

# LAW ENFORCEMENT FRAMEWORK





## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Alberta's new Law Enforcement Framework - outlined in these pages - lays the foundation for moving forward with a new vision for the future of law enforcement in Alberta.

It ensures law enforcement in Alberta is modern and well equipped to meet the needs of Albertans into the future. It can also be refreshed and adapted over time to ensure it continues to reflect the changing realities of law enforcement in this province.

The framework recognizes that community policing forms the foundation of effective law enforcement and that communities need flexibility to address their local policing needs as effectively and efficiently as possible. It also acknowledges that Albertans have greater expectation for law enforcement accountability.

Because crime does not stop at or recognize municipal borders, law enforcement must be coordinated, integrated and intelligence-led. The framework incorporates this approach, ensuring Alberta continues as a national leader in innovative policing and law enforcement practices, which in turn will help ensure our province remains strong, vibrant and safe.

I am proud of the outstanding job law enforcement officers do every day protecting Albertans and preventing, reducing and investigating crime, and I extend my thanks to the many stakeholders and Albertans for their tremendous contribution and dedication to the development of this new framework.

Sincerely,

Frank Oberle

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A key priority of the Government of Alberta is providing Albertans with safe, secure communities in which to live work and raise their families. Part of achieving this objective lies in ensuring that adequate and effective policing is maintained throughout the province.

Although Alberta's law enforcement system served Albertans well through the 20th century, significant population and economic growth has brought new challenges to our province. Law enforcement in Alberta is more complex and complicated than ever before:

- Alberta's population has grown more diverse. Law enforcement personnel encounter a wider range of cultures and perspectives.
- A continuing trend of urbanization is creating higher service demands in urban centres, and creating the risk of service inequities in rural and remote communities facing decreases in population.
- Crime in Alberta has become more severe given the rise in gang activity and criminal elements have become more sophisticated in their tactics and use of technology.
- Legal and administrative requirements have grown more complex, diverting law enforcement resources away from providing front-line services.
- Alberta's law enforcement system has evolved to include many types of personnel: police officers, peace officers, private security personnel and civilian support. There is a need for clarity in the roles and responsibilities of these personnel, to avoid confusion in the general public and among law enforcement.
- A lack of consistent standards across the province has resulted in differing levels of training and skills among law enforcement personnel.
- Jurisdictional and geographic boundaries present barriers to adequate and effective service delivery. Increased collaboration, integration and information sharing among law enforcement agencies is needed to navigate these barriers.
- Accountability and governance issues, including the need for community input and civilian oversight, must be addressed in order to maintain the confidence Albertans have in the province's criminal justice system.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* is designed to reflect and respond to these realities, and to position Alberta's law enforcement as a modern, flexible and professional system that can continue to meet the policing and public security needs of Albertans.

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The *Law Enforcement Framework* builds on the investments and work undertaken to date and a number of other policy initiatives, including the MLA Review of Special Constables, the Roundtable on the Future of Policing, and the Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force.

The vision of the *Law Enforcement Framework* is that policing reflects the priorities of Albertans, is transparent and accountable in the delivery of services, and that the entire spectrum of available policing and public security resources are properly and appropriately utilized. The Framework aims to achieve this vision consistent with the following principles:

*Collaboration among law enforcement partners.* Public safety should be enhanced through better coordination among law enforcement organizations, with functions and activities organized to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

*Balanced allocation of law enforcement resources.* Law enforcement resources should be effectively organized and deployed to maximize community-based approaches to local policing, while ensuring the ability of police to handle complex investigations.

*Efficient deployment of services.* Policing services should be delivered with minimal duplication, with functions placed with those personnel who are best suited in terms of training and authority.

*Provincial leadership.* Government's role is to set strategic provincial direction for law enforcement, establish policies and standards, and oversight that ensures law enforcement remains adequate, effective and accountable to Albertans.

*Equitable distribution of costs for policing.* The cost of policing services in Alberta should be shared in an equitable manner among Albertans and Alberta communities.

The Framework sets out nine strategic directions that will guide the future of Alberta's law enforcement system in three main areas:

### ***Strengthening Service Delivery***

Communities will have flexibility in meeting their policing needs and have access to integrated specialized investigation services on a province-wide basis. Roles, responsibilities and competencies of law enforcement personnel in the province will be clear, relevant and consistent.

*Strategic Direction 1:* Capable, flexible and responsive operational policing will be the foundation of modern law enforcement in Alberta.

*Strategic Direction 2:* The full continuum of law enforcement delivery will be utilized to provide flexibility in policing approaches throughout the province.





*Strategic Direction 3:* Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) will be the mechanism to coordinate and enhance the delivery of integrated, specialized policing services on a province-wide basis.

*Strategic Direction 4:* Law enforcement in Alberta will be intelligence led.

*Strategic Direction 5:* Law enforcement in Alberta will be guided and assessed using clear, strong standards and performance indicators.

*Strategic Direction 6:* Alberta communities will be safer through a balance between traditional enforcement activities and community-led prevention initiatives aimed at reducing crime over the long term.

### ***Ensuring Accountability to Albertans***

The trust and confidence of Albertans in law enforcement will be retained through structures and processes that provide for community input into policing priorities and credible oversight mechanisms for addressing public concerns.

*Strategic Direction 7:* All Alberta municipalities will have adequate, transparent and meaningful community input into local policing needs and priorities.

*Strategic Direction 8:* The police public complaint process will be responsive and timely, thereby enhancing oversight of Alberta police officers and police services.

### ***Equitable Distribution of Policing Costs***

Funding mechanisms for law enforcement will be structured so that they are flexible, predictable, sustainable and equitable, they consider municipality size and ability to pay, and they better align funding responsibilities with the types of police services provided.

*Strategic Direction 9:* Develop a model to distribute the costs of local policing in an equitable, transparent and sustainable manner.





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## INTRODUCTION

### CONTEXT

A key priority of the Government of Alberta is providing Albertans with safe, secure communities in which to live, work and raise their families. Part of achieving this objective lies in ensuring that adequate and effective policing is maintained throughout the province.

Alberta's law enforcement system served Albertans well through the 20th century. However, the significant population and economic growth our province has experienced in the past decade has brought new challenges to our doorstep, including more insidious and professional criminal elements.

A combination of technological advances, legal issues and socio-economic factors have made law enforcement in Alberta more complex and more complicated than ever before. Police agencies are facing increased service demands as criminal elements grow and become more sophisticated.

Communities expect greater input into the establishment of policing priorities. Governments are demanding greater accountability around the allocation and expenditure of funds, and program funding is increasingly being tied to targeted initiatives with performance measures. There are increased expectations with respect to public transparency and public accountability for police operations and complaint processes – areas traditionally left largely within the purview of the police service leadership.

As their communities grow and evolve, Albertans want their police services to remain responsive, adaptable and effective. They want to retain trust and confidence in their local law enforcement personnel. In return for their tax dollars, Albertans also expect their communities to enjoy an equitable level of access to law enforcement services.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* is designed to reflect and respond to these realities, and to position Alberta's law enforcement as a modern, flexible and professional system that can continue to meet the policing and public security needs of Albertans. It is more than just a plan for the present; it was developed to guide the efforts of government, law enforcement, communities and stakeholders into the future. It is a framework designed with a view towards enhancing law enforcement into the future in harmony with the dynamic nature of our province.

### THE DIRECTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

The *Law Enforcement Framework* is not an action plan, but rather a foundation for the future of law enforcement in Alberta. The current model of law enforcement dates back to the early 1930s - a model that has not kept pace with major societal and technological changes. There are real and considerable pressures for change. Today's public has greater expectations and demands for

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accountability; we have ever-changing technological advances and instant global communications; crime and criminal groups are becoming more complex and continually reinvent themselves; there are increased administrative burdens and Court requirements; and mounting pressures for growth, change and redesign with limited resources.

Our consultations with key stakeholders identified where we need to be better, stronger, and more focused. We heard that law enforcement needs to be modernized in a way that allows for maximum flexibility at the community level while ensuring equitable access to specialized services on a province-wide basis. Law enforcement needs to be a web of services - coordinated, seamless, integrated and closely connected to the communities it serves.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* sets out principles and strategic directions that will guide the Government of Alberta as it makes future decisions around policing. It articulates how the government will work with communities, police services and other law enforcement partners to strengthen and renew Alberta's law enforcement system. It sets out roles and expectations for law enforcement personnel in the province; and it identifies how to best use the law enforcement services that are available in Alberta.

The objective is a law enforcement system that is proactive, efficient and effective – one that supports the ability of Alberta communities to address their unique policing needs and priorities, and provides safety and security to Albertans over the long term.

At the heart of the *Law Enforcement Framework* is a commitment to robust community policing.

Community policing is an approach to crime reduction that involves members of the community as active participants. Community consultations, community partnerships, problem solving and prevention are all hallmarks of community policing. Community residents play a role in identifying local crime and disorder issues and help establish policing priorities. Police services work proactively to address these priorities while remaining responsive to community concerns.

Community policing requires policing to be much more than simply reactive. Instead, front line police officers develop problem solving strategies in partnership with community members. Depending on the issue and the neighbourhood, such strategies could include the use of foot patrols, community stations or other tactics designed to increase police-community contact and intelligence sharing. In the long term, crime prevention strategies are introduced and implemented throughout the community.

While heavily rooted in front-line strategies, community policing does not operate in isolation from intelligence gathering and specialized investigative services. Rather, community policing augments the techniques of intelligence-led and specialized policing services in an effort to create an overarching network of effective, locally-controlled and locally-driven policing.

In order to be successful in providing community policing, police organizations must be open, accountable and responsible to public/community priorities and concerns. They must also adopt a philosophical dedication to the mission of solving local problems in partnership with the community.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The *Law Enforcement Framework* does not seek to re-invent policing in the province. Instead, the Framework builds on the significant investments and work undertaken to date in reinforcing Alberta's law enforcement resources and fostering greater integration and accountability in the work of law enforcement personnel. Achievements and future work include:

- Strengthening police services with the addition of 300 new police officers;
- Establishing integrated gang enforcement units to operate across the province;

- Hiring additional probation officers to enhance the supervision of repeat offenders in Alberta communities;
- Creating the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) to investigate serious and sensitive incidents involving police officers;
- Creating the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) to better coordinate law enforcement efforts to address serious types of crime;
- Developing a new province-wide networked radio system that will connect more than 700 emergency responder and government agencies; and
- Developing a provincial records management system, the Alberta Police Integrated Information Initiative (API3), to facilitate information sharing among police services in the province.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* is also supported by a number of policy initiatives that have been undertaken concerning the province's approach to law enforcement.

In 2005, the Alberta government conducted an MLA review of the Special Constable Program in Alberta. The review produced numerous recommendations to update and expand the program to better meet the rapidly changing demands in all areas of law enforcement. The recommendations were developed after extensive consultations with Albertans and research from across Canada and around the world.

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In March 2007, Alberta hosted the *Roundtable on the Future of Policing*. Attended by many law enforcement stakeholders from across Alberta, the Roundtable identified key concerns that included: civilian oversight and governance, the equitable provision of policing services throughout Alberta and the need for provincial leadership in the delivery of some of those services.

The Alberta government also established the Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force in 2007, to gather input and ideas from Albertans on ways to reduce crime, enhance community safety and improve public confidence in the criminal justice system. In its report, *Keeping Communities Safe*, the Task Force presented a number of findings and considerations for strengthening Alberta's law enforcement.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* is informed by this extensive background work. It has also been influenced by the input and perspectives of major law enforcement partners, including police services, police associations, police commissions, policing committees, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* has also been developed with regard to *Alberta's Crime Prevention Framework*, a key outcome of the Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force. *The Crime Prevention Framework* sets out a shared vision and approach for crime reduction in the province, through initiatives aimed at increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors.

Under *Alberta's Crime Prevention Framework*, organizations and personnel in Alberta's law enforcement system play key roles in working with community partners and other government departments to identify and address local needs and trends that could lead to crime. In this capacity, police services are envisioned as efficient, effective and balanced in their approaches, and working from a philosophy of community policing.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR A GROWING PROVINCE



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## WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Albertans are served today by a law enforcement system that is comprised of a number of organizations and various types of personnel.

The *Police Act* sets out the policing services that Albertans can expect in their communities, and the ways in which police services remain accountable to Albertans. Albertans benefit from four main types of policing in the province: municipal policing, regional policing, provincial policing and First Nations policing.

***Municipal Policing*** – The *Police Act* requires urban municipalities with populations over 5,000 to provide police services in their communities. Municipalities have a number of options for providing police services in their communities.

The most common municipal policing arrangement in Alberta is the use of contract policing. Under this arrangement, the RCMP provides policing services to a municipality under a Municipal Policing Agreement (MPA). Under an MPA, a proportion of the costs of policing are borne by the federal government, depending on the size of the municipality's population.

A municipality can also establish and maintain its own stand-alone police service. Six communities use this option: Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Lacombe and Taber.

***Regional Policing*** – Municipalities can also choose to provide police services in their communities through regional policing arrangements. Under these arrangements, the councils of two or more municipalities enter into an agreement to have their policing provided by one regional police service. At present there is one formalized municipal regional policing arrangement in Alberta – the Lethbridge Regional Police Service, which provides policing to the municipalities of Lethbridge and Coaldale.

***Provincial Policing*** – Under the *Police Act*, the Alberta government is responsible for providing police services for those municipalities with populations of 5,000 or less (towns, villages and summer villages), and to all municipal districts and counties, at no direct cost to them. The province meets this obligation by contracting for the services of the RCMP to deliver police services to these municipalities, through a Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA), signed between the Alberta and federal governments. Under the PPSA the province is responsible for 70 percent of the cost while the federal government pays 30 percent. The PPSA also provides police services to Métis settlements, and to First Nations communities where other policing arrangements have not been made.

**First Nations Policing** – The RCMP provides policing services to most of Alberta’s First Nations communities. However, 18 First Nations communities in Alberta have made other policing arrangements through agreements with the Alberta and federal governments. These arrangements are typically through a Tripartite Agreement or a Community Tripartite Agreement.

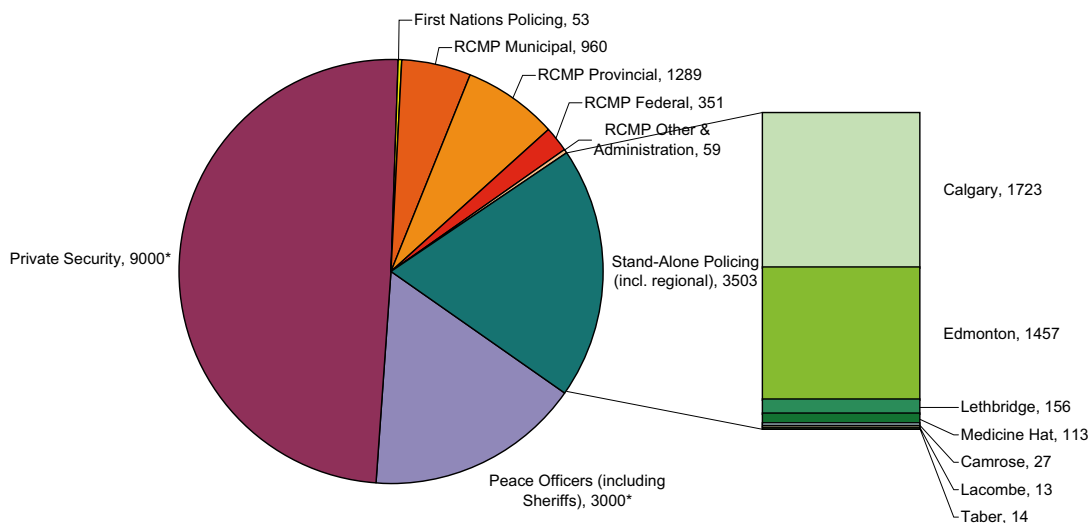
A Tripartite Agreement permits the creation of a First Nation police service operating exclusively on reserve. The cost of First Nations policing under these agreements is shared by the federal and Alberta governments, subject to the availability of funding.

A Community Tripartite Agreement is an agreement between the federal government, the Alberta government, and the First Nation, which provides for additional RCMP members to supplement the First Nations detachment. It also requires those RCMP members to spend at least 80 percent of their time on reserve. Costs of policing under these agreements are also shared between the Alberta and federal governments.

Albertans are served by many types of law enforcement personnel, each with identified roles and responsibilities. In addition to police officers, there are various forms of peace officers, private security personnel, and civilians.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT IN ALBERTA

Police and Peace Officers employed in the province in 2009



\*Approximates

(Source: Police Resources in Canada, 2009. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. This is a snapshot of police resources on May 15, 2009.)





**Police Officers** – Police officers are responsible for enforcing federal, provincial, and municipal laws, protecting life and property, preventing crime, and keeping the peace. They have a broad range of duties and roles, of which law enforcement is the major role. Police officers investigate occurrences, arrest offenders and bring them before the criminal justice system. They also provide a variety of community services including: crime prevention, educational programs, assisting in locating missing persons, dealing with lost property, traffic control, victim assistance and collision investigation.

**Peace Officers** – Peace officers supplement the work of police officers, performing varied roles that assist in maintaining the peace. Peace officers are authorized under the *Peace Officer Act*, which enables the Alberta government to designate agencies and individuals with peace officer status for specific job functions. There are two levels of Peace Officers in Alberta - Alberta Peace Officers and Community Peace Officers.

Alberta Peace Officers perform a range of duties on behalf of the province. These can include: fraud investigations; fish and wildlife enforcement; parks enforcement; traffic enforcement on Alberta highways; commercial vehicle enforcement; prisoner transport and court security; protection services for

the Premier, Lieutenant Governor, VIPs and other individuals; and varied inspector and compliance officers conducting enforcement under provincial statutes.

Similarly, Community Peace Officers perform a range of duties at the community level. Their duties vary in nature and scope depending on the unique needs and priorities of the communities they serve. These can include: working at postsecondary institutions to provide a safe and secure environment for staff and students; traffic enforcement in municipalities; enforcement of other provincial statutes; or other roles that are administrative in nature.

Peace officers add flexibility to law enforcement in Alberta by providing a continuum of personnel with varied levels of training and authority. This approach recognizes that many enforcement roles, such as regulatory compliance, do not require highly trained police officers. The use of peace officers for these roles enables police officers to remain focused on more complex and more serious criminal enforcement activities. Alberta is unique in Canada for its Public Security Peace Officer Program.

**Private Security Personnel** – Private security personnel, such as security guards and private investigators, have no special status in law nor any privileges or powers



beyond those of ordinary citizens. Private security personnel act as agents of property owners to protect private property, as permitted under the *Petty Trespass Act* and the *Trespass to Premises Act*.

A property owner can authorize his or her representatives (such as private security guards) to limit access to the property, and to arrest trespassers or individuals found committing a criminal offence on the property. Security personnel (such as loss prevention, security guards, investigators, locksmiths, and automotive lock bypass people) and private investigators are required to be licensed by the Alberta government under the *Security Services and Investigators Act*.

**Civilian Support** – Law enforcement is also supported by civilians who are either employed by or volunteer for a law enforcement organization. In police services, there are a number of civilian positions that complement the work of police officers. These positions can include administrative staff, dispatch call centre staff, crime analysts, and forensics services personnel. In addition to civilian positions, the RCMP and some stand-alone municipal police have auxiliary programs that provide opportunities for civilian volunteers to complement police services.

As can be seen from the foregoing, no one agency or type of personnel is solely responsible for law enforcement in the province.

Instead, a wide range of organizations and individuals operate in various capacities to ensure the safety and security of Albertans. The ability of the law enforcement system to achieve this objective depends on multiple players working together effectively and efficiently. However, a number of issues and trends are challenging the ability of police services to continue meeting the needs of Alberta communities.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* aims to position Alberta's law enforcement system to overcome these challenges, and pursue strategies and opportunities that will ensure Albertans benefit from modern, efficient and effective policing over the long-term.

## THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The Government of Alberta, through the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Public Security, plays an important role in coordinating government interaction with the law enforcement community in Alberta. This is achieved when the Province responds to emerging criminal justice trends or priority issues, ensures the law enforcement system is well structured and supported, as well as enables victims of crime to receive assistance during the criminal justice process.

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It is important that the Province provide leadership in the development and direction of policing. This stems from both the constitutional responsibility of the provincial government and the necessity to coordinate the widely varying needs and services of the different communities within the Province. Provincial leadership can be expressed in a variety of ways including legislation, standards, model policies, coordination of initiatives, direct delivery of certain services or projects, training, research, strategic planning, and inter-ministerial and inter-governmental cooperation.

Pursuant to the *Police Act*, the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security is “responsible for ensuring adequate and effective policing is maintained throughout Alberta”. Locally, it is the role of police leaders, civilian oversight bodies and local government to ensure law enforcement meets the needs of the communities they serve. It is the Government of Alberta’s role to set the direction, strategic framework, performance expectations and accountability mechanisms within which local law enforcement should be delivered. Where appropriate, the provincial government has a role in providing resources to ensure equity of services across the province to more effectively tackle crime and reduce victimization. It is also the Province’s role to set the pace for improvement and ensure law enforcement has the legislative powers and tools to fulfill their responsibilities.

Recognizing that municipalities and local police cannot be responsible for reducing crime on their own, the Government of Alberta has provided a significant investment in policing and engaged in developing and funding major initiatives. These include strategies to increase the number of front-line police officers; tackle serious, complex, and multi-jurisdictional crime through the ALERT model; and provide provincial technical and intelligence supports through radio interoperability and a provincial records management system.

Even with this investment, there are still significant pressures to respond to and new challenges to face. One example of where the provincial government can play an important role is in the area of information sharing. There are many challenges associated with information sharing in the field of law enforcement, driven by the variety of provincial and federal legislation that guides information sharing practices. Often times, different interpretations of legislation by police and government departments interferes with practices of sharing of information for law enforcement purposes and can impeded the development and interaction of electronic systems. The provincial government should be a leader in finding solutions for these challenges as they emerge.

Law enforcement agencies currently take direction from many “masters”. This situation can create duplication and overlap of services, tension between



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agencies, differing standards and levels of service—all of which can lead to an erosion of public confidence. It is critical to ensure that the public, police agencies, governance bodies and municipalities clearly understand the Province’s role and their own respective roles in setting the direction, strategic priorities, performance expectations, and accountability of law enforcement services in Alberta. This will only be possible if there is general agreement that frontline, community policing is a local responsibility while the province provides support and sets the higher-level strategic direction for law enforcement across Alberta. The Government of Alberta also needs to be clear in its role, particularly in regards to the direct delivery of “police-like” law enforcement functions.

Through a common understanding between the Province and law enforcement partners and stakeholders as to these roles and responsibilities, the Government of Alberta provides leadership in ensuring that equitable, adequate and effective policing services are provided throughout Alberta.

## **MAJOR TRENDS AND CHALLENGES**

Alberta’s law enforcement system is increasingly challenged by a number of inter-related and complex trends and issues:

*Growing, diverse population* – Alberta’s population has grown markedly in a relatively short span of time, buoyed in part by many newcomers from other

parts of Canada and around the world seeking to take advantage of economic opportunities. Alberta has therefore not only become more populated, but also more diverse. Law enforcement personnel encounter a wider range of cultures and perspectives, including some new Albertans who lack trust in authorities due to experiences in their countries of origin.

*Urbanization* – Urbanization has steadily increased in Alberta, and is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Many new Albertans are taking up residence in urban centres. Many other Albertans are also relocating from rural and remote municipalities to larger centres.

*Economic boom and bust* – The heavily resource-based nature of Alberta’s economy makes the province prone to extreme booms and busts rather than stable trends. Job losses and accompanying financial hardships during sudden downturns can contribute to increases in crime and regulatory offences as individuals struggle to make ends meet. Plentiful disposable cash in boom times, meanwhile, can contribute to increased use of illegal drugs, fuelling organized crime and gang activity.

*Severity of crime* – With a growing population, Alberta has over time also experienced growth in the severity of crime. Although the crime severity index and crime rate both declined in Alberta in 2009, they remained the fourth-highest in among the provinces. Alberta also had the fourth-highest homicide rate, the third-highest motor vehicle theft rate, the

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second highest family violence rate and the third-highest drug crime rate in 2009. The prominence of severe crime requires greater specialization and dedication of police services to address major crime.

*Growing sophistication of crime* – Criminal elements are growing in sophistication. Gang crime and organized crime, in particular, have become savvier and are employing new tactics, techniques and technology to try and stay ahead of police. This includes use of GPS technology, encrypted communications devices, independent wireless service providers, social networking websites, custom armoured vehicles, and bullet-proof vests. Many criminal organizations are aware of law enforcement surveillance techniques and work to counter-act these measures. Law enforcement organizations are challenged to keep up with technology to enforce crime and conduct more complex investigations.

*Growth in gang crime* – Population growth, economic growth and other socio-economic factors have contributed to a rise in gang activity in the province. Gangs are principally involved in drug trafficking, but are known to also be increasingly involved in fraud, identity-theft, and human trafficking. The nature of gang crime makes it especially challenging and resource-intensive to investigate and enforce.

*Legal and administrative complexity* – Law enforcement organizations are confronted with a more complex legal and administrative environment than ever

before. Frequent changes to case law, and to federal, provincial and municipal laws, regulations and bylaws make it challenging for organizations to remain up-to-date on standards and procedural processes. Administrative responsibilities are increasingly diverting law enforcement resources away from providing front-line service, leading to inefficiencies in resource allocation.

*Human resources* – Law enforcement organizations face human resource issues such as recruiting and retaining skilled personnel, and succession planning. Organizations also have differing levels of training and skills among personnel. A lack of consistent competency standards across the province means that a police officer in one part of the province may not have the same training as a police officer in another part of the province. This creates barriers in human resource allocation, and the risk of inconsistencies in service levels across the province.

*Confusion over roles and responsibilities* – The increased and evolving use of private security personnel and peace officers risks creating confusion over the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement personnel – among the general public, and within law enforcement. Confusion and inconsistency regarding the roles of law enforcement personnel presents hurdles and barriers to working in more collaborative and integrated ways. This leads to inefficiencies in service delivery.

*Jurisdictional issues* – Criminal elements are unencumbered by municipal or

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other jurisdictional boundaries. Law enforcement organizations, however, must navigate jurisdictional and geographic boundaries, which can be time consuming. Increased collaboration among multiple law enforcement agencies is needed to mitigate these barriers and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. This includes the sharing of information and integration of police databases, which is essential for enforcing crime that spans jurisdictions.

*Public confidence in criminal justice system* – Although Albertans continue to have confidence in the province’s criminal justice system, there are some irritants that risk eroding this confidence. Members of the public have renewed expectations regarding the accountability of governments, organizations and individuals in positions of public authority. In particular, there are legitimate public expectations regarding appropriate input into policing priorities, civilian oversight of police services, and the need for independent, credible processes by which concerns about police conduct are investigated and addressed.

## **POSITIONING FOR THE FUTURE**

Even in the face of growing pressures and challenges, opportunities exist to position and reinforce Alberta’s law enforcement system so that it remains modern, responsive, competent, accountable and effective in helping keep Albertans and Alberta communities safe and secure. The *Law Enforcement Framework* is aimed at

achieving these outcomes.

*Community level flexibility* – The law enforcement needs and priorities of each Alberta community is unique. Communities therefore need as much flexibility as possible to pursue local law enforcement approaches that meet their needs - a “one size fits all” approach to local policing does not work. At the same time, many communities have insufficient population or resources to establish and provide a full scope of specialized policing services. As a result, all Albertans do not benefit from equitable levels of policing services in their communities. Alberta’s law enforcement system needs to continue to provide communities with a maximum level of flexibility, while ensuring all Albertans have equitable access to specialized policing services.

*Seamless delivery of services* – Illegal activities occur across the entire spectrum of enforcement areas – from regulatory offences to minor crime to major, organized crime. A single crime can engage multiple organizations and types of law enforcement personnel. To provide adequate and efficient policing services to Albertans, law enforcement partners need to work together in more integrated ways. Multiple organizations and personnel must develop and pursue approaches that enable them to complement each other’s roles, responsibilities and expertise to form a tightly connected web of protective and enforcement services.

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*Consistent roles* – Albertans want to retain trust and confidence in law enforcement services. This depends in part on Albertans knowing who is responsible and accountable for which services. There must be clarity of roles and responsibilities among Alberta’s law enforcement partners. The RCMP will continue to be Alberta’s provincial police service, and a provider of municipal policing for many municipalities and First Nations. Peace Officers are also expected to continue playing important roles in providing flexible enforcement activities that complement the work of police officers. The Private Security industry will maintain its significant and broad contribution to the safety of Albertans, through their provision of security and investigative services that supplement the efforts of law enforcement. Ensuring clarity in the roles of these organizations and personnel will also help improve the efficiency of service delivery.

*Consistent standards* – No matter where they live, Albertans should have confidence that Alberta’s law enforcement personnel have the necessary skills and abilities to help keep their communities safe and secure. Across the province, police officers, peace officers and security personnel should have minimum standards of training and competencies commensurate with their duties. This will ensure that Albertans benefit from a consistent calibre of law enforcement in their communities, and will support the ability of law enforcement partners to provide seamless service delivery.

*Enhanced capacity* – Alberta’s law enforcement system needs to maintain its capacity to meet growing enforcement service demands, ranging from minor offences to major crime, and to address and suppress criminal activities that are growing in sophistication and severity. This requires strategic investments in technology and training, but also requires optimization of existing law enforcement resources. No law enforcement organization has the capacity to do it alone. Increased collaboration among law enforcement partners is essential, to facilitate the sharing of expertise, experience and resources, and to stretch beyond jurisdictional barriers that are not observed by those who break the law.

*Openness and Accountability* – Albertans expect law enforcement services to remain open, responsive and accountable to the public. Albertans must have access to opportunities and forums to provide community-level input into policing priorities and concerns. They must also have sufficient assurance their concerns regarding the conduct of law enforcement personnel are addressed with professionalism and impartiality. Alberta’s law enforcement system needs to provide these essential elements in order to ensure it maintains integrity, respect and public support.

*Equitable access to law enforcement services* – Albertans deserve adequate, efficient and effective law enforcement services no matter where they live. Realistically, it is not practical or feasible





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for every Alberta community to provide the same spectrum of police services. However, Alberta's law enforcement system should be structured and funded in ways that provide all Alberta communities with access to equitable levels of law enforcement services.

*Balanced approach* – Albertans want their communities and their province to be safe and secure over the long term. In addition to providing Albertans with efficient and effective enforcement services that address immediate needs, Alberta's police services also play an important role in helping prevent crime. The system must provide for this balanced approach, enabling police officers and peace officers to foster relationships and work with other community partners on initiatives that address crime prevention.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



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## VISION

Policing reflects the priorities of Albertans, is transparent and accountable in the delivery of services, and the entire spectrum of available policing and public security resources are properly and appropriately utilized.

Albertans place a priority on the safety and security of their communities. As our province grows in population, diversity and complexity, it is important that Alberta's law enforcement system is modern, efficient and capable of meeting the needs and expectations of Albertans.

Alberta's vision for law enforcement is one in which Albertans benefit from competent, innovative, efficient and collaboratively delivered policing services. It is a system in which police services work in new and seamless ways to address community-driven policing priorities. Law enforcement organizations retain the trust and confidence of the people they serve, and Alberta taxpayers as whole.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The strategic directions articulated in the *Law Enforcement Framework* are based on a consistent set of principles that will guide the Government of Alberta, municipal governments and police services in strengthening Alberta's law enforcement system.

*Collaboration among law enforcement partners.* Public safety should be enhanced through better coordination

among law enforcement organizations, with functions and activities organized to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

*Balanced allocation of law enforcement resources.* Law enforcement resources should be effectively organized and deployed to maximize community-based approaches to local policing, while ensuring the ability of police to handle complex investigations.

*Efficient deployment of services.* Policing services should be delivered with minimal duplication, with functions placed with those personnel who are best suited in terms of training and authority.

*Role of Government.* It is the Government of Alberta's role to set the direction, strategic framework, performance expectations and accountability mechanisms within which local law enforcement should be delivered. It is also the Province's role to set the pace for improvement and ensure law enforcement has the legislative powers and tools to fulfill their responsibilities in order to ensure law enforcement is adequate and effective.

*Equitable cost distribution for policing services.* The cost of policing services in Alberta should be shared in an equitable manner among Albertans and Alberta communities.

## STRENGTHENING SERVICE DELIVERY

Albertans benefit from a law enforcement system that provides a spectrum of integrated services that

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generally fall into two main categories: community-based operational policing and specialized investigations.

Community-based operational policing is at the heart of Alberta's law enforcement approach. This involves local law enforcement working at the grassroots, front-line patrol level. Police officers work in partnership with community members to implement crime and victim reduction initiatives that address local concerns and issues.

Community-based operational policing recognizes that each community in Alberta has unique law enforcement needs and challenges, and it enables communities to deploy resources in ways that will work best for the community. It also respects the desire of Albertans to have input into local policing priorities, and their desire for local police services to remain accountable to the community.

Specialized investigations involve officers with specialized training that address complex law enforcement matters and issues. These include units such as tactical response teams, undercover operations and specialized complex criminal investigations.

Specialized investigation services do not operate in isolation from community-based operational policing. Rather, they are delivered in coordinated ways. Community-based policing draws on and utilizes the unique resources of specialized investigations to address community needs and concerns.

However, not every Alberta community has the population, capacity or resources to provide a full complement of locally-driven specialized investigation services. This can lead to marked differences in service levels across the province.

Albertans should benefit from equitable access to police services, no matter where they live. Our law enforcement system must ensure communities can maintain flexibility in meeting their policing needs, and have access to specialized investigation services to reinforce their community-based operational policing.

In this modern system, Albertans are served by law enforcement personnel who are trained and recruited in accordance with provincial standards, ensuring a consistent quality of service in all communities.

Roles and responsibilities are also clarified, so that Albertans know the right personnel are assigned to the right functions, and are working in integrated ways that promote collaboration, optimize resources and maximize effectiveness.

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***Strategic Direction 1: Capable, flexible and responsive operational policing will be the foundation of modern law enforcement in Alberta.***

At the local level, communities should have the flexibility to address their local policing needs as effectively and adequately as possible. Community policing forms the foundation of effective law enforcement.

Alberta municipalities currently served under the Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA) will continue to be served by the RCMP for their community-based operational policing needs. Other municipalities will continue to have responsibility for providing municipal policing through contract policing, the creation of a stand-alone police service, or regional policing. Community-based policing on First Nations will continue in accordance with relevant agreements.

Currently, local police services can draw upon specialized investigations services. Some local services have established specialized investigation capacity; other local services share these kinds of resources through formal or informal agreements. Those communities served through the PPSA or a Municipal Policing Agreement (MPA) are provided specialized services through district deployment of the RCMP.

In addition to existing local capacities and arrangements, Alberta communities will be reinforced by access to provincially integrated specialized investigation services. This will ensure all Albertans

have access to an equitable level of police services in their communities,

Access to specialized services that are not available locally will initially be available through regionally established enforcement and intelligence teams set up under ALERT. Further support will be available as required through other larger, provincially-focused units within ALERT (i.e. Alberta Combined Special Enforcement Units, Sheriff Support Teams).

This direction will augment local police services as they pursue community policing approaches, and build upon the integrated, locally-controlled specialized services that are already in place in communities. The result will be better resourced community policing for Albertans.

***Strategic Direction 2: The full continuum of law enforcement delivery will be utilized to provide flexibility in policing approaches throughout the province.***

Currently, there are more than 5,500 police officers who are employed by municipal, regional, First Nations and provincial police services. To complement these resources, there are approximately 3,000 peace officers (including the Alberta Sheriffs) and approximately 9,000 licenced private security personnel.

Communities in Alberta have demonstrated their ability to find creative solutions that build their capacity and meet their local law enforcement needs

## Criteria for Service Determination within a Law Enforcement Continuum



and priorities. Some communities share resources with other communities through formal or informal agreements. Many develop collaborative relationships among local police services and other community members, including non-police organizations and personnel, to address issues such as crime prevention, training, and victim support. In addition to these approaches, communities also have the ability to distribute law enforcement functions beyond police officers to other personnel, such as peace officers.

Having access to this continuum of roles enables communities to more efficiently allocate law enforcement resources, so that the right functions are performed by the right individuals based on levels of expertise, training, authority and costs.

Expanding the continuum of law enforcement roles will provide

communities with greater flexibility in delivering community policing. The result will be more efficient and effective deployment of human resources, providing Albertans with better policing value for their tax dollars.

Albertans will also benefit from enhanced assurance and accountability in this modern system. The Alberta government will establish province-wide standards and quality assurance mechanisms to ensure law enforcement personnel have the competencies, guidance and authority to effectively perform their duties. This will give Albertans confidence that the right people with the right skills are performing the right jobs.

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***Strategic Direction 3: Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) will be the mechanism to coordinate and enhance the delivery of integrated, specialized policing services on a province-wide basis.***

Community-based law enforcement is vital but cannot be viewed in isolation. Dangerous and serious criminal activities, such as organized crime and gang activity, affect Alberta communities and often spill beyond municipal and provincial boundaries.

The severity, sophistication and multi-jurisdictional nature of some crimes requires specialized services such as gang units, drug enforcement units, major case investigators, canine units, and trained surveillance units. Not every community currently has the capacity to establish their own specialized investigation services.

The availability of coordinated and integrated specialized investigation services on a province-wide basis will help improve the delivery of police services in the province. This approach will enable these services to easily span municipal boundaries to effectively address inter-jurisdictional criminal activity. It will also ensure that all Alberta communities have equitable access to specialized investigation services, and will augment locally-controlled specialized services that are already in place in local forces.

Additionally, this will help Albertans receive more policing value for their tax dollars. Through the creation and use

of multi-disciplinary teams – with the right combination of skills, expertise and training to address serious crime – the approach promotes efficient allocation of these resource-intensive services.

Alberta has already begun to implement an integrated model of specialized service delivery. Law enforcement organizations and other disciplines involved in these efforts have demonstrated success in their ability to collaboratively and collectively address crime and social issues in the province. In 2006, the Province created ALERT as a preliminary step toward helping better coordinate law enforcement efforts to address serious types of crime.

ALERT operates at arms-length from government and is comprised of more than 400 seconded and contributed police officers, peace officers and civilian staff. It brings enforcement teams, intelligence units, and provincial support and specialized services together under one umbrella. These include collaborations such as:

- *Enforcement Teams* – For example, Alberta Combined Special Enforcement Units and Alberta Gang Enforcement Teams, which are dedicated to investigating, disrupting and dismantling criminal organizations.

- *Intelligence Units* – Criminal Intelligence Service Alberta, for example, works with other intelligence units to collect, evaluate, and disseminate information about organized crime.
- *Provincial Support and Specialized Services* – The Integrated Child Exploitation Unit, for example, finds and arrests those who manufacture and/or trade in child pornography, or who “prowl” internet chat rooms looking to sexually exploit children. The Integrated Threat & Risk Assessment Centre is responsible for assessing threats, developing risk reduction plans and safety strategies for high risk relationships and stalking situations in the province.
- *Sheriffs Units* – This includes: the Sheriffs Investigative Surveillance Units which provide surveillance assistance to law enforcement agencies in Alberta with ongoing provincially focused investigations; the Fugitive Apprehension Sheriffs Support Teams which track, investigate and arrest criminals who are the subject of outstanding warrants in Alberta; and the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods units which investigate complaints from the public regarding drugs, gang activity, and prostitution at problem residences and buildings under the authority of the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*.

ALERT will continue to serve as the functional lead in the development of coordinated, integrated, cross-jurisdiction responses to crime and disorder. The Government of Alberta will work with the ALERT Board of Directors and Alberta Chiefs of Police to develop a strategic plan that addresses the need for further integration based on:

- the jurisdictional nature and complexity of the crime;
- the degree of specialization required to conduct investigations;
- scarcity of expertise;
- desire to integrate;
- economies of scale; and
- available funding.

***Strategic Direction 4: Law enforcement in Alberta will be intelligence led.***

Intelligence is the cornerstone on which a modern, effective law enforcement system should be built. Intelligence-led policing (ILP) is a strategic, future-oriented and targeted approach to crime suppression and prevention. ILP is designed to inform law enforcement decision-makers at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

A modern, standardized, real-time approach to collecting and managing intelligence is vital in moving away from reactive efforts and towards dynamic, proactive approaches. Better identification of crime and disorder



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hotspots and better targeting of serious and prolific offenders will help direct policing resources in more effective and efficient ways.

Intelligence services need to be integrated with other law enforcement operations. This will allow for efficient dissemination of intelligence data and minimize barriers relating to human resource deployment or jurisdictional boundaries.

All Albertans should benefit from intelligence-led models of policing. Many local police services currently have locally-controlled intelligence units in place, which are integral to their delivery of locally-directed community policing. There is a need to build upon and augment existing capacities, so that all Alberta communities have equitable access to intelligence-gathering capability. Recognizing the nature of crime and sophistication of criminal networks is an area where there is pressing need for provincial and national consistency.

The Government of Alberta will work with ALERT's Criminal Intelligence Service Alberta and other law enforcement organizations to develop a provincial intelligence model. Development of the model will also engage Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada and its work in developing and deploying the next generation national intelligence system, the Canadian Criminal Intelligence System, which will provide service to more than 380 law enforcement agencies across Canada. This model will seek to reinforce – not replace – local intelligence capacities that are already in place.

Implementation of the Alberta Police Integrated Information Initiative (API3) and the development of a province-wide emergency services radio network will also provide a valuable tool for the collection and sharing of consistent, reliable and timely information from law enforcement services across the province and throughout the country.

***Strategic Direction 5: Law enforcement in Alberta will be guided and assessed using clear, strong standards and performance indicators.***

All Albertans should have confidence that their policing services meet consistent standards of quality. Police services must remain accountable to the public for their calibre of service. Albertans expect to receive value of their tax dollars, and want to know how their police services are performing in preventing, addressing and reducing crime in their communities.

The Government of Alberta has a role in establishing minimum benchmark standards for the delivery of adequate and effective policing. While many Albertans benefit from regular and robust performance reporting from their local police services, this is not practised consistently across the province. The Government of Alberta will work with the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police and the Alberta Association of Police Governance in developing key performance indicators to more accurately assess the effectiveness of policing provided.



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This strategy will provide government, police commissions and policing committees, police services and Albertans with a basis for comparisons between police services and access to standardized, relevant performance indicators. While providing for a consistent provincial approach, it will seek to preserve local police independence and discretion, which are vital for modern-day community policing. The strategy will be enshrined in the Alberta standards and police services will be audited to the standards.

Albertans will also have greater assurance that local law enforcement personnel have been recruited and trained to consistent province-wide standards.

Most police services in the province voluntarily adhere to recruitment guidelines developed by the Alberta government in cooperation with the Human Resources Committee of the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police. These guidelines are intended to provide valid, reliable and relevant police recruit selection standards. Mandating compliance with the recruitment guidelines will resolve gaps and ensure that appropriately qualified and screened candidates are selected for careers in policing.

The Government of Alberta will continue the development of standardized training and competencies for specialized criminal investigators. It will also continue to work with law enforcement organizations to develop and pursue approaches for training and professional development of officers. These approaches will include sharing of

expertise among police services to enhance consistency in policing practices, enabling smaller municipal police services to benefit from the experience of larger services and vice-versa.

The establishment of an Alberta Police/Peace Officer Training Centre will play a critical role in ensuring consistent, accessible, quality, state-of-the-art recruit training, specialized training and ongoing professional development for all police and peace officers in Alberta.

The training centre will also allow for increased sharing of expertise and would enhance consistency in policing practices and standards. An Alberta Police/Peace Officer Training Centre will promote greater equity in the level and quality of police and peace officers throughout Alberta.

## **BALANCING ENFORCEMENT WITH PREVENTION**

Today Alberta's law enforcement personnel serve in capacities that go beyond traditional enforcement activities. Consistent with the philosophy that underlies community policing, Alberta's police services are involved in a growing number of community partnerships. Police officers are increasingly working in collaboration with professionals in social services, health, housing and other policy areas to address community needs and challenges.

Against this backdrop, the Government of Alberta has worked with communities to establish a new approach to reducing

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crime throughout the province. This approach envisions Alberta's police services participating in locally-driven initiatives aimed at addressing factors to prevent and reduce crime in their communities.

Crime and social disorder do not happen in isolation. They arise out of a number of complex and contributing personal and societal risk factors. Among children and youth, these risk factors can lead to involvement with gangs and violent activity. By working to enhance protective factors – such as school involvement, mentoring, strong social supports, and access to health – the government and communities can together address risk factors and prevent and reduce crime in Alberta.

***Strategic Direction 6: Alberta communities will be safer through a balance between traditional enforcement activities and community-led prevention initiatives aimed at reducing crime over the long term.***

The engagement of police services in community-led prevention initiatives is consistent with Alberta's vision of community policing as a foundation of modern law enforcement.

In community policing, front-line police officers actively work with other community members to develop problem-solving strategies targeted to the needs of the community. Community-led prevention initiatives, similarly, are

developed with the input of community members and are designed to address the unique local needs, priorities and risk factors present in communities.

Creating safer and stronger communities for Albertans therefore requires a modern law enforcement system that balances traditional enforcement activities with ongoing engagement with community partners to prevent and reduce crime over the long term.

An important element in collaborative, community-led initiatives is the ability to share information. Effectively assisting individuals with multiple risk factors often requires the involvement of several community partners. Barriers to information sharing among the partners can introduce delays and gaps in connecting the individual with the assistance they need. Delays and gaps can result in children and youth slipping back into risky behaviours and situations. The Alberta government will work with police services to overcome information-sharing barriers in ways that respect the privacy of individuals.

The Alberta government will also work with police services and communities to make it easier for clients to access the assistance they require. Effective crime reduction initiatives should have the ability to identify and intervene with individuals at risk, and to seamlessly connect these individuals with the assistance they need to reduce their risk factors and enhance their protective factors. Enabling the provision of client-

centered services will require alignment among Alberta government ministries and agencies in the development and delivery of programs and services.

## **ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY TO ALBERTANS**

Albertans need to have confidence in the criminal justice system for it to be effective. Police derive their authority, morally and legally, through the community. Without the trust and confidence of community members, the ability of law enforcement to maintain public order and address criminal activity is undermined.

Albertans expect their police services to be accountable to them, and to operate with integrity, fairness and transparency. Police services must practice good governance and be responsible to citizens. Two key components in this regard are public input into policing, and oversight of police actions.

Alberta's law enforcement system must strike the right balance on accountability. Police services need to maintain a degree of autonomy in carrying out their duties and enforcing the law. They should not be governed in ways that present the appearance of being exclusively controlled by state or political interests. However, governance must allow for community input and influence in order to ensure police services remain accountable to the public, from whom they ultimately derive their authority.

This balance will be achieved by ensuring that law enforcement organizations have forums in place that facilitate meaningful community input into local policing needs and priorities; and that they have credible oversight mechanisms for addressing concerns regarding the conduct of law enforcement personnel.

Presently there is a mix of governance systems in Alberta's law enforcement system:

- *Municipal Stand-Alone and First Nations Police Services* – Each municipality operating a stand-alone police service, and each First Nations police service, has a police commission that provides oversight and creates an independent and neutral buffer between the police service and the local government.
- *Contract Policing* – Under the *Police Act*, municipalities that engage in contract policing for the services of the RCMP have the option of forming a Policing Committee to provide input and direction regarding policing priorities and strategies, and to appoint Complaint Directors that address public complaints about police conduct. However, as of 2010, only eight out of 40 municipalities using contract policing have formed a Policing Committee to provide a means of civilian oversight.
- *Provincial Police Service* – Communities served under the PPSA rely on the internal RCMP annual performance plan process to obtain



community input but the scope of consultation involved varies drastically across the province. A mechanism for local oversight with respect to public complaints is also lacking in communities served under the PPSA.

To ensure Alberta’s law enforcement system maintains public support and confidence, existing gaps in accountability and governance need to be addressed. All Albertans should have access to mechanisms that allow for meaningful public input into local policing priorities, and which provide appropriate levels of public oversight at the local level. An appropriate governance structure must also be in place for provincially coordinated specialized services, to ensure these are accountable to all Albertans.

***Strategic Direction 7: All Alberta municipalities will have adequate, transparent and meaningful community input into local policing needs and priorities.***

Today, the general public has significant expectations about the police services they receive in their communities. A primary strength and purpose of community-based operational policing is its ability to deliver the police services required to meet each community’s unique policing needs and priorities. Without a meaningful mechanism to solicit community input on needs and priorities, the central purpose of community-based policing is undermined.

A key outcome is for all Alberta communities to have mechanisms and processes in place to ensure local policing needs and priorities are reflected in the strategies of their respective police services. Each community requires the flexibility to establish mechanisms that meets the unique needs and expectations of local residents.

However, all Albertans should have a consistent level of accountability from their police services, no matter where they live. Accordingly, the mechanisms established for municipalities – particularly those with populations over 5,000 – should provide for a level of public oversight that is at least equivalent to that provided by Policing Committees, as provided for in the *Police Act*.

The Government of Alberta will work with police agencies and municipalities to ensure that adequate accountability mechanisms are established. This includes municipalities where police services are delivered under the PPSA. In these cases, mechanisms will build on existing practices such as citizen advisory committees.

***Strategic Direction 8: The police public complaint process will be responsive and timely thereby enhancing oversight to Alberta police officers and police services.***

Albertans wish to retain confidence in the professionalism and integrity of individual police officers, and by extension, their police services as a



whole. The public places enormous trust and authority in law enforcement personnel – to provide protection, enhance security, investigate criminal activity and enforce laws on their behalf.

Albertans recognize that law enforcement personnel overwhelmingly carry out their duties with competence, skill and repute. On those few occasions when something goes awry, Albertans want to know that police conduct will be investigated, assessed and corrected with the best interests of the public at heart.

The right processes need to be in place to assure Albertans that police services are not above the law, and that police officers may not act with impunity. Albertans need equitable access to oversight mechanisms and processes that ensure timely and transparent investigation of public complaints regarding police conduct.

Each community requires the flexibility to develop a police complaint and disciplinary process that reflects the unique needs and expectations of community residents. However, all local processes should be consistent with province-wide standards.

The Government of Alberta will update and modernize the *Police Act* and develop a set of provincial standards for police complaint and disciplinary processes. These will include a standardized system for tracking and categorizing complaints, and clarification of the role of Public Complaint Directors.

This will build upon the work already undertaken to ensure the interests of Albertans are served when police are involved in serious incidents. In 2007, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) was established as a mechanism for independent investigation of police conduct. ASIRT investigates incidents or complaints involving serious injury or death of any person, and matters of a serious or sensitive nature, that may have resulted from the actions of a police officer.

## **EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF POLICING COSTS**

As Alberta's population has grown and law enforcement has become more complex, the costs of policing have also risen. The Alberta government, municipal governments and the federal government share the costs of law enforcement in Alberta, through different funding mechanisms:

*Provincial Policing* – The province provides policing services to municipalities covered under the PPSA at no direct cost to these municipalities. These include towns, villages and summer villages with populations not greater than 5,000, all municipal districts and Métis settlements, and First Nations where other policing arrangements have not been made.

The costs associated with policing under the PPSA are shared between the Alberta government (70 percent) and the federal government (30 percent). In 2008, the total cost of police services under the PPSA (excluding enhanced policing



agreements and ALERT) was \$243.6 million; Alberta's share of this total cost was \$170.5 million.

*Municipal Policing* – Municipalities with populations greater than 5,000 are responsible for providing police services in their communities, by way of contracting with the RCMP or by establishing their own stand-alone police service.

Municipalities that choose to contract for the RCMP's policing services are covered by a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government. The proportion of costs shared by the federal government varies with the size of the municipality:

- Municipalities with a population less than 15,000 are responsible for 70 percent of the policing costs, and 30 percent is paid for by the federal government.
- Municipalities with a population of 15,000 or more are responsible for 90 percent of the policing costs, and 10 percent is paid for by the federal government.

In 2008 (the most current data available for analysis), there were 48 municipalities in Alberta which were responsible for their policing costs (and for which full sets of comparative data are available). These data reveal that the costs of providing police service can vary considerably among municipalities:

- the average expenditure on police services in 2008 was \$259 per capita;

- on average, policing costs were 20 percent of total municipal tax revenues;
- on a per capita basis, policing costs ranged from \$94 in Cochrane to \$324 in Edmonton;
- for three municipalities (Edmonton, Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray), policing costs represented over 25 percent of total municipal tax revenues;
- for 13 municipalities, policing costs represented less than 10 percent of total municipal tax revenues.

*Municipal Policing Assistance Grant* – Municipalities with populations greater than 5,000, which are responsible for the costs of their policing, are eligible for financial assistance from the province through the Municipal Policing Assistance Grant (MPAG) program. The objective of MPAG is to help municipalities better meet the costs of policing services.

Financial assistance under MPAG is based on the following thresholds:

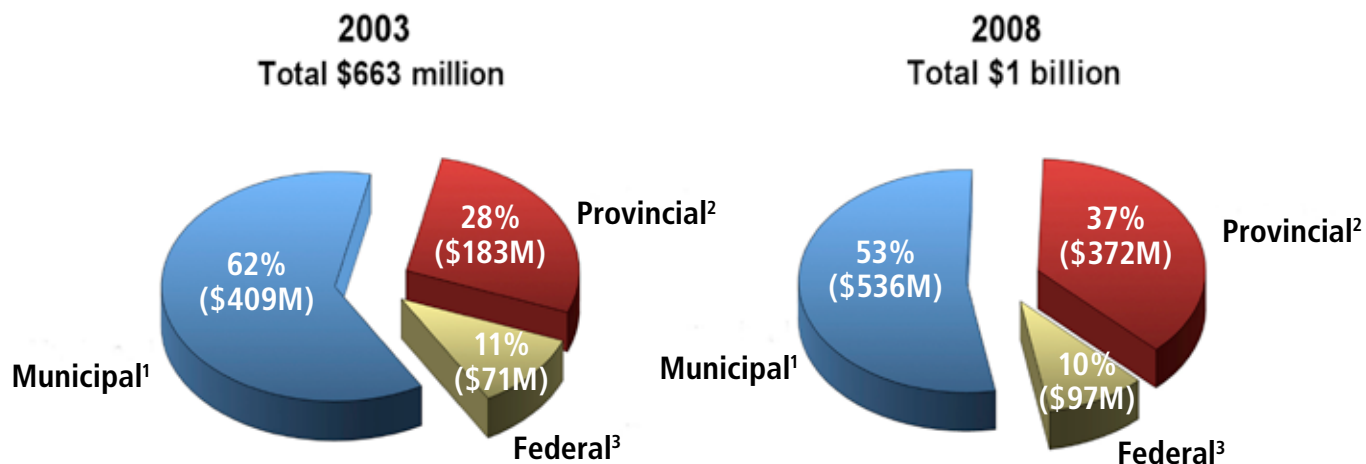
- Towns and cities with a population between 5,001 and 20,000 are eligible to receive a base payment of \$200,000, plus \$8.00 per capita.
- Cities and urban service areas with a population between 20,001 and 50,000 are eligible to receive a base payment of \$100,000, plus \$14.00 per capita.
- Cities and urban service areas with a population greater than 50,000 are eligible to receive \$16.00 per capita.

In 2008, MPAG provided an average of \$17.3 per capita (\$17.8 per capita in 2009) to support municipalities with their policing costs. This represented almost seven percent of the average cost of providing police services in these municipalities. On average, the MPAG provides the equivalent of approximately 1.4 percent of total municipal tax revenue for these municipalities.

- Provincial Fine Revenues - \$104 million in 2009
- Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) - \$24 million in 2009
- Provincial Peace Officers (i.e. the Sheriff Services) - \$15 million in 2009
- 300 New Police Officers - \$30 million in 2010-11

*Additional Provincial Services* – The Alberta government also provides funding support for law enforcement through other mechanisms and initiatives, such as:

## Financial Contribution to Policing in Alberta



1. Source: Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2003; 2008 (MFIS data). Total operating and capital expenditures for policing. Excludes bylaw enforcement costs. Excludes costs for municipalities policed by the Provincial Police Service (<5000 in 2008; <2500 in 2003). Removes provincial contributions to municipalities including MPAG, Fine Revenue, Premier's initiative for 300 new police and ALERT municipal disbursements. Adds in enhanced policing costs and expenditures for Lloydminster (Alberta side only).

2. Source: Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security, 2003-04; 2008-09 (Financial and Business Services Branch). Includes Municipal Policing Assistance Grants, Fine Revenue, Provincial Police Service Agreement, First Nations Policing, Premier's Initiative for 300 new police, Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT), and Sheriff Services (Traffic Safety, investigative Support, Warrant Apprehension, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods).

3. Source: Police Resources in Canada, 2004; 2009. Represents the 30% federal share of provincial police service costs, as well as the federal share of municipal policing provided by the RCMP to communities larger than 5,000 (either 30% or 10% depending on population). Includes the costs of federal policing activities.

Although Alberta’s law enforcement system benefits from a significant amount of support, there remain concerns. Municipalities are facing increasing challenges in providing adequate police services in the face of local changes in demographics and tax bases. Growing municipalities are experiencing higher demands for law enforcement services, which at times exceed their available service levels. The total level of Alberta government support for policing can also vary considerably from community to community. This can result in taxpayers in one part of the province disproportionately subsidizing police services in another part of the province.

Albertans should equitably share in the costs of policing, just as they should benefit from equitable access to police services in their communities. Albertans should understand how the taxes they pay to support policing align with the level of police services in their communities.

Alberta communities are diverse. Differences in population, fiscal capacity, remoteness and other local circumstances mean that the costs of policing can not realistically be shared equally by all Albertans across the province. However, Albertans in some parts of the province should not bear unreasonably disproportionate costs to support policing in other parts of the province. Each community should be responsible for the costs of its own policing to the greatest practical extent.

***Strategic Direction 9: Develop a model to distribute the costs of local policing in an equitable, transparent and sustainable manner.***

Going forward, Alberta’s law enforcement system must be supported through a flexible, predictable, sustainable and equitable cost distribution model. The model should be based on the following principles:

*Fairness (Equitability)* – Mechanisms must seek to address equitable levels of funding contribution and responsibility.

*Sustainability* – Mechanisms must account for municipalities’ ability to pay, which can impact their long term sustainability; this is especially a concern in smaller communities.

*New funds reinvested* – New funds realized under funding mechanisms should be reinvested in law enforcement throughout the province.

*Phased in* – New mechanisms should be phased in over a reasonable period of time in order to ensure communities have the ability to address any impacts.

This new “made in Alberta” model should be consistent with, and be designed to support, the overall directions articulated in the *Law Enforcement Framework*. To this end, the model should provide for:

- Shared responsibility for the costs of law enforcement services, whereby each municipality contributes to the costs of providing local policing.



- Provincial-level funding for specialized investigation services that are integrated provincially and which provide policing services cross-jurisdictionally, reflecting the fact that these services are coordinated regionally or province-wide and provided in multiple municipalities across the province.
- Better alignment between funding responsibilities and delivery responsibilities, enabling municipalities to maintain focus on community-based front-line police services and relieving them of the cost pressures associated with specialized services; this will also improve accountability to taxpayers.

## CONCLUSION



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## CONCLUSION

A new law enforcement framework is necessary – one that reflects and accounts for the realities of modern policing, facilitates greater coordination among existing law enforcement agencies, and maximizes the use of resources to address crime and disorder throughout Alberta.

Our consultations identified where we need to be better, stronger, and more focused. We heard that law enforcement needs to be modernized in a way that allows for maximum flexibility at the community level while ensuring equitable access to specialized services on a province-wide basis. Law enforcement needs to be a web of services - coordinated, seamless, integrated and closely connected to the communities it serves.

This paper sets out the proposed elements and approach of a new law enforcement framework that will help guide decision-makers in the Alberta government, municipal governments, and Alberta law enforcement agencies in the organization and deployment of resources.

The evolution of law enforcement in Alberta did not begin nor does it end here. Rather, this Framework presents a developing agenda that builds on the progress that has already been made in making law enforcement more effective.

We will continue to work collaboratively in refining a provincial framework within which local citizens, government, law enforcement and other service providers are guided and mobilized to more effectively reduce crime, victimization and community disorder.

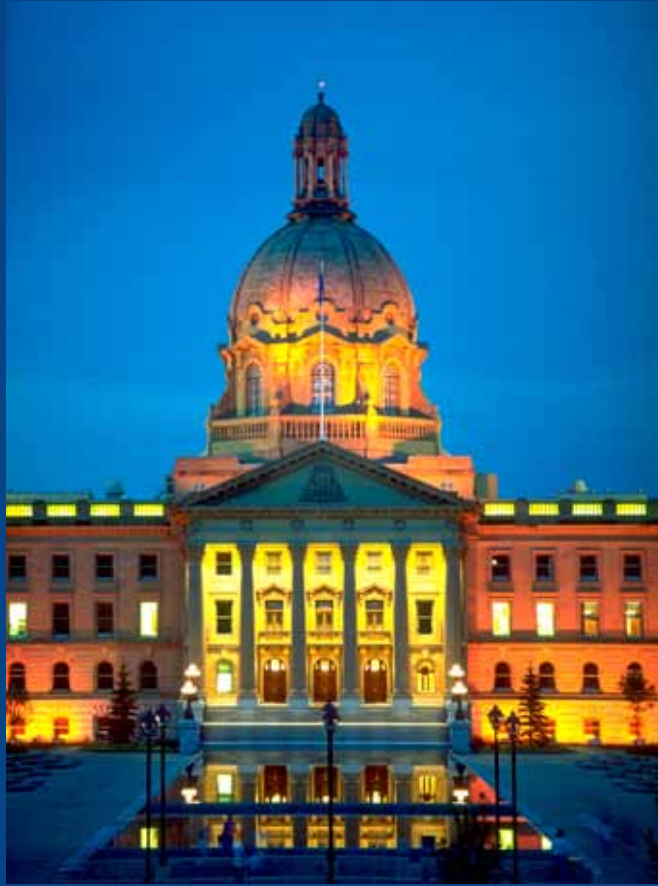
It is the hard work and commitment of our partners and their ability to embrace change and get things done that makes us confident that we are well positioned to make substantial improvements for the benefit of all Albertans.

The *Law Enforcement Framework* is designed to position Alberta's law enforcement as a modern, flexible and professional system that can continue to meet the policing and public security needs of Albertans. It is more than just a plan for the present; it was developed to guide the efforts of government, law enforcement, communities and stakeholders into the future. It is a framework designed to build upon with a view towards enhancing law enforcement into the future in harmony with the dynamic nature of our province.

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The *Law Enforcement Framework* will guide some of the immediate work that is required to enhance law enforcement in Alberta including such things as the API3, an interoperable radio system, streamlining systems and improving processes, addressing the issue of consistent police training throughout the province and ensuring information sharing with law enforcement is unencumbered in cases where it is important to uphold laws. Recognizing the dynamic nature of the province and crime, the *Law Enforcement Framework* will further serve to guide our work into the future allowing innovation and flexibility.

Our goal is simple, to make law enforcement better – to ensure all Albertans have safe and secure communities in which to live, work and raise their families.



**Government of Alberta** ■