



Item No. 10.2.1

Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality January 8, 2023

TO: Chair Kent and Commissioners of the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality

SUBMITTED BY: - Original Signed -
Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 28, 2023

SUBJECT: Rate of police officers per 100,000 population ('cop to pop' ratio)

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This is a staff-initiated report.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Nova Scotia *Police Act*, section 53, SNS 2004, c.31, as amended.

53 (1) The board shall annually cause the chief officer to prepare a budget for the police department.2004, c. 31 police 27 MAY 12, 2022.

(2) The board shall ensure that the budget prepared pursuant to subsection (1) is consistent with those matters referred to in subsection 55(3).

(3) The budget prepared pursuant to this Section shall be submitted to council by the board for approval.

BACKGROUND

The following information is submitted for the information of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC), at the request of Commissioner Harry Critchley at the BoPC meeting on Wednesday, November 29, 2023. Halifax Regional Police (HRP) previously emailed an internal briefing note on the subject to Commissioners on December 6, 2023.

DISCUSSION

Every year, the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) division of Statistics Canada publishes findings from the annual Police Administration Survey (PAS)^[1]. These include the rate of police strength per 100,000 population – commonly known as the 'cop to pop' ratio.

Because HRM is served by both HRP and Halifax District Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the CCJCSS calculates the HRP and RCMP cop to pop ratios separately. The estimated population for HRP areas is calculated as 59% of the HRM population from the preceding year^[2]. This formula has been used by CCJCSS since 1996.^[3]

The cop to pop ratio is often used to compare levels of policing in different geographical areas across the country. As the integrated HRP/RCMP policing model in HRM is unique across Canada, it is respectfully submitted that the HRP cop to pop ratio should not be considered equally comparable with other municipal police services.

Please see the 'Rate of police officers per 100,000 population ('cop to pop' ratio)' document at Attachment 1 for more information.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required for the purpose of preparing this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Rate of police officers per 100,000 population ('cop to pop' ratio) Internal Briefing Note

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Chief Don MacLean, Halifax Regional Police, 902.490.6500

^[1] The 2020 cycle of the PAS was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, following the 2023 cycle, the survey will take place bi-annually

^[2] Estimated population from the current year is not available at the time of calculation, so the preceding year is used

^[3] Email correspondence from CCJCSS to HRP, dated January 28, 2022

Date: December 4, 2023

To: HRM Board of Police Commissioners

From: Chief Don MacLean

Subject: Rate of police officers per 100,000 population ('cop to pop' ratio)



The following information is submitted for the information of the HRM Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC), at the request of Commissioner Critchley at the BoPC meeting on Wednesday, November 29, 2023.

Every year, the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) division of Statistics Canada publishes findings from the annual Police Administration Survey (PAS)¹. These include the rate of police strength per 100,000 population – commonly known as the 'cop to pop' ratio.

Because Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is served by both HRP and Halifax District RCMP, the CCJCSS calculates the HRP and RCMP cop to pop ratios separately. The estimated population for HRP areas is calculated as 59% of the HRM population from the preceding year². This formula has been used by CCJCSS since 1996.³

The estimated population for HRP and the reported police strength for that year are used to calculate the cop to pop ratio for HRP. In 2022, the population for HRP was estimated at 271,368, and the reported number of police officers was 531, meaning the cop to pop ratio was 195.7.⁴

The cop to pop ratio is often used to compare levels of policing in different geographical areas across the country. As the integrated HRP/RCMP policing model in HRM is unique across Canada, it is respectfully submitted that the HRP cop to pop ratio should not be considered comparable with other municipal police services.

Approximately 120 HRP officers (22% of HRP police strength) work in the integrated Criminal Investigation Division (CID), which investigates all CID files across HRM. This means that HRP officers may investigate CID files which occur in RCMP areas, and vice versa. Therefore, HRP officers in CID do not work solely in HRP areas, and RCMP officers in CID do not work solely in RCMP areas.

This was noted in the results of the 2019 PAS, which stated for Halifax: *"The data in this table represents Halifax Regional Police, N.S. which has a rate of police strength of 209. However, this rate does not include the number of police officers from Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Halifax rural which shares responsibility to police the same area. When RCMP Halifax rural officers and the population they serve are added to the calculation, the rate of police strength amounts to approximately 166 police officers per 100,000 population."*⁵

It is worthy of note that the estimated HRP population figure relates to the resident population only, and does not consider temporary populations, including students, tourists, commuters, and entertainment visitors. For all the above reasons, it is submitted that the only appropriate calculation for a meaningful and comparable cop to pop ratio for HRM would be to use the total police strength for HRM, and the total population for HRM.

¹ The 2020 cycle of the PAS was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, following the 2023 cycle, the survey will take place bi-annually

² Estimated population from the current year is not available at the time of calculation, so the preceding year is used

³ Email correspondence from CCJCSS to HRP, dated January 28, 2022

⁴ Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0077-01 Police personnel and selected crime statistics, municipal police services](#)

⁵ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00015/tbl/tbl05-eng.htm>

(HRP police strength + Halifax District RCMP police strength)

Total HRM population/100,000

If this calculation is used for 2023, with an HRM population of 480,582, a police strength of 545 for HRP, and a police strength of 188 for Halifax District RCMP⁶, the cop to pop ratio would be 152.5.

If this calculation is also used to estimate the cop to pop ratio for 2024, with an estimated HRM population of 512,820⁷, and without the additional positions requested by both HRP and Halifax District RCMP (thereby using the same police strengths as above), the cop to pop ratio would be 142.9.

If the additional positions requested for the 2024/25 fiscal year by both HRP and Halifax District RCMP are included, this would give a police strength of 569 for HRP, and a police strength of 194 for Halifax District RCMP. With the estimated HRM population of 512,820, the cop to pop ratio would be 148.8.

Cop to pop ratios across Canada - examples

The following list contains examples of cop to pop ratios from different geographical areas across the country⁸, which illustrates the wide range which exist depending upon the unique circumstances of each area:

- Canada – 181.3
- Nova Scotia – 183.8
 - Amherst – 246.6
 - Cape Breton – 210.7
 - Kentville – 268.5
 - Truro – 272.9
 - Bridgewater – 265.4
 - New Glasgow – 326.6
- Toronto – 164.8
- Montreal – 212.3
- Fredericton – 157.0
- Saint John – 190.1
- Vancouver – 187.2
- Victoria – 205.9
- Saanich – 157.3

Respectfully submitted for your information.

Chief Don MacLean.

⁶ <https://www.halifax.ca/media/84139>

⁷ Internal HRM population projections

⁸ Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0076-01 Police personnel and selected crime statistics](#) and [Table 35-10-0077-01 Police personnel and selected crime statistics, municipal police services](#)