

Speaking Notes | City Council Presentation Nov. 16, 2020

Chief McFee

Mayor and Council,

Thank you for having me back to continue this important conversation. The time since this summer's protests and public hearings has been filled with deep reflection at the Edmonton Police Service. We've held a mirror up to ourselves, our policies and our actions, and what we've seen has reinforced a dedication to community safety and well-being in Edmonton. But, it has also shown us that change is inevitable, and necessary – there is no denying the experiences and inequities racialized and vulnerable communities have called our attention to.

The system our society operates in is inherently racist. We know this from the countless stories shared during the public hearings, and from looking back on the practices Canadians have upheld for generations.

It's in our schools, our healthcare system, our criminal justice system...it's all around us. We've heard loud and clear that this is an issue Edmontonians are done waiting patiently to change.

As I've said previously, I believe in the EPS and its ability to lead this much-needed change. We have an exceptional team of professionals who truly wish to make a positive impact. I can confidently say – and I know this from my days working the frontlines – that by and large, officers choose this career to make a difference.

That doesn't mean we're perfect, but it does mean we have the people, talent and dedication to be a service that all Edmontonians can trust. **Our foundations are strong because of our people.**

I've had the privilege of watching officers begin to shift the definition of policing in Edmonton. **Becoming a modern service that balances support with enforcement was our priority in 2019 ... before COVID-19 and the death of George Floyd ... and it continues to be our priority now.** What we've seen in the past several months has validated our direction and shown us that we need to keep pushing for change.

For more than a year, EPS has been busy building relationships and calling on partners to help recalibrate the social safety net to go beyond the superficial. We're not interested in bandaid fixes that keep the cycle repeating itself. We're interested in getting to root causes and effecting real, lasting change for those who need it most.

What we heard through the public hearings, and what we're hearing through our Commitment to Action, has reinforced that this *is* the direction policing should be heading in – now there's a sense of urgency.

As Chief of Police, I firmly believe that this urgency must be maintained with meaningful and evidence-based decisions to drive the kind of progress that's truly needed.

We need to keep pushing, we need to keep including community voices. And – under no circumstances – can we give up. Our racialized and vulnerable communities can't afford for us to lose the momentum we've been building.

Though public and community safety will always be our bottom line, we've taken a deeper look at demand reduction and understanding what drives calls for police service in Edmonton. The data tells us we have two distinct groups that regularly come into contact with the police:

The first group are the serious, recurring offenders responsible for much of the violence in the city. Their presence in our city couldn't be any more evident than in recent weeks – we've had a **completely unacceptable** number of shootings linked directly to this demographic.

The second group are the vulnerable, at-risk and marginalized communities that have become unnecessarily entrenched in the arrest-remand-release cycle.

These two demographics are separate, requiring entirely different approaches to rehabilitation. This is what we mean when we say, "balance support and enforcement". A one-size approach to policing does not fit all.

Success isn't just about the number of guns we take off the street or bad guys we put behind bars, it's also about the number of individuals we help divert away from the justice system toward needed supports. It's important that we don't confuse the two.

But what's more important is that we address both simultaneously to solve the feeder systems that drive the criminal justice system.

Even though policing is only one aspect of the larger social safety net, we are uniquely positioned to push for change. We are the lynchpin of community safety and well-being, and the connecting agency that invites others to come to the table, plan and act for a better future. **We are willing to continue leading that change...so long as others are willing to bring their solutions and join us.**

The key with our vulnerable communities isn't policing – it's partnership.

Though police have been the catalyst to start the conversation ... often because of existing positive relationships and an understanding of the people involved ... the path forward requires *all of us* to take action. **If we keep focusing on only one aspect, we'll keep getting the same results.**

Community safety and well-being isn't owned by any one particular agency, it's a group effort. Accountability is necessary on all sides to create effective, human-centred solutions that serve

our citizens over bureaucracy. This isn't about simply moving money from one area to another – what our citizens need are real, measurable outcomes.

Our current system is fractured – we don't have to look any further than the number of homeless camps that appeared over the summer to see that there are some very large, and very detrimental gaps.

People are and will continue to fall through the cracks if we don't seriously begin considering how we can recalibrate the social safety net.

The report put together by MNP has confirmed things we've long known: the way we're set up directly impedes our ability to effectively address the growing needs of our vulnerable population. This is because:

- **There's a lack of coordination and cooperation between service providers and funders. We should be working in teams with shared priorities and aligned performance metrics.**
- **There's inadequate data collection and consequent analysis of priorities and outcomes.** How do we expect to effect positive change if we don't have the data to both back up our progress and adjust our approaches collectively?
- **There's no continuum of care for high-risk individuals** – the system isn't set up to see them through every stage of their journey. **We are not positioning these individuals up for success.**
- And finally, there are limited preventative services to mitigate the risk of individuals further harming themselves and others. This greatly reduces our capacity to be proactive in situations that have the most impact on the course of an individual's recovery or relapse.

What this tells us is we need to look critically at where we are and be upfront about the system's failures. **We've clearly identified the issues and we've known them for years ... we shouldn't be surprised anymore. Now is the time to begin finding solutions.**

We talk a great deal about what our utopia state looks like, but we never talk about how to get there. What's needed is a paradigm shift – a complete systems transformation.

Instead of continuing to play by the same rules, we need to start looking at how we change the game.

Right now, we're focused on how we can individually fill the gaps, when we should be focused on how we can use our collective resources to span the entire spectrum – **we should be shifting our focus toward recovery of care outcomes for a complete human service alignment.**

We are stronger – and care for our vulnerable population is stronger – when we work together. I’m not talking about collaboration with little or no measurement of success, I’m talking about **partnership with collective outcomes.**

Let’s take a moment to talk about EPS’ budget. We’ve all seen the recent media coverage regarding impacts to the Calgary Police Service’s budget, so I’d like to walk you through our financials.

The current EPS budget is \$462 million, with funding coming from various sources such as the City of Edmonton and the Provincial Government. As a police service, we are required to regularly report back on how this money is not only used, but also the outcomes it’s enabled us to successfully achieve. Every dollar has a place and a purpose to guarantee that citizens are getting value.

Our funding formula provides us the ability to manage organizational growth, navigate challenges resulting from the economic downturn and the pandemic, and adjust to our city’s diverse needs. To date, we’ve made several adjustments – all within our existing budget – to reflect this:

- We’ve reduced the EPS budget from 2021 levels by **\$11 million** over two years following Council’s motion in July.
- We’ve reallocated approximately **\$28 million** in resources to create the new Community Safety and Well-being Bureau as part of Vision 2020. It’s worth noting that this reallocation began in 2019, well before our conversations on defunding began.
- We’ve absorbed roughly **\$5-7 million** in costs related to COVID-19 pressures and another **\$5 million** resulting from provincial budget changes.
- And, we’ve absorbed approximately **\$6 million** for the implementation of in-car video, and another **\$6 million** for the City’s Enterprise Commons project.

These adjustments – which total nearly **\$63 million** – have allowed EPS to continue fulfilling its duty to the public while adapting to a changing and fluid environment. **And, in the process, we are accountable to the public and our funding providers for every dollar we spend.**

While we’re on the topic of money, I’d like to pose a question to you: how much funding do you think goes into our current social safety ecosystem? Utopia state aside, what dollar figure do you believe funds the system, as is?

Hundreds of millions?

Two billion?

Based on publicly available data, that figure is 7.5 billion of segmented, siloed funding allocated on an organization-by-organization, program-by-program basis in Edmonton. This includes all funding from federal, provincial and municipal sources. We know that social issues such as homelessness, domestic violence, criminal justice, trauma and mental health are complex and very much intertwined, yet our funding is still dealt with piecemeal – which means accountability and outcomes are also dealt with piecemeal.

There is more than enough money in the system – 7.5 billion is a *substantial* amount.

The issue isn't funding. **The issue is that the funding isn't integrated across the ecosystem to truly maximize social impact.** We should all be heading in the same direction.

It was early in my career when I first heard someone say that all we need to do is move money from police to other areas, like social services, and I've heard it often since. What isn't said as frequently is the estimated ratio for social service charities, addiction and mental health to police funding is seven to one – for every dollar spent on policing, seven are spent on social services charities, addiction and mental health. Or, when only looking at social services charities compared to policing, the estimated ratio is four to one.

Let me be very clear, I'm not here to advocate for more money to EPS or to say that our social services shouldn't be well-funded. Many of our social service programs do great work and have been exceptional partners with EPS. I am here to say that there must be a better way to recovery – and part of that is in how we use our financial resources to get people-focused results and ultimately reduce demand for service.

This is a conversation that goes well beyond policing and impacts an entire network of service providers and funders. We'll be presenting the full scope of this dollar figure in the coming weeks.

I'd now like to welcome Executive Director Sean Tout of Information Management and Intelligence to present on EPS' calls for service.

Executive Director, Sean Tout

Thank you, Chief McFee. And thank you Mayor and Council for allowing me to add some context to social disorder and EPS' first response.

The EPS has undertaken a comprehensive review of the citizen generated emergent and non-emergent phone calls for assistance to its Police Communications Centre, triage and diversion opportunities and those social disorder and mental health focused events that necessarily require a police officer first response.

These situations are fluid and emotionally charged and initial complainant accounts are often fractured, evolving and lacking context. As a result there are no additional social disorder and

mental health focused calls for assistance to divert to a community service provider absent a police officer first response, without exposing those partners and the public to unacceptable levels of risk.

The question that prevails is this: Immediately after a police officer first response has identified the situation and environment to be safe, what 24/7 community service partners are available to engage in a direct referral to carry out the continuum of service and provide follow-up to support positive outcomes that reduce demand and decrease recidivism. These opportunities are significant.

For the next few minutes I will address the assertion that “30% of what police do is social work”. Before I do, I want to recognize the complexity of this information. This complexity is representative of the decisions that are undertaken in arriving at the determination a citizen generated call for assistance should be categorized as a Social Disorder call for service.

EPS received 539,138 emergent and non-emergent phone calls for assistance to its emergency communications centre in 2019. For the purpose of this discussion, we are focusing on the 385,034* calls specifically for EPS assistance.

Of those 385,034 emergent and non-emergent phone calls specifically for EPS assistance, 192,513 (50%) were triaged at source. Duplicate calls arising out of the same event were reconciled, referrals to differential police responses (Police and Crisis Team (PACT), Heavy users of Services (HUOS), on-line reporting etc) were undertaken, and referrals to community service partners were made - where an EPS police officer first response was determined **NOT** to be required.

The remaining 192,521 (50%) emergent and non-emergent phone calls necessitated the dispatch of EPS Officer(s) in a first response capacity. Of those, 113, 389 resulted in additional EPS involvement and the completion of formal occurrence report; 58, 552 for Disorder, Other and Traffic investigations; and 54, 837 for Violent Crime, Non-violent Crime, Weapons and Drug investigations.

Of those 113, 389 occurrences, 38, 418 resulted in arrests being made. This does **NOT** include MH apprehensions. There were 18,373 unique individuals arrested in 2019 but there were 43,262 arrests. Of the 18,373 unique individuals, 10,606 (57%) were arrested a single time 2019. (33%) or 6,209 unique individuals were arrested between 2-5 times. The top (1%) or 217 unique individuals were responsible for 4,490 (10%) total arrests in 2019. The most prolific unique individual was responsible for 70 arrests alone.

Of the 113,389 occurrences, EPS officers applied control tactics techniques in 1,817 (2%) of them. 2,106 Unique individuals had a total of 12,406 control tactics techniques applied in 2019. The most prolific unique individual was responsible for 23 of the 1,817 occurrences resulting in the application of 54 control tactics techniques in 2019.

Between 2000 – 2017 EPS officers exercised the use of lethal force 13 times.

*excludes abandoned calls, cancelled calls, pocket dials etc.

50% of all 9-1-1 and non-emergent phone calls to the EPS Police Communications Center result in a Police dispatched call for service.

Therefore 192, 513 9-1-1 and non-emergent phone calls to the EPS Police Communications Center were triaged, many diverted to our partner agencies.

For example, 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team managed 22,528 contacts/calls in 2019, 13,995 were crisis diversion events.

- 720 were referred by EPS Emergency Communication Centre – No EPS Police response was required.

It is the remaining 192,521 calls for service that require a Police Officer First Response that we will discuss. Specifically, those identified as Social Disorder in nature.

Social Disorder Calls for Service Require a First Response

First Response “Tool Kit” Includes:

- Legislated and Common Law Authorities and Powers
- Control Tactics and Techniques Training and Options
- Defusing and De-escalation Training and Options

And when EPS first response officer presence have rendered the situation and environment safe,

- **This** is where the opportunity exists for immediate and direct referral to 24/7 community service partners. But only where they are available to engage and carry out the continuum of service and provide immediate follow-up to support positive outcomes that reduce demand and decrease recidivism. These opportunities are significant, but the availability of 24/7 partner support is not. Much potential exists for new and enhanced community partnerships and for joint partnerships like the Joint Dispatch Centre. The continuum of community safety supports and services is currently not integrated and responsive to the level it needs be.

Of those 192,521 CFS that requires an EPS First Response, 48,810 or 25.4% were initially classified as Social Disorder based upon complainant information about the unfolding situation.

Generally, Police Officer First Response to Social Disorder calls for service is prioritized at Priority 5 “General Service” or Priority 4 “Priority Response”.

But, these situations are often fluid and emotionally charged and initial complainant accounts are often fractured, evolving and lacking context. These changing dynamics resulted in 429

Social Disorder CFS being re-prioritized to **Priority 3 - "Just Occurred"**, **Priority 2 "In Progress-Property at Risk"** and **Priority 1 – "High Priority in Progress, Person at Risk"**. Continual monitoring and evaluation identified the need to expedite EPS police officer intervention.

Those fluid and emotionally charged initial complainant accounts necessitate a Police Officer First Response. That First Response often results in the exercise of police officer legislated and common law authorities, crisis intervention and de-escalation, arrest, exercise of control tactics and techniques, victim supports and evidence collection etc.

And when EPS first response officer presence have rendered the situation and environment safe,

- This is where the opportunity exists for immediate and direct referral to 24/7 community service partners. But only where they are available to engage and carry out the continuum of service and provide follow-up to support positive outcomes that reduce demand and decrease recidivism.

As depicted in this slide, of the 48,810 initially classified Social Disorder CFS, 6,457 were determined **not to be** following First Response. Furthermore, an additional 15,409 CFS initially classified as something other than Social Disorder, were identified **as being such** following First response. It is important to note, this is a conclusion classification, a rear-view mirror determination, that is a result of Police Officer First Response and Initial Assessment informing the proper and contextualized classification of the situation.

Again the continuum of community safety supports and services is currently not integrated to the level it needs to be. These opportunities are significant but the availability of 24/7 partner support is not. Much potential exists for new and enhanced community partnerships and for joint partnerships like the Joint Dispatch Centre.

So in summary, there were actually 64,219 (16.7% of the total emergent and non-emergent phone calls for EPS assistance to its emergency communications centre in 2019) appropriately classified as Social Disorder following EPS First Response and Investigation.

38, 113 of those (almost 10% of the 385,034 calls for EPS assistance) required no further EPS Involvement specific to that incident. However, 24, 321 (38% of the 64,219 Social Disorder CFS) required additional work and resulted in an occurrence being filed.

Again, it is the clarity of the rear-view mirror following Police Officer First Response and Investigation that identified that 60% of the 64,219 Social Disorder CFS required no further EPS Involvement. But the challenge is **how**, with **only** the initial complainant information, to **disentangle** those 38, 113 CFS from that required **no** further EPS involvement from the 24, 321 occurrences that do, at the initial contact point or emergency communications centre?

The next slides will identify the risks and potential impacts of getting this decision wrong. For this we will focus on the 24,321 or 38% of this decision with the greatest impacts of error.

It is at this juncture we ask “what 24/7 community service partners are available to immediately engage following a direct referral, to carry out the continuum of services and provide follow-up to support positive outcomes that reduce demand and decrease recidivism?” Again, the continuum of community safety supports and services is currently not integrated to the level it needs to be. These referral opportunities are significant! Much potential exists for new and enhanced community partnerships and for joint partnerships like the Joint Dispatch Centre

[NOTE: “Other” includes cancelled calls (93.3% or 1,666 of the 1,785) as well as information and unknown.]

Over and above those 64,219 Social Disorder CFS and Occurrences classified as a result of First Response and Investigation, EPS Officers provided First Response supports to EMS, Fire, Other Community Service Agencies in 4,798 additional CFS in 2019.

41% (1,967) of those Partner Agency calls for EPS Assistance for Safety and Support resulted in occurrences including Violent Crime and Non-violent Crime.

For example, the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team managed 22,528 contacts/call in 2019, of which 13,995 were crisis diversion events.

- this represents a thread in the social safety net – that continuum of services where Community Service Providers engage and divert
- HOWEVER, In 141 of the crisis diversion events EPS Police Officer’s were dispatched to address escalation and increased risk experienced by Community Service Providers

It is important to note that our community safety partner agencies have Staging protocols (driven by OH&S rules and safety concerns) that govern their engagement in certain circumstances until EPS First Response has investigated and the situation and environment are rendered safe,

- It is following this EPS First Response determination that they are permitted to engage

Remember, the paramount responsibility of the Edmonton Police Service, of your First Response Police Officers is the preservation of life. The strategic potential of joint partnerships like the Joint Dispatch Centre address these unintended consequences and risks of delayed response to these often fluid, evolving, emotionally charged initial complainant calls for assistance.

Part 2 of the Occupational Health and Safety code (Hazard Assessment, Elimination and Control) would cover much of this, as issued equipment and uniforms are listed on hazard assessments as a control measure for several different hazards.

Section 7 (1) An employer must assess the work site and identify the existing and potential hazards before work begins at the work site or prior to the construction of a new worksite.

Section 9(1) If an existing or potential hazard to workers is identified during a hazard assessment, an employer must take measurements in accordance with this section to eliminate the hazard, or if elimination is not reasonably practicable, control the hazard

Of those 24,321 Social Disorder occurrences, 3,077 were identified following First Response investigation as being Violent Crime (1,140 Occurrences) and non-violent crime (1,937 Occurrences). There were 1,278 Victims of Crime identified in those 3,077 occurrences. And situational awareness and assessment necessitated the use of Control tactics to gain physical control of the accused in 238 of those occurrences.

For additional context, we are sharing a consumer of EPS services perspective – a look at the who and not just the what.

Within those 24,321 Social Disorder CFS, EPS First Response Officers interacted with 24,399 unique individuals.

The top 1% or 233 of those unique individuals were involved in 6,547 Social Disorder Occurrences in 2019 alone. 486 of those were Violent Crime and 2,615 were non-violent crime.

For added context, Between 2007 and 2019, these same 233 individuals have accounted for 19,600 occurrences of which, 25% (4,900) were non-violent crime and 15% (2,940) were violent crime. Remember, occurrences represent only 59% (113,389 of the 192,521) of EPS Dispatched Police Officer First Response Calls for Service and only 29% (113,389 of the 385,034 EPS specific calls for assistance in 2019!

This identifies a significant risk to simply applying triage and deferral practice based upon CFS classification alone. Added context would be needed to include who is involved and what their recent histories include to mitigate unidentified risks.

The strategic potential of joint partnerships like the Joint Dispatch Centre could provide this additional context. Currently EPS Emergency Communications Centre staff do not have access to mental health risk and addictions information – they are limited to EPS information and initial complainant information in assessing First Response criteria.

Of those 24,321 Social Disorder Occurrences, 54 resulted in violence being perpetrated against your EPS First Response Officers.. That violence resulted in 93 Criminal Charges being laid ranging from Assaulting your Police Officer (including with a weapon) – Disarming / attempting to Disarm your police officer

Lastly, I leave you with statistics on EPS Officers' lethal use of force.

Between 2000 – 2017 EPS Officer's exercised the use of lethal force 13 times. In every situation the lives of your police officers were in imminent danger

Officers were attacked with a metal pipe, knife, or axe in 5 instances. – one of your officers was stabbed

In one attack, the suspect fought with and was in the process of disarming your officer

In 7 attacks, your police officers had guns pointed at them,

In 5 of those 7 attacks, your police officers were shot at

In 3 of those 5 attacks, your police officers were shot,

and as our city well knows, in one such attack with a firearm, your police officer was murdered

And 38% or 5 of those 13 encounters originated as social disorder / trouble not known / unknown CFS.

I hope that I've clarified that significant opportunities exist to prevent the second, third and prolific calls for service where 24/7 community service partners are available to engage immediately following a direct referral by first response police officers, to carry out the continuum of services and provide follow-up to support positive outcomes that reduce demand and decrease recidivism.

Thank you and I will now pass the floor to Edmonton police commission chair RUTH.

Chair Ruth

Thank you ED Tout and good morning Mayor Don and Councillors.

I would like to start out by saying the Commission fully stands behind the materials presented today. If you want to drive better outcomes then change must happen - both the Commission and the Service are committed to that change. In fact, we hired this Chief to do just that – to do things differently, to create new systems to drive down calls for service and increase community safety. It is also important that the Service is integrated into the continuum of care required that involves all of the other supports within the human services ecosystem.

The Edmonton Police Commission believes that Edmontonians deserve a safe city – one that includes protection by the police service. We know, however, that we must balance that with an increasing focus on interventions for mental health, addictions, housing and homelessness – police are only one part of this larger system. We know that the opportunity exists for stronger community partnerships however, at this time, none of the supports are integrated and the entire system remains fractured and siloed. The fact is very few agencies offer after hours or weekend services - the police offer 24/7 response to all calls for service - this leaves a huge gap for the citizens of Edmonton especially as it relates to the vulnerable and marginalized communities.

As you have heard from the Chief – **funding is not the issue – the alignment and integration of services is.** City Council has made the decision to further reduce the Service's budget and suspend the funding formula with the intent to redirect these budgetary dollars to programs within the local community social safety ecosystem. Those dollars provided in the formula have allowed the Service to create a Community Safety & Well-Being Bureau as part of their

VISION2020 initiative and allowed them to manage organizational growth **without** further funding requests to Council.

The reports that have been provided to you today identify the overlap and redundancies within the entire system. We believe that only a full transformation of all the programming within the human services ecosystem, with shared outcomes, will generate the improvements you are looking for. The Commission is finalizing our report to you on a complete scope and governance review to achieve the outcome of a balanced approach to community safety. You will have that report presented to you on December 7th and we believe our proposal will address the gaps that the Chief has alluded to.

In closing, the Commission is committed to continuous improvement within the Edmonton Police Service and improved outcomes for all residents of the City of Edmonton. We all want to ensure Edmonton remains a safe and vibrant city and believe that we can work together to build a safer city that addresses not only Council's but the public's concerns and expectations.

Thank you and I will now pass it back to the Chief to conclude our presentation.

Chief McFee

Thank you, Chair Ruth.

I'm ending my final remarks where I began... with *partnership*. Community safety and well-being isn't about one organization or the other. Everyone in the social safety net owns a part of creating the best possible outcomes for Edmontonians.

The better we can integrate our approach, outcomes, data and funding, the better we can serve our citizens.

Now is the time for brave leadership and radical change. Continuing to think and operate in the same silos we have for decades doesn't benefit anyone, least of all our most marginalized. This is a call to action for folks to meet us at the table. Now is the time to come together. We can no longer afford to try and tackle our city's complex social needs individually.

Edmonton is a city of trailblazers. We're known nation-wide as a city of firsts'. It's fundamentally part of our nature to think smarter, do better and lead the pack. This is no exception. We are capable of much more when we act collectively.