



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Annual Report – Problem-Oriented Policing, Community-Based Crime Prevention and Community Patrol
January 1 to December 31, 2023

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2024-06-04

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board (Board) receive this report for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to advise the Board that the Niagara Regional Police Service (Service) is in compliance with Board By-Law 493-2024 Problem-Oriented Policing, By-Law 472-2024 Community-Based Crime Prevention, and By-Law 473-2024 Community Patrol
- The Chief of Police is required to make a written annual report to the Board with respect to problem-oriented policing, community-based crime prevention, and community patrol.
- This report provides a summary of requirements to ensure the Service is compliant in following these By-Laws.

Financial Considerations

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

Analysis

Problem-Oriented Policing By-Law 493-2024

The Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of every year in respect of problem-oriented policing. This report will contain:

- a) a summary of the written procedures regarding problem-oriented policing
- b) the status of Service compliance with the said procedures.
- c) the steps taken by the Service to promote, implement and evaluate problem-oriented policing initiatives.

The following is a detailed response to the above-noted requirements:

- a) *“...a summary of the written procedures regarding problem-oriented policing...”*

General Order (GO) 149.05 - Community Patrol and Problem-Oriented Policing, provides members with written procedures on how to initiate problem-oriented policing initiatives to address community issues concerns. This GO is reviewed bi-annually and is set for review in 2025.

- b) *“...the status of Service compliance with said procedures...”*

In accordance with GO 149.05, all officers and supervisors assigned to general patrol shall promote, plan, and implement directed patrol and/or problem-oriented policing initiatives to address public safety concerns, high incidents of crime, public disorder, and road safety.

- c) *“... the steps taken by the Service to promote, implement, and evaluate problem-oriented policing initiatives...”*

Recruit officer training, from the onset, includes preparing and delivering problem-oriented initiatives. This training prepares officers to recognize key elements of community safety concerns and respond with initiatives and/or directed patrol efforts throughout their career. The following directed patrol and/or problem-oriented policing initiatives are an overview of several implemented during this reporting period. Many of the initiatives are operationalized in all districts across the region, while others are exclusive to the concerns in a specific community.

Summary of 2023 Initiatives and Community Patrols

Traffic and Safety Awareness Day: This annual initiative was conducted to remind drivers that kids are back in school. Patrols aimed to target impaired drivers, drivers who are speeding, disobeying school bus protections, disobeying stop signs, and other Highway Traffic Act (HTA) violations that endanger the safety of the students. This initiative has been developed to establish safe roadways and a safe environment for the students in the Niagara Region. A total of 56 warnings and 176 Provincial Offence Notices (PONS) were issued across the Region.

Obstructed License Plate Initiative: This initiative was implemented in 1 District to hold drivers accountable for their driving behaviors by ensuring vehicle license plates were unobstructed and clearly visible to officers on patrol. The launch of this initiative coincided with the beginning phase of the Niagara Region’s launch of their Automated Speed Enforcement Cameras / Red Light Camera programs. Phase one of the initiative focused on educating the public via social media platforms and by way of traffic stops. There was a total of 34 warnings issued and 4 PONS issued. Phase two focused on an increase in enforcement of applicable laws. There was a total of 11 PONS issued with 6 warnings, 1 suspended driver identified, 1 individual wanted on an outstanding warrant, and 1 impaired driver arrest.

Community initiative "Schools In": This initiative was implemented to address community concerns regarding vehicles failing to adhere to rules of the road while travelling in school zones and failing to yield to students utilizing crosswalks. The initiative sought to educate drivers and apply applicable enforcement, when necessary, to achieve driver compliance. This initiative occurred during school hours. There as a total of one PON issued along with several warnings.

2 District Traffic Safety Initiatives: These initiatives were conducted by 2 District platoons to address community concerns related to traffic safety. A myriad of initiatives occurred throughout the year that targeted speeding, careless driving, unnecessary noise, and distracted driving. Platoons collaborated on directed patrol and organized enforcement activities. In total, 72 PONS and 24 warnings were issued to violators.

Driving Complaints: 3 District received driving complaints from vehicles not stopping for red lights/stop signs/school buses, speeding, loud mufflers, heavy trucks, and off-road vehicles. Subsequently, traffic initiatives were conducted in identified areas with officers monitoring intersections and conducting radar/lidar enforcement. Officers once again partnered with Ministry of Transportation (MTO) enforcement officers and City By-Law officers on heavy truck enforcement. ATV patrols were also conducted along the St. Lawrence Seaway property, along with several pedestrian and bicycle paths, where officers educated the public and enforced the Off-Road Motor Vehicles Act and Trespass to Property Act. A total of 38 PONS were issued and 12 warnings were given.

5 District conducted a special project related to traffic enforcement in areas of Fort Erie, Crystal Beach, and Ridgeway. This initiative was in response to community requests for higher police visibility in these areas. Locations of particular concern were Central Avenue, Erie Road, Ridge Road, and in school zones. Other locations and residential areas focused on their issues/concerns. Enforcement efforts resulted in four PONS issued and three warnings.

Traffic Enforcement Rural Roads: Focused traffic enforcement conducted in rural areas of 6 District - Port Colborne and Wainfleet. Areas identified through citizen / municipal office complaints were prone to a high frequency of vehicles travelling at excessive speeds. Increased enforcement resulted in 345 PONS for speeding being issued and 19 stunting charges, resulting in drivers license suspensions and vehicle impoundment.

Overweight Trucks: Officers along with members from the Traffic Enforcement Unit responded to complaints regarding overweight trucks on west Niagara roadways. Education was pushed out over the district Twitter account. This led to a heightened awareness of the approved truck routes within west Niagara. A considerable number of charges had been laid under the Highway Traffic Act, and a significant reduction in the number of commercial motor vehicles traveling on restricted roadways.

The 2023 MTO initiative took place 5 times throughout the year. This initiative is run by the MTO, assisted by the Town of Lincoln, to contend with commercial trucks bypassing the Lincoln MTO scales, causing traffic concerns through the Town's infrastructure. The MTO and the Service's joint initiative statistics for 2023 included 207 vehicle inspections, 67 vehicles removed from the highways due to serious defects, 89 total charges laid, along with 6 licence plates seized due vehicles having critical defects.

Bicycle Safety: Police and Wendy's Restaurant once again partnered in the 'Free Frosty Campaign' where 10,000 coupons were provided to frontline officers to distribute to youths displaying good bicycle safety by wearing helmets and obeying the rules of the road. Once again Wendy's, with the assistance of officers, gave away 500 bicycle helmets on kick off day. Officers also assisted the Niagara's Safety Village with their 2 summer bicycle safety courses that are 1 week, respectively.

The Community Oriented Response and Engagement Unit (CORE) continued their collaborative efforts in 2023, focusing on building relationships with key stakeholders and identifying problems and resolutions together. This has brought about greater police visibility and easier accessibility to police by members of the public and stakeholders in the community to address an array of topics.

Bicycle and Foot Patrol Initiatives: Throughout the year, to adopt a stronger focus on community policing and visibility, bicycle and foot patrols were initiated in downtown cores and recreational areas. While walking the beat, officers routinely engaged with local shop keepers and citizens identifying problem areas and concerns. Issues related to homelessness, unwanted persons, thefts, property damage, drug use, and discarded drug paraphernalia were identified and addressed.

Homeless Persons: During 2023, the City of Welland continued to see an increase in homeless persons and tents constructed on both public and private properties. With the onset of cooler weather, police collaborated closely with the staff from Niagara Assertive Street Outreach, Gateway Niagara, and The Hope Centre. These partnerships were valuable and assisted persons who were living in tents or vehicles by providing them with temporary and/or permanent shelter.

Lock it or Lose It: This initiative is an annual public reminder. Using social media posts and increased police visibility, the community is alerted to the risk of theft from vehicles. Officers conduct foot and bicycle patrols throughout open-air malls and businesses, making themselves visible to patrons and business owners. Furthermore, while onsite, officers also walked through the parking lots, visually checking for unlocked cars, and placed an educational pamphlet on the windshield of parked vehicles. This initiative incorporated increased police visibility along with awareness for motorists to secure items in their vehicles out of plain view.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): The Service completed several CPTED audits for businesses, community groups, and homeowners who requested to have an officer come out to their property and offer suggestions to discourage crime. Police were able to collaborate with homeowners and business owners to make recommendations for improved safety.

High School Beach Day: District officers, along with CORE Unit members, planned for and were present during the annual high school unsanctioned beach day across the Region. Officers utilized ATV patrols and foot patrols to engage with the thousands of students who attended this event. Police enforced the Criminal Code, Liquor Licence Act, and the Trespass to Property Act throughout the day.

Beach Patrols: The beaches of Niagara remained popular destinations in 2023 and quickly overwhelmed local infrastructure. On weekends, beaches were often at, or over, capacity and parking issues arose at various locations. Affected Districts worked with local Municipal By-Law offices to address the influx of people and address parking concerns.

The Fleming Centre community policing initiative was conducted due to youth complaints received by the Service from residents. Uniform members attended the Fleming Centre 219 times in 2023, to foster new relations and build trust within the community. This was a year long project spreading across all shifts.

Community Based Crime Prevention By-Law 472-2024

The Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30 of each year in respect of community-based crime prevention initiatives. The report shall include:

- a) a summary of the written procedures concerning community-based crime prevention initiatives;
- b) the status of Service compliance with the said procedures;
- c) a summary of current crime prevention initiatives and an indication of their success; and
- d) a summary of current concerns, as voiced by the community through the community partnership initiatives.

The following is a detailed response to each of the above noted requirements:

- a) *“...summary of the written procedures concerning community-based crime prevention initiatives...”*

GO 149.05 - Community Patrol and Problem-Oriented Policing provides direction on a police officer's duties including "Crime Prevention". In addition, section 82(1) of the Community Safety and Policing Act 2019, establishes specific statutory duties for police officers that include: preventing crimes and other offences and providing assistance and encouragement to other persons in their prevention.

- b) *“...the status of Service compliance with the said procedures...”*

The Service is committed to working with municipalities, school boards, community organizations, neighbourhoods, businesses, and neighbouring municipalities or jurisdictions, to develop and implement community-based crime prevention initiatives. The Service ensures the community-based crime prevention initiatives are consistent with the Ontario Mobilization and Engagement Model of Community Policing.

- c) *“...a summary of current crime prevention initiatives and an indication of their success...”*

The following is a summary of Crime Prevention initiatives during 2023:

1 District Officers initiated high visibility presence to deter thefts and break and enters occurring within the area of Glendale Avenue and Merritt Street in St. Catharines. Officers strategically positioned themselves while authoring reports, and during low call volume times, to deter criminal behavior. Officers reported no criminal behaviour or suspicious activity during their initiative. Officers continue to use high visibility patrols in their efforts to address community concerns and reduce crime.

Community initiative “Project Conversation” sought to address community concerns relating to disturbances involving youth in a St. Catharines green space. Officers sought out opportunities to engage with local youth attending the park to deter antisocial behavior and foster relations. Nearby residents were also engaged and appreciated the increase in police presence. A reduction of antisocial behaviour was noted during enforcement efforts.

5 District conducted ATV patrols in certain areas of Fort Erie and Crystal Beach. This initiative was in response to community requests for higher police visibility in these areas. Locations of particular concern were along shorelines, cottage rentals, and private properties. Certain properties belonging to the Town of Fort Erie were focused on issues/ concerns. The Service utilized uniform members on marked ATVs to enforce and educate violators.

As part of the Service’s commitment to crime prevention and patrols of summer vacation properties, uniform members utilized foot patrols, ATV patrols, and marked cruisers to conduct cottage checks along the Lake Erie shoreline. The cottage checks consisted of ensuring doors, as well as windows, had been locked and secured with no obvious signs of damage or forced entry. Cottage check signs were left at the property for owners to inform them that police were active in the area patrolling and conducting these checks.

d) *“...a summary of current concerns, as voiced by the community through the community partnership initiatives...”*

The Service regularly monitors and evaluates the effectiveness and on-going need for community-based crime prevention initiatives in collaboration with municipalities, school boards, businesses, and community organizations. Property crime and crime prevention strategies remain a community concern. Crime prevention and engagement initiatives with youth also continue to be a concern. Crimes related to the societal issues of illicit drug use are an ever-growing community concern. The Service remains cognizant of these issues and strives to address them through continued collaboration with community stakeholders and continuing with proactive community-based crime prevention.

Community Patrol By-Law 473-2024

The Chief shall make a written report to the Board on or before August 30th, of each year in respect of community patrol. This report shall include:

- a) confirmation of compliance with the Directed Patrol procedure.
- b) the high and low numbers of Members assigned to the patrol unit, with particulars and reasons for any period that the patrol unit numbers were less than those required under Section 4.3.1.
- c) costs of Directed Patrols; and
- d) the status of the outcome of the Directed Patrol initiative including the effect of Directed Patrol on crime, calls for service, public disorder analysis and road safety.

Detailed Response

- a) *"...confirmation of compliance with the Directed Patrol procedure..."*

GO 149.05 - Community Patrol and Problem-Oriented Policing provides direction to supervisors that they shall monitor and evaluate all directed patrols to ensure compliance with procedures. During this reporting period, the Service has remained compliant with all procedures.

- b) *"...The high and low numbers of members assigned to the Patrol Unit, with particulars and reasons for any period that the Patrol Unit numbers were less than those required under Section 3.3.1..."*

Directed patrol, as part of addressing concerns raised within the community, forms the core patrol responsibilities of every uniform member of the Service. When staffing levels permit, front-line supervisors can assign members to problem-oriented policing initiatives, including traffic enforcement. Supervisors are responsible for the deployment of all members when hired on overtime to deal with directed patrols targeting concerns raised within the community. The Patrol Unit numbers were not less than required at anytime in 2023.

- c) *"...costs of directed patrols..."*

Unless otherwise indicated, the projects referenced in this report were conducted by on-duty personnel, during the regular course of their duties and did not incur additional costs to the Service.

- d) *"...the status of the outcome of the Directed Patrol initiative including the effect of directed patrol on crime, calls for service, public disorder analysis and road safety..."*

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring and evaluating problem-oriented policing initiatives. The evaluation includes an assessment of the level of success achieved and a consideration of the potential for the initiative to be continued, expanded, or ended.

This evaluation is documented by way of a memorandum directed to the District Commander.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

To comply with the provisions of the Board By-Laws and to maintain compliance with Adequacy and Effective Policing.

Relevant Policy Considerations

By-Law 493-2024 - Problem-Oriented Policing
By-Law 472-2024 - Community-Based Crime Prevention
By-Law 473-2024 - Community Patrol
GO 149.05 – Community Patrol and Problem-Oriented Policing

Other Pertinent Reports

8.11 – 2023.07.27 - Annual Report – Problem-Oriented Policing, Community-Based Crime Prevention and Community Patrol

This report was prepared by Rob LaPlante, Inspector, 1 District Commander, in consultation with Shaun Parrent, Inspector, 2 District Commander, David Gomez, Inspector 3 District Commander, Dan Savoie, Staff Sergeant, 5 District Commander, Phil Liczkai, Staff Sergeant, 6 District Commander, Sarah Rose, Staff Sergeant, 8 District Commander, and reviewed by Mario Lagrotteria, Superintendent, District Operations. Recommended by Todd Waselovich, Deputy Chief, Operational Services.



Submitted by:

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Chief of Police

Appendices

Not Applicable.