative change in Toronto Police Service’s public image. Consulting with people who are expert in working with colour, and consulting with public stakeholders, would more likely lead to a colour scheme that reflects Toronto’s values and the principles of the modern, engaged police service the City's needs.

The Police Chief has indicated that little thought has gone into the selection of the proposed stealth grey, militaristic colour scheme. Such an undeliberated choice is at odds with the Toronto Police Service’s broad responsibilities to serve the public interest. The decision to choose a stylish, “cool looking” design over one that encourages public respect and engagement is not in keeping with the transformational change and modernization that Council has called for.

Through its vehicles, the Toronto Police Service projects the City’s “brand” to the public on our streets and in our communities. The design and colours chosen for police vehicles must support this brand, and the principles that it represents.

The Police Services Board should be asked to halt the introduction of vehicles with the new colour scheme until clear image guidelines in keeping with Toronto’s municipal values and Police tactical requirements are developed, a thorough study of appropriate colour schemes is undertaken, and professional design recommendations are brought forward.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM22.32