

# **The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board**

Public Board Meeting  
October 25, 2023

Report of the Chief of Police

## **Statistics Canada 2022 Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rate Overview**

### **1. Recommendation**

That the Board receive this annual report for information.

### **2. Summary**

York Regional Police presents police-reported crime statistics to the Police Services Board every year that highlights crime statistics accessed from the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS), a division of Statistics Canada. The crime data released by Statistics Canada use two complementary methods of measuring crime; traditional incident-based crime and clearance rates, and crime severity indices and weighted clearance rates. This report is focused on the Crime Severity Indices (CSI) and the Weighted Clearance Rates (WCR) for Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime. It includes an overview of York Region results and those of other select provincial and national police jurisdictions. The report format has been enhanced from previous annual reports with additional information on five-year trend analysis and case clearances.

A detailed report of York Regional Police incident-based crime and clearance data for the year 2022 was presented to the Board in May 2023, reflecting the volume of crime reported to police. The CSI and WCR measures contained herein better reflect trends in more serious

crimes because they take into account both the volume and relative seriousness of offences. Examining these measures provides a broader understanding of the impact of crime and level of community safety and well-being.

The Statistics Canada 2022 CSI and WCR measures indicate that York Regional Police continues to be one of the safest large police jurisdictions in the country. The data analysis shows the following:

- The 2022 Crime Severity Indices for York Regional Police increased for all the three indicators of Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime, consistent with the national trend of increased or exceeded crime rate to pre-pandemic levels
- Amongst the national comparators, York Region has the second lowest Violent CSI and the third lowest Non-violent and Total CSI in 2022
- Amongst the provincial comparators, York Region has the third lowest Violent CSI and the fourth lowest Total CSI and Non-violent CSI in 2022
- For all three 2022 CSI measures of Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime, York Region values are 20 percent lower than Ontario values and 40 percent lower than Canada values
- The 2022 Weighted Clearance Rates for York Regional Police decreased by 5.8 percentage points for Total WCR, decreased by 8.5 percentage points for Violent WCR and decreased by 6.2 percentage points for Non-violent WCR
- The 2022 WCR ranking for York Regional Police remained the same for Total Crime and decreased for Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime
- Police services in Ontario and Canada reported a declining WCR in all three measures, over one-year and five-year trends
- Results presented in this report should be interpreted with caution because differences in police service policies, procedures, enforcement practices and case clearance practices can influence CSI and WCR values

### **3. Background**

Police services in Canada provide a range of important services to the public including responding to emergencies, building relationships with local communities, reducing crime and promoting public safety. When responding to emergencies or crime scenes, police investigate incidents, present it to the court and report it to the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics. The criminal incidents reported to police by the public and those that come to the attention of police are submitted monthly to the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics.

#### **CRIME REPORTING METHODOLOGY**

##### **Uniform Crime Reporting Survey**

In Canada, police services across the nation gather information on all criminal incidents reported to police using an incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey developed by Statistics Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of

Police (CACP) in 1962. The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey is a census of all crimes reported to police that collects and reports on federal statute offences. An incident is considered to be the set of connected events which usually constitute an occurrence report and may contain one or more violations of the law along with their victims and accused.

The Uniform Crime Reporting Survey methodology allows reporting of four serious offences in a criminal incident. To provide better comparability, Statistics Canada report only the most serious offence of each submitted incident, but the York Regional Police Annual Statistical Report includes all four violations as a more accurate representation of crime volume. This 2022 Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rate overview report is based on all criminal incidents reported to Statistics Canada from January to December of 2022 by the municipal, provincial and federal police services.

## **Crime Severity Index**

The Crime Severity Index (CSI) is a measure of police-reported crime that reflects the relative seriousness of individual offences and tracks changes in crime severity over time. The CSI measures both the volume and severity of crimes reported to police. At the request of the policing community, the index was introduced by Statistics Canada in 2009 in collaboration with police services, the justice system and academics, to address limitations of the traditional crime rate.

In the CSI computation process, each crime is assigned a weight depending on its seriousness. The weight is based on the incarceration rate and average prison sentence length from the criminal courts. The weights are updated every five years using court system outcomes. The most recent update on weights was completed in 2022 and applied to the 2021 datasets. Changes made to the seriousness of a particular crime through introduction of a minimum sentence or other legislative change is reflected in the CSI.

Unlike the traditional crime rate, all *Criminal Code* offences including criminal traffic violations are included in the CSI. The CSI addresses the limitations of traditional crime statistics that are driven by high volume, but relatively less serious offences. It complements the volume-based method of reporting crime rates to give a broader picture of crime in our communities.

The CSI is available for three separate indices: Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime. The Violent CSI is comprised of all police-reported violent violations such as crimes against persons, and the Non-violent CSI is comprised of all police-reported property violations, other *Criminal Code* violations, other federal statute violations, drug violations and *Criminal Code* traffic violations.

Crime Severity Indices are standardized at 100 for 2006 for Canada to facilitate comparisons across police services and against the national and provincial averages. Data on crime severity indexes are available beginning from 1998. The CSI scores below 100 imply that the police service has a lower crime rate compared to other police services, and a CSI score above 100 indicates a more serious crime rate compared to other police services.

## Weighted Clearance Rate

Statistics Canada also introduced Weighted Clearance Rate (WCR) measures in 2009 to enhance comparability of police clearance rates. The WCR measures the percentage of police-reported criminal incidents that are cleared, weighted by crime severity. Clearance rate weights are assigned based on the same principle as the CSI, where a more serious offence will have a higher 'weight' than less serious offences. The WCR measures are also available for Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime.

## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT AND COMPARABILITY

The global COVID-19 pandemic which began in early 2020 continued throughout 2021 with varying levels of restrictions. Operating environments in police services changed substantially during the period as various policies were enacted to contain the spread of the virus, changing how people socialize, interact, work and learn. Varying levels of restrictions remained across Canada at the beginning of 2022 but the situation gradually became normal for people and businesses and crime pattern increased to or exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

The limitations of the data presented in this report should be acknowledged. Crime data from different policing jurisdictions, even collected through the standardized Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, should be compared and interpreted with caution because of differences in police service policies, procedures and enforcement practices. The CSI measure is not an indicator of overall police workload, and the WCR measure does not reflect overall police effectiveness. Various factors affect comparability and the findings of this report are only one component of assessing the overall crime picture in York Region.

Crime and clearance data for every policing jurisdiction can be influenced by:

- organizational priorities, procedures, available resources and allocation
- reporting practices of victims and/or complainants
- barrier free access for public in reporting a crime to police
- legal, such as offence definitions and interpretations
- statistical factors, such as Uniform Crime Reporting Survey methodology changes and internal counting rules
- reporting differences for less serious crimes both by the public and by the police
- population composition, for example, racial and ethnic makeup, age and gender profile, and family structure
- internal practices such as investigator coding, report validation processes and case clearances
- crime type; for example, local or multi-jurisdictional such as motor vehicle theft in recent years and violent or non-violent
- crime complexity and solvability, such as organized or non-organized
- variances in service delivery models, such as in-person police response versus alternative service delivery options available
- economic conditions; for example, poverty, employment opportunities and affluent neighbourhoods

## 4. Analysis

The 2022 Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rate Overview report is prepared by comparing Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rates for Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime. The measures are analyzed with trends for other police services of similar size and backgrounds.

### **NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL COMPARISONS**

The crime statistics measures of York Regional Police have been compared to nine select national police services and nine select provincial police services that serve the largest and most similar populations. The select nine largest national comparator police services that serve a population of more than 700,000 are Toronto (3,025,647), Montreal (2,038,845), Peel (1,517,448), Calgary (1,413,800), York (1,224,244), Edmonton (1,087,172), Ottawa (1,071,868), Winnipeg (783,096) and Durham (745,580). The select nine largest provincial comparator police services that serve around or over 500,000 people include Toronto (3,025,647), Peel (1,517,448), York (1,224,244), Ottawa (1,071,868), Durham (745,580), Waterloo (633,828), Halton (627,200), Hamilton (597,010) and Niagara (496,059).

The indicators for Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime in York Region are also compared with the average of the comparator police services in Ontario and the average of the comparator police services in Canada.

### **Crime Severity Index Results**

Appendices 1-3 display the Crime Severity Indices of Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime of select police services in Ontario and Canada. In the three categories of Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime, York Region CSI scores increased significantly in 2022 from 2021. However, the increase observed in Ontario and Canada are marginal.

In 2022, the top five offences contributing to the national CSI are breaking and entering, fraud, robbery, sexual assault level 1 and mischief. For the Violent CSI, the top five contributing offences are robbery, sexual assault level 1, assault level 2, assault level 1 and uttering threats to a person. For the Non-violent CSI, the top five contributing offences are motor vehicle theft, breaking and entering, theft \$5,000 or under, shoplifting \$5,000 or under and fraud. In York Region, all of the offences increased significantly in 2022 including robbery (109.9%), weapons violations (96.5%), motor vehicle theft (49.2%), assault level 1 (33.2%), breaking and entering (28.5%), assault with weapon/CBH (27.2%), theft under (19.9%) and uttering threats (13.9%).

Data provided in Appendix 1 shows that the Total CSI score for York Regional Police is 11.5 percent lower than the average CSI score of the nine largest police services in Ontario, and 35.4 percent lower than the average of the nine largest police services in Canada. The Violent CSI and Non-violent CSI shows a similar pattern. For all three crime severity indices of Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime, the York Regional Police scores are 20

percent lower than the total Ontario score and 40 percent lower than the overall score for Canada.

Appendix 2 provides details of the CSI values for the nine select national comparators for the last five years 2018-2022, as well as one-year variances, five-year variances, and five-year averages. The data tables and charts demonstrate that among the national jurisdictions with a population over 700,000, York has the second lowest (best) score in 2022 for the Violent CSI and the third lowest for the Total CSI and Non-violent CSI. For the five-year variances, York has the highest percentage increase for the Total CSI and Violent CSI, and second highest percentage increase for the Non-violent CSI.

Appendix 3 shows the CSI values for the nine select provincial comparators for the last five years 2018-2022. Amongst these provincial jurisdictions with populations over 500,000, York Region has the third lowest (best) score in 2022 for the Violent CSI and fourth lowest score for the Total CSI and Non-violent CSI. However, when looking at the five-year variances, York Region has the highest percentage increase for the Total CSI, Violent CSI and Non-violent CSI.

## **Weighted Clearance Rate Results**

Weighted Clearance Rates for the same national and provincial comparators are also provided in Appendices 1-3. In 2022, the WCR for York Regional Police decreased for all the three indicators Total Crime, Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime.

In 2022, the York Region WCRs declined more compared to the select provincial and national police services due to increases in the offences of robbery, weapons violations, breaking and entering, theft of motor vehicles and assault with a weapon causing bodily harm.

Appendix 1 shows that in 2022, all of the three WCR measures for York Regional Police decreased. The decrease was 5.8 percentage points for Total WCR, 8.5 percentage points for Violent WCR and 6.2 percentage points for Non-violent WCR.

Appendices 2 and 3 provide details of the WCR in the nine select national and provincial comparators for the last five years 2018-2022. Among the national comparators, the York Regional Police WCR values declined the most, compared to others. However, among the provincial comparators, similar declining trends were also observed in two other police services, Halton and Hamilton. Despite the declines in 2022, York Regional Police's weighted clearance rates are among the top three or four nationally and among the top four or five provincially.

## **5. Financial**

There are no financial implications.

## 6. Conclusion

We will continue to review the annual crime data released by the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics and Statistics Canada in order to assist us with the development and review of our policing priorities, operational strategies and crime prevention programs.

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Jim MacSween, M.O.M., B.A.A.  
Chief of Police

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Attachments (3) Crime Severity Index PSB Report – Appendix 1: Aggregate of Comparators  
Crime Severity Index PSB Report – Appendix 2: National Comparators  
Crime Severity Index PSB Report – Appendix 3: Provincial Comparators