

York Regional Police

2023-2025 Business Plan

Attachment 1 – Consultation Findings Report



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Executive Summary

In November 2021, the Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board approved the 2023-2025 Business Plan Development Strategy. The formation of the Business Plan relies extensively on research, input from our members, business partners, and the community at large. Our approach was comprehensive and inclusive of a broad array of both internal and external stakeholders.

York Regional Police (YRP) conducted a series of member and community consultations to obtain feedback that will be used to develop our future goals and the activities and strategies we undertake to achieve them. This report contains a summary of findings from the various consultations that were conducted to inform the 2023-2025 Business Plan.

Methodology

York Regional Police conducted a broad range of consultation sessions with various internal and external stakeholders to engage and encourage dialogue on how we can improve service delivery and support our members. The COVID-19 pandemic required us to make adjustments in our approach to consultations. Our traditional methods of conducting in-person internal and external consultations were limited due to pandemic restrictions, which required us to further rely on digital tools and platforms. Our methods of engagement included:

- **ThoughtExchange®** – A virtual crowd sourcing software used to gather thoughts and experiences surrounding a specific topic. Participants submit their thoughts anonymously by text. After sharing their thoughts, participants are able to read thoughts shared by other contributors then rate each thought using a five-star rating system. Five stars indicates strong agreement and one star indicates strong disagreement.
- **Online Surveys** – Participants were given access to a link with a series of questions relating to York Regional Police. Participants were offered an option to complete the survey online or request an alternative format. Submissions were anonymous.
- **Focus Groups (Virtual and In-person)** – Brainstorming and discussions using facilitation tools to explore ideas on future priorities for York Regional Police.
- **Virtual Town Hall** – A virtual town hall event was promoted through the YRP website and YRP social media platforms that included a combination of open-ended questions, polls, and conversations between the Executive Command Team (ECT) and the community.
- **Research and Secondary Sources** - Information was also gathered by analyzing secondary source reports from committees and working groups and conducting research on trends that may impact future service delivery.

Our People – Internal Consultations

York Regional Police consults with its members on an ongoing basis. Efforts were made to gather information and ideas through different means and formats to ensure maximum participation.

- **YRP Member Survey** – The survey was made available electronically to all members, including senior officers. Alternative formats were offered.
- **Chief District Visits** – The Chief of Police attended all YRP districts to have conversations with members and obtain feedback.
- **District Enhancement Committees** – Member-led groups provided feedback at each district.
- **York Regional Police Association (YRPA)** – A focus group was conducted with the Board of Directors and Executive members.
- **Census and Inclusion Survey Insights Report** – A survey was conducted by CCDI Consulting Inc. to all members, including senior officers.
- **Breakthrough Research and Reports** – Input from the various Breakthrough project teams research and reports that include member priorities and recommendations for improving the work environment.

Top Themes (Our People):

1. **Learning and Professional Development** – Increase programs and opportunities for members to learn and develop new skills as part of succession planning and growth.
2. **Communication** – Ensure transparent and consistent communication in messaging through all levels of the organization.
3. **Member Support and Wellness** – Continue to build support and wellness programs that encourage work-life balance as well as mental, emotional, and physical health of members.
4. **Flexible Work Arrangements** – Expand options and allow more flexibility in shift start times and ability to work remotely.
5. **Staffing** – Address staffing shortages and increased workload to ensure the safety of our people and our community.
6. **Facilities and Equipment** – Assess facilities to accommodate existing strength and anticipated growth, and upgrade necessary tools/equipment to accommodate member needs in the performance of their duties.
7. **Policies and Processes** – Review internal practices and procedures to ensure they are equitable and inclusive.

YRP Member Survey

A member survey was administered from June 13 until July 8, 2022, to obtain important feedback from all members of YRP. The anonymous survey was made available online and alternative formats were offered for those who required it. The survey was completed by **898** out of a total of **2319** members giving a response rate of **38.7%**. The last comprehensive member survey was conducted in 2016; therefore, changes in methodology and the format of questions limited the ability to make comparisons. Responses were not made mandatory; thus, there is a varying percentage of non-responses for each question.

Results:

Work Environment – To understand feelings of well-being, collaboration and efficiency, members were asked to share their thoughts relating to their work environment.

- **74.2 %** of respondents strongly agree or agree that members are held accountable for their actions.
- **88.5%** of participants see a link between the work they do and York Regional Police priorities.
- **70.6%** of respondents feel they receive meaningful feedback on work performance.
- **73.9%** strongly agree or agree that their contributions in the workplace are valued.
- **88.8%** of respondents believe they are treated with respect in the workplace.
- **66.7%** of respondents have confidence that inappropriate workplace behaviour will be properly addressed.
- **Top suggestions to improve YRP work environment:**
 - Accountability – Hold leadership, supervisors, and members more accountable in a manner that is fair and equitable. Improved mechanisms to file complaints and report harassment is required.
 - Recruiting and Promotion Practices – Improve practices related to recruiting and promotion through improved succession planning, meaningful evaluations and peer reviews (360 evaluations). Review indicators and data measurement tools to evaluate performance so they do not create competitiveness and toxicity.
 - Equitable and Inclusive Practices – Be consistent when it comes to discipline, performance evaluations, and general practices. Continue to strive for a more inclusive environment.
 - Supervisor Training and Education – Better training on leadership and conflict management/resolution for supervisors at all levels; ensure we foster good leaders.
 - Communication – Improve communication in all directions and ensure transparency across the organization. Be more open to listening to your members rather than top-down communication.

Communication – To understand the effectiveness of how information is being shared and received, members were asked to share their thoughts on communication.

- **81.9%** of survey participants believe that York Regional Police strategic priorities & objectives are clearly communicated.
- **86.2%** of respondents strongly agree or agree they receive adequate guidance and direction to perform their job.

- **88.0%** of respondents think they receive essential information needed from their supervisor to perform their job effectively.
- **87.8%** of participants are comfortable communicating ideas and perspectives to their direct supervisor.
- **51.1%** of respondents think that essential information flows effectively between units.
- **Top suggestions to improve Communication:**
 - Collaboration and Open Communication – Minimize the ‘silo’ approach and improve sharing of information and collaboration between units and bureaus.
 - Consistency and Transparency – Better consistency in how messaging is delivered throughout the organization; clear and transparent communication is needed to continue to improve the organizational culture.
 - Use of Technology and Resources – Use technology to help streamline organizational communications and flow of information; consider creating online hubs for specific topics of conversation and have representatives from each unit share information.

Learning and Growth – To understand views on the development of members’ knowledge, skills and abilities, they were asked to share their thoughts relating to learning and growth.

- **75.3%** of respondents believe York Regional Police supports their career objectives.
- **80.4%** of respondents strongly agree or agree that there are opportunities to learn and grow professionally within the organization.
- **88.9%** of participants believe that York Regional Police provides adequate tools and resources to do their job well.
- **Top suggestions to improve Learning and Growth:**
 - Equitable opportunities – Make access to training courses and conferences more equitable. Discrepancies that exist for frontline vs. investigative, sworn vs. civilian, supervisor vs. member should be reviewed.
 - Career guidance and succession planning – Develop better mechanisms to allow members to develop in areas of interest, create viable career plans, and encourage growth; consider developing a career advisor program.
 - Staffing and budgets – Review how we can enhance training opportunities that often have to be denied due to staffing shortages or insufficient training budgets.

Work-Life Wellness – To understand balance of physical, mental and emotional health, members were asked to share their thoughts on work-life wellness and balance.

- **89.4%** of respondents believe York Regional Police recognizes the importance of employee health and wellness.
- **81.3%** of respondents strongly agree or agree that York Regional Police continues to make efforts to support work-life balance.
- **89.9%** of survey participants think York Regional Police provides services that address wellness needs.
- **Top suggestions to improve Work-Life Wellness:**
 - Support & Resources – Increase staffing in overworked areas and improve processes to remove barriers when members need access to supports and wellness services.

- Flexible Work Arrangements – Expand access and options for flexible work arrangements such as flexible shift starts and remote work.
- Communication – Improve how commitment to work and alignment of work-life balance and wellness is communicated across the organization. Ensure messaging does not portray lack of trust from leadership or that members should feel privileged.

Diversity and Inclusion – To understand feelings of respect and value to the organization, members were asked to share their thoughts on diversity and inclusion.

- **85.5%** of respondents strongly agree or agree that York Regional Police makes continuous efforts to provide an equitable work environment.
- **89.3%** of survey participants believe York Regional Police makes continuous efforts to provide an inclusive work environment.
- **86.6%** of respondents believe it is important for York Regional Police members to reflect the diversity of our communities.
- ***Top suggestions to improve Diversity and Inclusion:***
 - Biases – Address unconscious and systemic biases that are gender or race based.
 - Leadership – Increase diverse representation in senior leader positions.
 - Transparency – Improve transparency in areas such as hiring and promotions.

Organizational Performance – Members were asked to reflect on general feelings and impressions of York Regional Police.

- **88.1%** of respondents indicated that they are very satisfied or satisfied with their position at York Regional Police and **85.6%** indicated that they would recommend York Regional Police as an employer.
- **What does YRP do well?**
 - Member Wellness – Prioritizes member wellness through various services and initiatives.
 - Community engagement and support – Excellent service to the community through engagement and partnerships.
 - Resources – Provides access to equipment, advanced technology, and tools.
 - Diversity and Inclusion – Continued efforts to improve diversity and inclusion within the organization.
 - Learning and Development – Provides opportunities for learning, innovation, and leadership.
- **What does YRP need to improve?**
 - Promotional and Hiring Process – Reduce cumbersome processes to ensure the best fit for units and enhance representation of the community we serve.
 - Member Support – Ensure we continue to build trust, compassion, respect, and appreciation of members.
 - Resources – Provide adequate staffing to address capacity constraints in several areas of the organization.
 - Facilities and Equipment – Ensure adequate and effective work spaces and meeting rooms, enhance work space configurations, continue to provide up-to-date equipment and comfortable uniform and patrol vehicles.
 - Communication – Improve the flow of information in all directions.

Demographics

- The majority of respondents have between 15 and 19 years of service representing **20.3%** of respondents.
- **26.7%** of respondents are supervisors.
- **49%** of respondents identified as Male and **31%** of respondents identified as Female.

Summary of Other Comments:

- Members believe that YRP is a great employer and offers great programs and initiatives to support health and wellness.
- Members believe that there needs to be more focus on talent retention, competence amongst ranks, and resource planning/management.
- Develop ways to enhance equitable access to training, mentorship, and other development tools.

Chief's District Visits

Chief of Police Jim MacSween attended parade visits across all YRP districts in 2020 and 2021. Chief MacSween responded to questions from members which were submitted in advance to district Staff Sergeants. In 2020, members had an added opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts after the Chief's visits by using Thought Exchange. The ECT has committed to conducting further research and follow-up with the concerns raised by frontline members.

Top Themes:

1. **Uniform** – Members were looking for better quality, better fit, and an expansion in coverage for items such as boots and mock-neck shirts. Redistribution of equipment between the duty belt and molly vest was requested due to weight of duty equipment.
2. **Equipment** – Members requested increased deployment and training of Conducted Energy Weapons (CEWs) on platoons. Other equipment requested includes weapon lights and leg holsters.
3. **Technology** – Additional access and upgrades to technology to assist officers in carrying out their duties such as maps, electronic notes and additional access to social media on YRP devices. Members also raised the issue of if/when body worn cameras would be implemented.
4. **Business Continuity** – In light of COVID-19, members would like clarity on plans for future pandemic lockdowns as well as policies surrounding reserve deployment, accommodations for child care in light of school closures, and appropriate personal protective equipment.
5. **Retention of Frontline Officers & Supervisors** – There is a lack of experience on the frontline as members find specialty or investigative units more attractive in terms of duty, promotion, and salary. Consider updating the Staff Development process or consider imposing a minimum tenure.
6. **Promotional Process** – Members find the process too long, frustrating, and there is the appearance of possible bias at times. Improvements could be made by creating a separate process for frontline and investigative supervisors, maintain a YRP members only exam, and promote supervisors in the areas of their expertise.
7. **Officer Safety and Wellness** – Members feel vulnerable while accessing district parking lots which are also open to the public. Members would also like YRP to consider additional single/half-cage cruisers to the fleet as they are more comfortable.
8. **Business Intelligence/Statistics** – Members feel the Business Intelligence (BI) tool is being used to evaluate members, but does not capture the totality of member activities. Members feel the stats-driven mindset has made some less inclined to do the right thing unless there is a stat/recognition, and it can potentially undermine team spirit.
9. **Staffing Levels and Workload** – Staff shortages and changes to operations continue to weigh on member workloads (e.g. creation of the Call Diversion Unit (CDU) has increased the workload for Criminal Investigations Bureaus.
10. **Training and Professional Development** – Concerns that recruit training is more focused on completion of paper work and not enough emphasis on pertinent skills. Members also requested a review of development programs such as annual requalification and the Investigative Development Program (IDP).

District Enhancement Committees

The District Enhancement Committees (DECs) are member-led groups initiated to help address member concerns at the district level. They coordinate communication with a regional oversight committee to ensure consistent and proactive responses. The DECs are a mechanism for members to provide feedback, assist with improving wellness and morale, and encourage member engagement and development. The pilot project began in October 2020 at 2 District and was rolled out region-wide throughout 2021 and 2022.

Top Themes:

1. **Kit and Clothing** was the number one concern for frontline members in 2021 and 2022. Issues include: fit, sizing, make, material and quality of current issued wear, issues related to the reliability or suitability of outerwear, as well as industry trends and best practices.
2. **Fleet** issues have been prevalent at all districts. These issues include light-bar control placement, rifle racking, card scanners, makes/models of vehicles available to frontline personnel, and general user requirements/modifications that impact the day to day operations of frontline members.
3. **IT Service** issues include software updates, accessibility to educational content (rationale) and generalized support to resolve issues related to forms, documents and case management. These issues were easily resolved through modifications, strong communication and education.
4. **Facilities** remains a common area of feedback for frontline members. Facility requests varied depending on the district. Some considerations were made to recognize the age and operations of the district, the feasibility of changes and the timing of district refreshers.
5. **Professional Development** concerns raised related to the Investigative Development Program (IDP), promotional process and access to courses. The IDP program remained at the top of the list of priorities for frontline members.
6. **Member Wellness** is a core component of the mandate of a DEC and any issues raised get addressed through coordination with the Wellness Bureau. The organization remains open to the needs and concerns of their members and encourages members to be involved.

York Regional Police Association (YRPA) Board of Directors and Executive

On May 25, 2022, nine representatives of the YRPA participated in a focus group to share their insights on YRP's future priorities for the 2023-2025 Business Plan and concerns they have heard from YRP members. This is the first time members of the YRPA were consulted for Business Planning purposes. A presentation to explain high-level information about YRP's Business Plan and the purpose of the consultations was delivered. Participants were then asked to share their thoughts through facilitation tools and discussion:

Top Themes:

1. **Communication** – Issues related to how and when command directives and corporate communications are disseminated to the membership. Also, issues surrounding internal communication between units and decision-making.
2. **Professional Development** – Suggestions related to how YRP can improve internal training for both sworn and civilian members, especially new supervisors. Focus on improving training related to people and performance management, while creating online training modules to be more engaging and available to access at any time.
3. **Recruitment and Staffing** – Issues included improving the length of time a uniform recruit is hired and assigned, and also aligning the internal promotional process with current staffing levels to maintain adequate staff on the frontline. Both concerns noted centred on hiring more uniform members to ensure safety for the public and our members.
4. **Member Wellness** – Predominant concerns related to work-life balance and preventing 'burnout', and increased levels of stress due to the public's high expectations of law enforcement; would like to see improved channels of communication between YRPA and internal human resource-related units to enhance support to members.
5. **Community Engagement** – Suggestions were discussed including implementing additional technologies to increase online reporting and call diversion, and enhancing outreach and education to the public about YRP's operations and service delivery.

Our Community – External Consultations

York Regional Police makes it a priority to engage with the community. A broad range of community consultation sessions were conducted to engage citizens, community organizations, partners, and businesses to obtain feedback on current services and programs. Their input will be used to inform future objectives and implementation activities.

- **Local Residents** – A Community Survey was distributed to 12,000 randomly selected residences across all municipalities of York Region. Participants were issued a letter with a QR code to complete the survey online. Alternative formats were offered.
- **Seniors** – A virtual focus group was conducted during a session of YRP's Older Adult Safety Information Series (O.A.S.I.S.).
- **Youth** – Attended in-person discussion sessions of YRP's Youth Engagement Series and Youth Crime Prevention Academy. Elements of YRP's 2022/2023 Youth Strategy will also be used to inform Business Plan priorities.
- **Indigenous Persons** – A virtual focus group was conducted with the Chief and Band Council of the Chippewas of Georgina Island.
- **Persons Who Appear to Have a Mental Health Condition** – Participated in an in-person facilitated conversation with various community stakeholders and individuals who appear to have a mental health condition.
- **Persons with Disabilities** – A virtual focus group was held with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC).
- **Policing and Community Partners** – A survey was distributed electronically to policing and community-based partners.
- **Newcomers to Canada** – A virtual focus group was conducted with students and facilitators of classes offered by the Newmarket Welcome Centre.
- **Other Community Groups** – Additional consultations were conducted using a crowd-sourcing program called Thought Exchange® with the following groups:
 - YRP's Police Community Advisory Council (PCAC), District Community Liaison Committees (DCLCs), and Integrated Strategic Community Advisory Council (ISCAC)
 - 2SLGBTQ+ community
 - Youth Crime Prevention Academy
 - Religious and Spiritual Leaders
- **Public Virtual Town Hall** – A live virtual town hall with the Executive Command Team was conducted through social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).
- **Local Business** – A survey was distributed to small business via a newsletter through the Strategic Economic Initiatives department of The Regional Municipality of York (the response rate was low and data was not statistically significant to include in this report).

Top Themes (Our Community):

1. **Community Engagement** - Increase positive interactions through programs and initiatives with community groups such as youths and older adults.
2. **Police Visibility** – Increase uniform presence and patrol in neighbourhoods and at community events to support community safety and well-being.
3. **Road Safety and Enforcement** – Implement road safety strategies to educate and address traffic concerns throughout York Region.
4. **Training and Awareness** - Expand officer knowledge of mental health and addictions to reduce stigmas and improve response to persons in crisis.
5. **Recruitment** - Increase hiring of police officers reflective of York Region's communities to maintain and ensure optimal service delivery.
6. **Communication** - Improve how information is delivered to the public by expanding use of inclusive mediums.
7. **Public Trust** - Increase transparency and accountability to strengthen relationships with citizens and community partners.

Community Survey

A community survey was administered in 2022 to obtain important feedback from residents of the York Region community. A letter was sent to **12,000** randomly selected York Region addresses to invite the community to complete an online survey or contact YRP for alternative formats. This is the first time the community survey was offered in an electronic format. By the survey's closing, there was a response rate of **17.7%**. This result is a decrease of **8.7%** from 2019.

Results:

More than half of the respondents had lived in York Region for over 20 years. There was a more than 10% differential in the number of respondents who identified as male, compared to female. Almost two thirds (**65.3%**) of respondents reported they were between the ages of 40-69 years. However, **15.4%** of respondents reported they were 70 years and over, which is a positive finding for our first digital only (versus paper-based) community survey.

- **Level of Satisfaction** – 92.1% were very satisfied or satisfied with the service provided by York Regional Police. This is down slightly (-2.1%) from 2019, when there was a 94.2% satisfaction rate.
- **Level of Confidence** – 92.3% have confidence in York Regional Police, which is down slightly (-1.7%) from 2019 when the confidence level was 94.0%.
- **Level of Trust** – 93.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that York Regional Police has the trust of the public, which is a slight decrease (-1.2%) from 94.3% in 2019.
- **Interactions with Police** – 21.0% of respondents had interactions with York Regional Police over the last year. (This question was changed and cannot be compared) 74.3% of respondents that were a victim and/or witness of a crime reported it to police in 2022, which is down slightly (-3.2%) from 77.5% in 2019.
- **Community Impact** - the majority of respondents (over 91%) have confidence in YRP to keep the community safe, agreed that YRP treats people with respect and has the trust of the public.
- **Public Opinions of YRP** - Over 89% agreed or somewhat agreed that York Regional Police provided the same quality of service to all citizens, has good knowledge of the community, and are committed to building partnerships with the community.
- **Online Reporting** – Knowledge of online reporting remains generally low, with only 27.1% of respondents being aware that some crimes can be reported this way.
- **Community Safety** – 91.0% of respondents stated that they felt very safe or reasonably safe in their community, which is consistent with 2019 results.
- **Police Visibility** – 80.9% of respondents indicated they are very satisfied or satisfied with the police visibility in their communities; up slightly from 2019 when 79.8% were very satisfied or satisfied.

Top Five Policing Priorities:

- Crimes Against Property
- Auto theft
- Fraud
- Traffic safety
- Violent Crime
 - Auto theft and Fraud are new to the top five, while guns and gangs and drug enforcement have fallen out of the top 5 in 2022.

Top Five Traffic Safety Concerns:

- Aggressive driving
- Speeding
- Distracted driving
- Impaired driving
- Pedestrian safety

Top Five Priorities Related to Youth:

- Bullying
- Drug selling
- Gang activity
- Internet predators
- Hate Crime

Top Five Priorities Related to Seniors:

- Financial exploitation by strangers
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Social isolation
- Risk of wandering
- Physical abuse

Frequent Open-ended Comments:

- Asking for more police visibility and patrols in their neighbourhood
- Giving thanks and support to York Regional Police
- Community safety and traffic safety concerns

Seniors

On May 10, 2022, two members of the Planning, Research and Evaluation unit participated in an Older Adult Safety Information Series (O.A.S.I.S) session to conduct a virtual consultation session to inform the 2023-2025 Business Plan. The session was hosted by members of the Seniors Safety Section of Community Services. It was attended by 17 older adults from across the Region. They were given a high-level presentation about our business planning process and the purpose of the consultations. Participants were then asked to share their thoughts as to what YRP does well and where YRP can make improvements.

Feedback:

Q1: What does YRP do well?

- Stays connected with the community very well
- Quick response on non-emergency calls
- Impressed with series like O.A.S.I.S.
- Providing safety-related information through programs for seniors
- “I’ve found police force members to be polite and friendly; that is important”
- Engaging in partnerships with key stakeholders who meet & provide services or supports to larger older adult populations (e.g. being an active member of Prevention of Elder Abuse York Region)
- Provides presentations to specific groups with specific needs

Q2: What does YRP need to improve?

- More communication with different senior groups through councillors
- More patrolling on residential streets to deter criminals from committing crimes and more officer visibility
- Better presence on York Region Transit and Viva buses; as seniors age they need to use public transit
- Ensure YRP officers receive training on engaging with members in the community with mental health, Alzheimer’s, dementia, etc.
- Increase feelings of safety for seniors walking in public; would like to see more presence in areas with loitering and panhandling
- More in-person presentations at seniors’ centres and seniors’ living centres
- Address increased robberies and scams targeting older adults and minorities
- More crime statistics being made public; more information about senior related crimes
- On-foot community patrols
- Partner with more groups such as Neighbourhood Watch to enhance community safety, reduce fear, and inform residents
- Provide a mechanism to get highlights of current crime trends that is easy to see; similar to how 24-hour news channels display information

Chippewas of Georgina Island

On March 14, 2022, members of the Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit, a member of the Executive Command Team, and a member of the York Regional Police Services Board facilitated a virtual discussion with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, including the Chief and two Band Councillors. This is the first time that the Chief and Band Council were consulted for business planning purposes. After a high-level presentation on YRP's business planning process, participants were asked to share their thoughts on the following three questions:

Feedback:

Q1: What does YRP do well?

- Community outreach and communicates well
- Hiring of band members at YRP
- Good response time
- Assisting in calls
- Positive relationship with Chief, Band Council members, and Band members
- YRP is respectful and honourable

Q2: What do we need to improve on?

- Enhance YRP's cultural awareness training, particularly for new recruits on issues related to Band members wearing safety equipment on snowmobiles
- More enforcement of drug trafficking and bringing awareness to the community
- Ensure YRP members know which laws the Chippewas are bound by; federal vs provincial laws

Q3: What should YRP's priorities be for the next 3 years?

- More enforcement of drug trafficking
- Hire more officers
- Maintain dialogue with Chippewa members
- Focus on child and human trafficking
- Improve mental health and crisis intervention training for all YRP officers

Youth Engagement Series Session

On June 9 and August 18, 2021, two members of the Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit attended youth-centric symposiums to facilitate discussion about youth safety and positive youth interactions with law enforcement; 35 participants attended both dates. Feedback from these sessions are outlined below:

Feedback:

Q1: What more can police do to make youth and the community feel safe?

- Create a guns and gang prevention program
- Address the opioid epidemic, especially among people released from incarceration
- Create zero-tolerance policy for police officers that “do something wrong.”; hire officers with character and remove those who do not demonstrate organizational values
- Improve the V.I.P program and create opportunities to interact positively with police design lessons in schools to be more interactive, question-based, and engaging
- Reduce stigma against police through new community-based organizational initiatives
- Listen to the needs and concerns of youth

Mental Health Strategy Consultation

On May 10, 2022, three members of the Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit facilitated an in-person focus group with various community stakeholders and individuals who appear to have a mental health condition to discuss emergent themes specifically related to mental health in York Region. This is the first time a focus group specifically related to mental health was conducted for YRP's Business Plan. Four top themes were identified and 26 participants were asked to share their thoughts and lived experiences using facilitation tools and discussion.

Top Themes:

1. Crisis Response

- Focus on cultural sensitivity and accessibility
- Hire more Mental Health Support Team staff
- Enhance accessibility to front-line responders for easier connection and access to services and vital information
- Improve training for those responding to mental health calls; instill values to uphold when responding to calls involving a person in crisis

2. Diversion

- Collaboration between different institutions, including the court system, to share information and services available for community members in need
- Pre-charge intervention
- Quicker means to identify and assess individuals in need of pre-charge intervention
- More awareness and education on diversion and its purpose
- Allocate more funding or resources to ensure professionals of different organizations have proper training
- Examine range of options for those experiencing mental health issues to be responsive to their different individual needs

3. Police Prevention

- Utilize more community response and funding for community outreach supports to increase access to mental health experts
- Enhance sharing of resources between organizations
- Limit crisis with certain communities that might be triggered by police interaction
- Enable connections with people to build empathy and understanding using fully-supported, human-centric approaches; help prevent stigma for those seeking support

4. On-going Support

- Establish and maintain agency collaboration
- Create community mental health table
- Build trust within community by dialoguing with them regularly to listen to their needs
- Develop physical space to allow community members and institutions to collaboratively advocate for people in need of support

York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC)

On June 22, 2022, two members of the Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit, a member of the Executive Command Team, and a member of the York Regional Police Services Board were invited to dialogue with the YRAAC through an online focus group. Fourteen committee members participated to provide feedback on the following questions:

Feedback:

Q1: What does YRP do well?

- Positive interactions
- Respectful
- Information presented during school presentations shows a better representation of diverse communities:
 - Seen in officers that attend schools and events
 - Demonstrated in images used in presentations and promotional material
- Excellent information sharing about COVID-19 news throughout pandemic
- Officers have strong understanding about mental health issues
- Good documentation by officers about vulnerable persons in their reports
- Culturally responsive and promotions that highlight diversity of our membership
- YRP's accessible website has good information and closed caption videos are helpful

Q2: What can YRP do to improve accessibility when providing services to persons with disabilities?

- Improve members' understanding of intellectual disability; increase education and training of officers
- Point families in the right direction regarding range of services offered by YRP
- Increase visibility of officers in schools and in parks; children need more police visibility
- Improve approachability – e.g. how can someone who uses a text to speech application engage with a uniformed officer?
- Promote knowledge of the non-emergency line to public
- Share with the public; show what YRP is already doing in its facilities and services and how they can be accessed
- Improve police officer training related to accessibility
- Better promotion on social media
- Increase promotion and engagement during Accessibility Week to highlight services

Policing and Community Partners

A survey was distributed electronically to various policing and community-based partners, including regional and municipal councils, economic development leaders, social service providers, paramedic services, fire services, and hospitals. The survey was completed by 35 policing and community partner representatives.

Survey Findings:

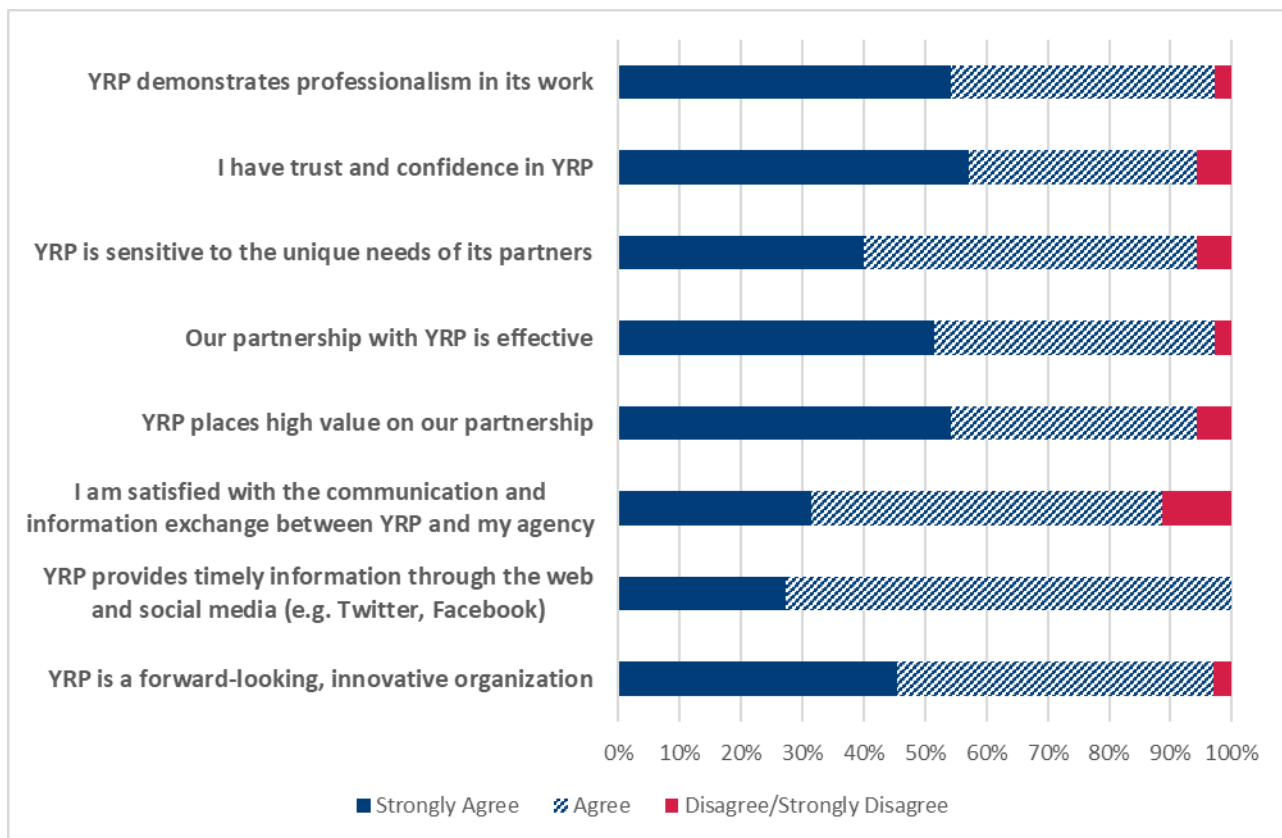


Figure 1. 2021 Policing and Community Partners Findings

Barriers or risks that may hinder YRP's ability to work with community partners/agencies (current or future):

- Transition of key YRP staff can lead to not understanding who to contact for services; need to establish new relationships and progress can be delayed when bringing members up to speed
- Protecting privacy of clients hinders ability to fully cooperate with police on certain matters
- Lack of service standards or clear guidelines between YRP and Municipal By-law Enforcement can lead to overlap in service
- Better avenues to share information between YRP and community agencies
- Lack of understanding of hospital care issues and patient environments
- Not enough access to YRP support services; review viability of restoring programs like the School Resource Officer and Values, Influences, and Peers (VIP) program

- Lack of resources in areas such as the Senior Safety Section to proactively respond to aging population
- Stigma toward certain clients continues to exist within YRP; more can be done throughout YRP at all levels to increase understanding, empathy and reduce barriers
- Historic/current disproportionate policing toward marginalized and racialized families (i.e. over-surveillance)

Enhancing engagement between YRP and agencies:

- Increased/improved communication and involvement; have regular planned meetings and check-ins with agencies to share information and build collaborative solutions to address community concerns
- Continue participating in events and programs such as community tables and liaison groups
- Provide consultation on disaster and emergency response
- Continue to partner on new initiatives and joint training opportunities to better understand processes when dealing with clients/patients
- Increase education to staff on mental health, human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, outreach, and how to have conversations with marginalized and racialized persons
- Improve timeliness of front-line responses, returning calls from schools, and sensitivity to age/identities/individual needs of students

Top five issues YRP to prioritize over the next three years:

- Collaborative training and initiatives with agencies, especially those serving vulnerable populations with mental health, addictions and homelessness concerns
- Visibility and community-based policing
- Road safety and enforcement
- Increased partnerships and communication
- Diverse, anti-racism and anti-oppression approach to policing
- Additional issues include: human trafficking, fraud/cyber security, youth engagement and education, community engagement and outreach

Additional Comments:

- Overall there are excellent relationships with YRP and appreciation for the support and community engagement to date.
- We appreciate the responsiveness of YRP when intake systems have identified individuals who require wellness checks.
- We have had excellent success with addressing "legal" cannabis production sites by working with YRP; there may be other issues we can address by working more closely together.
- You should be very proud of your officers. I have had outstanding experiences dealing with them in professional settings.
- Thanks for the opportunity to submit feedback.
- Our agency has enjoyed a strong, positive relationship with York Regional Police. Our experience with the members of YRP has been, without exception, extraordinarily positive.
- YRP is at the top of the list for support for persons with developmental disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorder.

Welcome Centre (Newmarket)

On April 13, 2022, two members of the Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit and member of the Executive Command Team hosted an online focus group with residents who participate in programs at the Newmarket Welcome Centre. Welcome Centres are a one-stop service designed to guide and support newcomers to York Region. There are five centres throughout York Region that provide settlement and integration services, English language training, accreditation and qualifications information, employment supports and other services based on community needs. The focus group included 18 individuals with varying levels of English language proficiency and a Welcome Centre employee. They provided feedback on the following questions:

Feedback:

Q1: What does YRP do well?

- Presentations
- Visibility of uniform members in community on patrol in vehicles
- Trusting
- “Police provide information”
- “Police are nice and helpful.”
- “Police are very good.”
- “I feel safe.”
- “Very quick with 9-1-1 response.”

Q2: What does YRP need to improve?

- Increase presence
- Road safety
- Fraud education
- Provide better and more accessible information to the community about scams
- Provide information about safety and laws
- More community events such as tour of Districts
- More education from police on active citizenry and how to report crimes

ThoughtExchange® Consultation Summaries

In preparation for the 2023-2025 Business Plan, members of the Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit facilitated four online consultations with external community groups between September 2021 and March 2022. A crowd-sourcing software called ThoughtExchange® was used to gather thoughts and suggestions to inform our strategic direction.

Due to Covid-19 social distancing measures in place during the consultation timeframe, it was best practice to conduct all thought exchanges virtually and asynchronously, which also increased the opportunity for individuals to participate.

Each participant group was asked the same question:

“What priorities should York Regional Police focus on for our next Business Plan?”

Top Themes:

When comparing responses or ‘thoughts’ across the four groups, the following predominant themes emerged:

1. **Mental Health and Addiction** – Participants responded that YRP should focus and expand resources to support individuals experiencing mental health conditions and improve YRP training to bolster the knowledge of members surrounding mental health.
2. **Law Enforcement and Public Safety** – Participants would like to see faster police response times to calls and from 9-1-1 call takers when answering emergency phone calls. They also felt there should be more attention given to combating human trafficking, traffic related concerns, and youth crime.
3. **Community Engagement** – Participants responded that YRP should work alongside community members more, increase community and youth-centric programs, and offer more education for the public.
4. **Public Trust** – Participants expressed desire to build mutual trust between YRP and minority groups; erode the climate of fear surrounding law enforcement practices through transparency and accountability.
5. **Police Visibility** – Participants suggested officers attend more community events to show presence and deploy uniform resources efficiently.

Police Community Advisory Council (PCAC), District Community Liaison Committee (DCLC), and Integrated Strategic Community Advisory Council (ISCAC) members

The Police Community Advisory Council (PCAC) is comprised of York Region residents and other stakeholders that provide the Chief of Police with advice on race relations, perceptions of social equality, budget proposals, crime prevention initiatives and the delivery of specialized programs.

District Community Liaison Committees (DCLCs) are advisory groups comprised of York Region residents, community groups and partner agencies in each YRP District. The committee serves as an independent resource to the community and the district commanders.

Integrated Strategic Community Advisory Council (ISCAC) is comprised of YRP members and members from various professions (lawyers, media, private companies) who provide feedback on policing perspectives, facilitate community awareness of programs and community responses to crime prevention, public safety, and other policing issues.

Top Rated Thoughts:

- **Reaching Out to Community** - People should feel comfortable to contact police
- **Community Engagement** - Community is at the heart of our society
- **Equity and Inclusion** - Create a peaceful environment for the community
- **Youth Engagement** - Build trust, understand their issues, create awareness of programs; continue to raise the image of police through positive relationships
- **Maintaining Public Trust** - Need transparency and accountability to gain public cooperation and support
- **Community-based Policing/Patrols** - Spend more time in neighbourhoods meeting residents of all ages
- **Engagement with Black Youth** - Encourage them look at the police as friends, not enemies
- **Community Outreach** – More interaction with various ethnic groups to improve the image of YRP/policing in our diverse community
- **Relationships with Marginalized and Racialized Communities** – Continue to improve relations and outcomes for marginalized and racialized communities; there is a greater duty to support those who are more vulnerable, and improvement and growth is an on-going process

2SLGBTQ+ Community Consultative Roundtable

2SLGBTQ+ Community Consultative Roundtable – includes Pflag York Region, the York Region District School Board, York Pride, and the AIDS Committee of York Region.

Top Rated Thoughts:

- **Mental Health Response** – Focus on expanding the Mental Health Response Team to better support positive mental health outcomes for community members; the pandemic has negatively impacted the mental health of many communities.
- **Resource Alignment** – When an at-risk 2SLGBTQ+ youth has an encounter with YRP due to a conflict involving the youth, the officer should provide next steps, literature or contact information to allow the youth to connect to additional services in the community to ensure they are not isolated.
- **Data Analysis and Information Sharing** – Use data to better understand the safety needs of our community. Data analysis is an effective way to study and understand any issues our communities may face.
- **Equity and Inclusion/Transparency** – Further public transparency on the equity and diversity work being done internally. Police service agencies are perceived as institutions that struggle with transparency and vulnerability. Addressing it will build public trust.
- **Mental Health Response** – Enhance response to mental health crises to better support individuals and reduce stigma associated with mental health.
- **Training** – Continue ongoing training on issues members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community face, build trust and provide extra training for officers around topics such as youth homelessness, trauma informed care.
- **Understanding the Community** – Continue education and awareness to be able to provide better support.
- **Building Relationships** – It's an ongoing process to build and maintain community trust with police.
- **Indigenous Issues** – Continue to help improve safety and quality of life for Indigenous individuals and support First Nations communities in York Region.

Youth Crime Prevention Academy

YRP Youth Crime Prevention Academy – Participants are comprised of youth between the ages of 13 and 17 who voluntarily registered for this Academy. The program consisted of four sessions that focused on providing youth with practical and relevant information to protect themselves and make good decisions.

Top Rated Thoughts:¹

- **Mental Health**
 - It's important to focus on issues such as stress, loss, anxiety, etc., because it would help many people feel safer and content in their lives.
 - Mental health is important as it affects your mood, and day to day life which can be either in a positive or negative way.
 - YRP should focus on mental health awareness, and the romanticism of mental health problems. A lot of people these days think that having a mental health disorder is “trendy” and “cool” and a lot of them lie about it for attention.
 - YRP should focus on mental health for the next Business Plan because since Covid-19 started a lot of people have been negatively affected.
- **Cyber Security** – YRP should focus on tackling cyber security and especially educating young children and teens about cyber bullying and cyber safety. It's important because cyber security affects everyone and lots of dangerous things happen online.
- **Youth Programs** – Create more programs so that people are comfortable with the police.
- **Youth Engagement** – YRP should focus on having more police officers visiting schools or community centres. This is important because many people may want to be informed on how to be a police officer or how to deal with anything going on in their lives.
- **Visibility in Schools** – Be more available to youth in high school; consider mentorship initiatives; it is important because having a good role model in a child's life can shape them in a great way.
- **Community Programs** – York Regional Police should focus on adding more community programs. It is important to be involved in the community and it is nice to have lots of variety and options.
- **Communication/Working with the Community** – It is important because it is great to make people feel supported and safe, and it is really nice to be able to learn about police-related things.

¹ NB. - potential recency bias. Immediately preceding this ThoughtExchange, the participants received an information session related to cybersecurity.

Religious and Spiritual Leaders

Religious and Spiritual Leaders – The consultations included representatives of different places of worship and faiths throughout York Region. They shared suggestions and thoughts on behalf of their communities.

Top Rated Thoughts:

- **Safe Worship Environments** – Providing a safe environment in places of worship; people need to feel safe.
- **Collaboration** – Faith-based organizations who support people with Developmental Services are best served in crisis with police working in tandem with their workers. Strengthens our community partnerships and response in crisis and preventative measures.
- **Proactive Communication** – Move from being reactive to having more proactive conversations. Need ongoing efforts to strengthen community relationships.
- **Timely Information Sharing** – Sharing incidents that impact religious communities is important. We need to know what is going on around us. Speedy communication with religious centres is vital when alerts occur.
- **Awareness and Understanding** – Education about minorities and faith groups to better understand their sensitivities.
- **Connectivity** – Diverse communities need to be able to engage with police easily.
- **Outreach** – Reaching out to various community groups needs to be ongoing to create and maintain strong relationships. Ensure they are comfortable contacting YRP if needed.
- **Community Safety** – Safety of citizens, businesses, and organizations is necessary for smooth operations of private and corporate life.
- **Drug-free Streets** – Remove any drug selling off the streets or limit/eliminate the selling of drugs.
- **Response Time** – When a request for service occurs, we would want to see a prompt response to the request.
- **Public Education** – Advance knowledge may serve as deterrent against committing crime.

Virtual Public Town Hall

On the evening of February 2, 2022, YRP hosted a live virtual town hall across three social media platforms – Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, using the hashtag #YRPTownHall. The Executive Command Team along with members of Strategic Communications and Strategic Services conducted this consultation using polls, questions in the form of Tweets, and posts to generate feedback from participants. Participants included various members of the public who follow YRP's social media accounts, as well as other partner agencies including ISCAC and PCAC, who were sent an email invitation to join the multiple platform conversation. Overall the Town Hall reached a large audience including 166,148 impressions across Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, with Twitter accounting for 60% of the audience.

Results:

Discussion Topic #1 – What does YRP do well?

- Community engagement
- Social media and communication
- Community safety and protection
- Professionalism and respect
- Quality service

Discussion Topic #2 – What can YRP improve upon?

- Road safety
- Increased transparency with public
- Increased patrol and officer visibility
- Officer training
 - Mental health
 - Public relations
 - De-escalation
- Staffing and hiring

Discussion Topic #3 – What do you think should be YRP's top priorities going forward?

- Road safety in residential areas
- Gun control
- Mental health training and awareness
- Distribution and consumption of illegal drugs
- Community engagement and communication

Discussion Topic #4 – How can YRP better collaborate with the community?

- More officers dedicated to community policing initiatives
- Host sport activities with communities
- Engagement in community events
- Through social media presence
- Increased interaction with youth in communities

Twitter Poll #1 – What is your biggest public safety concern?

- Violent crimes (44.1%)
- Traffic safety (25.3%)
- Property crimes (23.3%)
- Internet crimes (7.3%)

Twitter Poll #2 – How safe do you feel in your community?

- Reasonably safe (55.2%)
- Very safe (30.7%)
- A little unsafe (10.2%)
- Very unsafe (3.9%)

Twitter Poll #3 – How do you prefer to receive safety messages from YRP?

- YRP.ca (4.6%)
- Social media (89.2%)
- Newspaper or TV news (4.1%)
- Pamphlets or postcards (2.1%)