



Staff Report C2025-06

Committee 2025-04-14

Council 2025-04-28

Amendments ☒

Submitted To: Committee of the Whole | Council
Submitted By: Sara Almas, (A)CAO/Director of Legislative Services/Clerk
Prepared By: Sara Almas, (A)CAO/Director of Legislative Services/Clerk
Subject: Council Input for the Development of the 2026-2029
Collingwood & The Blue Mountains OPP Detachment Action Plan

Recommendation

THAT Staff Report C2025-06, Council Input for the Development of the 2026-2029 Collingwood & The Blue Mountains OPP Detachment Action Plan, be received;

AND THAT Council approve the following as key themes (and action items as defined herein) as important input and considerations for the development of the 2026-2029 Collingwood & The Blue Mountains OPP Detachment Action Plan;

- Community Relationships and Trust Building:
- Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Homelessness:
- Traffic and Road, Waterway & Trail Safety:
- Resource Allocation and Management:
- Cultural Competency and Diversity:
- Environmental and Emergency Preparedness:
- Local Crime Trends and Prevention

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of the approved feedback be forward the Collingwood OPP Detachment Board for information.

Amendments

On April 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole recommended additions to the OPP Detachment Plan consultation and input. As such the following themes will be updated to include the additional recommendations:

Community Relationships and Trust Building:

- Detachment Commander and/or Board Chair make periodic presentations to Council

Traffic and Road, Waterway & Trail Safety

- Bike Patrol (under Traffic and Road, Waterway & Trail Safety) (*in addition to foot patrol*)

Resource Allocation & Management:

- Advocacy for improved delivery time for Vulnerable Sector Checks

1. Executive Summary

Police Services for the Town of Collingwood are provided by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). Collingwood's Police Service is provided by a Joint OPP Detachment with the Town of The Blue Mountains, through the guidance of two (2) OPP Detachment Boards: Collingwood and the Town of The Blue Mountains.

The Collingwood and The Blue Mountains OPP Detachment Commander Loris Licharson is currently reaching out to Council and community stakeholders in preparation of the development of their 2026-2029 Detachment Plan. Their goal is to ensure that the policing services provided are responsive and reflective of the needs of our two communities.

Staff have identified Action Plan Items based on Collingwood's unique needs, for Council's consideration. This will form Council's feedback to the Detachment Commander for consideration in the Plan development process. This feedback is requested by the end of April. The Detachment Commander will prepare the draft Action

Plan, based on all feedback received through their consultation and present to both Collingwood and The Blue Mountains Police Board's. The Detachment Board has an ongoing mandate to do outreach and consultation with the community. Following the presentation to each Board, the Boards will have 60 days to review and provide final input. The Detachment Commander shall consider the O.P.P. detachment board's comments on the draft, if any, and revise the plan if he or she determines it to be appropriate. The local action plan shall be published on the Internet in accordance with the regulations made by the Minister, if any.

The recommended themes for Council's consideration as their feedback in the development of the local OPP Detachment Action Plan include (specific actions are further identified within the report:

- Community Relationships and Trust Building:
- Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Homelessness:
- Traffic and Road, Waterway & Trail Safety:
- Resource Allocation and Management:
- Cultural Competency and Diversity:
- Environmental and Emergency Preparedness:
- Local Crime Trends and Prevention (A critical component that will be further explored by the Detachment Commander in the development of the plan):

2. Analysis

Background

In our evolution to a Programs & Services based budget, the provision of policing is a significant service within the Community Safety & Standards Program:



This Program areas accounts for 28.5% of the operating budget, which is the program will the greatest cost center with Community Access & Mobility second at 20.4%. It is important to ensure that the best value of taxpayer dollars, and that Programs reflect the needs and vision of the community.

The Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, S.O. 2019 (the “Act”) addresses the requirements for the local [detachment] action plans (the “Plan”) that is prepared by the Detachment Commander. The Plan shall address at least the following matters:

1. How adequate and effective policing will be provided in the area served by the detachment, in accordance with the needs of the population in the area and having regard for the diversity of the population in the area.
2. The objectives and priorities for the detachment determined by the O.P.P. detachment board and such other objectives and priorities determined by the detachment commander.
3. Quantitative and qualitative performance objectives and indicators of outcomes relating to,
 - i. the provision of community-based crime prevention initiatives, community patrol and criminal investigation services,
 - ii. community satisfaction with the policing provided,
 - iii. emergency calls for service,
 - iv. violent crime and clearance rates for violent crime,
 - v. property crime and clearance rates for property crime,
 - vi. youth crime and clearance rates for youth crime,

- vii. police assistance to victims of crime and re-victimization rates,
- viii. interactions with persons described in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this subsection,
- ix. road safety, and
- x. any other prescribed matters.

4. Interactions with,

- i. youths,
- ii. members of racialized groups, and
- iii. members of First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities.

5. Interactions with persons who appear to have a mental illness or a neuro developmental disability

It is important to note that the Detachment Commander is required to consider the community safety and well-being plan adopted by the municipality, as well as consult with the following:

- (a) his or her O.P.P. detachment board;
- (b) the municipal council of any municipalities that receive policing from the detachment;
- (c) the band councils of any First Nations that receive policing from the detachment;
- (d) groups representing diverse communities in the area that receives policing from the detachment;
- (e) school boards, community organizations, businesses and members of the public in the area that receives policing from the detachment; and
- (f) any other prescribed persons, organizations or groups.

It is important to note that the analysis does not include a review of the community safety and wellbeing plan, as that is the obligation of the Detachment Commander.

2023 – 2025 OPP Detachment Action Plan: The current Plan addresses several priorities that remain important to our community, as identified in Resource 1.

The following three areas of focus were identified in this plan:

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- Crime which includes Violent crimes (assaults, sexual assaults and domestic violence), property crimes and illicit drugs (including opioids)
- Roadway, Waterways and Trails
- Community Wellbeing

Analysis for the 2026 – 2029 Plan

Detachment Commander Licharson confirmed he is seeking Council's input to identify overarching key public safety priorities that are impacting our local communities today and over the next few years, and where Council feels the OPP should be focusing their efforts. These priorities will assist in contributing to our Action Plan moving forward, which will help guide their efforts to keep our roads, waterways, trails and neighbourhoods as safe as possible.

It is the responsibility of the Staff Liaison/Resource, to support the development of strategic documents for the Board and the Corporation of the Town of Collingwood. As such, Staff have reviewed a number of strategic plans, master plans, policies as well as the results of the 2024 Statistically Significant Market Research Survey to develop some key focus areas for Council's considerations in their submission to the Detachment Commander.

Community Based Strategic Plan (CBSP):

We believe that Collingwood's Police Services, as a significant cost center for the Town, should be consistent with or have synergies with our mission, values, pillars and goals.

Mission: Working together to provide excellent services, progressive and accountable decision-making, collaboration and advocacy.

Values: Leadership * Integrity * Respect * Excellence * Financial Stewardship

The key Pillars that reflect support and collaboration with Police Services are:

Connected: Support a Community that is Safe & Well

Key Action: Support homelessness prevention initiatives

Responsible: Continuously drive operational and organizational excellence

The CBSP is a significant document to help guide important strategic decisions for the Town of Collingwood over the next 4 years to support and advance Programs and Services. Synergies and alignment exist throughout the following strategic priorities:

Community Safety and Well-being - The strategic plan emphasizes fostering a safe and healthy community. Collaborative efforts with the OPP should focus on enhancing public safety initiatives, addressing mental health crises, and expanding homelessness prevention partnerships.

Inclusive and Engaged Community - The strategy calls for fostering an inclusive community that prioritizes belonging and active engagement among residents of all backgrounds. Engagement strategies and community policing efforts can strengthen this objective.

Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure: Integrate climate action plans and enhance emergency management capabilities to mitigate and adapt to climate-related hazards. Collaborate with the OPP on strategies for addressing environmental emergencies and promoting sustainability.

Transportation and Access - The strategic plan prioritizes improving transit and active transportation infrastructure, ensuring safe and efficient movement for residents and visitors. Joint efforts with the OPP should enhance road safety and improve traffic flow through strategic enforcement and education.

Economic Growth and Vitality: Support a vibrant economy by ensuring safety and security in downtown and waterfront areas, which are essential hubs for tourism and local business. OPP involvement in these areas can help maintain public order and encourage economic activities.

Downtown Master Plan (DMP):

The Plan identified challenges from their research, and in particular the following:

- There is a perception that the Downtown is uncomfortable and there are specific challenges within and around the existing bus terminal and public washrooms.
- The Downtown is perceived as a car-oriented destination, with vehicle traffic creating safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists.

The DMP Vision develops “Downtown is the heart of Collingwood”. It is to build on the opportunities and address the challenges identified. The Vision reflects and is informed by the Strategic Directions and serves as a compass in directing the collective efforts of the Town, the BIA, and the Collingwood community [included the efforts of the Police] toward the shared goal of creating a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable Downtown.

Strategic Direction 01 - Establish a Strong Foundation for Downtown Growth

Strategic Direction 02 - Celebrate and Connect to Collingwood’s Unique

Strategic Direction 03 - Establish a Heart in Downtown Collingwood

Strategic Direction 04 Activate Downtown in the evening and throughout the year

Strategic Direction 05 Reinforce a Beautiful and Enjoyable Pedestrian Experience

Action Item 4: Continue to Raise Education and Awareness around Mental Health and Homelessness in the Downtown

In collaboration with the County of Simcoe, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team, the Town of Collingwood continues to make strong progress in providing key supports and services related to mental health, food access, and homelessness, including a Mental Health Response Unit that includes Mental Health Crisis Workers and trained OPP officers;

Action Item 6: Continue to Support the Evolution of the Downtown from a Car-Centric to a ‘People-First’ Destination. Concerns identified were identified with speed, cyclists and pedestrians.

The remaining Strategic Directions and Action Items include elements relating to the importance of ensuring that the Downtown remains a safe space, and welcoming for all patrons.

Tourism Master Plan & Economic Development Action Plan

Both the Tourism Master Plan (TMP) and the Economic Development Action Plan also include the importance of a safe community to attract visitors and investment (and retain investment) in Collingwood.

Trip Advisor identifies health and safety as one of the top three considerations for tourists when determining their destination or rate the satisfaction of a destination attended. Guiding principles of the TMP is ensuring a welcoming and safe community. The EDAP Vision echoes Collingwood as a beautiful and 'safe' setting for investment attraction and retention for business, and it's employees.

Market Research Survey

In 2024, the Town retained the services of Forum Research to conduct a statistically significant survey with input from residents of the Town of Collingwood.

Of the 13 services provided by the Town surveyed, the Police Service rated #4 with 89% of the public rating them between Very & Somewhat Satisfied. (1. Fire, 2. Library, 3.Parks & Greenspace). The gap analysis concluded the role of the police service and feeling safe in the community was also a driver of overall satisfaction, and a primary area for maintenance in service versus improvement. However, it also concluded that Roads & Active Transportation is within the top 3 lowest areas of satisfaction. There are a number of ways that the public may believe this to be a problem area, reasons including the condition, maintenance, design, parking, etc. but it also includes speed and vehicle safety for both drivers, cyclists and pedestrians which would benefit of increased visibility.

Other notable concerns identified in the survey include mental health & homelessness, and garbage & cleanliness.

Other Related Collingwood Master Plans, and Guiding Documents:

The following master plans and guiding documents (amongst others), also serve as linkages to important program and service areas where safety is identified as an important feature for its success.

- Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan
- Waterfront Master Plan (including the importance of water safety)
- Active Transportation Plan & Cycling Plan
- Multi-year Accessibility Plan
- Sustainable Development Goal 11: Focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

Additional Opportunities for Consideration in the Action:

Through daily municipal operations, future planning, regular interactions with the public, staff, and Police, the following are a list of additional areas for submission to the Detachment Commander.

- Community Emergency Management Support: With the effects of climate change, significant weather events pose a high demand on emergency services at all levels. Police often serve as the first responders who provide immediate assistance and support during severe weather events, and ensuring communication with the Town's Emergency Management Coordinator. As well as, enforcing evacuation orders and ensuring compliance with safety protocols to minimize harm, control traffic flow, establish safe routes, manage road closures to facilitate emergency response and evacuation efforts, amongst other critical supports.

- **Optimizing Response Times:** Ensuring that appropriate regular coverage for the Town of Collingwood is maintained, particularly under instances of staffing constraints, to optimize response efforts and meet our shared objectives of community safety, efficiency and satisfaction.
- **Youth Engagement:** Council has recognized the important of youth involvement in local government. Ensuring that the Police regular interact with youth is important for a number of reasons such as building trust & legitimacy, steering youth away from criminal activities through early intervention, education, and supporting youth at-risk.
- **Waterway & Trails:** With our active waterfront and trails system, and as the Terminals Point development advances, it is important to also ensure the safety of our residents and visitors that use these recreational amenities. Police focus on these areas ensures the safety of individuals using these areas, preventing accidents and providing assistance in emergencies, and deters criminal activities such as illegal dumping, theft, vandalism.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** Engage in diversity training and community outreach programs to enhance mutual understanding and respect.

Financial Impacts

Although this report has no direct financial impact, the Community Safety & Standards Program is the highest operating cost center in the 2025 Budget (\$12,247,647). The Policing Service is \$5,979,167 or 49% of the Program costs. It is important to ensure that Collingwood is getting the best value for their taxpayer dollars.

Conclusion / Recommendation

Policing is a critically important service to ensuring the success and vitality of the Town of Collingwood, it's residents, visitors, businesses, and stakeholders. Based on Collingwood's unique needs and vision, Council recommend the following considerations be submitted to Detachment Commander Licharson for consideration in the development of the draft 2026-2029 Detachment Plan. It is important to note that specific crime data

and statistics as well as the Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan been not been analyzed as part of this report, but will form a critical aspect of the Detachment Commanders assessment in accordance with the Act.

Overarching consideration, consistent with our CBSP, is recognizing the importance of ‘excellence’ in service delivery, collaboration and financial stewardship, while ensuring there is a focus on a community that is safe & well.

Themes:

Community Relationships and Trust Building:

- Strengthen local community engagement and trust, and increased visibility in the community, in particular the Downtown and waterfront, including increased foot patrols.
- Establish effective communication channels with residents, explore opportunities to use the Farmer Markets and other community events to interact with the community.
- Youth engagement ensuring that the Police regular interact with youth is important for a number of reasons such as building trust & legitimacy, steering youth away from criminal activities through early intervention, education, and supporting youth at-risk. Opportunities exist with collaborative opportunities with our Library Youth programming, Student Mayor of Month Initiative, and co-op and mentoring opportunities for youth development.

Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Homelessness:

- Continued collaboration with local government bodies, businesses, and community organizations, including the Town’s Internal Homelessness Support Working Group, Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness and others.
- Develop or enhance existing programs that address the challenges of substance abuse, particularly in relation to the opioid crisis including homelessness prevention initiatives. Including opportunities to enhance foot patrols and presence in the Downtown and waterfront, to ensure patrons and residents in the

downtown feel safe and help linking individuals in need to the appropriate County of Simcoe Service providers.

- Explore opportunities to enhance the partnerships and optimize responsiveness of the Mental Health Crisis Team, and other supports for mental health interventions and initiatives.

It is important to note that often, police find themselves responding to calls that are complex but not criminal with no chargeable offences. The police are available to the public 24/7, but that does not mean that they are the most appropriate to respond to calls that are often medically or socially complex. In looking at root cause, there is a clear indication that all sectors have a shared responsibility to support our residents' safety and well-being.

Traffic and Road, Waterway & Trail Safety:

- Increased visibility and support to improve road, trail and water (in the harbour areas) safety, especially during peak tourist seasons and emergency events.
- Increase enforcement of traffic laws, with a focus on pedestrian and cyclist safety, including enhanced public awareness campaigns, including collaboration with the Town of Collingwood Communication.
- Coordinate an annual meeting (or more frequent if needed) with the Town's Transportation Staff to discuss challenges, concerns, trends and successes to foster our culture for continuous improvement opportunities.

Resource Allocation and Management:

- Optimize the use of personnel and resources to meet local needs.
- Implement effective scheduling and deployment strategies for officers to ensure appropriate daily coverage and enhanced presence as may be needed for significant events.
- Be prepared for and explore opportunities to leverage AI and other emerging technologies to support better and more efficient policing services

- Establishing a process to enhance communication and partnership with the Town's Municipal By-law Enforcement Division to create increased synergies in policy development and enforcement.

Cultural Competency and Diversity:

- Continue to encourage cultural awareness and sensitivity within the police force including outreach programs to build trust and transparency within diverse community segments.
- Promote inclusion and diversity in recruiting and community interactions.
- Continue to address issues as they arise related to cultural differences and bias in policing.

Environmental and Emergency Preparedness:

- Continue to work the Town in the development and updates to plans for dealing with local environmental challenges and natural disasters.
- Collaborate with local emergency services to enhance response capabilities for weather-related incidents and other emergencies.

Local Crime Trends and Prevention (A critical component that will be further explored by the Detachment Commander in the development of the plan):

- Address specific crime issues prevalent in the community (i.e. drugs, theft, fraud, domestic violence, mischief, graffiti, vandalism, etc.)
- Develop targeted crime prevention strategies.
- Engage in proactive policing initiatives to deter local crime.

The above feedback, including any additions or revisions from Council, will be submitted as Council's feedback in response to the Detachment Action Plan consultation, and copied to the Collingwood Police Detachment Board for information.

3. Input from Other Sources

- Department Heads and Customer Service Staff provided input into the report

4. Applicable Policy or Legislation

- Community Based Strategic Plan
- Downtown Master Plan
- Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, S.O. 2019

5. Considerations

2024-2028 Community Based Strategic Plan: Advances pillar(s) below:

☐ Sustainable ☒ Connected ☐ Vibrant ☒ Responsible

- ☒ Services adjusted if any: Police
- ☒ Climate Change / Sustainability: Not Applicable
- ☒ Communication / Engagement: Not Applicable
- ☒ Accessibility / Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: Consistent with Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- ☒ Registered Lobbyist(s) relating to content: N/A

Next steps and future action required following endorsement:

The Council approved feedback for the 2026-2029 Local Detachment Plan development process will be submitted to Detachment Commander Licharson, with a copy to be followed to the Collingwood Police Detachment Board for information.

6. Appendices and Other Resources

Resource 1: [2023-2025 Collingwood/The Blue Mountains OPP Detachment Action Plan](#)

Resource 2: [Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, S.O. 2019, c. 1, Sched. 1](#)

7. Approval

Prepared By:

Sara Almas, (A)CAO/Director of Legislative Services/Clerk, (A)Executive of Customer & Corporate Services

CAO Comments:

- ☒ Endorsed by (A)CAO/Director of Legislative Services/Clerk Sara Almas on April 13, 2025 to proceed to COW.
- ☒ Endorsed by CAO Skinner on April 23, 2025 to proceed to Council, as Amended.

