



# NEWS RELEASE

## **Toronto Police Association presents at the Toronto Police Services Board Meeting considering the 2024 Budget Proposal**

**Toronto, ON, December 19, 2023 –**

Today, the Toronto Police Association presented at the Toronto Police Services Board Meeting as part of its effort to raise awareness with the public and advocate for its members during the City of Toronto's 2024 Budget process.

Using an extensive network of communications channels, the deputation is only one step in a city-wide public awareness campaign about the challenges that are facing the Toronto Police Service, members, and the city at large.

According to the presentation put forward by the Toronto Police Service:

- Since 2010, the population of Toronto has grown by 13% while the number of police officers has declined by 11%, amounting to **400 fewer officers for 460,000 more people.**
- As of September, **emergency calls to police are up over 18% this year.**
- An average **response time to the highest priority emergency call is more than 22 minutes.**
- 60% of the time there are **no units immediately available** to respond.
- As of September, **major crimes are up 21%** this year.

"We ask our members to provide our residents with adequate and effective policing, which at a minimum includes crime prevention, emergency response, assistance to victims, and public order maintenance," said Jon Reid, President of the TPA. "The tradeoff is that the City must give us the tools and resources needed to do that job safely, and effectively. Without



the appropriate investment in policing, the public can expect the situation to get worse.”

A full version of the submission by the Toronto Police Association is below.

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*The Toronto Police Association represents almost 8,000 police and civilian members of the Toronto Police Service. We are a professional organization dedicated to advancing the interests of our members through education, political action, and legislative advocacy. We operate in an open, ethical, and professional manner and strive to promote professionalism and accountability within the ranks of our members. Our foremost priority is the wellbeing of our members and the community we serve.*

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## **Deputation to the Toronto Police Services Board Budget Committee Meeting**

**President Jon Reid  
Toronto Police Association  
December 19, 2023**

### ***Check Against Delivery***

- Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair and Board Members
- I thank you for having me here today... especially given the importance of these special budget Board meetings.
- As you know, I am Jon Reid, president of the Toronto Police Association.
- For the sake of those in attendance or watching the live stream who may not know me or the TPA... the TPA is the Association that represents the approximately 8,000 members of the Toronto Police Service who dutifully serve Toronto's residents in both sworn and civilian capacities.
- I, like my Board colleagues who serve on the TPA Board, are elected by the membership to serve in our roles. Our members trust us with the responsibility and privilege of being their voice; of advocating for them, both in and outside the workplace; and expressing their concerns because they cannot speak on matters publicly.
- We ask our members to provide our residents with adequate and effective policing... adequate and effective policing that is impacted by the unique characteristics of our city. Unique characteristics you've heard members of the command team articulate to you.
- The trade off in that request... the city must in turn give them the tools and resources they need to do that job safely, and effectively. And



- you as the Board must impart this importance on the city. And I, as their president, must impart that importance to you.
- I've distributed amongst you all a copy of the postcard mail out the TPA engaged in last week.
- It is important for us ... as the voice of our members – to communicate to Toronto's residents the reality of the dire situation we are in today.
- I want to take a moment to go over with you the content in that card.
- Since 2010, our city has grown by 13%... while the number of our police officers has declined 11%. That means we have 600 fewer officers for 460,000 more people.
- We have 169 police officers per 100,000 residents in our city. That, in my opinion, is an unacceptable number for service delivery. From a human perspective, this creates an unfair occupational environment that exacerbates the stressors our members have to endure.
- Another stat we have shared with the public...as of September, emergency calls are up 18%
- And terrifyingly ...it takes us, on average, 22 minutes to respond to the highest priority call.
- And 60% of the time, there are no units immediately available to respond to an emergency
- I ask each of you here to take a moment and imagine being at home and hearing a commotion, an unexpected sound of glass breaking, or the front door opening... and coming to realize that someone has broken into your home. You pick up the phone to call 911... and you are put on hold. And even if you are not on hold – imagine having to wait 22 minutes for someone to show up.



- This is today's reality in Toronto. It isn't fair to the citizens of our city... and it isn't fair to the men and women of this organization. And it surely cannot be categorized as providing adequate and effective policing.
- Often the focus of discussion surrounding adequate and effective policing is on response times... but I would be remis in not flagging on behalf of our members that that is only one aspect of policing.
- Showing up ... in a timely fashion is only one aspect. But we have a responsibility to do so much more... think about the investigations, the administrative responsibilities that come along with that, victim support, crime prevention... just to name a few.
- We continue in a system where we take from Peter to pay Paul... and it is not sustainable or responsible. Policing cannot be a shell game of moving resources. The fact is, we are not able in the current environment to satisfy our policing responsibilities.
- Let's think about some of the troubling events of recent history in our city.
- All of us as Justice System participants urged our political leaders to address our concerns with the bail system and bail reform. But we can't lose sight of the fact that we also have a responsibility to supervise and enforce the laws when those who are on bail are released in our communities. We do not have the resources or the available time to do this work.
- As another example, in very recent memory we suffered a spat of violent incidents on our public transit systems... on the tail end of a pandemic where residents and commuters alike were already hesitant and uneasy in turning again to public transit. Our resources are limited... and it became a shell game of pulling from already taxed



units to increase transit patrols temporarily. Media frenzy dies down... back to status quo. It isn't fair to our communities.

- You've heard Svina, our CAO discuss unique characteristics of our city... like the concentration of consulates in our city. Think of the impact the war in the middle east is having on our communities... the policing responsibility of facilitating peaceful protests during charged times... not to mention the increase in hate crime investigations. All of that requires resources... and we again must pull those resources at the expense of others.
- This is what happened last year when the Service dissolved the CRUs and right now it means, as the Chief highlighted at the last meeting, investigative units like our Drug Squad will continue to be depleted.
- There are some who will suggest that the solution to this problem is simply to take tasks away from police officers – and the money – and give those responsibilities to someone else.
- We have worked closely with the Service on options for Alternative Service Delivery because we agree there are things our members are doing that they shouldn't be doing.
- But right now, we are talking about unacceptable wait times for calls that only the police can attend.
- When we look at the non-police models for responding to mental health calls for service, as an example.
- That assistance is welcome and appreciated but they are only responding to a fraction of the calls we receive for mental health. Not because they don't have the resources but because they are not eligible to respond to the rest of the calls.

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- De-tasking is not the answer to this problem. Several years of zero-based budgets and moratoriums on hiring are why we are in this dire situation to begin with.
- The Service continues to take the steps needed to put forward reasonable budget proposals. It is up to you as the Police Services Board to approve a responsible budget and urge the City to approve an investment that adequately and effectively funds policing in Toronto.
- Thank you.