

Alberta Provincial Police Service Deployment Model

Alberta Municipalities' Summary and Analysis

August 2022



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Background

On August 16, 2022, Justice and Solicitor General released a [report](#) on a potential Alberta Provincial Police Service (APPS) deployment model. This report, prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), is part of the larger APPS transition study. The news release accompanying the report states that “while Alberta’s government hasn’t made a decision about establishing a police service, this process can help ensure Alberta is ready to make a transition on its own terms if the federal government ends RCMP contract policing or reduces subsidies to provinces, territories, and municipalities policed by the RCMP under contract.”

The proposed deployment model is based on seven values, also referred to as design principles, which are reiterated throughout the report. A summary of these values, along with PwC’s explanation of how their deployment model supports each value, is provided in Appendix I. The deployment model prioritizes:

- Balancing the distribution of resources across the province to prioritize service delivery to rural, remote, and Indigenous Communities.
- Decentralizing specialist resources and services.
- Implementing structures and roles to deliver consistent ‘core’ policing services throughout the province.
- ‘Right sizing’ detachments to ensure adequate local coverage and establishing a ‘floor’ or minimum number of resources for all communities.
- Sharing resources to manage capacity and maintain service.

The report claims that the impacts of this model on frontline services will be:

- An increase in the number of sworn officers in rural, remote and Indigenous Communities, achieved by rebalancing resources to rural communities and reducing the number of sworn members deployed in headquarters or administrative roles.
- The implementation of a ‘minimum viable’ detachment size of 10 sworn officers, increasing the number of officers in the smallest 37% of detachments by an average of 65% (i.e., adding 275 front-line police officers to the smallest 42 detachments).
- Improved access and service coverage in rural and remote areas due to decentralization of specialist teams and resource sharing.

The deployment model describes five detachment prototypes, all of which would be fully staffed and resourced to deliver the following core services: community policing, investigations, mental health and addictions response, traffic operations, community engagement, and victim services (see following table).

Detachment prototype	Number of detachments	Number of sworn officers	Community characteristics	Types of services provided
Headquarters	1	n/a	Located in Edmonton	Not specified, but likely to include corporate services (finance, procurement, human resources, asset management, IT, communications, and legal services)
Regional (urban) hub	3	125-200	Larger rural communities acting as centres in Northern, Central, and Southern Alberta	Full range of operational and strategic services
Service hub	20-30	48-192	Medium sized rural communities in Alberta, likely acting as a “centre” in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community policing and field operations • Investigation teams • Mental health and addictions response • Specialist service teams
Community detachment	10-80	65-85	Rural and remote communities in Alberta, likely smaller in size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community policing and field operations • Investigation teams • Mental health and addictions response • Specialist service teams
Detachment in Indigenous communities	TBD	TBD	Indigenous communities that chose to contract the APPS to provide services	To be determined with input from Indigenous communities and leaders

Detailed descriptions of the types of services to be provided in each detachment, as well as the top-level organization for the APPS, are included in the report’s appendix. The report does not specify where each type of detachment would be located, but suggests several factors that should be considered when determining these locations, such as:

- Population (size and service needs)
- Location and geographic characteristics
- Physical size/infrastructure of detachments
- Number of officers and frontline resources required in the detachment to serve the community
- Relative location of other detachments:
- Access to other service providers (municipal police services, mental health and addictions, child advocacy centres)
- Demand for services and historical crime data
- Community input

Key assumptions and cautions in the report include:

- The physical space and available infrastructure that exists today can accommodate the deployment model proposed.
- Team supervisory ratios and composition are presented for illustrative purposes only and must be refined and validated for alignment with leading practice guidelines and considering capabilities and service complexity.
- Staffing levels in community detachments are based on having a minimum of two officers on shift for a single shift 7 days a week (i.e., will not have 24-hour availability).
- Staffing levels in service hubs are based on having 24-hour frontline availability as well as teams of investigative and specialist services.
- Numerous additional data points should be considered in further detailed analysis, including crime volume, community service demands, other agency demands, population projections, Crime Severity Index scores, case clearance ratios, and geographic spread of jurisdictions for each detachment as a part of detailed deployment model design.
- Input from communities should be incorporated into the deployment model including required resources, public safety priorities, and needs as an additional data point to be incorporated into a detailed deployment plan.

Analysis

The PwC report describes a high-level, conceptual deployment model that was developed in a top-down manner based on design principles, organizational priorities, and a pre-defined target operating model. The report acknowledges that the model was not developed in consultation with the communities that would be served by an APPS and would need to be validated based on community need, as well as numerous other relevant data points (crime rates, caseloads, etc.). ABmunis has previously expressed concerns with the province's failure to engage meaningfully with municipalities throughout the APPS transition study. This latest report again demonstrates how provincial models for an APPS are being developed in isolation from key stakeholders, including municipalities and the RCMP.

In 2021, ABmunis approved set of principles that would apply to any provincial police service, regardless of the service provider (Appendix II). In evaluating PwC's deployment model against these principles, there is broad alignment between the model's design principles and ABmunis' principles. In particular, the model's commitment to provide a province-wide minimum standard of core policing services significantly aligns with ABmunis' principle on police service levels. ABmunis also supports the model's recognition of the need to integrate police services with other key services within the public safety ecosystem, such as mental health and addictions services.

However, certain elements of the deployment model directly contradict the stated design principles. For example, the methodology used to develop the deployment model contradicts the principles of community-oriented and collaborative. The deployment model notes that the resourcing and sizing requirements for Detachments in Indigenous Communities will be co-developed with those communities; it is unclear why this collaborative, community-centre approach is not being offered to all Alberta communities. Additionally, the report states that the design principle of efficient and integrated will be achieved by "centralizing services and capabilities where it is operationally and fiscally advantageous to do so", which contradicts the stated priority of "decentralizing specialist resources and services out of urban centers and into rural, remote, and Indigenous communities."

In PwC's previous [transition study](#), the cost of contracting the RCMP as Alberta's provincial police service was estimated at \$783 million to support 3,097 regular members and 933 civilian members in 148 detachments.¹ The transition study proposed that an APPS could provide 3,153 officers and 1,036 civilian members in 113 detachments for a total cost of \$759 million. The latest report on the deployment model provides an updated projection of APPS strength that takes into account additional funds raised through the police funding model implemented in 2020. According to the report, these funds can be used to support 3,696 officers and 1,046 civilian members by 2025-26 for a total operating cost of \$819 million. This represents a 17% increase in the number of officers with only an 8% increase in funding. Justice and Solicitor General staff have explained that the apparent disparity in police funding compared to police service strength reflects the movement of officers out of administrative positions into frontline positions. The report does not provide any further information on costs or a potential police funding model. Additionally, since the report does not specify what kind of detachments will be located where, municipalities still do not know what service levels in addition to core policing will be available to them locally.

Many of the questions ABmunis identified in our [analysis of the first PwC transition study](#) remain unanswered by the PwC report on a deployment model. Some additional questions and concerns related to the proposed deployment model include:

- As local needs and data were not considered in developing the deployment model, PwC recommends that their model be validated against this information, as well as through community consultation. When will this process take place and how will the projected APPS costs and resource allocation be impacted?
- How does province plan to fill positions, particularly those in rural and remote communities, for an APPS that is projected to be larger than the current provincial police service, at a time when police services across the country struggle with recruitment and vacancies?
- How will community detachments and service hubs work with municipalities to set local policing priorities and be accountable to the communities they serve?
- The proposed deployment model prioritizes "balancing the distribution of resources across the province in a way that prioritizes service delivery to rural, remote, and Indigenous Communities." How will the province ensure equitable service delivery and responsibility for policing costs between communities served by the APPS and communities that contract the APPS as their municipal police service?
- How will specialist service teams be deployed across the projected 20-30 service hub detachments? Will each service hub contain all types of specialist service teams? If not, how will the placement of specialist service teams be determined? What are the costs associated with duplicating and decentralizing these teams and their equipment in a dispersed deployment model to improve access and responsiveness to calls for services that are further away from large centers?
- The deployment model assumes that the physical space and available infrastructure that exists today can accommodate the proposed model. Is this a realistic assumption given the model's stated priority to improve access and service coverage in rural and remote areas by decentralizing resources?
- The report proposes a top-level organizational structure whereby the Chief of Police reports to a Provincial Police Commission, who in turn reports to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. How does this structure support increased civilian oversight of police, transparent decision-making, and accountability to the people and communities served?

¹ This cost estimate includes the normalization of RCMP salaries; includes the cost of Alberta sheriffs; and reflects both Provincial Police Service Agreement and Municipal Police Service Agreement detachments and staff.

- The report's appendix reviews the metrics commonly used to determine the optimal number of officers needed for a particular community and concludes that "the takeaway from these metrics seems to suggest that Alberta is experiencing higher caseloads, as well as more complex and serious. Matched with an overall lower proportion of officers per population, this suggests that the current ratios of officers may not be adequate to properly address the community safety demands placed on officers in Alberta." This statement aligns with feedback ABmunis has heard repeatedly from its municipal members, so we support the deployment model's proposal to make significantly more resources available for policing. At the same time, we endorse the idea that the broader ecosystem of public safety includes health, mental health, and social services, as well as the justice system. How will the province ensure that these sectors and the public-safety related services they deliver are appropriately resourced and accessible to all Albertans, in support and alignment with the proposed deployment model?

After the report's release, ABmunis drafted an [official statement](#) in response to media requests. For more information about the APPS proposal and related ABmunis' advocacy, please visit our [online policing hub](#).

Appendix I – Summary of APPS Deployment Model Values

Design Principles	Description	How the Model Supports the Value
 <p>Community Oriented</p>	<p>Community engagement at the heart of the service and establishing mechanisms to facilitate relationships between the provincial police and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger minimum detachment size • Consistent portfolios of services and capabilities • Enhanced community policing front line officer role
 <p>Transparent</p>	<p>Transparent in actions, decisions and communications with each other and those that are served. Ensure honesty and openness in interactions and decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional leads for functional areas to ensure consistency and accountability throughout the province • Local Commissions to bring in the Community wherever possible
 <p>Fair</p>	<p>Fair dealings with citizens and communities at every contact through appropriate and continuous training, oversight and support so service members are empowered to do the right thing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly trained members of the APPS are deployed in all communities in Alberta • Consistent standards and defined ways of working are required to share resources across locations
 <p>Responsive</p>	<p>Effective response systems to ensure that the future provincial police are responding to calls for service in a timely manner while producing outcomes that satisfy citizens' needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effectively placing front line officers where they are needed in the community, at times they are needed • Providing service coverage and surge capacity in Service Hubs for all Community Detachments • Placing specialized services where they are needed and accessible to all communities

Design Principles	Description	How the Model Supports the Value
 <p>Efficient and Integrated</p>	<p>Integrated services across the province with infrastructure and resources shared to achieve economies of scale and joined-up outcomes for citizens.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralizing services and capabilities where it is operationally and fiscally advantageous to do so
 <p>Collaborative</p>	<p>Establish and reinforce effective collaboration and working relationships with communities, agencies and organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding community collaboration leads into the organizational structure to drive the ecosystem approach • Appoint regional leads responsible for collaboration and community partnerships
 <p>Consistent</p>	<p>Consistent and dependable level of services provided throughout the province. Having adequate resources and the level of staff for standard police services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizing staffing efficiency by not having a one-size-fits all approach • Layering services to all communities by the implementation of service hubs • Optimizing staffing and shifting models by community need and capability demand

Appendix II – ABmunis Principles for an APPS

1. Police governance and oversight
 - An Alberta Provincial Police Service (APPS) must ensure that all municipalities have meaningful input into developing local policing priorities.
 - Governance and oversight bodies for an APPS must include municipal representation at local, regional, and provincial levels.
 - An APPS must provide regular reporting on policing priorities and outcomes to the municipalities it serves.

2. Police service levels
 - An APPS must establish and deliver a minimum standard of policing infrastructure, supervision, administration, and front-line services necessary to respond to calls for service and provide adequate proactive policing in all Alberta municipalities.
 - This minimum standard must exceed current RCMP performance.
 - The Government of Alberta must create, with input from municipalities, metrics to demonstrate that the minimum standard is being met or exceeded in all Alberta municipalities.
 - The Government of Alberta must publicly share reporting on APPS performance.

3. Policing costs
 - Municipalities must not bear any of the costs associated with implementing and transitioning to a provincial police service.
 - Police funding must be based on the principles of fairness, transparency, and predictability.
 - The Government of Alberta must fill the funding gap associated with the loss of federal funding for using RCMP services.
 - Municipal policing costs for an APPS must be at minimum 5% below current RCMP policing costs.
 - All municipalities must pay an equitable share of policing costs for the minimum standard of policing.
 - Municipalities must retain the ability to negotiate contracts with an APPS. Municipalities requesting contract enhancements, e.g., additional dedicated officers or staff, would be responsible for paying the additional cost of providing these.