

**Report to / Rapport au:**

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE BOARD  
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

**2 December 2024 / 2 décembre 2024**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

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**SUBJECT: CORE STRATEGY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD OPERATIONS CENTRE  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**OBJET: PLAN DE MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA STRATEGIE DU CORE ET DU  
CENTRE DES OPÉRATIONS DE QUARTIER**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Police Service Board receive this report for information.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que la Commission de service police d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent  
rapport à titre d'information.**

**BACKGROUND**

In 2024, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) implemented significant changes to enhance public safety in our downtown core through the Community Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) Strategy. This report marks the conclusion of the initial implementation phase and provides an overview of the strategy's five key components and their current status.

CORE was developed to address the unique challenges faced by the ByWard Market, Rideau Street corridor, and Sandy Hill north. It embodies the heart of our mission: serving the public by preventing harm to our community. The strategy comprises five interconnected initiatives:

1. Neighbourhood Operations Center (NOC)
2. Integrated Community Situation Table (ICST)
3. Hot Spots Policing and Focused Deterrence
4. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
5. Community Advisory Board (CAB)

CORE is a proactive, evidence-based, and harm-focused community policing strategy. It ensures that police are in the right place, at the right time, while working collaboratively with our community to create sustainable solutions. This approach focuses on three key principles: taking a proactive stance, concentrating efforts on areas and individuals most in need of intervention, and partnering with the community to develop effective crime prevention strategies.

As we conclude this implementation phase, the CORE Strategy remains the cornerstone of the Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) commitment to downtown safety. Its success thus far demonstrates the crucial role of community partnerships in driving positive change. Moving forward, OPS remains committed to the ongoing evaluation, refinement, and expansion of these initiatives to further enhance public safety in downtown Ottawa.

Further reporting on the CORE Strategy will be conducted through the OPS twice-annual reporting process, as mandated by the Provincial Solicitor General funding agreement. These reports will focus on the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

1. Community perceptions of safety and security.
2. Number of police patrols in hot spots.
3. Incidents of crimes against the person.
4. Numbers of at-risk individuals referred to support services.
5. Access rates to Community Re-integration programs.
6. Retention rates in Community Re-integration and Day Reporting programs at 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years
7. Incidents of property crime.
8. Identification and interventions of individuals at high risk of reoffending

These metrics will guide our ongoing efforts to enhance safety and well-being in downtown Ottawa.

## DISCUSSION

The initial implementation phase of the CORE Strategy has yielded significant progress across all components. Each initiative has been successfully operationalized, with varying degrees of adaptation based on community and operational needs.

Key achievements include:

- Establishment of the NOC as a hub for multi-agency collaboration. The NOC hosts the Frontline Taskforce (FTF), bringing together multiple city agencies working together toward community safety and well-being.
- Successful launch of the ICST, with a new community-led Steering Committee providing oversight and governance. For the first time in Ottawa, the ICST has united over 30 diverse community partners, creating an unprecedented collaborative approach to support the complex needs of vulnerable individuals.
- Implementation of evidence-based Hot Spots Policing has been operationalized by OPS Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRT). This has increased the number of officers on foot patrol in high-priority areas, representing a strong commitment toward proactive, community-oriented policing.
- Integration of CPTED principles into community safety efforts, with formal agreements established with the Rideau BIA and BMDA. Twenty high-priority addresses have been identified for initial CPTED audits and reports, with funding allocated for environmental safety and security improvements.
- Realignment of the CAB with city-wide stakeholder engagement initiatives. OPS is now working closely with city partners at Community Social Services and Ottawa Public Health to participate in a planned initiative that will bring all stakeholders together.

Challenges faced during implementation, particularly related to staffing levels, are being addressed through ongoing recruitment efforts for both officers and civilian analysts. OPS is working diligently to ensure necessary resources are available to maintain and expand CORE initiatives.

The CORE Strategy's success thus far demonstrates the crucial role of community partnerships in driving positive change. As we move forward, OPS remains committed to evaluating, refining, and expanding these initiatives to further enhance public safety in downtown Ottawa. Future updates on these ongoing efforts will be provided through the Provincial Funding reporting process, ensuring continued transparency and accountability.

## **Neighbourhood Operations Center (NOC)**

Since its opening in June, the Neighbourhood Operations Center (NOC) has quickly become a cornerstone of the CORE Strategy. It serves as the central hub for the newly formed multi-agency Frontline Taskforce (FTF) to facilitate real-time information sharing and rapid problem-solving, enhancing our collective ability to respond effectively to community needs.

Building on this initial success, the FTF has expanded its role by inviting community agencies and partners to attend meetings as guest presenters. Presentations from the ANCHOR Program, Center 454, and the Sandy Hill Community Health Center OASIS Consumption and Treatment Site have significantly enhanced our understanding of vulnerable community members' needs. This initiative has improved our responsiveness to emerging issues and led to more holistic strategies for addressing community safety and well-being. By including community agency service partners in problem-solving processes, the FTF has gained valuable insights into the challenges faced by at-risk populations and the resources available to support them.

To further the NOC's collaborative vision, a new access protocol has been implemented, making the shared main area accessible to all city partners while maintaining a secure police-only rear area. This arrangement enhances inter-agency cooperation and reinforces the NOC's role as a community hub.

During the OPS Crime Prevention Week event in November, over 100 community members visited the NOC, engaging with representatives from OPS, By-Law, OC Transpo, and the ByWard Market District Authority (BMDA). This event highlighted our commitment to community engagement and showcased the NOC's potential as a valuable community space. It represents a step towards our vision of providing the community with greater access to police and our frontline partner agencies.

Future plans for the NOC include conducting a partner satisfaction survey and implementing cross-training sessions to enhance inter-agency understanding. These initiatives will guide our efforts to further strengthen our collaborative approach.

The NOC continues to evolve as a vital component of the CORE Strategy, embodying our commitment to community-oriented policing and inter-agency collaboration. Its success demonstrates the effectiveness of bringing diverse stakeholders together to address community safety and well-being.

## **Integrated Community Situation Table (ICST)**

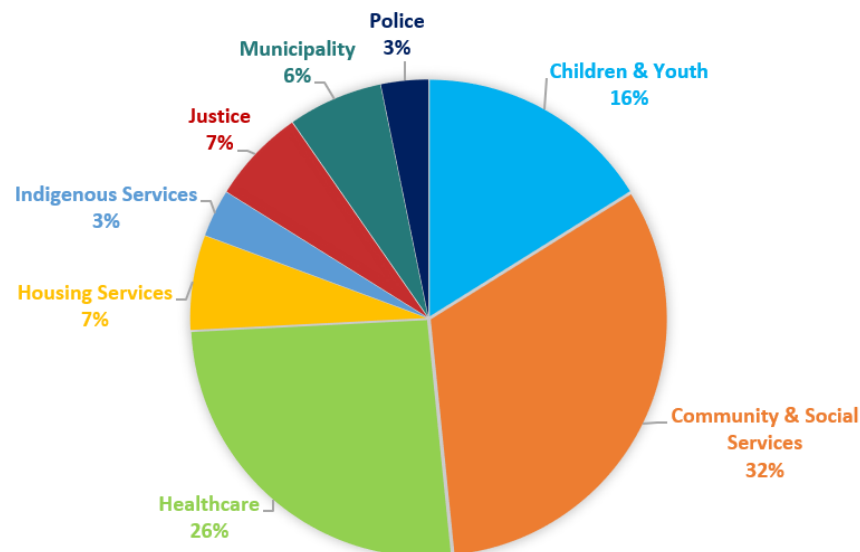
The ICST continues to make a significant impact on those most at risk in our community. A key development is the internal transition of support within OPS to the

Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Branch. It's important to note that OPS is not managing or running the table, but rather continuing to provide in-kind support to build sustainability and capacity for this community-led initiative. This transition of internal support to CSWB ensures continued alignment with OPS's broader community safety strategies while maintaining the ICST's independence and community-driven nature.

The CSWB is currently assisting with the administration and facilitation of the ICST, with OPS providing funding to support the eventual transition of these responsibilities to a community-hired member by 2025. This interim support allows for seamless coordination between police services and social support agencies, enhancing the ability to provide comprehensive, tailored interventions for vulnerable individuals.

The network of community partners has grown to include over 32 organizations, with more being added as service delivery gaps are identified. This expansion has enhanced the ICST's ability to provide comprehensive support to individuals with complex needs, contributing much-needed additional resources and allowing for more tailored and effective interventions.

Since the table began taking referrals in April 2024, the ICST has conducted 15 interventions in 7 months, demonstrating its efficacy in addressing complex cases. The ICST continues to actively strengthen partnerships with community initiatives that support and divert individuals facing challenges such as mental health and substance use issues. This expanded collaboration enables a more comprehensive, sustained approach to assisting high-risk individuals.



*ICST partner agencies by service sector.*

Internally, OPS is developing a streamlined referral process for officers to connect individuals with the ICST. This evolution is significant as police partners typically provide the majority of referrals to situation tables in Ontario, aligning with the goal of diverting vulnerable individuals away from the criminal justice system. The OPS Adult Pre-Charge Diversion Section is spearheading this effort, ensuring all officers receive proper training on the situation table and its purpose. This initiative empowers officers to utilize the ICST as a powerful tool in directing vulnerable individuals towards more appropriate community-based support.

Looking forward, the table will transition to a community-hired member to assume the roles and responsibilities of administering and facilitating the ICST, highlighting the OPS commitment to supporting community-led initiatives. This transition will further enhance the ICST's ability to provide proactive interventions and community-based solutions, maintaining its core mission of supporting the most vulnerable members of our community.

These developments demonstrate the ICST's role as a separate and distinct, but powerful resource that police can access to support vulnerable individuals who are frequently engaged with the criminal justice system. By fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders and providing a structured approach to addressing complex social issues, the ICST is making significant strides in supporting at-risk individuals and enhancing community safety and well-being.

### **Hot Spot Policing**

Evidence-based policing demonstrates that police are most effective when working proactively in high-crime areas while collaborating with the community to develop tailored problem-solving solutions. The CORE Hot Spot Policing strategy embodies these principles, responding to community requests for enhanced, visible police presence in the right places at the right times.

CORE maintains a crucial balance between law enforcement and community support. In its first three months, OPS officers have successfully intervened in serious criminal activities, including proactively identifying and arresting dangerous offenders wanted on warrants, disrupting drug trafficking operations, and swiftly responding to crimes in progress. Simultaneously, they have provided vital support to vulnerable individuals, connecting them with essential resources such as housing, mental health services, and addiction support through community partners. This balanced approach continues to be integral to the strategy's success.

Feedback from the community and reports from officers are overwhelmingly positive. Residents and businesses frequently express gratitude for the increased visible police presence and note positive changes in the downtown core. Officers report a wide range of community interactions, from regular check-ins with businesses and residents to more involved engagements connecting vulnerable community members with necessary services.

*“Overall, we had a lot of great interactions and discussions with local residents, visitors, and business owners. Many people stopped us to say they were very happy to see us out in numbers, with some even becoming emotional as they expressed how much the downtown core has declined over the past number of years. We also had numerous positive interactions with those people who are temporarily experiencing homelessness at Rideau and Colonel By, Rideau and Nelson, and George and Cumberland to name a few.”*

*An NRT officer reported his experience working with the CORE Team – August 20, 2024.*

The current CORE analysis and evaluation process is tracking police activities, assessing implementation and delivery, analyzing crime displacement and diffusion of benefits, and producing weekly performance reports. Key metrics include officer time in hot spots, patrol frequency, arrests, and community interactions. Outcome tracking concentrates on crime severity scores, total crime volume, and calls for service. The approach enables data-driven strategic adaptation and improvement. Upcoming qualitative assessments will gauge community perceptions of safety, security, and attitudes toward police, providing a comprehensive view of the strategy's impact.

### **Preliminary Impact Analysis of the first 90 days of Hot Spot Policing (August 6 – November 6)**

On August 6, 2024 proactive CORE Teams began conducting foot patrols in high priority hot spot locations. These teams are now fully operationalized under the OPS Neighbourhood Policing Directorate (NPD) and are led by Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRT). CORE Teams consist of six (6) Ottawa police officers partnered with two (2) OC Transpo Special Constables for a total of eight (8) officers.

Due to current staffing constraints, CORE Teams are limited at two days a week, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 11am to 7pm. Deployed as teams of two officers each, CORE Teams conduct eight-hour hot spot foot patrols in these peak times. Additional patrols are conducted by Community Police Officers (CPOs) in partnership with City of Ottawa Community Engagement Teams (CET) on Wednesdays from 1pm to 3 pm.

This analysis examines the adherence to strategic plans and the impact of proactive hot spot policing in eight high priority hot spot areas. It compares calls for service and total reports of crime for the period of August 6 - October 31 in 2023 (pre-implementation) with the same period in 2024 (post-implementation). Additional analysis of Crime Severity Index (CSI) scores and crime displacement is ongoing but was not immediately available at the time of this report.

Key findings include an overall 17.9% reduction in demand for calls for service to police and a 4.62% reduction in crime across all hot spots, with some variation among individual areas.

### Methodology

The analysis excludes officer-initiated calls for service to focus on community-initiated calls only. This prevents the increased police presence and proactivity in hot spots from artificially inflating call volumes, which could mistakenly suggest an increase in demand for police services.

### Strategic delivery

The 90-day preliminary analysis demonstrates a strong adherence to the strategic plan. CORE Teams exceeded foot patrol targets, conducting 238 patrols over the first 90 days compared to an expected 208.

During this period, officers recorded 972 community interactions and only 21 arrests, highlighting the priority of community engagement over strict law enforcement. Interactions ranged from check-ins with residents and businesses to more involved assistance for individuals in need.



*Hot Spot related police calls for service in the 8 high priority hexagon areas*



## Calls for Service and Proactive Policing

CORE hot spot policing appears to have had a significant effect on demand in calls for service to police and measures of proactivity. Overall, there was a 59% increase in police proactivity and a 17.9% reduction in demand for police across all hot spots compared to the same period last year.

Hot Spots	Aug 6 to Oct 31		% change
	2023	2024	
1 – Rideau St / Sussex Dr	77	60	-22.08
2 – Rideau St / Dalhousie St	77	78	1.3
3 – York St / William St	82	65	-20.73
4 – George St / Dalhousie St	112	76	-32.14
5 – King Edward Ave / Daly St	138	99	-28.26
6 – Clarence St / Parent Ave	61	57	-6.56
7 – Rideau St / King Edward Ave	167	106	-36.53
8 – Rideau St / Nelson St	137	157	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>-17.98</b>

*Year on year comparison of Calls for Service to police in each Hot Spot*

### Key findings

Standout improvements in Calls for Service:

- Hot spot 7 (King Edward / Rideau St): 36.53% decrease
- Hot spot 4 (George St / Dalhousie St): 32.14% decrease
- Hot spot 5 (King Edward St / Daly St): 28.26% decrease

Area of concern:

- Hot spot 8 (Rideau St / Nelson St): 14.6% increase in calls for service

The impact of proactive policing is particularly evident around the days when OPS conducted hot spot foot patrols (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday):

- Tuesdays: 250% increase in proactivity, with a 15% decrease in calls for service
- Wednesdays: 23% decrease in calls for service
- Thursdays: 210% increase in proactivity, with a 16% decrease in calls for service

These figures demonstrate a clear correlation between proactive policing and decreased calls for service, highlighting the potential deterrent effect of enhanced visible police presence in key hot spot areas.

## **Reported Crime**

The analysis of reported crime data shows an overall decrease of 4.62% across all hot spots. However, this reduction is not uniform across all areas:

Most improved areas:

- Hot spot 4 (George St / Dalhousie St): 43.18% decrease
- Hot spot 1 (Rideau St / Sussex Dr): 29.03% decrease

Areas needing attention:

- Hot spot 2 (Rideau St / Dalhousie St): 25% increase
- Hot spot 8 (Rideau St / Nelson St): 24.24% increase

These varying results demonstrate the need for tailored, area-specific strategies within the overall CORE approach. While some hot spots have shown significant improvement, others require further analysis and adjusted tactics.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The data shows a clear correlation between increased proactive policing and a reduction in Calls for Service, particularly on days when CORE Teams conduct hot spot foot patrols. However, the impact on reported crime varies across different hot spots, indicating the need for continued refinement of the strategy.

The significant reduction in calls in six out of eight hot spots, suggests that proactive patrols are having a positive impact on community safety. The correlation between increased police proactivity and decreased calls on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays further supports the effectiveness of CORE hot spot policing.

The increase in calls in hot spot 8 (Rideau St / Nelson St) may indicate emerging issues or a shift in community dynamics that requires further investigation and potentially adjusted strategies.

While the overall decrease in reported crime is encouraging, the notable increases in hot spots 2 (Rideau St / Dalhousie St) and 8 (Rideau St / Nelson St) warrant closer examination to understand the underlying factors and develop tailored problem-solving responses.

## **Implications for CORE Strategy**

These findings generally support the effectiveness of the CORE strategy in reducing both calls for service and reported crime. However, the varied results across different hot spots highlight the need for flexible, area-specific approaches.

It is important to note that this analysis represents only a preliminary evaluation of the first 90 days of the CORE strategy implementation. While the initial results are encouraging, this analysis does not meet the standards of a rigorous experimental design. The observed correlations suggest positive impacts but cannot be considered scientifically conclusive. These findings, however, provide valuable insights for refining the strategy moving forward.

As the CORE strategy enters its next phase, it will undergo significant adaptations based on lessons learned during this pilot period. The strategy will evolve to encompass four key pillars of community oriented, place-based policing:

1. Advanced geographic crime analysis focusing on micro-level trends
2. Strategic deployment of proactive patrols to maximize deterrence
3. Implementation of problem-oriented policing for long-term prevention
4. Enhanced community engagement to include local voices in designing effective interventions and to assess public response

These adaptations aim to create a more comprehensive and tailored approach to each hot spot's unique challenges. By moving beyond increased police presence alone, the strategy will address root causes of crime and disorder through data-driven, community-informed solutions.

With anticipated increases in staffing and resources, the CORE strategy aims to expand its reach and effectiveness. Future plans include enhancing officer presence on more days of the week, covering extended hours, and encompassing a broader range of locations. This expansion will allow for more comprehensive coverage of hot spots and potentially increase the strategy's impact on crime reduction and community safety.

To ensure continuous improvement, the strategy will follow the evidence-based policing methodology of targeting, testing, and tracking. This approach will allow for ongoing evaluation, learning, and refinement of tactics based on real-world outcomes and community feedback.

Crucially, future evaluations will incorporate rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. Academic partnerships are being established to conduct scientifically valid studies on the effectiveness of hot spot policing in Ottawa's specific context. These studies will provide a more robust assessment of the strategy's impact on crime trends, community safety perceptions, and overall well-being in targeted areas. In addition, a qualitative research project in collaboration with academic

partners will commence in December to assess community reactions and perceptions of safety and security related to hot spot policing and the overall CORE strategy.

By combining evidence-based practices with locally tailored approaches and rigorous evaluation, the CORE strategy sets a new standard for community-oriented, data-driven policing in Ottawa. Future reports will not only track long-term trends but also provide scientifically sound insights into the strategy's effectiveness and its potential for broader application to communities facing similar challenges nation wide.

comprehensive evaluation will provide valuable insights to guide future refinements and expansions of the program. Moving forward, CORE remains committed to continuous evaluation, improvement, adaptation, and expansion of the Hot Spot Policing strategy based on data-driven insights and community feedback.

### **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**

The CPTED initiative, a cornerstone of OPS's long-term community safety strategy, has focused on building strong partnerships with the Rideau BIA and BMDA. Formal agreements establish a framework for collaboration, leveraging local knowledge and resources effectively. This partnership also facilitates the distribution of provincial funding directly to affected community members, residents, and businesses. This ongoing initiative will continue beyond this report, adapting to evolving community needs.

CPTED is now fully operationalized and integrated into OPS's community safety efforts. Through close collaboration with partners, OPS has identified high-need addresses within the downtown community for initial CPTED audits. Addresses were identified using a multi-stage approach that combines crime data analysis, direct community input, and partner recommendations. This ensures efforts target areas of greatest need and potential impact.

To directly addresses community requests for collaborative efforts to enhance safety, twenty (20) high-priority addresses have been identified for- initial CPTED audits and reports, with funding allocated for environmental safety and security improvements. Specific improvements include enhanced lighting, strategic placement of security cameras, and removal of environmental features that may create opportunities for criminal activity.

The CPTED initiative is currently underway, with audits being conducted as of November 6, 2024.

In a complementary initiative, OPS is partnering with the Belleville Police Service to implement CamSafe, an online security camera registry. This system allows community members to voluntarily register their cameras, creating a valuable investigative resource

without granting direct access to footage. Instead, it serves as a directory for detectives to quickly identify potential video evidence sources during investigations.

Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, OPS plans to expand the CPTED program, continuing to respond to community input. The focus will remain on high-risk areas, implementing physical safety enhancements and addressing environmental features that impact community safety.

By emphasizing environmental factors and leveraging community resources, OPS aims to create lasting improvements in downtown Ottawa's safety and security landscape. The CPTED and CamSafe programs will continue to evolve, guided by community needs, emerging best practices, and ongoing evaluations, reinforcing its role as a vital component of the CORE strategy.

### **Focused Enforcement and Deterrence**

The next phase of the CORE strategy introduces a Focused Deterrence approach to address repeat offending. This evidence-based strategy combines strict law enforcement with comprehensive support services for high-risk individuals. It's important to note that this component is still in its planning stages and represents the next evolution of the CORE strategy. As such, detailed implementation and outcomes will be reported on separately in future updates.

In preparation for this upcoming phase, provincial funding has been secured for a partnership with the John Howard Society. This collaboration will provide transitional beds and caseworker support for individuals upon release, exemplifying how law enforcement's deterrent effect can be combined with community organizations' supportive services to create more sustainable outcomes.

To ensure organizational readiness for this new approach, a comprehensive assessment will be conducted, followed by an action plan to address any identified gaps. All relevant partners and staff will receive training in focused deterrence and procedural justice approaches. A pilot focused deterrence program is scheduled to launch in early 2025.

The Focused Deterrence strategy will address a specific group of individuals at high risk of reoffending, with ongoing tracking, analysis, and evaluation of outcomes and impacts on both crime rates and community perceptions of safety. This targeted approach aims to effectively reduce recidivism while providing necessary support for successful reintegration into the community.

As this is a future phase of the CORE strategy, its development, implementation, and outcomes will be thoroughly documented and reported on separately from the current

initiatives. These future reports will provide in-depth information on the strategy's progress, challenges faced, successes achieved, and its overall impact on community safety and well-being.

By signaling this next phase, we demonstrate our commitment to continuously evolving and improving our approach to community safety. The Focused Enforcement and Deterrence component represents an important step in our ongoing efforts to address complex issues of repeat offending while maintaining our focus on both enforcement and support.

## **TRANSITION TO ONGOING OPERATIONS**

As the CORE Strategy moves from implementation to ongoing operations, it's important to outline how the strategy will continue to evolve:

1. **Continuous Evaluation:** All aspects of CORE will undergo regular assessment to ensure their effectiveness and relevance to community needs.
2. **Adaptability:** The strategy will remain flexible, ready to adjust approaches based on emerging trends, community feedback, and operational insights.
3. **Expansion:** Successful elements of the strategy will be considered for expansion to other areas of the city as appropriate.
4. **Integration:** CORE initiatives will be further integrated into the broader OPS operational framework to ensure consistency and maximize impact.
5. **Reporting:** Bi-annual reports will provide transparent updates on the strategy's progress, challenges, and successes, aligned with the Provincial Funding requirements.
6. **Community Engagement:** Open lines of communication with community stakeholders will be maintained, ensuring their voices continue to shape the approach.

This transition marks a new chapter in the commitment to community safety. By moving from implementation to sustained operation, the aim is to solidify the gains made and continue building on the strong foundation established by the CORE Strategy.

## **CONCLUSION**

As the initial implementation phase of the CORE Strategy concludes, a solid foundation has been built for enhancing public safety in downtown Ottawa. The success of these initiatives demonstrates the power of collaborative, community-oriented policing. Moving forward, detailed updates on the CORE Strategy will be provided through the bi-annual

reporting process mandated by the Provincial Solicitor General funding agreement. These reports will focus on key performance indicators that measure progress in improving community safety, reducing crime, supporting vulnerable individuals, and enhancing police effectiveness. Provincial Funding reports will include comprehensive updates on the CORE Strategy's ongoing impact and evolution. These reports will be made available through official OPS channels and will provide in-depth analysis of performance against the established KPIs. The initial implementation phase may be complete, but the commitment to the principles of CORE remains unwavering. The OPS will continue to refine and expand these initiatives, always with the goal of creating a safer, more vibrant downtown Ottawa.