

Report to Council



Date: November 28, 2022
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: 2022 Q2 & Q3 RCMP Update
Department: Kelowna RCMP Detachment

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive the RCMP Quarterly Update report from the Superintendent, Kelowna RCMP Detachment, dated November 28, 2022.

Purpose:

To present Council with an update based on 2022 Q2 and Q3 (April 1 to September 30, 2022) public safety and crime data.

Background:

On April 12, 2021, Council approved the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan for the Kelowna RCMP Detachment. The Plan, is focused on achieving measurable outcomes related to public safety, is comprised of four pillars:

- 1) Increase the sense of safety in our public spaces;
- 2) Decrease the risk of property crime;
- 3) Earn the trust of more citizens that have experienced persons crimes; and
- 4) Show up at our best for every citizen.

In support of the Strategic Plan, a comprehensive performance measurement and reporting framework was adopted in the spring of 2021. In April 2022, a one-year review was completed with several refinements made.

Trends & Themes

This report mirrors that of Q1 which illustrated that locally reported crime, generally, is returning to pre-pandemic levels; consistent with national trends. Notwithstanding, Kelowna RCMP responded to 6.7 per cent fewer calls for service overall in Q2 and Q3 compared to the same period in 2021. However, there was a notable 38 per cent increase in calls for service in Q2 for the downtown area, compared to last year when public health orders were still in place.

Despite temporary staff vacancy challenges this year, the Kelowna RCMP maintained response times for Priority 1 & 2 calls with only marginal differences compared to last year. However, responses times to Priority 3 & 4 calls were impacted although, this was mitigated by Municipal Employee Watch Support Officers (WSO) who managed many of these less serious incidents in a timely manner. The Kelowna WSO Unit was established in summer 2021 and Kelowna is the second RCMP detachment provincially to introduce this model.

Break & Enter (Business).

The City of Kelowna experienced a 38 per cent increase in B&E (Business) in Q2 and a 35 per cent increase in Q3 compared to the same timeframes in 2021 and is now consistent with pre-pandemic (2019) levels. In response, the Kelowna RCMP began targeted enforcement of priority repeat offenders and established a Task Force to further refine options. Early analysis suggests these efforts, enabled by the renewed ability to resource proactive enforcement positions, is having a significant and immediate impact. This will continue to be evaluated and reported further in early 2023.

Bike Thefts

Compared to 2021, bike theft increased 85 per cent and 41 per cent in Q2 and Q3, respectively. However, it is important to highlight that the number of bike thefts align directly with pre-pandemic (2019) rates. Notwithstanding, the Kelowna RCMP has re-launched its Bait Bike Program with demonstrated success. In Q3, bait bikes were deployed 13 times leading to three arrests. This initiative, along with targeted enforcement of repeat offenders, led to a 23.5 per cent decrease in bike thefts from August to September 2022.

Robberies

Of concern to our community, and the Kelowna RCMP, is a notable increase of 91.6 per cent in robbery (theft with violence or intimidation) which is up by 33 cases. The increasing trend of robbery occurrences was also observed across the province. Noteworthy, the Kelowna RCMP recently refined its reporting criteria to align with provincial and federal best practices to ensure theft with violence or intimidation is categorized appropriately. This improved approach to coding incidents may account for some of the statistical increase. This data set shows a noted jump that is expected to normalize with routine improved categorization of files.

Kelowna RCMP have also reacted to the violence and thefts with a proactive response. A media strategy is being developed to equip businesses with late hours and employees working alone overnight (i.e., gas stations, convenience stores, and cannabis / liquor establishments) with protective strategies. Such crime prevention approaches are augmented by criminal intelligence analysis of robbery files to identify opportunities for targeted enforcement with repeat offenders.

Shoplifting & Fraud

Although, an increase in both shoplifting and fraud in both quarters as compared to 2021 has been observed, shoplifting in 2022, is down 18 per cent overall while fraud has also seen a decrease since August. Deeper analysis in Q4 will help to develop the necessary strategies needed to continue with these noted reductions.

Domestic Violence

Reported cases of domestic violence cases declined in Q2 (-19 per cent) and Q3 (-34 per cent). This compares to 2021 figures when reported domestic violence cases increased significantly due to pandemic-driven factors.

Overall, the City of Kelowna is trending downwards in violent crimes against persons whereas both province and district-wide reporting are trending upwards in this same category.

The following includes standardized indicators from the Canadian Police Performance Metrics Framework and measures of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan. All indicators relate to the City of Kelowna:

Quarter 2 Metricsⁱ

| Police Capacity & Response | 2021 Q2 | 2022 Q2 | % Change |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Total Calls for Service | 17199 | 16311 | -5% |
| Total Calls for Service from Downtown area | 1706 | 2359 | 38% |
| Total Calls for Service from Rutland area | Not avail | 1373 | Not avail |
| Calls for Service, Priority 1 & 2 ⁱⁱ | 6330 | 5419 | -14% |
| Response Time for Priority 1 Calls (in minutes) | 7.8 | 8 | -2.5% |
| Response Time for Priority 2 Calls (in minutes) | 10.3 | 10 | 3% |
| % of Calls for Service receiving Callback ⁱⁱⁱ | Not avail | 39.5% | -- |
| Officer Hours assigned to public spaces: Downtown, Rutland & parks | Not avail | 4103 | -- |
| Caseload ^{iv} | 111 | 106.3 | -4.3% |
| Total Property Offences | 2935 | 3202 | 9% |
| Auto Theft | 152 | 147 | -3.3% |
| Theft from Motor Vehicle | 704 | 600 | -14.8% |
| Break & Enter – Business | 167 | 231 | 38.3% |
| Shoplifting | 372 | 479 | 28.8% |
| Break & Enter – Residential | 72 | 82 | 13.9% |
| Bike Theft | 133 | 247 | 85.7% |
| Fraud | 294 | 339 | 15.3% |
| Mischief | 585 | 487 | -16.8% |
| Arson | 31 | 51 | 64.5% |
| % of Thefts which reported Forced Entry ^v | Not avail | 37.7% | -- |
| Persons recommended for Charges ^{vi} | -- | 66 | |
| Offences by 28 Repeat Offenders on Release ^{vii} | -- | 210 | -- |
| Total Persons Offences | 890 | 818 | -8% |
| Assault (Common) | 365 | 314 | -14% |
| Domestic Violence | 247 | 201 | -19% |
| Sex Offences ^{viii} | 46 | 41 | -10.8% |
| Theft with Violence (known as robbery) | 17 | 34 | 100.0% |
| Assault Cause Bodily Harm/ Assault with Weapon | 101 | 124 | 22.8% |
| Illegal Drugs | | | |
| Illegal Drug Trafficking | 19 | 18 | -5.3% |
| Traffic Safety | | | |
| Traffic Violation Tickets | 930 | 339 | -63.5% |
| Collisions – Combined | 272 | 278 | 2.2% |
| Relevant Social Indicators (reflecting policing complexity in Kelowna) | | | |
| Calls for Service with Mental Health Component | 824 | 821 | -0.4% |
| Calls for service, MHA Apprehensions | 188 | 149 | -20.7% |
| Calls for service, Overdose ^{ix} | 43 | 74 | 72.1% |

Quarter 3 Metrics^x

| Police Capacity & Response | 2021 Q3 | 2022 Q3 | % Change |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Total Calls for Service | 17960 | 16500 | -8% |
| Total Calls for Service from Downtown area | 2419 | 2338 | -3% |
| Total Calls for Service from Rutland area | Not avail | 1447 | -- |
| Calls for Service, Priority 1 & 2 ^{xi} | 6336 | 5633 | -11% |
| Response Time for Priority 1 Calls (in minutes) | 8.3 | 8.3 | 0% |
| Response Time for Priority 2 Calls (in minutes) | 10.1 | 10.3 | 2% |
| % of Calls for Service receiving Callback ^{xii} | Not avail | 46% | -- |
| Officer Hours assigned to public spaces: Downtown, Rutland & parks | Not avail | 3892 | -- |
| Caseload ^{xiii} | 114 | 104.1 | -8.7% |
| Total Property Offences | 3193 | 3223 | 1% |
| Auto Theft | 157 | 155 | -1% |
| Theft from Motor Vehicle | 637 | 667 | 5% |
| Break & Enter – Business | 165 | 222 | 35% |
| Shoplifting | 320 | 361 | 13% |
| Break & Enter – Residential | 99 | 84 | -15% |
| Bike Theft | 191 | 269 | 41% |
| Fraud | 357 | 411 | 15% |
| Mischief | 594 | 476 | -20% |
| Arson | 41 | 35 | -15% |
| % of Thefts which reported Forced Entry ^{xiv} | Not avail | 32% | -- |
| Persons recommended for Charges ^{xv} | -- | 83 | -- |
| Offences by 28 Repeat Offenders on Release ^{xvi} | -- | 87 | -- |
| Total Persons Offences | 833 | 891 | 7% |
| Assault (Common) | 306 | 322 | 5% |
| Domestic Violence | 254 | 167 | -34% |
| Sex Offences ^{xvii} | 44 | 48 | 9.1% |
| Theft with Violence (known as robbery) | 19 | 35 | 84% |
| Assault Cause Bodily Harm/ Assault with Weapon | 131 | 144 | 10% |
| Illegal Drugs | | | |
| Illegal Drug Trafficking | 17 | 22 | 29% |
| Traffic Safety | | | |
| Traffic Violation Tickets | 661 | 622 | -5.9% |
| Collisions – Combined | 357 | 362 | 1.4% |
| Relevant Social Indicators (reflecting policing complexity in Kelowna) | | | |
| Calls for Service with Mental Health Component | 833 | 669 | -20% |
| Calls for service, MHA Apprehensions | 142 | 165 | 16% |
| Calls for service, Overdose ^{xviii} | 41 | 40 | -2% |

Discussion and Considerations:

As with most Canadian industries, the police sector is struggling to recruit, train and retain officers. Recruit classes at the RCMP Depot are significantly smaller and, in some cases, have been cancelled outright. This challenge is universal; experienced by RCMP and municipal agencies, alike, and is noted across North America. Further, the issue is being aggravated by a higher-than-average retirement rate. Kelowna RCMP Detachment, like all in British Columbia, are experiencing higher than desirable vacancy levels. In turn, this results in higher call volume, caseload, and pressure on working officers; a situation that leads to higher illness rates which exacerbates the situation further.

In response, Kelowna RCMP took several steps to mitigate the impacts, maintain critical service delivery in the face of post-pandemic tourism rates, and to improve the situation for 2023. This included temporary redeployment of proactive enforcement and non-frontline human resources to the frontline to ensure service levels were maintained throughout the summer. Creatively, the RCMP secured significant support from Lower Mainland RCMP Detachments during long weekends. With these additional resources in place, the RCMP experienced a noted reduction in calls for service, likely due to their high visibility in high crime and busy tourist areas. This initiative also saw an offshoot benefit with several officers requesting to be posted to the Kelowna detachment, after experiencing the fulfilling work offered and desirable living conditions within the City of Kelowna. Moreover, Kelowna RCMP were identified divisionally as a staffing priority this summer. As a result, an unprecedented number of officers are being posted to the detachment this year. The vacancy rate is projected to improve from a low of 71 per cent in Q2 to normalized rates around 85 per cent by February 2023.

Targeted Enforcement

As noted in this report, Kelowna RCMP experienced a continued increase in property crime offences, a trend noted across British Columbia. In response to the largest increases in offence categories including B&E – Business, Shoplifting, Bike Theft and Fraud, the Kelowna RCMP employed a data-led targeted response whereby individual offenders were prioritized for enforcement based on their repeated patterns of criminality. This strategy began in August and, by September, there was a notable decline in crime in all categories. While these are very preliminary results, the Kelowna RCMP will continue to employ a targeted enforcement response to trending crimes through threshold analysis and in the deployment of an updated repeat offender management program model in line with the Lepard/Butler Report (2022) recommendations.

Conclusion:

The metrics and related data provided within this report were utilized to inform, through evidenced-based analysis, the decisions that have guided the responses to crime and public safety in the City of Kelowna. The Kelowna RCMP Officer in Charge continues to drive change with a focus on sustainable workloads, appropriate staffing levels and wellness of all members of Kelowna Detachment. This has been done by creating efficiencies through reprioritization and realignment of administrative work to support staff that has led to additional operational capacity for front-line members. Our commitment to all initiatives identified in the strategic plan remains our top priority.

Internal Circulation:

Community Safety Department
Communications Department

Submitted by: K. Triance, Superintendent, Kelowna RCMP Detachment

Approved for inclusion:



S. Leatherdale, Divisional Director, Corporate & Protective Services

cc: T. White, Police Services Manager

C. Cornock, Community Safety Service Manager

ⁱ The following annual metrics are used to monitor delivery of our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan:

- Objective 1, Increase the sense of safety in our public spaces: Citizen perceived level of safety in areas including Downtown & Rutland per City of Kelowna bi-annual Public Safety & Crime Survey
- Objective 2, Decrease the risk of property crime: Percent of property offence charges that resulted in a conviction
- Objective 3, Earn the trust of more citizens that have experienced persons crimes: Detachment participation in trauma-informed practice training, Detachment referrals to community supports
- Objective 4, Show up at our best for every citizen: Seats at senior decision-making table held underrepresented groups; Detachment participation in unconscious bias training & Indigenous Cultural Safety; Detachment participation in mental wellness training and crisis debrief supports; Citizen satisfaction with police services as per City of Kelowna Citizen Survey

ⁱⁱ Priority 1 calls are the most serious emergency calls and require immediate police response. They involve a risk of loss of life or grievous bodily harm. Examples include in-progress abductions, assaults, domestic disputes, home invasions, robberies, sexual assaults, screams for help, shootings, stabbings, and suicidal persons. Priority 2 calls are urgent calls that require immediate police attention such as a residential break and enter in progress.

ⁱⁱⁱ False alarms, abandoned calls for service, traffic and online reports, assistance outside of public safety and failure to appear are not indicated for follow up calls. New metric, changes to system was required to capture the data. Changes implemented in March 2022.

^{iv} Case loads are defined as the number of Criminal Code offences (excluding drugs and traffic offences) per authorized strength. They represent the workload per officer, and as a result, are often a better indicator of the demand for police services than either a jurisdiction's population or its crime rate. The case load is calculated by dividing the total number of Criminal Code offences by the authorized strength for the reporting period. The case load was calculated using the year previous to the end date of the quarter being reported on (i.e. 2021-07-01 through 2022-06-30). *For reference, in 2020, annual caseload for Coquitlam was 40 (pop 152,800) and for Township of Langley (pop 133,951) was 54.*

^v Excludes shoplifting as forced entry is not relevant. New metric, changes to system was required to capture the data. Changes implemented in March 2022.

^{vi} Consistent with national reporting, the "persons charged" category will include the number of people recommended for charges by police (not the number of charges laid or recommended).

^{vii} In Kelowna, repeat offenders are designated as repeat property crime offenders with more than 10 negative contacts with police in the previous year. Not all individuals who meet these criteria are designated as repeat offenders due to the volume of individuals who do meet these criteria. The list of Repeat Offenders is reviewed biannually, at which time persons may be added or removed from the list.

^{viii} Sexual offences include sexual assault level 3 (aggravated), sexual assault level 2 (weapon or causing bodily harm), sexual assault level 1 (common sexual assault), and sexual violations against children.

^{ix} Overdose counts do not reflect all overdose incidents occurring within police service boundaries as response is frequently by paramedics. Where police do not attend, the occurrence will not appear in police records.

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