



File #: PM-26-009, **Version:** 1

TAMRMS#: B05



Policing Services Operating Business Case Funding

Notice given by: Councillor MacKay

BUDGET POSTPONED MOTION:

That the unfunded operating business case to conduct a review of policing services in St. Albert be moved from the unfunded operating business cases to funded with the funding source to be XXXXX.

Administration's Understanding of the Intent of the Motion:

That the business case for a Review of Policing Services in St. Albert is funded in 2026 and funded from the Stabilization Reserve.

SUMMARY

This motion, if passed, directs Administration to coordinate a review of the policing services in St. Albert as outlined in the 2026 Operating Business case titled "Review of Policing Services in St. Albert".

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Alberta Police Act requires cities with populations over 5,000 to provide policing services to their municipality by:

- Entering into an agreement with the Province of Alberta for the provision of Policing services by the provincial police service (subject to the costs as determined by the Minister), or
- Entering into an agreement with the Government of Canada for the provision of Policing Services by the RCMP, or
- Establishing a regional police service with at least one other municipality, or
- Establishing their own police service, or
- Entering into an agreement with an independent agency police service for the provision of policing services.

In accordance with Council Policy C-PS-02, Policing Services, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

(RCMP) is the current police agency of choice serving the City of St. Albert. At present, there are over 51 City of St. Albert Municipal Employees operating within the Policing Services branch who work along side of and support the RCMP members in the delivery of Policing Services to the community.

Currently, City Council has authorized the strength of the St. Albert Detachment to 75 members. The St. Albert detachment is led by the Officer in Charge, an Inspector rank, two Staff Sergeants, and six Sergeants. These officers oversee the 24/7 operations of General Duty investigators/response, as well as Community Policing, Traffic Services, Drug, Crime Reduction, and a General Investigation section (serious crimes). The current RCMP agreement includes access to specialized RCMP services such as, but not limited to Air Services, Canine, Emergency Response Team (ERT), and Major Crimes.

The Province of Alberta recently established an independent agency police service, the Alberta Sheriffs Police Service (ASPS). This service was designed to provide municipalities with an alternative option for providing policing services to their community. No details have been revealed as to when the newly established ASPS will be able to offer policing services to an urban municipality such as St. Albert; however, during the press conference announcing this new agency, the Government of Alberta did indicate that the province was willing to accept and start discussions with communities who did wish to further explore this option.

The City of St. Albert's agreement with the Government of Canada (GOC) for RCMP Policing Services ends in 2032. Contained within the agreement is a provision for either the City of St. Albert or the Government of Canada to end the agreement before this date, this would be achieved by providing 24-months written notice to the other party.

Several years ago, the GOC authorized the release of a white paper indicating a need for the RCMP to exit contract policing, focusing the organization on its Federal Policing mandate. The current GOC has not provided any notice to municipalities who contract the RCMP of their intention to no longer make these services available. They have, however, stated that they are committed to honoring their current contractual agreements making it unlikely that the GOC will provide notice to end the current agreement earlier than 2032.

As recent as October 2025, the GOC has announced that the government will be investing \$1.8 billion over four years to increase federal policing capacity. This includes the hiring of an additional 1000 RCMP employees. It is important to note that, even if the RCMP continues to provide contract services to Provinces and Municipalities, the GOA may move to amend the Police Act, removing the RCMP as an option at some point in the future.

Given the uncertain future of policing services in the province and the fact that St. Albert may be forced by either the GOA or the GOC to modify the way policing services are provided in St. Albert, it may be prudent to understand the potential risks, benefits, and costs of alternate policing models especially given the complexity and time required in making this transition.

Outside of the potential for a new policing model, this review is also intended to assess the number of policing resources, both RCMP and Municipal Peace Officer, to understand the optimal delivery mix considering the current Crime Severity Index and the goals and desires of the Policing Committee and Council that can be managed within the fiscal realities of the municipality.

If this business case is approved, Administration would start with the development and posting of a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking consultant services to undertake this review.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

The intended outcome of the review will be for the consultant to produce a report and make a recommendation on a Policing Service model best suited for the City of St. Albert. The consultant will be required to conduct public participation and engagement with community stakeholders to ensure that community needs are assessed and taken into consideration.

Administration would plan to further define and develop the scope of this review with the Policing Committee as they are well positioned and suited to help act as community representatives on policing matters due to their responsibilities related to setting the Policing Priorities for the RCMP in St. Albert as well as developing community safety plans.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

If approved, \$300,000 would be committed from the Stabilization Reserve, which has sufficient funds.

The recommended funding for this review is based on comparable studies that have been completed in Alberta over the last number of years. This includes the City of Grande Prairie estimated at \$300,000 (2022), Town of Rocky Mountain House at \$90,000 (2025), and the City of Red Deer at \$200,000 (2018).

The final scope of the review along with the desired level of community and stakeholder engagement will ultimately impact the total cost. Administration is recommending a \$300,000 budget to be approved to ensure that there is enough funding to meet what Administration understands to be the intended scope. Although there are currently no provincial grants available at this time, Administration would engage with the province to request funding support. In addition, taking advantage (where possible) by using the data from the 2024 Community Social needs assessment and Community Social Roadmap may help limit some costs.

Compliance & Legal:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

None at this time

Organizational:

Conducting a review of this nature could potentially have impacts to the culture and staff morale for both City of St. Albert employees working within the Policing Services branch, as well as RCMP members working at the detachment and/or considering transferring in or out.

Risks

Administration believes that it is fully recognized by all levels of Government that, should a fundamental change occur where the Province of Alberta or Government of Canada decide to change the available policing service options, it will have large and far-reaching implications for all Municipalities within Alberta. Transitioning all municipalities at the same time would require significant planning, resources, and time. This observation is based on the learnings of the transitions of both the City of Surrey, British Columbia, and the City of Grande Prairie, here in Alberta, who have moved to their own independent services.

Although completing a study now will certainly allow for more awareness to what the City of St. Albert may encounter, there may not be enough information or detail available in 2026 related to the costs of the new Alberta Independent Police Agency. This detail will be key to ensure that a good and robust analysis is completed when comparing service delivery options.

On August 15, 2023, Council passed a motion to direct the Administration to include the creation of a new long-term policing strategy into the Community Well Being strategy. If approved, this review will have to be completed prior to the start of this long-term strategy and thus may impact its development timelines.

Another risk exists for the newly mandated Community Safety Plans that the Province requires the Policing Committee to undertake. Details of what these plans must include have not been released but there is some risk of overlap or duplication if not coordinated.

If approved to proceed, the result of the review will be to present multiple police service models including risks, opportunities, estimated costs and high-level implementation considerations but will not include an implementation plan on the various models.

Should Council ultimately direct the pursuit of one of the options, the next step would be the development of a detailed implementation plan which will likely require additional resources.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

F.2.3 Municipal Enforcement

- Responding to Public Complaints and enforcing select municipal bylaws and provincial statues. This includes, but is not limited to community standards enforcement, animal control, parking enforcement, as well as the Alberta Traffic Safety Act and portions of the Alberta Liquor and gaming Act.

F.4.1 911 Call Answer and Policing Dispatch Service

- Answering and dispatching all emergency and non-emergency RCMP and Municipal Enforcement calls for services as well as all initial St. Albert 911 calls.

F.4.3 RCMP Police Service

- Contract with Public Safety Canada that designates the RCMP as the Municipal Police Service for St. Albert.

Report Date: December 1, 2025
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