

Outcomes of Redwater RCMP Community Engagement 2021

As per the 2021 Summer Redwater Community Engagement initiative, which was open to all residents from in the following geographic areas:

Abee, Amelia, Coronado, Egremont, Half Moon Lake, Lost Point Lake, Newbrook, Opal, Radway, Redwater, Thorhild County and Sturgeon County (North and East of Gibbons).

This initiative was open to submissions between the dates of Monday, July 19,, 2021 to Monday, July 26, 2021. It was developed to provide a forum where residents could bring forth any of their policing concerns to the Detachment Commander and have their concerns published, along with the corresponding responses and/or action plans to address the issues, if applicable.

Following the deadline for submissions, I received some responses from community members as summarized below.

Concern #1:

General Concern regarding the vast area the RCMP have to patrol with limited staff members.

Answer #1:

All police services have a set number of resources to deploy as efficiently as we can. In order to deploy these members appropriately we thoroughly analyze calls-for-service, operational intelligence and emerging crime trends. Reporting crime impacts how we deploy our members. We need to know where the needs are before we can assign the resources in the most effective manner possible. We deploy resources across the province based on an analysis of calls for service, local knowledge, intelligence and trends.

Workload analysis includes factors such as travel time, call volume, the type of crimes occurring in the area, amount of time required for investigations, size of detachment and time available for proactive policing. These include strategic patrols, community engagement, visiting schools and attending community events. Detachment Commanders have close ties to the communities we serve and meet regularly with local leaders to ensure community input is considered in decision making. The RCMP is glad to engage at all levels and we are always appreciative of new ways to hear from our communities. This means if you witness or are a victim of a crime, ensure you report it to your local RCMP, in order to help the police take all information into account when developing future plans to address and prevent crime in the area.

There is much more to the policing service the RCMP provides at the detachment level than just the officers you see patrolling in a police vehicle. Behind that officer and providing service to your community, is an extensive criminal intelligence and analysis network along with specialized support units like the Emergency Response Teams, Major Crimes Units, Integrated Drug Units, Traffic Services, the Alberta Internet Child Exploitation Unit, Federal Policing (Drugs and Serious and Organized Crime) and this list goes on. We have resources available to be deployed on a timely basis to respond to various calls for police services in any and all locations across the province.

Concern #2:

General concern if Redwater RCMP Detachment is properly funded and has appropriate resources with the ability to respond to increased crime as a result of upcoming construction projects.

Answer #2:

It is understood when there is a construction boom/employment boom in geographical areas the crime trends follow and has an impact on the communities in the area. This is something Redwater RCMP Detachment is well aware of as I am sure the county and town mayors, reeves and councils are as well. If and when the criminal element arrives as a result of this prosperity, Redwater RCMP Detachment remains poised to address any issues that may arise as a result. Such tools that could be used are targeted patrols, the use of intelligence analysis, crime reduction and prevention techniques, along with other strategies.

Should additional patrols and police presence be needed, the RCMP allows for Enhanced Police agreements to be entered with the towns and counties effected. These Enhanced agreements allow stakeholders (towns and counties) to enter into an agreement and provide funding on a non-permanent agreed upon term basis. This allows additional policing services to the community to adequately deal with increased crime and other related issues that are believed to be shorter term and not permanent. For example, when shutdowns and substantial work is being done on the plants south of town and Sturgeon County expects a large increase in traffic and the issues surrounding this, Sturgeon County has entered into an Enhanced Policing Agreement with the Redwater RCMP Detachment to provide additional patrols dedicated to the plant area for traffic management and enforcement for the duration of the work being done. Once the work is completed and traffic returns to normal, the enhanced agreement ends and police resources go back to initial agreements. This assists the province, town and countries from paying for additional police resources for a long term.

These Enhanced Policing Agreements (EPA's) are available at all times and for a variety of different reasons. Some cottage communities in the province enter into EPA's with their local detachments to provide additional patrols and police presence in the



cottage communities during peak times to deter property theft and provide a quicker response time to the communities associated to the agreement. Other EPA's consist of traffic initiatives, Crime Reduction Initiatives and off-highway vehicle patrols. This has been and remains an option to any stakeholder or combination of stakeholders, wanting additional patrols.

Concern #3:

Redwater RCMP Detachment Underfunded and Does Not Have Enough Resources to Respond to an Emergency.

Answer #3:

Redwater RCMP Detachment is a provincially funded detachment covered under the PPSA (Provincial Police Services Agreement). Under the Police Act, the Alberta government is responsible for providing police services for those municipalities with populations of 5000 or less, as well as to all municipal districts and counties. The province meets this obligation by contracting for the services of the RCMP to deliver police services to these municipalities, through the Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA), signed between the Alberta and federal governments. Prior to 2020, these police services were provided at no direct cost to the municipalities served if their populations were 5000 or less. Beginning in 2020, the Province of Alberta decided to recoup these costs under the PPSA by having these communities begin to pay for a portion of policing moving forward. This cost shift by the Province of Alberta to the communities covered under the PPSA **does not** increase funding or allow for an increase in policing, it merely allows the Province of Alberta to recoup some of these policing costs (<https://www.auma.ca/advocacy-services/programs-initiatives/policing-hub/urban-municipalities-populations-5000-or-less>).

As per the PPSA, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General for the province of Alberta along with the Commanding Officer of the RCMP "K" Division establish policing priorities annually in the form of a three-year business plan. This agreement establishes the minimum standard of policing that each Police Detachment and Service (RCMP and Municipal Police services) must meet as part of the PPSA. In simpler terms, each year the Alberta Solicitor General and the Commanding Officer of the RCMP in Alberta set a minimum level of policing requirements in the province and set priorities. The Province of Alberta then provides budget funding to the RCMP to meet these agreed upon standards and minimums. The RCMP in Alberta then assigns the police officer positions that the funding from the Provincial government allows for, to the appropriate detachments and areas that an analysis of crime rates/trends, seriousness of crimes, intelligence, call-volume, etc., identify the need for.



Every detachment commander, chief of police and supervisor will gladly accept more money for their budget and more resources to put boots on the ground to support their day-to-day operations. The expectations, demands, accountability of police, all continuously grow and evolve in this day and any increase in resources is greatly appreciated. But a reasonable and justified balance needs to be decided upon. What amount of policing is sufficient? Does there need to be a police officer available at all times should an individual need to speak to them without having to wait, or have the officer follow up with them at a later time? Is there an expectation that a police officer attend a crime scene immediately upon being called with no need to prioritize? Should each town, village, county and hamlet have a police officer present in them at all times? These are all questions and scenarios that are looked at on many levels from the PPSA minimum standards set by the Alberta Solicitor General and the Commanding officer of the K Division RCMP, to each RCMP District in Alberta, by each detachment commander, by each town, county, village and hamlet. The ultimate question that needs to be asked is "What level of policing services is the Province of Alberta and its stakeholders (cities, towns, counties, hamlets, villages, etc.) willing to pay for?" Do the residents of communities want police officers on every other corner 24-hours a day and are they willing to pay the associated costs through taxes and other means of financing this for this service? This is a question that the government and elected representatives on all levels of each community need to address and answer to.

Redwater RCMP Detachment consists of 6 Constables, 1 Corporal and 1 Sergeant for a total of 8 RCMP members. In addition, Redwater RCMP Detachment is home to a separate Provincial Integrated Traffic Unit which adds an additional 5 RCMP members that routinely patrol and travel through and around Redwater RCMP Detachment area. This adds an additional police presence, at no cost to the towns or counties, that numerous other detachments areas don't enjoy the benefit of.

I can assure you Redwater RCMP Detachment is fully equipped and prepared to respond to any emergency that presents itself and has responded to a number of emergencies over the last year in a professional and above average manner. These emergencies included such things as armed stand-offs, shootings, aggravated assaults, homicides, major collisions, along with a variety of other incidents and in each case the police response was more than adequate and sufficient to deal with the situation at hand.

Concern #4:

General Concern regarding the response times.



Answer #4:

Alberta RCMP cannot speak to specific response times in terms of averages or estimates as they vary significantly from area-to-area and incident-to-incident based on a number of factors including: geographical challenges that come with the vast size of many of our detachment areas; road and weather conditions; the level of urgency of the call for service in question; as well as the volume and level of urgency of other calls for service we may be responding to at the time.

When responding to calls for service members prioritize these calls and their response to them. If there is a criminal act in progress and a risk to the public or involved parties, these are responded to first to ensure the safety of everyone.

To address the geographical challenges our members face, the Alberta RCMP implemented a new Closest Car service. Dispatch closely monitors the location of frontline members on patrol in order to send the closest car to a call for service, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries i.e: A Fort Saskatchewan member might be closest to a call in Redwater jurisdiction and that member will respond as opposed to waiting for a Redwater member to respond.

The Redwater detachment members make it a point to show up in person, when possible, to speak with complainants and victims in relation to the occurrences that they are involved in or reported on.

Concern #5:

Property thefts are increasing.

Answer #5:

Although it may feel like property crime is increasing, the reality is property related crime is decreasing. Redwater RCMP Detachment year end 2020 statistics show:

- Property Crime have **decreased** by 32%.
- Break and Enters have **decreased** by 33%.
- Theft Under \$5000 have **decreased** by 47%.
- Overall Criminal Code offences have **decreased** by 27%.

Concern #6:

Request for increased traffic enforcement on Highway 28.

Answer #6:

Over the last 16 months the pandemic has caused a wide variety of business and services to adjust how they conduct their day-to-day activities to ensure business continuity and flatten the curve. Policing over the pandemic has faced the same challenges and with restrictions easing there is an increase in visibility and traffic enforcement where appropriate.

Concern #7:

What can we do to help the RCMP?

Answer #7:

No matter the challenges, the solutions remain the same. The partnerships between concerned, committed stakeholders, governments at all levels (Federal, Provincial and Municipal), multiple enforcement agencies, organizations and citizens all working together to build stronger and safer communities. From an RCMP perspective, there is an expectation that our detachments be engaged in and with the communities we serve. That means consulting with residents and community leaders (as we are doing today with this Town Hall) to establish policing priorities and assisting with public safety issues. We are committed to having regular communication with community leaders, providing reports and updates, being involved in community activities and events when possible. Through these and numerous other means our goal is to develop positive and fortify relationships of trust with the community.

Concern #8:

What community outreach programs/committees are the communities engaging in to collaborate with the RCMP on policing priorities and strategies for our area?

Answer #8:

There are a variety of community programs and committees that Redwater RCMP detachment participates in and contributes to. Some examples are Citizens on Patrol, Victim Services and Rural Crime Watch. In addition, having liaison officers assigned to work together with groups and organizations located within the detachment area, to address any specific policing needs required.

There are a variety of other community programs that you may see in other communities such as Police Advisory Committees, Block Watch, HUB program, Restorative Justice Programs, along with many others. These are all programs that are run by community volunteers with the local RCMP detachment contributing and



assisting wherever possible. The Redwater RCMP detachment is more than willing to engage with residents to make these programs a success.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in this "Virtual Town Hall". I would also like to acknowledge several individuals who expressed their appreciation and thank the staff of Redwater RCMP Detachment for the work they do everyday. With the support of the communities, our success improves for safer communities.

Regards,

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