

# TORONTO POLICE SERVICE NEWS RELEASE

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## **Toronto Police Service's 2023 Budget Request prioritizes Core Services, Emergency Response Time Improvement to address increasing demand for service**

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The Toronto Police Service ("the Service") released its operating budget request for 2023 as part of a multi-year plan that prioritizes core services, the hiring of officers, special constables and communication operators to ensure timely help is available when Torontonians call 9-1-1, and also advances technology to create sufficient capacity to allow officers to optimize their time to best serve the city's increasing needs.

"As we considered our 2023 priorities, it was clear that our budget must reflect what we have heard from the public. It must be about core services and response times to emergency calls from Torontonians," said Chief of Police Myron Demkiw. "This budget request reflects the critical need to hire more officers, 9-1-1 operators and special constables to increase operational capacity, and in turn public safety. It also prioritizes modernizing our operations to enable the Service to keep pace with the increasing demands of our growing city."

### **Efficiencies and Reallocations**

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Svina Dhaliwal said, "For the last decade the Service has implemented cost containment measures including reallocating existing resources when areas of priority were identified by the Service and the community. This budget proposal aims to improve emergency response times as part of a multi-year modernization plan to effectively address the city's increasing demand for police services".

In 2022, the Service redeployed officers from Community Response Units in multiple Divisions in large part to support the commitment to expand the Neighbourhood Community Officer Program, in direct response to community interest. The Service also changed the way it attends community special events to ensure that appropriate numbers of police officers are available for large scale, public events, while not depleting resources needed to respond to calls for service. The Service also reallocated existing resources into the Hate Crime Unit and re-introduced a specialized unit to address rising auto thefts and carjackings. Lastly, the Service has changed shift schedules for emergency response units in order to better align resources with calls for service at different times of the day and night.

Chief Demkiw added, “While necessary, the cumulative effect of these types of measures is that they have come at some cost to member wellness, a lack of operational flexibility in some key areas, and a degradation of core services, including in emergency response times as outlined by the Auditor General’s recent report”.

## **Auditor General’s Report**

In June 2022, Toronto’s Auditor General, Beverly Romeo-Beehler, identified in an audit of the Service that response times to all calls, but in particular Priority 1 calls, were increasing and service levels were not keeping up with the demands of a growing city.

“Despite the tremendous progress we’ve made towards building capacity at the Service, there’s more work that needs to be done to ensure we maintain the core services that the public expects from us,” added Chief Demkiw.

He continued, “My priorities as Chief include improving and earning trust in the Toronto Police Service. On this front, the Auditor General’s report raised an important issue. Our ability to answer when the call is made is one of the fundamental commitments of policing that we must deliver on. The public needs to trust that the police will arrive when needed. They should expect nothing less from us and that expectation reaffirms our conviction that greater investment in our organizational and operational priorities and modernization efforts is critical.”

## **Public Engagement**

Public engagement is an integral part of the budget development process and this request is a reflection of the feedback received from communities across the city. Consultation demonstrated that the public believes that greater resources are needed in the following areas: 9-1-1 response and patrol; crime prevention; investigations and victim support. The Service also received resounding support for the Neighbourhood Community Officer Program. Of the 1,500 surveyed, over 90% indicated concern for current emergency response times. 86% of respondents said it is important to have a Neighbourhood Community officer assigned to their community.

## **The 2023 Budget Request**

The Toronto Police Service’s net operating budget request is \$1,166.5 Million (M) which represents a 4.3% increase over last year. Of the \$48.3M increase, \$18.5M or 1.7% is required to apply negotiated wage increases under collective agreements with the Toronto Police Association and Senior Officers’ Organization.

The Service’s budgets have consistently represented a declining share of the City’s overall budgets, from 26% in 2011 to 22.9% in 2022.

Compared to other major Canadian and U.S. cities, Toronto’s officers serve an increasing number of residents per officer, not including the additional numbers of those who come to the City daily to work and visit. In 2011 there was one Toronto Police officer for every 468 residents and in 2021, there was one police officer for approximately every 600 residents.

Chief Demkiw outlined his priorities during the change of Command ceremony on December 19, 2022 as improving trust, accelerating reform, and supporting safer communities.

The Service has identified the following key areas where additional investments will be made in 2023 upon budget approval:

**Improving Emergency Response Time:** This budget will allow the Service to build its core service delivery team by adding approximately 200 uniform officers within the next year, including 162 priority response officers of which 25 will be deployed to support community safety in the downtown core, and 22 major case management personnel which will allow the Service to begin to meet legislative requirements. The Service also plans to fill 90 Special Constable positions and hire an additional 20 9-1-1 communication operators. These totals take in to account anticipated separations and retirements.

**Crisis Call Diversion Program:** Extending our program of placing community crisis workers in our 9-1-1 Communications Centre underlines our commitment to alternative service delivery; allowing the 9-1-1 Communications team to identify when a police response is not required and community agency support alone will be the best response. Our partnership with the Gerstein Crisis Centre remains an important one. The Service will also participate in the City's Community Crisis Service pilot and efforts to implement SafeTO: A Community Safety & Well-Being Plan. By applying a public health lens to our practices, we will invest more time, energy and resources into preventing gun violence before it happens.

**Technological Advancement:** Technology can help ensure our officers' time is focused on the highest value work, such as responding to the most urgent calls from Torontonians. Increased investment in the Service's technology will drive efficiencies through greater automation and digitization of work; provide advanced analytics to improve decision-making capabilities; and, increase officer mobility through initiatives like the Digital Officer Program.

**Accelerating Police Reform:** The Service is dedicated to addressing the findings and recommendations from key reports and independent reviews that have identified areas in need of improvement. This includes Major Case Management improvements so the Service can begin to meet legislative requirements, the recommendations of the Honourable Justice Gloria J. Epstein, Head of the Independent Civilian Review into Missing Person Investigations, the City's Auditor General report on 9-1-1 call response times and priority calls for service, as well as the Board's 81 directions on police reform.

**Building Community Trust:** This budget request will allow for expansion of the Neighbourhood Community Officer program by an additional 16 Neighbourhood Community officers by the end of 2023. The Service will also continue its efforts to prevent the increase of gang violence through a multi-sectoral approach focused on education, prevention, intervention and suppression in partnership with community agencies. It is also expected that the Service will release an action plan to address the findings from its race-based data collection work.

**Member Wellness & Improving Trust Internally:** The Service is committed to the wellness, development and training of its people for a healthy and professionalized workforce, including the implementation of recommendations from Deloitte's report on workplace harassment that was released in July.

The Service is moving toward service and outcomes-based budgeting to support the City of Toronto's overall budgeting process. As part of this, the 2023 Budget will outline key metrics and costs associated with the following service categories: 911 Response and Patrol; Investigations and Victim Support; Crime Prevention; Events and Protests; Traffic and Parking Enforcement; and Courts and Prisoner Management.

To learn more about the Service's Budget 2023 request, including line by line information, please visit the [2023 Budget webpage](#).

To review the Auditor General's report on TPS, please visit the [Auditor General webpage](#).

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Allison Sparkes for Office of the Chief