

Toronto Police - Consultant KPMG Report

Consultants urge big changes to Toronto police:

Mayor John Tory notes overuse of frontline cops, but union president dismisses report ‘written in crayon.’

The Toronto Police Services Board has been presented with 14 "areas of focus" to find ‘real’ cost savings and modernize policing.

By: Jennifer Pagliaro - Toronto Star - Dec 10, 2015

Mayor John Tory says he is “dumbfounded” by how often highly paid, frontline Toronto police officers are dispatched to routine calls, a statistic found in a consultant's report on the city's force that had been kept secret and was finally released Thursday.

At a time when the city is looking to trim spending to cover millions in budget gaps, the mayor was responding to the findings of the report which looks at “modernizing” policing while significantly reducing costs.

“As one member of the police services board I was dumbfounded at the fact that a huge portion of... the calls that come in were dedicated to dealing with things like parking enforcement,” Tory said in an interview with the Star.

His response to whether the board will seriously consider sweeping changes in the report, what would likely involve contentious negotiations with the powerful police union, was straightforward: “The answer is: ‘Yes.’”

Police association president Mike McCormack, who represents officers, discarded the report as “lacking data” and disputed several of the key findings.

The report lacks credibility, he said. “What I’m looking at is a 40,000-foot level report. I don’t even consider them recommendations. I consider them concepts, and we’re definitely willing to sit and talk about these things once we get all the data around it.”

That report, using data provided by the police service, calls for a complete overhaul of the way this city does policing — a “community-centric” approach that would see more neighbourhood officers out of their cars, halt unnecessary spending and focus on pro-active and data-driven responses that better serves neighbourhoods.

It’s an approach; the authors say that would bolster a “culture of transparency, accountability and appreciation for providing and achieving value for money.”

Last month, the Star reported that the board was stalling regarding both implementing and publicizing the recommendations from KPMG.

The report, which cost taxpayers \$200,000, was commissioned by the board in 2014 after members grew unsatisfied with the lack of cost-savings in an earlier two-year internal review launched by former chief Bill Blair, now a Liberal MP for Scarborough Southwest and recently appointed parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Justice.

In the interim, this board passed a 2.76 per cent increase — or \$27 million extra — for the 2016 police budget, what remains the single largest cost to the city at more than \$1 billion, the majority of which is contracted salary and benefits for officers.

The KPMG report, led by former UK police Chief Ian McPherson, looked at how frontline officers spent their time in 2013, responding to a total 643,620 calls. The top 10 types of calls accounted for 89 per cent of all calls that saw uniformed officers dispatched to the scene.

But the report found that the majority of those calls, which were a draw on the majority of police resources and time, were “non-emergency” and “which may not always require frontline officers to be deployed.”

Of those, **16 per cent of calls were related to parking matters** — representing 400,000 hours of time spent by either civilian officers in the parking enforcement unit or uniformed officers, the report said.

Another 27 per cent of calls were for medical complaints.

The consultants said there is opportunity to better prioritize calls, including increasing the use of non-uniformed officers or setting appointments and call-back times to deal with non-emergency matters — that, the authors said, would better serve the public and cut costs.

Union boss McCormack disputed KPMG’s findings, presenting a different analysis of the 2013 call data — one commissioned by the association and completed by Curt Taylor Griffiths, director of the Police Studies Centre at Simon Fraser University.

McCormack said parking-related calls are already going to the civilianized parking enforcement unit, not to frontline officers, and that typically medicals calls are responded to at the request of other emergency services.

He cited data that says fewer than five per cent of all calls in 2013 were for traffic or parking-related matters and that 82 per cent of all calls were for “crime-related” complaints, including disorderly and “anti-social” behaviour. That analysis claimed 24 per cent of calls were for serious crimes such as assault and theft.

Still, McCormack acknowledged there is room for improvement and promised to work with the board going forward on issues related to the better deployment of frontline officers.

The KPMG report also found that a two-year internal review launched by former chief Bill Blair at the board's urging to find "efficiencies" largely failed to achieve those goals.

In reviewing Blair's own review, as directed by the board, KPMG found the service and the board had differing priorities, that it lacked "consistency and coherence," presented incomplete analysis with evidentiary "gaps," and failed to identify greater costs savings — amounting, KPMG found, to a defence of the "status quo."

In one instance, Blair's review only identified four out of 45 positions in forensics to be civilianized — jobs that could be done at a lower cost to the service. Blair's review argued civilianizing any more than that would not result in savings. KPMG's authors said: "There appeared to be insufficient evidence to support this rationale."

For the board to implement the most radical recommendations, history shows there is likely to be pushback from the police union.

But Tory said he's "optimistic" they are willing to negotiate in "good faith" about issues such as changing shift scheduling and redeployment of frontline officers — issues that have been highly contentious for the past decade.

He said the board will also need to have serious discussions with the province over new legislation to allow better technology for jobs that don't require officers — such as catching drivers who make illegal left turns.

Tory recognized other issues, such as the closure of police divisions, will be difficult to sell with local councillors and their communities.

"I would make the argument that it's entirely possible the net result of this will be more police presence in the community, because if you're not sitting two officers in a car — sitting waiting to see if someone turns left at Adelaide and Yonge — then you could be patrolling in a neighbourhood or just being in a neighbourhood or responding to an emergency," he said.

When first asked about the report by the Star, current board chair Andy Pringle called the recommendations "random suggestions." Following the Star's reports, Pringle, in an email from a board spokesperson, said the report "provides a basis for dialogue leading to long-term change, to which the board and the service are committed." He declined to comment ahead of the Dec. 17 board meeting, where the KPMG report will be presented.

Key recommendations from the report

The KPMG report outlines 14 “areas of focus” which are aimed at re-organizing and “modernizing” Toronto's current policing model. Here are the highlights.

Knocking down divisions: KPMG called for a “One Service” approach, what would completely reshape the current model that has been in place for decades. The consultants said the board should consider getting rid of 17 divisions spread throughout the city and replacing them with “strategic hubs” with one centralized “tasking centre” or “brain” to better triage calls. The authors said that change would “enable the right people and right skills, in the right places at the right times.”

Community policing: The report looks at getting more police officers out of their cars and into neighbourhoods, moving away from the current model that mostly sees officers dispatched around the community in their squad cars based from decentralized divisions. KPMG said this would also reduce the number of fleet vehicles (and therefore gas costs) needed by the service, representing significant savings. Consultants were not able to identify specific costs without further study.

Data-driven policing: The authors found that data and intelligence “does not appear to be driving day-to-day activities or allocation of resources” — part of a theme throughout the report about a lack of proper data collection, organization and analysis. “An organization cannot manage what it does not measure,” the authors said, recommending the service invest in the kind of real-time tracking that can improve customer service and cut costs.

A civilian for a cop's job: Throughout the report, KPMG insisted there is room to better civilianize non-essential jobs currently being done by higher-paid uniform officers. It found the current uniform-to-civilian ratio at divisions was 19.5 to 1 and that former chief Bill Blair's own internal review “erred on the conservative side” and “demonstrated a reluctance to civilianize.” The authors found noted success in civilianization in Edmonton, Waterloo, San Jose, Denver and Chicago.

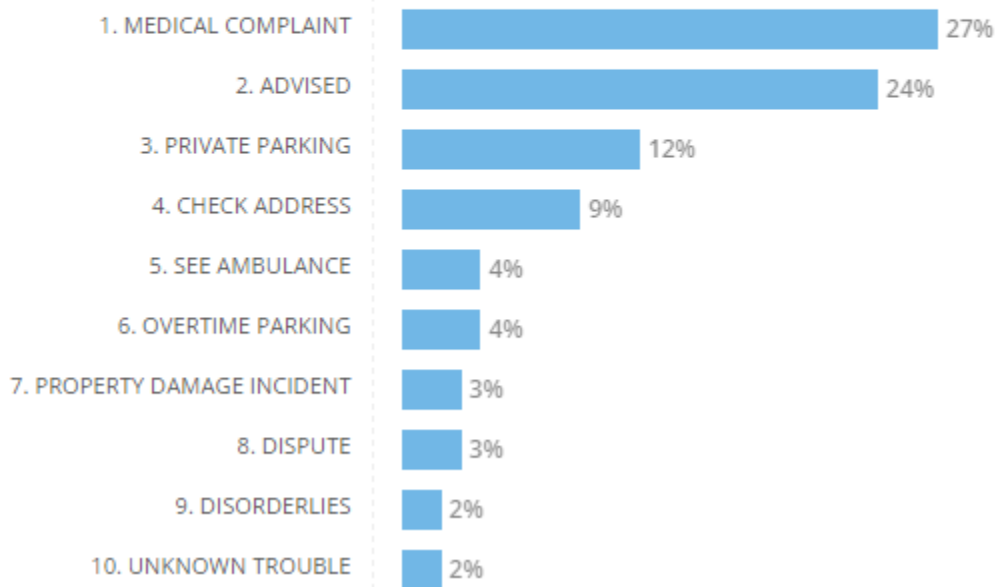
Contracting out: KPMG says the board should be “thoroughly” considering outsourcing parking enforcement to the city, which handles some parking responsibilities now, or to a private company. It also found court security could be more efficient if contracted out, noting the trend in other cities has already been to privatize those services with little impact on the public and “significant cost savings.” The report says police could consider a pilot project at certain courthouses.

Halt unnecessary spending: The report says that in the short term, the board should stop capital spending — \$543 million planned over 10 years — for non-essential projects while they reconsider their priorities for service. Already there are plans to spend \$15.25 million on construction and renovations of two downtown police stations. It also suggested looking at temporarily reducing premium (overtime) pay and suspending unnecessary promotions.

Improving accountability: KPMG says there needs to be “strong leadership” from both the board and senior police command. Individual board members should take responsibility for issues including “diversity” and “public consultation” to “set clear objectives” for the board and service to be held accountable for. Above all, it recommended the board develop a strategic plan for both short- and long-term goals based on the identified recommendations in the report to move toward “a more community-centric, proactive, modernized model of policing.”

Police calls by the numbers

KPMG report found 7 of 10 top types of calls for service were “non-emergency” issues and may not require frontline officers. Here’s how they rank in terms of total dispatched calls:



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