



2021-2026 Strategic Plan

Summative Report Card

The life cycle of the Taber Police Service 2021-2026 Strategic Plan has ended. During the past few months, the Taber Police Service has been conducting an environmental scan, conducting a community survey and holding focus groups within our community to prepare for our next strategic plan iteration. This is also the time where it is necessary to examine the culmination of our efforts and determine whether we have met the goals that we established back in 2021.

A few comments before I commence the analysis. The Taber Police Service's small size is one of its strengths. As a small community police service we are able to be nimble, meaning we can make changes to process and resource allocations very quickly. Our small size also provides an information flow to the office of the Chief of Police in a timely manner. Often crime trends, community pressures, and concerns from community are dealt with before they become a systemic issue or a much larger concern. The pulse of the community is quickly assessed by our officers and executive. If an objective is to measure the pulse of the community, we often ask ourselves what does that look like? This overarching and problematic question has plagued measurements of police efficacy for a long time. How do we know if what we are doing is working? How do we measure our success?

In larger police agencies, there are literally dozens of employees that are tasked with identifying performance measures, assessing key performance indicators, determining what the cost of each individual crime is to the taxpayer, measuring response times on priority 1 calls within the city, etc. Furthermore, in larger organizations the Chief of Police is able, at the push of a button, to see multiple reports of crime analysis, heat maps, violence scales, sick time usage, overtime usage, ERT deployments, etc. The costs for these types of analyses are astronomical. We, as a small police service, do not have the capacity nor the budget or, frankly, I would suggest the need to create such a data rich environment to measure police efficacy. At the same time, the Alberta Policing Standards have determined that measurements are necessary. Yet since 2003 when I started working with the Province on creating a report card system that allows police agencies to measure themselves against a set of objective standards, and, as a result, against each other, a reliable and accurate tool of police efficacy has not been approved.

What we are left with is a strategy that measures outcomes in our community, rather than outputs of police work. This is not to say that outputs are not measured, nor are there not expectations of police work that each of our officers must undertake. It simply means that the outputs of police work may have nothing to do with police efficacy or, for that matter, community safety. From my perspective, it is the outcomes that matter.

What we have attempted to do it is establish who we are, what our core functions are, our key priorities within those functions, and then establish a set of goals to work towards as an organization to demonstrate our efficiency and purpose. The following summation is a report card to you of our efforts as an organization. From a review, you will see that some of our successes simply mean that we have completed tasks or assignments each month, with reports to the Commission that demonstrate our work. Some suggestions of success are simply to measure what occurred last year on a topic versus our current situation, in other words, trend analysis. As we know, however, the absence of something does not necessarily mean it is not happening. Each measurement system has its flaws. My hopes are that you can draw from the entirety of our report a picture of the health of our organization, public satisfaction within community of our efforts, and that you can state that the Taber Police Service provides adequate and effective policing, as we are required to do within the Police Act.

It should be noted that in the middle of our business plan, in 2024, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services established 5 policing priorities for policing services in Alberta. We were able to strategically align our own goals with those priorities and have also reported on them in the excel spread sheet attached.

Attached is a report that is not new to you. I have attempted to update you quarterly on the progress of our work, each time referring to proofs that have been saved electronically within our file management system. What is new is that under each of the goals I have provided you with a summative narrative that explains what work was done and how successful we have been against the established measure.

There is much to be proud of and a few of the highlights have been expanded upon for your review. For a complete review, please see the attached spreadsheet.

Highlights:

Goal: Community Safety Priority:

The public deserves to feel safe in their homes and community. The police service can make plans and produce reports of our efforts and assess public safety through analysis of criminal activity. Trends from the reports can be identified and acted upon where necessary.

Measurement:

Expand the Community Standards Unit to provide services to the MD of Taber.

The Taber Police Service worked closely with the MD of Taber to vision, create, and deploy the Regional Community Standards Unit. We have reported twice to MD Council on the program and have been met with positive reviews of the program. This is a fine example of municipalities working together to improve community safety.

Goal: Community Collaboration Priorities:

Create a standalone municipal-based Victim Services Unit.

Measurement:

Obtain funding and have a staffed operational unit up and running.

Victims of crime are priority clients for the Taber Police Service. After the province announced major changes to victim services programming in Alberta, in September of 2023 we developed a business case, received funding, and hired a manager and case workers to operate our own standalone victim services unit. We were able to successfully move away from the board-based unit that was run successfully for many years by TCAPS. I want to thank TCAPS for their leadership during the transition.

Goal: Maintain our School Resource Officer program. The SRO program is highly recognized by the public as an excellent program.

Measurement:

The SRO will compile a yearly report that outlines the activities of the program. It will include the number of matters dealt with by the SRO, the number of threat assessments, etc.

A short survey will be sent yearly to our school partners to assess the SRO program.

Every three years, Taber youth will be surveyed, similar to the adult survey, to understand the perceptions and attitudes towards policing in our youth.

The SRO program is highly recognized by the public as an excellent program. Surveys were completed, tabulated and reported to the Commission each year of our business plan. The surveys all demonstrated this is our flagship program and participants gave strong support to the efficacy and work of the SRO. The SRO program was also recognized in our focus group sessions as being important and has support in the community for expansion of the program.

Goal: Within standards, try to recruit and attract new employees who are from diverse backgrounds that reflect the demographic in our community.

Measurement:

Examine background of employees to our diversity demographic. Success will be more alignment.

Inspector Gyepesi has led recruitment drives that have allowed us to hire two officers from the Filipino community, one police officer and one dispatcher from the Low German Speaking Mennonite community, and our digital evidence management clerk from the Sikh community. These communities asked our police service to reflect the communities we serve and we have been successful in that regard. The Taber Police Service can now offer services in 8 different languages.

Goal: Community Awareness Priorities:

Develop a community camera registry program.

Measurement:

Obtain approved policy for the program. Policy approval is the measurement.

Develop a layer on the CAD to identify camera locations in community. Successful completion is the measurement.

Obtain registrants. Increased numbers indicate success.

The camera registry was developed in-house at no cost to the TPS using a map layer in our CAD. Initial uptake of registries was good, and we continue to gain registrants as the word spreads.

Goal: People and Technical Priorities.

Maintain 911 Alberta Standard compliance.

Measurement:

Receive a successful audit from the Alberta 911 Standards Committee. Certificate is proof.

911 Standards were created near the beginning of this strategic plan. We made it a priority to sit on the provincial meetings and get involved in the creation of several of the standards. PSCM Bell took the initiative to lead the build of our backup 911 center and meet all of the other standards required to be a Public Safety Answering point in Alberta. We have been audited and received certification of the 100% successful audit.

Goal: Create a call taking service for other communities' policing or CPO programs.

Measurement:

Consider expanding the regional CPO programs, dispatch and clients (within capacity).

We were able to bring on the city of Chestermere, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo into our communications center this past cycle increasing revenues while at the same time meeting this important goal.

Conclusion:

When trying to assess whether policing services are adequate and effective, the best measurement of success is the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services Standard Compliance Audit. I am happy to report that twice during this business planning cycle we have passed the audit with 100% compliance. We have also been seen as an example for smaller police agencies to replicate, and our systems and processes are often used as examples for other agencies to follow. This audit is an unbiased review that

should demonstrate to the Commission, Council, and community that the Taber Police Service meets the objectives for a police service under the Police Act of Alberta.

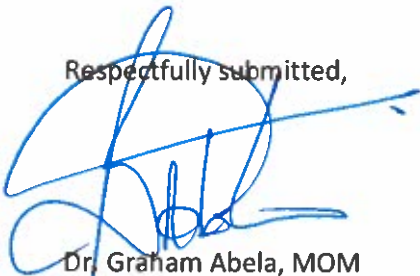
When we review our goals and those that have been achieved, we see we have proof that we are meeting the previously set objectives. We can also demonstrate that our key priorities, and the priorities of the Ministry, have been mostly achieved. Within our core functions, we have demonstrated that we have worked hard to achieve adequate and effective policing for our community. We also see that there were a few areas where we did not meet our tasks to demonstrate goal achievement. Some of these tasks are out of our control (such as the metric for police), as they rely on government to provide standards. Perhaps the goals were set too high and were not as achievable as we thought. However, not achieving a goal does not mean we have not learned or grown as an organization. I have come to know that most learning occurs along the way, and does not necessarily culminate in the achievement of a certain core or benchmark.

We can also see that the success of the Taber Police Service aligns well with the goals of the Town of Taber as a corporation and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services goals. As part of the larger Town of Taber organization, albeit at arm's length, it is important for policing to contribute to the vibrancy, strategies and well-being of this community, and I believe our report demonstrates that we have done our part.

The strategic plan is just that; a plan that allows us to align our efforts and establish what is important for our organization and community in reference to policing. The outcomes of efforts demonstrate our effectiveness as an organization and I think we have met the bar set for us by the Commission.

I commend the members and staff of the Taber Police Service for their efforts. We thank the Commission and Council for their leadership, and the community for the resources they provide, and for their support in promoting public safety in Taber.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Graham Abela, MOM
Chief of Police
Taber Police Service