Event Report
SUMMIT OVERVIEW

The 2023 Calgary Policing Summit was held on September 8, 2023. The one-day conference was an opportunity for the Calgary Police Commission, Calgary Police Service (CPS) leadership, City Council, and the Alberta Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services to hear from Calgarians.

The one-day conference started with a panel discussion on how changes in the community are shaping the future of policing. Participants then split into smaller groups to learn about work underway in policing, followed by a chance for them to ask questions and provide input. In the afternoon, participants were asked about their priorities for the 2024 Annual Policing Plan.

Themes covered in the morning sessions included:

- Alternative approaches to helping people in crisis that CPS is implementing
- How CPS is working to better connect with and reflect Calgary’s diverse community
- How the Government of Alberta is supporting public safety in Calgary
- How CPS is working with partners to improve safety in public spaces
- New technology that CPS is integrating into their vehicles (including a showing of the new police vehicle prototypes called KITT Cars)

Participants at the event also heard from Alberta Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services Mike Ellis, Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek, Calgary Police Commission Chair Shawn Cornett, and CPS Chief Constable Mark Neufeld.

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

Participants at the Calgary Policing Summit were invited by the Calgary Police Commission to represent a broad spectrum of community organizations. Strong representation from CPS, the province and City Council was also invited to give community members as much opportunity as possible to directly interact with those who make or influence decisions on policing priorities.

In total, 540 invitations were sent and approximately 300 people attended for the day. The organizations that were invited selected their own representatives based on their people’s availability and interest.

The event was free for participants and lunch was provided.
The approximate breakdown of representatives in attendance was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Calgary City Council</td>
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<td>Alberta Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services</td>
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<td>Student Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Sports Organizations</td>
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**WHAT WE HEARD**

Note takers were present in all the sessions to capture the comments made by participants in attendance. Question cards were also collected at the end of each session so people that did not get a chance to ask a question during the session could write it down for future follow up from the presenters.

Below is a summary of the comments provided by the community.

1. **On crisis response:**

   - The current system where police take people in mental health crisis into custody (formally called Form 10 powers) needs improvement so that people with mental health concerns are not criminalized. Faster information sharing between the healthcare system and officers needs to occur so medical experts are determining if someone needs to be in protective custody.

   **Response to this input:**
   CPS and Alberta Health Services (AHS) are working to address shortcomings in the Form 10 system. Officers now have 24/7 access by phone to AHS clinicians.
that can access individuals’ medical records and help determine what to do. Work is also underway to try reform the different legislation that prevents better coordination and information sharing.

- The City of Calgary needs to lead better coordination between the agencies that could help respond to people in crisis so the public is not getting repeatedly transferred around to different agencies when they are trying to get help.

  *Response to this input:*
  CPS, Calgary 9-1-1 and the Distress Centre are working to help reduce transfers and get people to the right resource no matter how they call into the system. They recently co-located 9-1-1 and 211 to facilitate more seamless coordination. The Service is also working to improve information sharing with the public and other agencies.

- Police automatically being dispatched to crisis calls where a weapon is present needs to be re-evaluated. A significant number of people experiencing homelessness carry weapons for protection, forcing police to be the primary agency responding to any call involving them. Re-evaluating what is considered a weapon and including behaviour-based risk assessment would mean other agencies could go to more crisis calls without the police.

  *Response to this input:*
  CPS is aware of this concern and will continue to consider how to address it.

- Businesses owners are not feeling supported when people with addiction or mental health concerns are having a negative impact on them. The justice system needs to get the person in crisis supports, but also needs to protect the property and wellbeing of others in the community by stopping crime and disorder.

  *Response to this input:*
  The goal is to have “warm hand offs” between officers and other support agencies when a person is in crisis so that they are going directly where they need. Officers are still trained to respond to criminal acts and then once charges are laid, options for diverting someone from the criminal justice system can be considered.

- More support is needed to ensure businesses are not forced to clean up needles, urine/feces, and other impacts of drug use and homelessness.
Response to this input:
This concern has been noted and forwarded to The City of Calgary.

- Calgary needs to do a better job of getting out in front of mental health problems. The supports being offered to those committing offences and to the affected community members are not always evident.

Response to this input:
The justice system can play a key role in helping with mental health challenges in the community through restorative justice and court diversion programs. Toronto has an integrated case management model where social agencies and the police coordinate support for individuals frequently having contact with both parties, but Alberta requires legislation changes to allow this level of coordination and information sharing. CPS is advocating for these changes.

- Calgary should be focused on the root causes of public safety problems.

Response to this input:
People typically end up in crisis when they do have the appropriate tools to deal with their situation. The focus of the overall support system is currently to take the least invasive measure that will meet the needs of the person. Prevention efforts are also a big focus currently, including crime prevention work with youth and providing supports to new Canadians so they are not as vulnerable.

2. On connecting with and reflecting the community:

- Better public access to data is needed, including better data collection and race-based data. Better transparency is needed around what is occurring within CPS with culture change, complaints, morale and diversity. The community wants to have access to data and know about CPS’ priorities.

Response to this input:
Race-based data continues to be a priority of CPS and the Calgary Police Commission. Work is underway with Statistics Canada to develop a consistent national standard on collection of race-based data. CPS will also continue to work on better public reporting of data. CPS publishes regular reports on a variety of matters through its Community Accountability webpage. CPS has noted this input and will continue to consider how to better address it.
• Calgary needs more community-based resources to support youth and work in the downtown core. A downtown district office should also be reconsidered as well as programming for youth downtown.

  *Response to this input:* Funding is available for non-profit agencies that address mental health and addiction concerns in the downtown core through the Community Safety Investment Framework. CPS is also aware of the concerns related to there being no downtown district office and has tried to address this concern through Community Safety Hubs. The way officers are deployed and stationed downtown is something that is continually reviewed.

• Education both inside CPS and out to the community is an important way to engage the community. You and the Law presentations are highly valuable and should be offered to all new Canadians.

  *Response to this input:* CPS has noted this input and will continue to consider how to address it.

• The community likes having positive interactions with the police and more of these interactions would be beneficial. Technology can also be a bridge with the community that helps tell a better story.

  *Response to this input:* CPS continues to organize events like Coffee with a Cop, outreach events and other ways for officers to have positive interactions with the community. New and better approaches are always being integrated into this work.

• CPS needs to make sure that its view of equity, diversity and inclusion aligns with the community’s view. There also needs to be strong measurement of progress and the community needs to be involved in how the work grows.

  *Response to this input:* CPS has advisory boards and an Anti-Racism Action Committee made up of community members to provide regular input into the work being done around equity, diversity and inclusion. Work, such as an employee census, also continues to try better measure the success of these efforts.
The community values seeing diversity among officers.

Response to this input:
CPS has been making a concerted effort to reach out to various communities to recruit a greater diversity of officers. The efforts are showing success and new recruit classes are becoming increasingly reflective of Calgary.

3. On the Government of Alberta’s work:

- There is a displacement of businesses in the downtown and private security firms are being hired because there is not enough support from law enforcement. This needs to be tracked so the province can assist.

Response to this input:
The province is providing funding for 50 additional police officers and made 12 Sheriffs available to CPS to support the local work to address crime and social disorder downtown. How police resources are used and where is up to the police chief.

- The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) program is having an impact and should not be discontinued.

Response to this input:
There are no plans to discontinue this program.

- The Police Act needs to be reviewed and updated more regularly to ensure the legislation is keeping up with changes happening in the community.

Response to this input:
The Alberta Police Act is formally reviewed every five years and there are constant smaller reviews happening as issues come up.

- There needs to be consideration given to the costs that police agencies will have as a result of the province making body-worn cameras mandatory. The cost can be significant and provincial support will likely be needed by many agencies.

Response to this input:
The province is meeting with police chiefs across Alberta to work through how the new body-worn camera mandate will be implemented. At this point, nothing
has been determined.

- The province should consider creating a human resource support for police services that aligns with the police conduct complaint investigations support provided.

  **Response to this input:**
  The input was provided to the Government of Alberta for consideration.

- Appointees to police commissions should be free from political interference and there is concern that this may be changing.

  **Response to this input:**
  While police commissioners are appointed by political leaders (City Council and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services), commissions operate independently of these bodies and are responsible for holding appointees accountable if inappropriate activities occur.

- Damage and vandalism is occurring in communities and there is not enough funding in the province’s crime prevention budget to meet the need. It would be helpful if the budget could be reopened so communities can access this when needed.

  **Response to this input:**
  The province is aware that the crime prevention budget is not meeting demand and will consider ways to address the problem.

4. **On safe public spaces:**

- Better use of public spaces would help deter crime, such as activating them with things for people to do or doing things to make the spaces busier.

  **Response to this input:**
  This concern has been noted and forwarded to The City of Calgary.

- Communities and Community Associations want to help prevent crime, but do not know how to help. Better crime prevention advice and education is needed from CPS.
Response to this input: Improved crime prevention communication is a focus for CPS.

- People need to be encouraged to report concerns to the police and need information on how to do so. They often reach out to other bodies like the Business Improvement Areas instead of to CPS or The City of Calgary.

Response to this input: Improved crime prevention and reporting communication is a focus for CPS.

- Small businesses are being forced to hire private security to address crime and disorder at their properties and do not have the budget to carry the cost.

Response to this input: The concern is noted and CPS will continue to work with partners to address crime and social disorder occurring in communities.

- The perception of crime in an area does not always align with actual crime rates. Business Improvement Areas used to receive monthly reports on crime statistics but no longer do. Getting good data would allow the public to know what is actually occurring in their specific community.

Response to this input: CPS is aware of the desire for more localized crime data and is working to address this concern through better reporting or online dashboards.

- Community members, City of Calgary business units, City Council and CPS all have roles to play in helping to create and maintain safe public spaces and everyone is committed to doing so.

- There needs to be better data coordination between Alberta Health Services and CPS to provide a fuller picture of what is occurring.

Response to this input: CPS agrees and is constantly working with partners, including Alberta Health Services, to improve information sharing.

- Bail reform is needed to stop the ‘catch and release’ that is occurring with many chronic and violent offenders. The community wants to help advocate for needed
changes.

Response to this input:
Police commissions, police leaders and provincial governments have all advocated with the federal government for changes to the bail system and the federal government introduced Bill C-48 to create bail reform. CPS would specifically like to see violent offenders kept in custody as this is not always happening. Community members can support this work by contacting Members of Parliament to advocate for their support.

5. On the 2024 Annual Policing Plan:

Our People:

- Low morale at CPS is being noticed by the community and students in local criminal justice programs are choosing not to enter policing because of the issue. Changing morale needs to be a priority and helping officers feel valued is a critical component.

Response to this input:
An entire section of the 2024 Annual Policing Plan will focus on employees to improve morale and ensure those who serve are being supported.

- Data on morale and the efforts to improve it need to be shared with the community so they are aware of what is happening inside CPS. The work to communicate about this issue internally needs to also occur externally to help address the public perception of the culture at CPS.

Response to this input:
Annual Employee Survey results are released on the Calgary Police Commission’s website and ways to better communicate externally on what is being done about morale will be considered.

- The harassment issues within CPS raised by female officers in 2017 are still a concern to potential female recruits.

Response to this input:
The concern has been noted and both CPS and the Calgary Police Commission
will consider ways to better address it.

- In addition to increased recruitment, retention of experienced officers needs to be a priority so critical skills are not being lost. There also needs to be incentives for experienced officers to return to the front line/patrol and stay with CPS.

  *Response to this input:*
  CPS and the Calgary Police Commission are concerned about employee retention. Overall efforts to try improve morale are starting to help in this regard and CPS is seeing a decline in turnover.

- The application process needs to be more personal and it needs to help applicants build a relationship with the organization.

  *Response to this input:*
  CPS has been working to do more targeted outreach and to allow applicants to build relationships with each other and recruiters through events like Run with a Recruiter. This continues to be a focus for CPS.

- Recruiting materials need to better reflect the actual job of a police officer. Most officers work in patrol, not specialty areas. CPS should recruit based on what patrol officers do so people join to fill that role instead of seeing patrol as an entry-level role before moving on to specialty areas.

  *Response to this input:*
  CPS is aware of this needed shift and has been altering recruitment materials to reflect this desire.

- More focus needs to be given to officers that have worked for five to seven years as the excitement of the job being new has typically worn off and they need support to reset and get reengaged.

  *Response to this input:*
  This input has been noted and is being considered.

- Employee accommodations are a concern as there is a perception accommodated employees get to work in specialty areas as a result of their accommodation and that there is a high number of accommodations.
Response to this input:
Accommodations are an area where employees consistently raise concerns. CPS continues to look for better ways to support employees so they can return to work in their base position and to ensure fairness in accommodations.

- The impacts of 24/7 shiftwork are a concern for employees and can lead to officers having poor interactions with the public. The shift schedule should be informed by science to reduce these impacts as much as possible, which it currently is not.

Response to this input:
This input has been noted and is being considered.

- Police being sent to incidents that are not policing issues undermines morale and results in poorer outcomes for the public. Officers are responding to everything from mental health crises to dogs at large, simply because there is no one else to respond in the middle of the night.

Response to this input:
The Calgary Police Commission and CPS is very aware of this concern and has numerous initiatives underway to try divert calls from the police that should actually go to other agencies.

Our Performance:

- Data collection and accessibility needs to be improved, so work with the community is informed by meaningful and disaggregated data. CPS also needs to be clear with people how their data is being used.

Response to this input:
Improved data collection and reporting, including race-based data, is a priority for the Calgary Police Commission and CPS.

- Communication with the community has to focus more on increasing reporting in areas where crime is underreported, using storytelling to help the community understand how and when to report things, and closing the loop where there are complaints about the police. It would also be helpful for more neighbourhood- and community-level information to be shared.
Response to this input:
CPS received a significant amount of feedback on its communication through the Calgary Police Commission’s 2023 Community Perception Research. Work is underway to implement the suggestions in that report and through the Calgary Policing Summit.

- CPS needs to evaluate how the community is perceiving and receiving the trauma-informed response by police to incidents.

Response to this input:
This input has been noted and is being considered.

- All levels of the organization need to be part of the efforts around anti-racism work and equity, diversity and inclusion. More diversity in police leadership would also be welcome.

Response to this input:
CPS has an internal anti-racism advisory board that is working to bring people from across the organization together to support this work, and to integrate an anti-racism and EDI lens into all areas.

Our Community:

- Community building work is valued by Calgarians and CPS should continue to focus on it. Building trust with youth, embracing technology to engage with people, and being part of the community are all important parts.

Response to this input:
CPS follows the community policing model where the community and police are partners in keeping everyone safe. Meaningfully engaging youth and the community remain priorities.

- Many Calgarians do not feel safe due to open air drug use, social disorder, property crime and the reports of random violence in public spaces. Parts of the city also do not feel clean. These need to be priorities.

Response to this input:
Visual presence of security and the police as well as targeted work to address crime and social disorder in public areas will continue to improve safety. The
concern around cleanliness has been noted and forwarded to The City of Calgary.

- Businesses and community members want more localized real time information on crime. In some communities, CPS Community Liaison Officers have helped coordinate group chats on apps so that businesses can share information with each other and the police can share information with businesses. This is an appreciated approach.

  **Response to this input:**
  CPS received a significant amount of feedback on its communication through the Calgary Police Commission’s [2023 Community Perception Research](#). Work is underway to implement the suggestions in that report and through the Calgary Policing Summit.

- When communities raise concerns about crime in their area, they do not consistently hear back from CPS on what was done about it. It is leaving the impression that community concerns are not always getting a proper police response.

  **Response to this input:**
  This input has been noted and is being considered.

- There are concerns in some communities about encampments and the crime that can surround them. It can also sometimes be difficult to report concerns about locations that do not have an address, like green spaces and bridges.

  **Response to this input:**
  CPS works closely with the [City of Calgary’s Joint Encampment Team](#) to compassionately address encampments on public property. Addressing encampments, especially those that are a base for crime and disorder, is a priority for CPS.

- Community Associations and cultural groups want to be part of the solution to crime and disorder in their areas. Information on how they can assist would help them do this work.

  **Response to this input:**
  CPS is committed to a community policing model that engages communities on how they can help prevent and address crime in their area. CPS is aware that
there is a desire for more crime prevention information and more localized communication, and is working to improve both these functions.

- There are concerns in the community around CPS staffing levels. Some Community Associations are hiring private security to support the police because of short staffing.

  **Response to this input:**
  To improve resourcing and reduce workloads, the Commission and Council grew the police budget by $64 million and added almost 290 new positions in the 2022 to 2026 budgets. The Government of Alberta has also added a grant for 50 more police officers in Calgary. CPS has recruited the maxim number of new officers it can train in both 2022 and 2023, and infrastructure upgrades are in the works to increase the number of officers that can be trained each year.

- Increased density in established neighbourhoods has changed the crime rates in those areas.

  **Response to this input:**
  This concern has been noted and forwarded to The City of Calgary.

- Priorities for the community in 2024:
  - Open air drug use
  - Petty crime
  - Bail reform
  - Better helping people in crisis
  - Ensuring people feel safe in their communities
  - Improved communication
  - Improved community engagement
  - Violent crime
  - Ensuring community-level crime and concerns are addressed

**FEEDBACK ON THE SUMMIT**

A short online survey was emailed to participants after the Calgary Policing Summit. In total, 45 responses were received (33 from community members, six from CPS employees, four from City of Calgary employees, and two from presenters). Highlights of the responses were:
Respondents gave the Summit an overall rating of 4.3 stars out of 5.

Seventy-six per cent of respondents felt the Summit was the right length.

Eighty-seven per cent of respondents preferred that future similar events be held during a weekday.

The majority (62 per cent) of respondents drove to the Summit.

Ninety-six per cent of respondents found the opportunity to provide input valuable.

Eighty per cent of respondents want to see the Summit happen annually and the remaining 20 per cent want to see it every two years.

One consistently mentioned opportunity for improvement was to have shorter presentations to allow more time for questions and input. Respondents also appreciated the opportunity to either speak in the group or provide written questions and comments.