

# Re: EX15.17

**This is an Extract from the Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Toronto Police Services Board that was held on February 25, 2020**

## **P34. Establishing a Community Police Office in Lawrence Heights**

The Board was in receipt of a report dated January 6, 2020 from Mark Saunders, Chief of Police, with regard to this matter.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Police Services Board receive this report.

### **Motion**

**THAT, based on the continued implementation of the recommendations in The Way Forward, including important initiatives such as the Service's Neighbourhood Community Officer Program and the Connected Officer Program, in responding to any similar future requests regarding the establishment of a Community Police Office in a particular area or other such related initiative, the response provided by the Service in relation to this item be provided by the Board.**

**The Board approved the Motion and received the foregoing report.**

Moved by: M. Ford

Seconded by: U. Chandrasekera

January 6, 2020

To: Chair and Members  
Toronto Police Services Board

From: Mark Saunders Chief of Police

## **Subject: Establishing a Community Police Office in Lawrence Heights**

### **Recommendation(s):**

It is recommended that the Toronto Police Services Board (Board) receive the following report.

### **Financial Implications:**

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

### **Background / Purpose:**

At its meeting on October 29 and 30, 2019, City Council adopted an item with respect to establishing a Community Police Office in Lawrence Heights. The Board received a Board Report recommending that the Board:

- 1) Request that the Chief of Police assess Council's recommendation and report to the Board on the results of his assessment; and,
- 2) Forward a copy of this report to City Council via the Executive Committee.

This report will inform the Board of the assessment of establishing a Community Police Office in Lawrence Heights.

### **Discussion:**

#### **The Transformational Task Force and the Neighbourhood Officer Program**

The Board and The Toronto Police Service (Service) established the Transformational Task Force (T.T.F.) to explore opportunities and find sustainable efficiencies in the delivery of policing services in the City of Toronto. In the final report, Action Plan: The Way Forward, the T.T.F. defined the path to excellence for the Service. This report includes addressing the need for a trusted relationship between the public and the police. The Neighbourhood Officer Program (N.O.P.) is a key component of building that trust.

The Service implemented its first N.O.P. in 2013 in selected neighbourhoods across all 17 divisions. The primary objectives of the N.O.P. at the time of its inception were to reduce crime, increase public safety, and improve public trust in the police. The early focus of the N.O.P. was the need to increase police presence and address community problems associated with observed crime patterns within particular neighbourhoods and to foster stronger relationships between community members and the police.

Since 2013, the N.O.P. has been the cornerstone of community policing in the City of Toronto. The program has been responsible for embedding T.P.S. members directly into communities and has provided opportunities to build and sustain strong and positive partnerships with community leaders. To ensure continuing success of the N.O.P., it is imperative that there is a continued effort on the part of the Service to assess current program strengths, make corrections when necessary, and incorporate evidence-based findings from academic and professional evaluations. In 2019, the N.O.P. was re-branded as the Neighbourhood Community Officer Program (N.C.O.P.).

During their research, the T.T.F. found that the public wanted a trusted relationship with its police service. This was the most common and important message they received. That relationship needed to include:

- A focus on crime prevention, community safety, community engagement, and reducing victimization at the neighbourhood level.
- A more familiar, consistent and trust-based relationship between residents and officers who are assigned to neighbourhoods for longer periods.
- Officers less separated from the public – more time on foot and on bicycles interacting with people and less time isolated in cars.
- Building the skills of existing officers to strengthen engagement with individuals and groups, including answering questions and providing useful information.

The Service continues to implement the action plan as it works towards the three goals that define what it means to be a modern police service:

- Be where the public needs the Service the most, which includes using modern technology to ensure officers are fully connected to the community from any location, and to improve public access and customer service.
- Embrace partnerships to create a safe community which means a service-delivery model that is community-centric with an intensified, sustainable longer-term commitment of resources and capabilities.
- Focus on the complex needs of a large city by having a sustainable and affordable service-delivery model based on understanding the needs of our city and continuously adapting services to respond.

The action plan is first and foremost about a smarter approach to policing. Neighbourhood-centric policing will result in improved community safety.

The Neighbourhood Community Officers (N.C.O.) work in partnership with communities and service-delivery agencies to address crime, disorder, and community safety issues with an understanding of the complex needs specific to each neighbourhood. They are proactive and use information, evidence, and neighbourhood insights to work in partnership to identify issues and co-develop solutions. This includes referrals to appropriate community resources.

### **The Connected Officer Program and N.C.O.**

The N.C.O.'s are able to provide better service because of greater access to data, information and software through Connected Officer Mobile Devices. The N.C.O.'s throughout the Service have smart mobile devices that give them access to the data, information and software they need, always and anywhere. Regardless of their location, N.C.O.'s are accessible to residents – to receive and respond to calls, emails, text messages, and other forms of electronic communication. As the Connected Officer program evolves, N.C.O.'s will be able to prepare and file reports and other documentation from anywhere, rather than being limited to mobile workstations in cars or having to return to police stations to work at desktop computers. Because of the Service's investment in data analytics and modeling, all N.C.O.'s are able to use their mobile devices to access information and analysis that give them a richer understanding of the city and specific neighbourhoods. This includes economic, social, and demographic data, as well as other information such as crime statistics.

All police officers are required to perform a combination of administrative and operational tasks during the course of their duties. Completing operational tasks includes attending various geographic locations and interacting with members of the community. Administrative tasks often have the technical requirement of having access to systems and information often achieved through a desktop computer at a police station or in-car computer.

One of the main goals of an N.C.O. is to be physically present and accessible to the community in which they are assigned. Operational tasks and administrative tasks impede this goal when officers on foot patrol do not have access to the necessary equipment. Providing mobile technology in the form of smartphones to N.C.O.'s who walk and ride bicycles creates efficiencies which support achieving the goals and objectives of their assignment. Modern portable technology and supporting software is advancing at a fast pace which will support even more functionality, enabling officers to perform all of their administrative tasks on mobile devices in the near future. In this future state, a police station will be a place where officers start their shift and end their shift, but seldom utilize in between.

### **Conclusion:**

On Tuesday November 5, 2019, Staff Superintendent Mark Barkley and Superintendent David Rydzik met with Councillor Mike Colle and explained the goals, objectives and role of the N.C.O.P., as well as that of the Connected Officer Program. The complimentary relationship of these two programs is what puts these

officers where they are needed most; visible in the community. Past concepts of policing in a neighbourhood through use of community office space are replaced by advanced mobile connectivity. The ongoing evolution of the N.C.O. program and the ability for the officer to remain connected to and engaged with community members at any time and any place through their connected officer devices is a key principle of the modernization of the program. Having discussed the modern role of the N.C.O. and the Connected Officer Program, it was agreed that a community office space was not required.

At this time, establishing a Community Police Office in Lawrence Heights is not recommended.

Deputy Chief Peter Yuen, Communities and Neighbourhoods Command, will be in attendance to respond to any questions that the Board may have regarding this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Saunders, O.O.M.  
Chief of Police

\*original copy with signature on file in Board office