

Halifax Regional Municipality Policing Service Review Study

National Police Federation
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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The National Police Federation (NPF) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission as part of the ongoing policing service review taking place in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The NPF is the sole certified bargaining agent representing about 20,000 Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) across Canada, including about 990 RCMP Members in Nova Scotia. The NPF provides strong, fair, and progressive representation to promote and enhance the rights of RCMP Members.

The NPF strongly supports the periodic review of policing services in the communities that our Members serve. We believe that reviews such as this one provides us an opportunity to both highlight the outstanding work that our Members do and to discuss ways that governments can improve on the already excellent services that they receive. Below, are some of the key facts about the policing services within Nova Scotia and the HRM and recommendations on how to improve services, as well as some potential areas for further investigation.

RCMP POLICING IN NOVA SCOTIA

The RCMP has served as Nova Scotia's provincial police service since 1932 under the *Provincial Police Service Agreement* (PPSA)ⁱ. The Nova Scotia (NS) RCMP currently has about 990 officers working across 55 detachments throughout the province, serving 40 municipalities and 13 First Nations, at all levels of government through over 145,000 calls for service annuallyⁱⁱ.

The NS RCMP is committed to providing a wide range of services to keep residents safe such as general duty policing, emergency, critical incident response teams, and providing support services to other police agencies in the province. One example is the central RCMP Operational Communication Center that dispatches officers from RCMP detachments across the province and answers more than 230,000 calls for service through both 911 and RCMP emergency linesⁱⁱⁱ. This emergency response system allows officers to receive information about incidents in their area promptly and increases officers' response times.

The services of the NS RCMP go beyond general duty policing as they also provide a variety of specialized support to Nova Scotians, including victim services, Federal Serious and Organized Crime units, Police Dog Services, Crisis Negotiation Teams, and many more^{iv}. Access to these specialized services, and the RCMP officers' training and dedication, are essential to enhance public safety across the province.

Strong support was reflected in a survey conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights from January 18 to 27, 2022, that found 79% of Nova Scotians served by the RCMP are satisfied by the police service they receive^v. Even facing significant human and financial resources challenges, the NS RCMP has been able to maintain a high level of service and build strong local community relationships that have kept residents feeling safe and secure in the policing provided by RCMP Members.

OVERVIEW OF HRM'S POLICING SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Policing services within the HRM are provided through an integrated policing service model where policing services are provided by both the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and the Halifax District RCMP. This integrated model is unique in Canada, with two police services operating within the same municipal boundaries, with separate areas of jurisdiction. However, the division of urban areas being policed by a

municipal policing service versus rural or semi-rural areas being policed by the RCMP is seen in most other major Canadian cities outside of Ontario and Quebec.

The integrated policing model in Halifax was a direct result of the amalgamation of what is now known as the HRM. At the time of amalgamation in 1996, the standalone police departments in Halifax, Dartmouth, and Bedford merged into the HRP. In the portions of the areas that were integrated into the HRM which were policed by the RCMP under the PPSA remained under RCMP jurisdiction and thus created the integrated model seen today.

The HRP includes three geographic Patrol Divisions: Central (downtown), East (Dartmouth), and West (Bedford and West Halifax); the Investigation Division (the Integrated Criminal Investigation Division (CID)); and Administration Division. The RCMP Halifax District operates through seven detachments: Cole Harbour, Lower Sackville, Musquodoboit Harbour, North Central, North Preston, Sheet Harbour, and Tantallon.

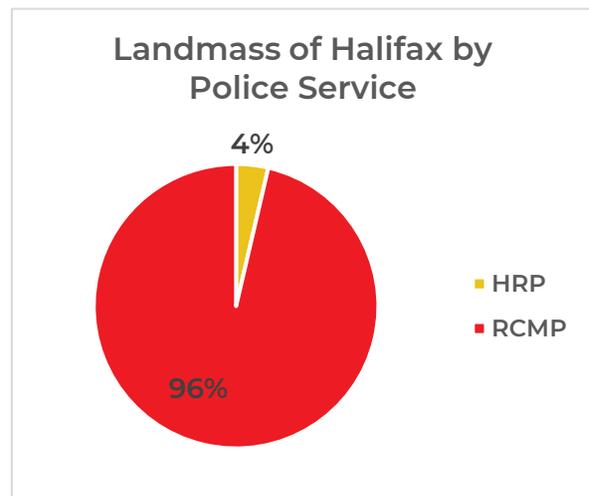
While both the HRP and the Halifax District RCMP have assigned jurisdictions, the two agencies work together through integrated units and services. As an example of this, dispatch services for the HRP and Halifax District RCMP are run through the Integrated Emergency Services (IES) located in Dartmouth. There are also several integrated teams between the RCMP and the HRP such as the CID. With situations such as these, the relationship is often governed by Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).

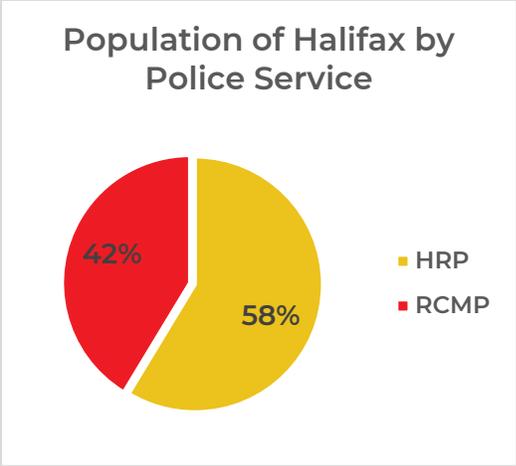
Because of this integrated model, on many occasions the RCMP share and/or provide services to the HRP. As examples, the HRP currently use some of the RCMP's specialized services, such as Emergency Response Teams (ERT), Explosive Disposal, and Marine Patrol.

URBAN VERSUS RURAL OR SEMI-RURAL POLICING

The division of policing jurisdictions between the urban and rural or suburban communities of Halifax does provide a clear example of the differences in how services are provided in the HRM.

Per the HRM's 2021/22 budget and business plan and Statistics Canada, HRM has an estimated population of over 440,000^{vi}. While the HRP polices around ~264,000^{vii} (~58%) of the city's residents and the RCMP polices ~186,000 (~42%) of Haligonians, the HRP is responsible for a geographical area of approximately 200 km² whereas the RCMP have a geographical area of approximately 5,290 km².





With a geographical area about 26 times that of the HRP, RCMP policing within the HRM can and does look substantially different. Given the larger geographical area, RCMP officers are expected to cover more ground, both in the regular execution of their duties, such as responding to regular calls for service, and in the delivery of specialized policing services.

In addition to covering larger areas, the RCMP polices mostly all rural areas in the HRM, which presents additional challenges to policing, such as lack of resources, isolation and long distances, and new and emerging crime trends.

POLICING BUDGETS AND RESOURCES

Another major difference between the policing services provided by the HRP and the Halifax District RCMP can be seen in the respective budgets and resources allocated to each of the police services. An important context, as mentioned above, is the size of population and percentages that are served by the RCMP and the HRP. While population numbers remain relatively comparable, the geographic area of police patrol for the two police services is substantially different. While there are several critical factors that can determine the demand for policing resources beyond population served and geographical area, the disparities between the HRP and the RCMP in this respect are worth highlighting.

This disparity is only exasperated by the clear division of resources between the RCMP and the HRP. From the 2020-2021 Annual HRM Budget, the HRP received a total of \$88,810,800 whereas the Halifax District RCMP received \$29,419,000^{viii}. The Halifax District RCMP budget is then further supplemented by funding provided by the federal government, at no additional cost to the HRM or its taxpayers, as outlined in the PPSA. Under the PPSA the federal government contributes 30% of the total Halifax District RCMP budget.

While these numbers only represent the funding allocated by the HRM, it clearly shows the disparity between the two policing services within the municipality. In 2018/2019 the national average cost per capita of policing was \$317^x, which puts the HRP costs above Canada’s average and the RCMP’s costs more than 50% below, at approximately \$143.50.

This is the result of the HRM being grandfathered in under the PPSA. A municipality the size of the HRM would traditionally only be subject to a 10% federal contribution by the federal government for RCMP services. Under the PPSA the HRM also receives several other cost-savings benefits including, but not limited to areas such as equipment procurement, training, specialized services, and liability protection that the RCMP offers without charge to the municipality.

The budget constraints that are felt by the Halifax District RCMP also directly result in a disparity between the number of resources of each service. When it comes to staffing within the HRM, in 2020/2021, the Halifax District RCMP had 184 Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs) positions ^x. The HRP, on the other hand, had 804 positions: 738 FTEs and 66 Seasonal, Casual & Term positions^{xi}. This means that there are almost three times as many FTEs provided by the HRM to the HRP rather than the Halifax District RCMP.

This puts incredible strains on the RCMP, especially given the comparative populations that both police services serve as well as the geographic areas they are expected to cover.

Considering the HRP’s and the RCMP’s 2021/22 operating expenses^{xii}, the HRM would spend about \$128.6 million for both police services. With a total population of approximately 440,000^{xiii}, this represents a cost of \$285.70 per capita, which is a bit less than the national average of \$317 per person. However, the Halifax amount goes up to \$ \$375.75 per capita when the RCMP is excluded from the calculation.

SPECIALIZED POLICING SERVICES

Specialized policing services within the HRM are provided by both the RCMP and the HRP depending on the specific specialized services that are required. However, under the PPSA a number of these services are provided to the HRM by the RCMP at little to no cost the municipality. The RCMP provides these services through a national program to support training programs for many specialized policing services that are above the basic training provided to officers. These specialized policing services are outlined below. In any review of policing services within the HRM, the cost of these services needs to be fully accounted for. Similarly, the specialized policing service capabilities of both the RCMP and the HRP need to be assessed.

RCMP Specialized Services

Tactical and Specialized Operations	Investigative Services	Operational Communications and Emergency Operational Coordination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Incident Program • Emergency Response Team • Emergency Medical Response Team • Police Dog Service • Underwater Recovery Team • Special Tactical Operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Crimes Unit • Proceeds of Crime Unit • Commercial Crime Unit • Human Trafficking Unit • Internet Child Exploitation Unit • Synthetic Drugs Unit • Violent Crime Linkage Analysis Unit • Cyber Crime Coordinator • Truth Verification • Interview Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Operational Communications Centre • Risk Manager Program • Emergency Management Section • Division Emergency Operations Centre • Provincial Ground Search and Rescue Program

POLICING INTEROPERABILITY AND PROCEDURES

Within the HRM’s policing model, integration, and interoperability between the two police services are of critical importance. With both the Halifax District RCMP and the HRM working together, the ability for police officers to work in an integrated and cohesive environment is a major determining factor of success. To adequately achieve that, there needs to be standardization of training, communication, procedures, and policing guidelines.

Stemming from the 2020 Portapique mass casualty event, the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) began a discussion around the necessity of having an integrated and cohesive approach from front line and police

services in the province. This should also be considered in the Halifax Regional Municipality Policing Service Review Study. Interoperable practices are optimal for effectively sharing information between police services while minimizing risk of disjointed response efforts or information gaps^{xiv}.

A clear example of a practice that needs to be analysed is the records management system. Currently, the Nova Scotia RCMP uses the Police Reporting and Occurrence System (PROS) but the Halifax District RCMP and Halifax Regional Police use the Versadex records management system. PROS is utilized in all other RCMP jurisdictions aside from the Halifax District RCMP. This can create gaps in HRM communication with other police services in the province and can pose risks regarding the lack of information sharing between districts.

Finally, many of the joint operations and integrated teams between the RCMP and HRP are governed by MOUs and agreements that were first drafted shortly after amalgamation in the early 2000s. These agreements have not been amended since that time and have proven to be an inhibitor to truly meaningful and effective integration. Of note, these MOUs do not clearly articulate how the management of integrated teams or joint operations will function and the allocation of resources from each respective service does not match the resources each service receives. To build stronger and more integrated policing within the HRM, these MOUs need to be updated to match the modern needs of the HRM and modern policing practices.

THE FUTURE OF POLICING

In 2023, the RCMP will celebrate its 150th anniversary. As part of that milestone, the RCMP strives to continue be the modern, inclusive, and healthy organization that employees and all Canadians expect. As the HRM reviews its policing services and what is expected of policing in a rapidly evolving society, the NPF would like to highlight that the RCMP and its Members are constantly working to find ways to carry out their police work in ways that builds trust and confidence^{xv}.

The pillars of the RCMP's modernization, which includes supporting modern policing; improving accountability, transparency, and conduct; addressing systemic racism; and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, are aligned with what the HRM is looking into with this review. Understanding and adapting to emerging trends is essential and the RCMP and its Members are committed to working with the communities they serve across Canada to address and adapt to specific needs. Jointly with these pillars, over the past years, the RCMP has also been working towards the implementation of its first Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, launched in early 2020. The strategy is designed to establish a strong foundation for equity, diversity and inclusion practice^{xvi}.

RCMP Members want to continue to be a part of the HRM's community safety policing model and work with Haligonians to improve community safety and well-being. To achieve that successfully, it is important to consider all activities that are currently being done by police officers, even those beyond their duties. Demand for policing continues to increase beyond core policing responsibilities, mainly due to ongoing underfunding of other social services and community supports to assist those most vulnerable who experience crises and police intervention as a last resort.

Modern policing might consider de-tasking some activities that currently rely exclusively on police. Haligonians, and our Members want to see more funding for much-needed critical services that help alleviate pressures on vulnerable communities and, by extension, the police. The HRM must do more to

ensure that all communities have the front-line public safety and social services needed to support the lives and well-being of all Nova Scotians. For too long, our Members and police in general, have been called on to fill the gaps in the absence of properly funded mental health and social support services.

Police officers have become, by default, the only available resources to respond to someone in crisis and/or with mental illness and these calls vary widely in complexity and risk. In the 2014 *Report on Police Encounters with People in Crisis* it is noted that improved responses to people in crisis would involve learning how to prevent people in crisis encountering or requiring the police^{xvii}.

For example, better referral options to the community could divert individuals to treatment and support and avoid crisis encounters. Across Canada, many provinces and cities have adopted Mental Health Mobile Crisis Response Teams, in which police officers collaborate with community partners, including mental health professionals, to de-escalate and safely intervene in crisis situations; link individuals to mental health services, and, when appropriate, divert them from the criminal justice system. These teams

have successfully provided much needed support within communities and the ongoing success and expansion of these programs relies on increased provincial and municipal government support and funding, as mental health calls have increased year over year.

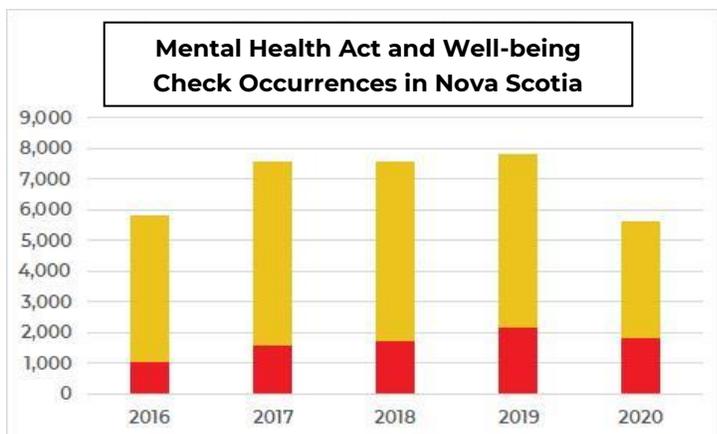


Table 1: Count of RCMP well-being check occurrences and Count of RCMP Mental Health Act occurrences in NS.
 *Nova Scotia includes H Division PROS and Halifax District Versadex.
 **Mental Health Act occurrences - Nova Scotia includes H Division PROS for all years and Halifax District Versadex beginning in 2014.
 *** Data for 2020 includes January 1, 2020, to August 31, 2020, inclusive

In Nova Scotia, from 2014 to 2019, the number of *Mental Health Act* occurrences has increased by almost 70% - from 3,339 to 5,674 calls. The count of RCMP well-being check occurrences has also increased by 80% between 2016 and 2020 (see Table 1^{xviii}).

In most cases, this means officers must spend countless hours sitting in hospital waiting rooms, taking them away from other core police duties. The resource

impact is concerning, especially in smaller and more rural communities, where police resources are limited, further impacting general calls for service and response times.

CONCLUSION

The integrated policing model in the Halifax Regional Municipality is truly unique and unlike any other across the country. It is a model that absolutely requires both police services to work in a truly coordinated and integrated way. It is also one that clearly highlights the differences between urban and rural policing in Nova Scotia. It shows the clear gap in resourcing and budgets provided to two distinct police services who serve rural versus urban areas of the city: a gap that exists in much of the province.

With approximately half the total budget and less than half the number of officers, the Halifax RCMP provides policing services to roughly the same number of Haligonians as the Halifax Regional Police. This

resourcing gap is in fact one of the most significant challenges facing policing in the HRM. Additionally, the RCMP through the PPSA also provides specialized and support services to the HRM free of charge while also providing some of the highest training and service standards in policing in the country.

That is why we suggest that any review of policing in the HRM needs to fully examine this disparity in resources and to accurately compare the services provided by both the HRP and the RCMP to ensure that there is better long-term alignment of policing resources for all Haligonians.

Finally, below are some key considerations that we believe need to be factored into this review to completely understand the policing services provided by the HRP and the RCMP.

1. Comparison of policing costs, including:

- RCMP cost share breakdown paid by each level of government.
- Cost of RCMP non-billables to Halifax, including legal services, External Review Committee costs, civil litigation, official languages training, claims and compensation settlements, relocation, contaminated sites assessments, work force adjustment lump sum payments to RRSP, etc.
- Overview of the cost per population between the RCMP and Halifax Regional Police (HRP) for police services.
- Cost breakdown of services the RCMP provides to the HRP, including additional resources for events, VIP services, etc.

2. Policing services and supports

- Compare the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the RCMP and the HRP and the services provided with the resources (human and financial) available.
- Outline the geographic challenges and disparity between urban and rural community policing, including the statistics on number of police officers assigned to a specific geographic area in terms of size, average distance travelled for calls, number of calls, and average response times.
- Compare policing statistics such as Crime Severity Index, number of officers per resident, weighted clearance rate, violent crime weighted clearance rate, and authorized strengths. These should be compared over a 5 to 10-year period to capture any trends.
- A clear understanding of the differences between policing rural and urban communities.
- A review of the HRM's police service interoperability and how it can be improved.
- A review of the available mental health and social safety supports available to public safety personnel and necessary improvements to it.

3. Service Review

- A complete service review identifying opportunities to improve service value for the city's Police Services, looking at:
 - Economy - police service input costs compared with inflation and the city's population growth. Are these comparable with those of other municipalities.
 - Efficiency - the police service model promotes an efficient use of resources to deliver services as compared to policing services in other municipalities.
 - Effectiveness - police services result in a safer community over time when compared to other municipalities.
 - Fairness - citizens have the police services they require; and,

- Environment - police services contribute to the city's desired community and social outcomes.
- HRM Police Service Review should outline and consider previous reviews and recommendations that have either been implemented, are in the process of being implemented, and what the resulting improvements have been.

4. Governance Review

- Conduct a governance review regarding how police services are delivered within the HRM.
 - This should include reporting structures, how strategic plans and priorities are developed and implemented, the approval and signing authorities, and how various communities are consulted and provide input into local policing priorities.
 - Review governance model: the composition and appointments, primary responsibilities, and operating responsibilities.
- Interviews should be conducted with various regional councils and stakeholders to identify and consider their perspectives and insights.

ⁱ Nova Scotia, *The Provincial Police Service Agreement* [Online] Available at:

https://novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/NSRCMP_Fact_Sheet.pdf

ⁱⁱ RCMP. Occurrence Report. 2019. <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/transparenc/police-info-policiers/calls-appels/occurrence-incident-eng.htm#text-1>

ⁱⁱⁱ RCMP Year in review 2016. [Online] Available at: <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/rcmp-h-division-2016-year-review#10>

^{iv} RCMP Programs and Services [Online] Available at: [Programs and services | Royal Canadian Mounted Police \(rcmp-grc.gc.ca\)](https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/Programs_and_services_|_Royal_Canadian_Mounted_Police_(rcmp-grc.gc.ca))

^v 2022. Pollara Strategic Insights - National Police Federation: Nova Scotia Wave 2.

^{vi} Statistics Canada. Population and dwelling counts: Census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations and census subdivisions (municipalities). [Online] Available at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810000301>

^{vii} 2022. Police personnel and selected crime statistics, municipal police services. [Online] Available at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510007701&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.15&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2017&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2021&referencePeriods=20170101%2C20210101>

^{viii} Halifax Regional Municipality. 2021-2022 Halifax Budget and Business Plan.

<https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/budget-finances/OperatingBudgetBook2122.pdf>

^{ix} Statistics Canada. Police resources in Canada, 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00015-eng.htm>

^x Halifax Regional Municipality. 2021-2022 Halifax Budget and Business Plan.

<https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/budget-finances/OperatingBudgetBook2122.pdf>

^{xi} Halifax Regional Municipality. 2021-2022 Halifax Budget and Business Plan.

<https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/budget-finances/OperatingBudgetBook2122.pdf>

^{xii} Halifax RP Operational Expenses (~99.2 Million) and RCMP Operational Expenses (~29.4 Million). In total, about 128.6 million for both police services. - <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/budget-finances/OperatingBudgetBook2122.pdf>

^{xiii} Statistics Canada. Population and dwelling counts: Census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations and census subdivisions (municipalities). [Online] Available at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810000301>

^{xiv} 2022. Expert Report prepared for The Joint Federal/Provincial Commission into the April 2020 Nova Scotia Mass Casualty. [Online] Available at: <https://masscasualtycommission.ca/files/commissioned-reports/COMM0058936.pdf?t=1657212213>

^{xv} 2022. Change at the RCMP. [Online] Available at: <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/vision150/index-eng.htm>

^{xvi} Systemic Racism in the RCMP. [Online] Available at: <https://www.securitepublique.gc.ca/cnt/trnsprnc/brfng-mtrls/prlmntry-bndrs/20211207/13-en.aspx>

^{xvii} 2000. *The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, A National Use of Force Framework*. [online] Available at:

https://www.cacp.ca/cacp-use-of-force-advisory-committee.html?asst_id=199

^{xviii} 2020. RCMP Occurrence Report. [online]. Available at: <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/transparenc/police-info-policiers/calls-appels/occurrence-incident-eng.htm>