

A photograph of the Edmonton skyline at dusk. The sky is a deep blue, and the city lights are beginning to glow. Several tall buildings are visible, some with lights on. In the foreground, there are trees and a highway bridge.

**MNP**

# Edmonton Police Commission 2023 Governance Review

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FINAL REPORT  
October 2023



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# Table of Contents

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1	Executive Summary.....	1
2	Introduction.....	2
3	Approach.....	2
3.1	Internal Engagement.....	3
3.2	Other Jurisdictional and Best Practices Research.....	3
4	Context.....	3
4.1	Legal and Regulatory Framework.....	3
4.2	Guiding Principles of “Good Governance”.....	4
5	Findings and Recommendations.....	6
5.1	Role of the Police Commission.....	7
5.2	Learning and Development.....	20
5.3	Committee Structure.....	27
5.4	Meeting Processes.....	32
5.5	Public Participation and Input in Commission Processes.....	38
5.6	Compliance with Alberta Provincial Standards.....	45
5.7	Summary of Recommendations.....	47
	Appendix A - References.....	49
	Appendix B –Variance to Standards.....	52

# 1 Executive Summary

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The Edmonton Police Commission ("EPC" or "the Commission") is responsible for maintaining the essential balance between public accountability and police independence which includes providing strategic direction to the Chief of Police and the Edmonton Police Service ("EPS" or "the Service"). Alberta Police Oversight Standards and EPC Policy 4.3.1 requires a governance review at a minimum of once every four years. This report reflects the findings of the 2023 review. It includes consideration of the Commission's overall governance dynamics, including its relationship with City Council and the Police Service, as well as the standard compliance requirements.

Information gathered for the review includes EPC documentation, interviews with Commission members, staff, and Police Service senior staff. It also included research into police governance practices of five other municipalities in Canada.

Findings are presented for each topic under the categories of:

- *Formal Structures* – Relevant legislation, bylaws, and documented policies.
- *Current Practice* – Current processes and practices identified through review of EPC information such as meeting agendas, minutes, reports, recommendations, procedures, webpages etc. and interviews.
- *Insights from Internal Engagement* – Interviews with Edmonton Police Commission Members and Staff, and Edmonton Police Service senior leadership
- *Insights from Other Jurisdictions* – Information on corresponding approaches in other cities included in comparative research. Where applicable, insights from a research scan are also included here.

Recommendations, with associated rationale and implementation considerations, are presented following each topic.

A review of EPC policies and documentation found the commission to be largely compliant with the Alberta Policing Oversight Standards. The Commission corrected issues identified in the 2019 compliance audit in all but one instance. In total, six instances of partial or non-compliance were found, largely related to documentation.

Key areas of concern as expressed by the Commission, staff and the Police Service tend to relate to the need to improve the shared understanding of the governance role of the Police Commission, and the need for related orientation and training. The efficiency of meeting processes and adequate, effective engagement with the public were also identified as areas of opportunity.

A series of nineteen recommendations is included with this report, and address the role of the Police Commission, learning and development, Committee structure, meeting processes, public participation, and compliance with Alberta provincial standards.

## 2 Introduction

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The Edmonton Police Commission ("EPC" or "the Commission") is responsible for maintaining the essential balance between public accountability and police independence which includes providing strategic direction to the Chief of Police and the Edmonton Police Service ("EPS"). Part of the Commission's role in achieving this balance is ensuring that best governance and oversight practices are considered and implemented where appropriate.

Alberta Police Oversight Standards and EPC Policy 4.3.1 requires the Commission to undergo a comprehensive governance review at a minimum of once every four years as part of a commitment to constantly developing and improving. This report reflects the findings of a review conducted from January to June 2023. The review goes beyond the statutory review requirements and includes consideration of how the Commission interfaces with City Council and the Police Service, as well as governance dynamics and Commissioner perspectives on the Commission's functioning and ability to fulfill its responsibilities as established by applicable legislation, regulation, standards, policies, and bylaws.

This report includes findings and recommendations based on the review of current documentation, engagement with Commissioners, Commission staff, and the Police Service, as well as comparative research on police governance practices in other Canadian cities.

## 3 Approach

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The scope of the review included the following:

- A targeted review of relevant provincial legislation and City of Edmonton bylaws with respect to police commission governance
- Review and evaluation of the current model for governance used by the Commission, including a review of the supporting policies, systems, structures, and strategic/operational tools and strategies
- Review of EPC Policy Manual and governance process compliance with the Alberta Policing Oversight Standards for Municipal Police Commissions (December 2014)
- Engagement with Edmonton Police Commissioners, Chief of Police, and Edmonton Police Service senior staff to gather insights on current processes, procedures and governance dynamics
- A comparative analysis of police commission governance policies and practices in other Canadian cities
- Review and evaluation of the Commission meeting schedule and protocols
- Review and evaluation of the structure and function of Commission committees
- Review and evaluation of the level of public engagement, and methods used to solicit input from the public

## 3.1 Internal Engagement

In total MNP conducted 15 individual or group interviews between March 10 and April 18, 2023. These interviews included all Members of the Commission, the Police Chief and Edmonton Police Service senior staff, and Edmonton Police Commission staff.

## 3.2 Other Jurisdictional and Best Practices Research

MNP conducted secondary research and reviewed legislation, bylaws, and other published information to gain insight into governance structures, policies, and procedures for police boards or commissions in the City of Toronto, City of Ottawa, Regional District of Halton, City of Winnipeg, and City of Vancouver. Interviews to gain more in-depth information were conducted with the Executive Director and/or Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Board or Commission. This information was used to identify contemporary practices and policies.

MNP also conducted research into contemporary practices and thought leadership surrounding police governance generally. A list of this information is included in the references section in Appendix A.

# 4 Context

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## 4.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework

Several acts and regulations prescribe the mandate and operations of the Edmonton Police Commission (EPC). The legislation and bylaws most relevant to this governance review are:

- The *Police Act* – The primary provincial legislation that defines how policing, and the administration of policing, operates in Alberta. The Act identifies the responsibility of ministers, government, and municipalities for policing. A municipality that has assumed responsibility for establishing a municipal police service under section 4(2)(d) or (5)(c) shall establish and maintain an adequate and effective municipal police service under the general supervision of a municipal police commission in accordance with Section 28 (2) and Section 59 (1) of the Act (Government of Alberta, 2023). The Act sets out the powers, responsibilities, and composition of police commissions, as well as their relationship with the police services they oversee.
- The *Police Amendment Act* – Bill 6 – Police Amendment Act, 2022 proposed a series of amendments to the Police Act (Legislative Assembly of Alberta, 2022). The Act received Royal Assent on December 15, 2022. The Amendment Act specifies that it comes into force on Proclamation, except for sections 5, 11, 12(b) and (c)(i), 32, 34, 36, 38(c) and (e)(ii) [all of which remove references to the Solicitor General] and 42 which repeals 52.1 which allowed a presiding officer of a hearing to be a former police officer or former member of the judiciary. Only Section 18 was proclaimed in force on March 29, 2023 (Government of Alberta, 2023). This section changes the composition of the Commission to include appointments to the Commission by the Minister. The expectation is that all sections will be ultimately proclaimed – efforts are underway by Alberta to establish the new mechanisms established in the Amendment Act.

- The Police Amendment Act (yet to be proclaimed except as above) contains several amendments related to police governance that affect the EPC (Government of Alberta, 2022):
  - A municipal council may appoint up to nine members to a police oversight body. The Minister may appoint members to municipal police commissions, with the number of appointees based on the size of the commission, with the total number of members not to exceed 15. (Section 18, Proclaimed and in force).
  - Sections of the Act governing ministerial intervention are clarified.
  - The Act specifies that the Minister may establish provincial policing priorities. Police commissions are now required to create their own policing priorities with consideration to these provincial priorities, and report these priorities to the Minister.
  - New requirements for police services and commissions to develop community safety plans and diversity and inclusion plans.
  - Establishment of a Police Review Commission to hear public complaints against a police officer, and removal of the responsibility of the Commission to appoint a public complaints director.
  - An obligation for the police oversight body to report annually to the Minister.
- Alberta Policing Oversight Standards for Municipal Police Commissions – These standards establish requirements for police commissions to ensure effective oversight of police services so that policing is carried out in a manner that is lawful, effective, and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. Topics covered in the manual include roles and responsibilities, organizational management, and personnel administration (Alberta Government, 2014).
- The City of Edmonton Bylaw 14040 - Pursuant to section 27-26 of the *Police Act*, Edmonton City Council enacted this Bylaw to continue the municipal police commission established in Bylaw 9304, to provide civilian oversight for the police service within the city of Edmonton. The Bylaw sets out commission structure, procedures, and operations pertaining to budget, contracts and agreements, information, and records management (City of Edmonton, 2022).

Specific sections of provincial legislation, City of Edmonton bylaws, and policies relevant to this governance review are included by topic in the sections that follow.

## 4.2 Guiding Principles of “Good Governance”

Public sector governance may be defined as the processes by which public decisions are made, the mobilization of public and private resources to implement them, and the evaluation of their substantive outcomes. There are multiple ways of considering governance effectiveness, including the quality of decision-making and implementation processes, the quality of governance outputs (laws, regulations, plans, etc.), and the quality of substantive social, economic, and environmental outcomes, such as quality of life and economic growth. While there is no “one size fits all” model of governance, sound governance principles and processes apply to all organizations – large, small, for-profit, not-for-profit, public agencies, or private companies.

Civilian police oversight, in the form of a Police Commission or Board, has been established broadly in legislation across Canada on the general premise that in a democracy, the police should be accountable to the community

they serve, yet remain independent from political involvement.

The subject of police governance has received significant attention nationally and, most recently, in the context of several public crises. Identified challenges impacting the effectiveness of the police governance model have included the general understanding of the role and functional authority of the Commission, the relationship with the police chief, and access to the necessary information and resources to fulfill the responsibilities of the Commission. Transparency and the Commission's relationship with the public have also been identified nationally as areas of concern. The high cost of policing and the significant portion it represents of municipal budgets have also contributed to frustration by municipal councils. There is some trending toward increased appointment of Municipal councillors to police boards/commissions.

The Edmonton Police Commission has a critical role in the leadership, stewardship, and oversight of the Edmonton Police Service. It also sets the tone for organizational behaviour and is integral to creating a culture that will deliver sustainable performance. Openness and accountability matter at every level. Good governance means a focus on how this takes place throughout the organization and those that act on its behalf. Effective governance requires more than individual dedication and commitment to responsible and responsive decision-making. It requires a system and structure that provides clarity, informed, efficient, and democratic decision-making, and promotes accountability and performance in the organization.

Although there is not a universal model of governance that works for all organizations, adhering to sound governance principles and processes can guide individuals responsible for governance level decision-making. The principles used to evaluate EPC governance structures and processes were determined by reviewing relevant literature and considering common governmental expectations and provincial priorities. An evaluation framework was developed with the following criteria to define what good governance should or could look like:

**Accountability – Oversight** is ongoing monitoring to ensure and report on compliance and results with policies, principles, and standards. It also includes identifying and managing conflict of interest, correcting either incorrect action or unintended impacts, and processes to investigate public complaints.

**Transparency – Open access** to information regarding decisions, the decision-making process, and the basis for or influences on decisions such as outcomes of consultation processes or lobbying activity allows citizens to evaluate the quality of decisions and implementation and satisfy themselves as to the fairness of governance processes. It also includes *impartiality*, which generally refers to fairness and objectivity in decision-making processes, without bias towards a particular interest (Taylor, 2016). While transparency is also a significant aspect of accountability, it has sufficient import in today's society to merit separate consideration.

**Efficiency – Efficiency** in governance involves ensuring the best possible use of available resources (Council of Europe, 2008). This includes streamlined processes that minimize duplication and overlap, with only deliberate redundancy. Timeliness of governance processes is included within this principle as a balancing factor for the time and resources needed to support accountability, transparency, and inclusivity. A perfect process is not valuable if decisions are too late to respond to urgent problems or if delays impose undue burdens on stakeholders.

**Effectiveness – At its most basic**, effectiveness means results meet the organization's mandate and objectives. It includes the processes and degree to which the knowledge and skills of those charged with governance are continuously maintained and strengthened, as well as the systems and processes to evaluate performance of both individuals and the organization to identify opportunities for growth (Council of Europe, 2008).

Inclusivity – Inclusive processes are both an inherent good and a necessary condition of effective action, supporting social capital (Taylor, 2016). People who feel they have had a reasonable opportunity to participate in a process are more likely to voluntarily comply with the outcome (Wilde, Narang, Laberge, & Moretto, 2009). For the purpose of this review, we consider inclusivity as the opportunity for citizens to provide input to the direction and priorities of the EPS, and the degree to which Commission deliberations reflect democratic process.

The EPC’s governance structures, systems and processes were reviewed in the context of these principles, with consideration to the formal structures of legislation, regulation, bylaws and policies and informal organizational norms (practices) and culture.

## 5 Findings and Recommendations

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The findings that follow reflect analysis of relevant legislation, bylaws, policies, insights from internal interviews and public engagement, and governance practices in other Canadian cities.

Findings are presented for each topic under the categories of:

- *Formal Structures* – Relevant legislation, bylaws, and documented policies.
- *Current Practice* – Current processes and practices identified through review of EPC information such as meeting agendas, minutes, reports, recommendations, procedures, webpages etc. and interviews.
- *Insights from Internal Engagement* – Interviews with Edmonton Police Commission Members and Staff, and Edmonton Police Service senior leadership
- *Insights from Other Jurisdictions* – Information on corresponding approaches in other cities included in comparative research. Where applicable, insights from a research scan are also included here.

Recommendations, with associated rationale and implementation considerations are presented following each topic.



## 5.1 Role of the Police Commission

### 5.1.1 Formal structures

#### 5.1.1.1 Commission Responsibilities

The Edmonton Police Commission is a non-political body responsible for providing good governance and oversight to ensure that the police provide adequate, effective, and efficient services in accordance with the Government of Alberta's Policing Oversight Standards for Municipal Police Commissions. As per the *Police Act*, the Government of Alberta requires that the City of Edmonton establish a police commission through bylaw and to prescribe the rules governing its operations and appoint its members. The *Act* prescribes the Commission's role to oversee the Service and establishes its responsibilities (Government of Alberta, 2023):

1. Estimate money required for the police service and prepare a yearly plan specifying the level of police service and programs to be provided to the municipality;
2. Allocate the funds provided by Council;
3. Establish policies providing for efficient and effective policing;
4. Issue instructions, as necessary, to the Chief of Police in respect of the policies referred to in 2;
5. Ensure that the Service employs sufficient persons for the purposes of carrying out the functions of the Police Service;
6. Designate a person as the Public Complaint Director;
7. Monitor the public complaint process;
8. Conduct an inquiry into any matter respecting the police service or the actions of a police officer or anyone employed by the police service.

The *Alberta Police Amendment Act* (PAA) includes several amendments which prescribed changes affecting the role and responsibilities of police oversight bodies (Legislative Assembly of Alberta, 2022):

1. Establish in *the Act* principles for policing in Alberta;
2. Established authority for the Minister to create provincial policing priorities. The Commission must establish priorities for the police service in the context of these provincial priorities, and report these priorities to the Minister;
3. Established authority for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations governing the training, responsibility, and duty of police commissions;
4. Requires police oversight bodies, in collaboration with the Service, to develop community safety plans and report annually to the Minister on their progress;
5. Requires police oversight bodies, in collaboration with the Service, to develop diversity and inclusion plans;
6. Discontinues responsibility for management of public complaints regarding officer conduct by the Commission and establishes the Police Review Commission for this purpose. The Commission continues to have a role in hearing public complaints related to policy or services;
7. Requires police oversight bodies to report annually to the Minister.

As noted in section 1.4, these amendments have not yet been proclaimed.

### 5.1.1.2 Alberta Provincial Policing Standards

The Policing Standards indicate that a police service will be deemed adequate and effective if the legislative requirements and policing standards are met. Once the legislative requirements are met, the community or region determines the level of service that residents want and can afford (Government of Alberta, 2021). The Standards further note the role of a municipal Police Commission to establish policies for effective and efficient policing for a municipal police service. The Standards identify where a police service is required to have policy for organizational management, personnel administration, operations and support services. The Policing Standards and Audit Section's Advisors audit police service compliance with the Policing Standards on a four-year cycle.

### 5.1.1.3 Policies for Effective and Efficient Policing

The supporting legislation for policy development for the Edmonton Police Commission is the *Police Act* which establishes the Commission's responsibility to establish policies to provide for efficient and effective policing.

EPC Policy 1.1.7 prescribes the following guidelines on policy development:

1. All policies and policy revisions must be adopted by formal resolution of the Commission.
2. Existing policies will be reviewed regularly, every three years as a minimum, to ensure alignment with the Commission's Strategic Plan and any changes to applicable legislation or regulation.
3. When appropriate, the Executive Director shall seek legal advice on the intent or wording of a policy.
4. The EPC Policy Manual will be maintained in an electronic format, available to all members of the public through the Commission's website.
5. The Executive Director shall develop administrative procedures to carry out approved policy direction.

Additionally, Policy 2.3.2 prescribes the following guidelines on the Commission's responsibility to establish policies to provide efficient and effective policing:

1. The Commission has an expectation that the Edmonton Police Service (Service) will have a system of written policy and procedure that is informed by the Commission's Policy and Procedure Manual and reflects the vision, mission, and values outlined in the strategic plan. The Service's Policy Framework will contribute to the organization's operational and administrative efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency.
2. The Chief of Police will provide reports to the Commission regarding plans for and changes to Service policies that directly align with approved Commission policies as outlined in the Commission's Policy and Procedure Manual and/or align with the governance and oversight role of the Commission.
3. The Chief of Police will additionally develop all policies required by the Province of Alberta under the Alberta Provincial Policing Standards, at a standard acceptable to the Province of Alberta.

#### 5.1.1.4 Bylaw 14040 – Edmonton Police Commission Bylaw

Policy 1.1.2 explains the legislative intent behind the creation of the EPC is to ensure that the Edmonton Police Service remains a separate, unbiased, independent body from the municipality. While the Commission is appointed by and accountable to City Council, it is intended to represent the interests of the community and maintain the arms-length relationship that exists between the Service and the political decision-making process.

Bylaw 14040 establishes additional responsibilities on the Police Commission, including providing sufficient information to enable Council to determine the financing requirements of the police services, which may include strategic plans, variance reports, capital plans and variance analysis. The Commission is granted authority to approve procurement agreements related to the Commission or Police Service's mandate, where the expenditure is within the total budget established by Council. The Commission is obligated to maintain records that support actions taken by the Commission and must make these records available to Council if requested.

#### 5.1.1.5 Commissioner Responsibilities

Edmonton Police Commissioners are required to fulfill their duties in accordance with the *Police Act*, City of Edmonton Bylaw #14040, and the EPC policy manual. Commissioners are entrusted with representing the interests of the public and Policy 4.1.1 prescribes the following roles and duties:

1. Individual members of the Commission must exercise their official duties and functions and arrange their affairs in such a manner that public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity, and impartiality of the Commission are conserved and enhanced.
2. Commission member actions should be guided by the Commission's Vision and Mission.
3. Commission members should expect to spend a significant number of hours each month in performance of their duties as required.
4. All members will attend meetings prepared to discuss items on the agenda and will have read all reports and background materials provided.
5. Commission members will focus their efforts and discussions on issues related to strategy, policy, and governance oversight.
6. Individual Commissioners will be appointed to any number of standing committees and/or ad hoc committees.
7. All Commission members are encouraged to attend functions throughout the community to maintain strong links with individuals and groups.
8. Each member of the Commission will avail themselves of training opportunities and will become knowledgeable on the practices of good governance and the policing profession.
9. No individual Commission member shall purport to speak on behalf of the Commission unless they are authorized to do so as outlined in EPC Policy 5.3.3 – Communications and Media Relations.
10. All Commission members must observe the rules around confidentiality as outlined in the Code of Conduct and the FOIP Act.
11. Individual Commissioners cannot direct the Executive Director, or any other Commission staff member and all directions or recommendations will follow the guidelines in EPC policy 2.3.1 – Information Requests.

12. Individual Commissioners have no direct authority over any member of the Edmonton Police Service and all authority flows through approved motions of the Commission.

In accordance with the *Police Act* and the Bylaw 14040, the Chair and Vice Chair must be elected from the members of the Commission. The Chair serves as the primary representative of the Commission and the Vice Chair may assume responsibilities of the Chair in their absence. In addition to their duties as Commission members, Policy 4.1.2 prescribes additional responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair as ensuring adherence to policies and maintaining the integrity of the Commission's processes, collaborating with the Executive Director to set meeting agendas, preside over meetings, and determine speaking order. The Chair fosters consensus, teamwork, and an environment of trust and cohesion while respecting diverse perspectives. They act as the official spokesperson, liaise with Commission members and committee Chairs, evaluate Commissioners for re-appointment, and represent the Commission at official functions.

At a Council meeting on April 17, 2023, the EPC put forward a set of recommendations to Edmonton City Council. Among these recommendations was one focused on enhancing EPC's governance abilities. Bylaw and policy amendment may proceed as City Councillors voted unanimously in favor of the following recommendations (City of Edmonton, 2023):

1. That the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, work with the Edmonton Police Commission to advocate to the Government of Alberta to appoint a Chair on a full-time basis. As per the amended Act, the Minister may appoint provincial members to municipal police commissions, however, it does not appear to allow for appointment of full time Chairs (City of Edmonton, 2023).
2. As policing and governance become increasingly complex, a full-time Chair would significantly assist in improving public awareness as well as helping the Commission reach its other strategic goals (City of Edmonton, 2023).
3. That Administration prepare amendments to policy and process to expand the scope of the Councillors appointed as members of the Edmonton Police Commission to include vetting and management of individual requests for information from fellow Councillors to the Edmonton Police Commission (City of Edmonton, 2023).

#### 5.1.1.6 Council Responsibilities

As per Section 30, subsections 5-7 of the *Police Act*, the following responsibilities are prescribed to City Council (Government of Alberta, 2023):

1. Where a commission has been established, the council shall not, except as permitted under this Act or the Police Officers Collective Bargaining Act, perform any function or exercise any power in respect of the police service that the commission is empowered to perform or exercise, or issue any instructions to a police officer.
2. For the purposes of the Police Officers Collective Bargaining Act, the council is the employer of police officers.
3. For the purposes of the Labour Relations Code, the council is the employer of persons other than police officers who are employed for the police service.
4. The council is liable for any legal liability that is incurred by the commission.

Additionally, City Council is responsible for gathering information to assess financing requirements of the police, and for creating an operating budget that supports an adequate and effective level of police services as per

Section 242 of the *Municipal Government Act* (Government of Alberta, 2023). As of October 2022, Edmonton City Council uses a funding formula to determine its budget for the Edmonton Police Service in accordance with City of Edmonton Policy C604A - Edmonton Police Service Funding Formula. This approach is intended to provide some funding certainty and to allow for long-term budgeting and workforce planning based on predictable indicators.

The policy outlines the Edmonton Police Service funding formula as follows (City of Edmonton, 2022):

$$A = [B + C + D]$$

Where

A is the total tax-supported funding for Edmonton Police Service for the applicable fiscal year

B is the total tax-supported funding for Edmonton Police Service for the previous fiscal year

C is the Edmonton Police Service Funding Formula as calculated by this policy

D is the Edmonton Police Service salary settlements, which are held corporately and calculated and allocated separately after the ratification of a Collective Bargaining Agreement

“C” is intended to represent the adjustment necessary due to demands on the service from population growth and inflation. It is calculated by multiplying the personnel net expenditure budget by population growth, and adding non-personnel net expenditure multiplied by a non-personnel inflation calculator for the applicable fiscal year.

Section 29(1) of the *Police Act* requires the Commission to prepare an estimate of all money required for the fiscal year to pay for the remuneration of the police officers and other persons employed for the police service, and to provide and pay for the maintenance of accommodation equipment and operating costs of the service. The Commission is also required to submit a yearly plan specifying the level of police service and programs to be provided in respect of the municipality.

It is Council’s responsibility to establish the total budget, and the Commission’s responsibility to allocate it. If, in the opinion of the Minister a municipality is not providing for adequate or effective policing services, the Minister may intervene to appoint additional police officers or request a provincial service to provide services to the Municipality and require the Municipality to pay for the cost of these officers.

#### 5.1.1.7 Officers and Employees

As per Section 30, subsections 2-4 of the *Police Act*, the following applies to officers and employees of the Service:

1. Every police officer is subject to the jurisdiction of the commission, after the establishment of a commission, and shall obey the directions of the commission.
2. Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2), a commission shall not issue an instruction to a police officer other than to the chief of police.
3. Where an employee other than a police officer is employed for the police service, the commission may release the employee from the police service subject to the provisions of any collective agreement that applies to that employee.

#### 5.1.1.8 Code of Conduct

Appointed members of the EPC must fulfill their role and responsibilities in a manner that instills public trust and

confidence in the integrity and objectivity of the commission. The EPC policy manual provides guidelines relevant to the code of conduct:

1. EPC Policy 4.2.1: Code of Conduct - The Code of Conduct for members of the Edmonton Police Commission establishes fundamental rules and expectations for their behavior. It encompasses compliance with laws, regulations, and policies, preserving the Commission's integrity, and treating others respectfully.
2. EPC Policy 4.2.4: Social Media - The Edmonton Police Commission supports the strategic use of social media for communication and marketing. This policy outlines guidelines for Commissioners, staff, and third parties using social media on behalf of the Commission. The Executive Director is responsible for managing social media presence, while Commissioners must adhere to guidelines such as reflecting Commission decisions accurately and respecting confidentiality.
3. EPC Policy 5.3.3: Communications and Media Relations – This policy outlines guidelines for the Commission to provide accurate, credible, and timely information to the media and stakeholders as appropriate. The Chair, and in their absence, the Vice Chair or designated member, acts as the Commission's spokesperson. The Executive Director assists with media inquiries, communication planning, stakeholder relations, and manages the Commission's brand.
4. City of Edmonton: Ethical Guidelines for Citizens Who Serve on City Boards, Agencies and Committees - Persons appointed to the EPC are required to govern their behavior in compliance with the municipal legislation of the Province of Alberta, as well as the bylaws and policies of the City of Edmonton. Commissioners must refrain from using confidential information for personal gain or disclosing it to unauthorized individuals. They are prohibited from exploiting their position to obtain special privileges for themselves or others. Any pecuniary financial interest in a matter before the commission must be disclosed, and if it differs from the interests of other members, they should abstain from discussing or voting on the issue. The integrity and impartiality of the commission and City Council should be upheld. After leaving the commission, individuals must adhere to the ethical standards of conduct for twelve months, excluding the provisions related to confidential information, which apply indefinitely (City of Edmonton, n.d.).

At a Council meeting on April 17, 2023, the EPC put forward a set of recommendations to Edmonton City Council. Among these recommendations were several focused on enhancing accountability of EPC and its commissioners. Bylaw and policy amendment may proceed as City Councillors voted unanimously in favor of these recommendations (City of Edmonton, 2023):

1. That Administration prepare the necessary bylaw and/or amendments to the Edmonton Police Commission Bylaw 14040 that enables City Council to establish an independent and arm's-length third party to manage allegations of breaches of the Oath of Office, Code of Conduct, or Conflict of Interest using the Office of the Integrity Commissioner as a model and that any financial implications are identified prior to approval of any bylaws. Under the current provisions, all allegations of misconduct against Commissioners are managed by the Chair or Vice Chair and supported by staff and legal if and when appropriate. The current processes create a gap in accountability that does not align with the EPC's principles of public interest and transparency (City of Edmonton, 2023).
2. That Administration and the Edmonton Police Commission work together to engage the Edmonton Police Service to draft a policy tool outlining an Alternative Dispute Resolution process that could be approved by both City Council and the Edmonton Police Commission. Under the current and future provincial *Police Act*, several provisions outline circumstances in which the Minister may intervene in

municipal policing matters, including the option to bring a disagreement forward to the Minister. While a formalized process is optional and nonbinding on any of the parties in accordance with the current Act, defining a path and principles for dispute resolution may be beneficial (City of Edmonton, 2023).

## 5.1.2 Current Practices

### 5.1.2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Current practice for establishing a Police Oversight Agency complies with the City of Edmonton Bylaw 14040 outlined in Section 5.2.1.2. Commissioner appointments and reappointments are determined by City Council in accordance with the formal structures mentioned in Section 5.2.1. Although recruiting board members is the responsibility of the City, the oversight agency (the EPC) is responsible for providing proof of compliance for this process. Therefore, it is expected that the oversight agency will be informed of the municipality's board member selection and appointment process for auditing and compliance purposes.

In 2021, the EPC developed a competency framework to provide a clear understanding of what responsibilities, time commitment, skills and attributes are expected of prospective and existing Edmonton Police Commission members. The framework also serves as a guideline for the recruitment, selection, orientation, and continuing development of Commissioners. More information on the competency framework is provided in Section 5.6.1.3.

Openings for commission members are posted on the City of Edmonton website where applicants are required to submit a cover letter, resume, and three letters of reference (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022). The posting includes information on the role, commission responsibilities, qualifications, assets, term of office, time commitment, compensation, application process, number of available openings, and deadline to apply. The posting contains a link to a podcast where the Chair and current commissioners highlight the work of the Commission and key competencies that will position future members for success. Additionally, 2022 postings for commissioner recruitment have added the following that considers the cultural diversity of the community (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022):

- Qualification: Training, education or experience enhancing knowledge and understanding of equity-deserving or marginalized groups is a requirement
- Asset: Relevant lived experience and understanding of diverse and marginalized communities
- Asset: Training in anti-racism, anti-oppression and/or harm reduction
- Asset: In depth of knowledge, education and experiences of working with Indigenous Peoples
- Closing statement: The Edmonton Police Commission is committed to cultivating a diverse, inclusive, and equitable culture. The Commission welcomes diverse applicants regardless of their identity factors, including, but not limited to race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin, age, and ability, and encourage applications from all interested individuals.

As stated in the postings for commissioners, a successful enhanced security clearance and criminal records check will be requested of applicants shortlisted for interview. The City will conduct a background check and security clearance on each successful candidate, including those appointed as a member of the council before providing confirmation of the candidate's appointment to the oversight agency. The background check and security clearance include the following:

- Criminal record check;
- Character / Reference checks;
- Interview of applicant (including an assessment of overall suitability);
- PCD shall receive an Enhanced Security Clearance (RCMP or municipal equivalent).

Although this process is managed by the City, the Executive Director of the EPC will email the City to confirm the candidates background check and security check have been cleared.

Current practices pertaining to recruitment and selection of commissioners are consistent with formal structures.

Appointed commissioners are prescribed responsibilities as outlined in Sections 5.2.1.1, 5.2.1.2, and 5.2.1.3. Current practices pertaining to police commission responsibilities are consistent with these policies, as indicated in the following:

- Meeting minutes from the EPC's Annual General Meeting indicate an election of a Chair and Vice Chair amongst its members occurred in January 2023 (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023).
- Meeting minutes from November 2022 indicate a 4-year budget for 2023-2026 was submitted to Council and date of meeting to access minutes (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022).
- Interview with Public Complaints Director indicates appointment occurred in November 2022.

Currently, Commissioners receive an orientation binder which covers legislation, bylaws, policies, procedures, schedules, and key contacts. Further overview is provided on police governance and oversight in Alberta, commissioner roles and responsibilities, strategic plans, the public complaints process, code of conduct, and other topics as appropriate. More information on training and orientation is provided in Section 5.6.

### 5.1.2.2 Committee Appointments

Currently, the Commission has established five standing committees: Finance and Audit, Governance, Human Resources, Professional Standards and the recently established Information Technology Committee. More information is provided in Section 5.3.

### 5.1.2.3 Setting Priorities and Strategic Planning

The Commission actively participates in the strategic planning activity of the Police Service and approves the EPS Strategic Plan. The Commission published its own strategic plan for 2019-2023, which also includes a set of goals and strategies as well as its own vision and mission and values as an oversight organization. While there is overlap in the values between the EPC and the ESP, they are not the same.

### 5.1.2.4 Policies for Effective and Efficient Policing

The EPC Strategic Plan includes an objective to "Develop a process for working with the Community and the EPS to set policy priorities". The Commission's January – June 2022 Report to the Community references community input as sought through the budget process and there are several references to Budget and Funding Formula Policy, Policy for the Finance & Audit Committee Terms of Reference, and Procurement Policy for the Service. The report references the Edmonton Community Safety & Well Being Plan as well as the EPC/EPS Response to the Safer for All Task Force Report and speaks to several programs implemented by the Police Service to support



community safety and well-being. The report also notes proactive steps by the Commission to put community safety and well-being at the forefront while becoming more efficient in reducing crime and victimization. The July-December 2022 Report to the Community notes an additional goal in the EPS 2023–2026 Strategic Plan to listen and learn to develop an understanding of the safety priorities of the different communities EPS serves, while allowing the public to understand the demands on the Police Service.

Reports received by the Commission in 2022 included the Early Intervention Unit, Control Tactics Report, Equity, Diversion and Inclusion Framework, EPS shift to a 10-Squad Model and a Guns and Gangs Strategy. The Guns and Gangs Strategy was approved by the Commission in 2022. The others were presentations for information versus policy discussions or decisions.

Commission policies related to governance and administration are reviewed by the Governance Committee and placed on the consent agenda for the Commission. There does not appear to be any related report or commentary from the Governance Committee.

The Police Commission receives the results of the Policing Standards and Audit Section’s reviews of EPS compliance with the Alberta Policing Standards, which includes confirming policy exists as required, or any areas of noncompliance. The Police Commission does not currently review or approve policing policy. The reasons provided by Commission staff are that policing policies are considered operational, and the Commission does not have the technical expertise to evaluate or approve it. There does not appear to be any information provided regarding policing policy in Commission orientations, or to the Police Commission’s responsibilities for policing policy or the authority delegated in policy 2.3.2 as noted above. Policing policies are not posted publicly or provided to Commission members. Policing policy on a subject is not generally referenced with materials presented to the Commission for information.

### 5.1.3 Insights from Internal Engagement

Interviews with Commissioners, support staff, and the Service indicate there appears to be a general awareness of the basic function and purpose of the EPC as defined in policy and the *Police Act*, but less clarity around what it could and should be doing to be of greatest value. The interviewed Commissioners displayed strong enthusiasm to contribute and add value to the strengthening of police services in the city.

As a high-profile commission, more training and orientation is felt to be needed. Many members are faced with a steep learning curve on often highly technical matters, in the context of complex relationships with the EPS, City Council, and the public. Respondents also indicated the job postings for Commissioner roles fail to accurately depict the extent of skills, experience, and time commitment required by the position.

Navigating oversight at a governance level was noted as a primary challenge. There is a need to strengthen the shared understanding of the governance role and expectations of Commissioners, including how to focus on governance-level questions versus operational details that are the responsibility of the Service. Impartiality can also be a challenge that would benefit from increased training. Commissioners bring a wealth of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, which in turn may shape their vision of effective policing. While there is significant value to diverse perspectives, there is also the potential for individual political considerations or advocacy on specific topics to seep into discussions, questions, and decisions.

The EPC and Council relationship has at times been severely strained, as reflected in a number of confrontational

meetings and public criticisms on social media platforms. Quarterly luncheon meetings between the EPC and Council were temporarily suspended as a result, before being resumed in 2023.

The presence of members of City Council on the Commission has been flagged as a challenge. Councillors bring a higher level of public exposure, political expertise, and council influence, creating an imbalance among members of the Commission. It also reduces the effectiveness of the role of the commission to be a buffer from political influence. There does not appear to be clarity regarding the respective roles of a Councillor as a member of Council, and as a member of the EPC, including what they are expected to report back to Council.

#### 5.1.4 Insights from Other Jurisdictions

Similar to Edmonton, other jurisdictions acknowledge the vital role of the Commission. The work of Commissioners is a substantial endeavor, considering that they are typically not full-time and operate with limited time, budget, and support staff. The complexity of their role and the environment they operate in, their extensive responsibility for oversight and the numerous challenges they face, make it difficult to consistently achieve governance excellence. Nevertheless, these Board Members/Commissioners generally felt they do well in fulfilling their mandate and effectively carrying out their key responsibilities.

The Toronto Police Services Board representative acknowledged the importance of police service boards being composed of the people and diverse communities they represent. Appointments to police boards/commissions are generally a combination of municipal and provincial appointments. In the three Ontario municipalities reviewed, three members of the commission are appointed by the province, including the Chair in Toronto. In Manitoba, one member is appointed by the province, and in Vancouver up to seven members are directly appointed by the province. Remaining members of the Board/Commission are appointed by the regional/municipal council, either from members of council or the community.

Currently, there are members of Council on all compared Boards and Commissions. In Vancouver, the Mayor is the Chair of the Police Board, as mandated under B.C.'s *Police Act*. There are no additional members of Council on the Board. Winnipeg currently has two members of Council on the Commission, including the mayor, out of a total of seven. Ottawa has three councillors (including the mayor) on a seven-member board. Halton has two Councillors out of a total of six board members, and Ottawa has three Councillors, including the mayor, on a seven-member board.

Other jurisdictions also struggle with civilian oversight of a professional police service. Tension in terms of what is governance versus operational, and where the board can direct the Service on technical matters is common. Respondents emphasized that it is crucial for Boards and their members to understand their responsibilities and respect the separation between the Board and the Service.

All appointees bring a unique lens to the board, which may create some inherent bias. While policy on code of conduct and conflicts of interest are consistently in place, other jurisdictions reported these policies may not effectively address political or personal philosophies. Some boards have highlighted the significance of depoliticizing the process as a key factor for success. Achieving this is challenging, especially when councillors and mayors serve as board members, as political considerations inevitably influence decision-making to some extent.

Other jurisdictions have implemented strategies to address these common governance challenges. In 2018 the Halton Regional Police Service Board engaged a consultant to provide expert governance advice, initially to assist

with executive hires and ongoing issues before the board, and subsequently to develop a new set of governance policies, and key administrative and strategic operations policies. Governance advice included matters impacting effective oversight, strategic planning, evaluation programs, board training and staff supervision and development. Leveraging expert advice has enabled the Halton Regional Police Service Board to address governance challenges head-on and implement tangible solutions to set enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of structures and processes.

A scan of policies posted by other jurisdictions indicates that the Halton Police, Ottawa Police Services, and Toronto Police Services Boards all include multiple Police Operations Policies. The subject areas of these policies are similar to areas contained within the Alberta Provincial Policing Standards. The Vancouver Police Department posts its Regulations and Procedures Manual on its website. The Vancouver Police Departments 2016 annual report states that the Board approves policing policies. A recent example is the handcuffing policy approved by the Vancouver Police Board in October 2021.

### 5.1.5 Recommendations

1. Clarify and emphasize the Commission's role as governance, enable discussion to support mutual understanding between the Commission, Council, and the Police Service, and provide guidance regarding the distinction between governance and operational matters

*Rationale:*

Council, the Commission, and the Service all have important roles. A shared understanding of how they work together would reduce conflict and help to address the respective needs of each. A common understanding, and a means of effective discussion with the Police Service on governance versus operational matters – or more specifically what are the governance considerations related to Police operations -- will be particularly valuable to support a productive relationship.

*Implementation Considerations:*

This recommendation is complementary to Recommendation 8 under Learning and Development.

Ensure role description and orientation training clearly emphasizes the Commission's governance role. Enable active discussion among commission members, with Police Service and Council re their governance role and what this means at orientation, as needed when items are presented, during in-camera meeting follow up, and annual self-evaluation. During annual planning, include a discussion of information needed by the Commission to perform its oversight role, and reports expected by Council to fulfil the Commission's accountability to Council.

The EPC's proposed Reporting and Accountability Framework includes formalized orientation sessions with the Commission and Council after each election, and more active, ongoing sharing of information with Council (Strategic Plan, Business Plan, Annual Report) with an opportunity for discussion.

2. Frame agenda items for Commission consideration in the context of the Commission's governance role.

*Rationale:*

There are different levels of focus at EPC meetings on topics that may be considered Police Operations. Preparing agenda materials with an explanation of the governance considerations on the topic will help to enable the

appropriate level of focus.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Establish, clarify, or empower the ED's role to ensure agenda materials clearly state the action required by the commission and how it is aligned with the governance role.

Establish a standard format for a top-level briefing for agenda items structured around their governance purpose, for example brief background; why the item is before the Commission; what is being requested of/recommended to the Commission; options; policy, budget, legal and service implications; etc. *See also recommendation 13.*

3. Review the practice of appointing members of City Council as members of the Commission.

*Rationale:*

There are some advantages to the appointment of members of Council to the Commission: it establishes a direct link between the Commission and Council; and Council representatives are able to act as a liaison between both bodies, communicating any Council message to the EPC and taking back messages and impressions to the Council. There are several disadvantages:

- The voices and opinions of Councillors tend to far outweigh those of regular Commissioners; they may have more experience and thus confidence in expressing themselves in a public forum and they are elected by a portion of the populace which carries weight of its own.
- Constant clarity regarding what is intended as private or in-camera discussion can be difficult, and messages may be relayed to Council or the Mayor through these informal channels that can create challenges for the Commission
- Council members are automatically conflicted during budget discussions, knowing the restraints placed on the bureaucracy by Council and being pressured by their colleagues on the EPC to approve increases which exceed those applied to the rest of the organization.
- Councillors have access to the Chief of Police through other briefings and engagements in which EPC are not invited. They may, as a result, have a greater impact on policing than members of the EPC.
- The attention of a Councillor is on a multitude of issues arising within a city the size of Edmonton; their principal audience and focus is not policing.
- Council members bring political AND Council influence into the room with them; it is inevitable. Best practice states that anyone being appointed to a decision-making body is to "remove" their other hat(s) before entering that body's chambers and then place it back on when leaving. For many, that is very tough to accomplish.

The City's procedure for Agencies, Boards, Committees, and Commissions includes general appointment principles for decision-making bodies that would apply to the Commission: "As the purpose of this type of Agency is to remove decisions from the political or administrative process, Councillors and Administration should not be appointed".

*Implementation Considerations*

Bylaw 14040 establishes that Council may appoint up to 11 members to the Police Commission, including two members of Council. This Bylaw will need to be updated to reflect the Police Amendment Act which limits

municipal appointments to nine and may also be amended to remove the appointment of members of Council.

Current appointments of municipal councillors to the Police Commission expire on December 31, 2023. Allowing these appointments to naturally expire will minimize disruption, allow for discussion regarding ways to maintain an effective ongoing relationship with Council, and is consistent with the Amendment Act.

The Community Safety & Wellbeing Taskforce also recommended that councillors not be appointed to the Commission.

4. Evolve the process for strategic planning to work jointly with the Police Service to produce one, integrated strategic plan.

*Rationale:*

The Police Commission is the Service's governing body responsible for setting the priorities for the Police Service. Development of two separate strategic plans creates the potential for confusion where there are differences between the plans (e.g., in value statements, differently articulated goals, etc.), having two plans distances the Commission from the Service and creates an inaccurate perception that they are two separate organizations versus two parts of a whole.

*Implementation Considerations:*

There may be governance or administrative aspects that the Commission would like to have as part of its annual workplan. These aspects can be framed within a broader goal in the shared plan. For example, 'effective governance' would reasonably be part of such a single, strategic plan, and may increase visibility and help the public to recognize the Commission's role and importance of governance in the services to the community.

The Service has recently published its strategic plan for the next three years. In the interim, if the Commission chooses to establish its own strategic plan, efforts should be made to ensure maximum alignment (particularly including vision, mission and values).

5. Expand the Commission's understanding of policing policy and its associated responsibility.

*Rationale:*

The Commissions' current policy focus is entirely on finance, administration, and governance. This set of policies does not fully address the Commission's responsibility to '*Establish policies providing for efficient and effective policing*'. In EPC policy 2.3.2 the Commission has stated a very broad "expectation that the Edmonton Police Service (Service) will have a system of written policy and procedure that is informed by the Commission's Policy and Procedure Manual and reflects the vision, mission, and values outlined in the strategic plan. The Service's Policy Framework will contribute to the organization's operational and administrative efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency." By doing so, it remains quite removed from the policies of the Service.

While policing strategies are regularly presented by the Service to the Commission for information, there is no indication that Commissioners are informed of or have access to current policing policies. Establishing policy is the responsibility of the Commission. Delegating authority to the service to establish this policy does not remove the Commission's responsibility for the policy. At a minimum, the Commission should understand what the current policies are.

*Implementation Considerations:*

The Vancouver example may provide a reference for Edmonton. Policing policies are publicly posted. The decision information supporting the Police Board's October 2021 approval of the handcuffing policy provides information on the process the Police Board went through, including third party technical advice to evaluate and ultimately approve the interim policy (Vancouver Police Board, 2021).

## 5.2 Learning and Development

### 5.2.1 Formal Structures

The Alberta Policing Oversight Standards dictate that Commissioners be supported by formal and informal training and professional development from the onset of appointment continuing throughout their term. The Standards state that at minimum, Commissioners must be familiar with the EPC's policy manual, but additional suggestions to the training plan include:

- Policing oversight and complaints in Alberta (Justice and Solicitor General)
- Legislated roles and responsibilities (*Police Act*)
- Public complaints process and provincial reporting – in general
- Provincial policing oversight standards
- Orientation to Professional Standards Branch/Section

The standard also requires the Commission to maintain a record of all training undertaken by Commissioners.

#### 5.2.1.1 Onboarding and Orientation

As acknowledged in EPC Policy 5.3.1, member contribution can be greatly enhanced by the delivery of a designated orientation and training program. As soon as practicable upon appointment, new Commissioners are required to participate in orientation sessions regarding their roles and responsibilities. Operational orientation is provided by the Police Service, but various sessions are delivered by Commission staff, members of the Police Service, members of the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General and/or any agency that can assist members to fulfill their responsibilities to the Commission.

Each Commissioner is responsible for familiarizing themselves with the contents of the Commission's Policy and Procedure Manual and abiding by the guidelines accordingly. For ongoing support related EPC operations and background information, new members may place requests to the Chair for mentorship with an existing Commissioner.

The Commission orientation binder includes:

- *Alberta Police Act*
- Alberta Police Service Regulation
- Edmonton Police Commission Bylaw
- Commission's Policy and Procedure Manual

- Meeting procedures and schedules
- Commission office procedures
- List of Mayor, Councillors, and Chief's Committee
- Other resources as appropriate

Further overview is provided on the following:

- Police governance and oversight in Alberta, including Commissioner roles and responsibilities
- Commission's current strategic plan
- Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) and how it applies to the Commission, as well as other pertinent legislation
- An overview of the public complaint process
- Commission's Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policies and guidelines
- Other topics as appropriate.

#### 5.2.1.2 Education and Training

Guidelines for the ongoing education and training of Commissioners throughout their term are outlined in EPC Policy 5.3.2. Commissioners are encouraged to and responsible for pursuing educational opportunities which support the strategic directions of the Commission. External resources may be drawn upon where appropriate. The Executive Director informs Commissioners of upcoming external training opportunities on an ongoing basis, such as training sessions and conferences of the Alberta Association of Police Governance (AAPG), Canadian Association of Police Boards (CAPG).

Within the first year of appointment, each new member should complete all designated orientation and onboarding training sessions, as well as the Alberta Justice & Solicitor General's online training modules. The EPC Policy Manual, each Commissioner will report on their training attendance quarterly, using the Commissioner Training Self-Reporting Form.

Other than the initial orientation, and topical briefings as may be provided by the ESP, the EPC does not directly provide group educational opportunities for the Commission as a whole.

#### 5.2.1.3 Competency Framework

The Commission approved a Competency Framework on June 17, 2021, further detailing expectations related to training timeline, as follows:

- Within the first year of appointment, Commissioners are encouraged to attend:
  - Any orientation sessions provided by the Service and ED
  - Site visits and/or ride-alongs
  - Training in meeting and parliamentary procedures
- Within two years of appointment, Commissioners should attend the annual conferences of at least two of the following:

- Alberta Association of Police Governance
- Canadian Association of Police Governance
- Canadian Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement

Opportunities to attend additional learning and development sessions related to governance and policing beyond what is stated in the Policy Manual are encouraged, including those offered by:

- The EPS Citizen's Police Academy
- The Canadian Police College
- The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police
- The Canadian Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement
- Post-secondary institutions (i.e., Institute of Corporate Directors)
- Municipal and provincial governments of their agencies
- Alberta Justice & Solicitor General Police Commission Training Program

## 5.2.2 Current Practices

The EPC's Executive Director is responsible for ensuring new members receive an orientation to governance prior to the first meeting of the New Year in January, including a review of the roles and responsibilities of the police commissioners as designated by the *Police Act*, public complaint process, and the role of the Public Complaint Director in managing complaints. Various presentations introduce governance, Commission budget and finances, and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP).

The Commission does not currently maintain a central record of training undertaken by Commissioners as required by the Standards.

The Alberta Justice & Solicitor General Police Commission Training Program was offline for several years but has recently been reactivated. New Commissioners have been enrolled to take the course.

In January 2023, the EPC's Policy & Research Analyst reviewed the new Commissioner mentorship program outlined in EPC Policy 5.3.1 (Onboarding & Orientation) in the interest of amending and formalizing structures of support for new members. A more structured Commission mentor program was recommended to assist with the integration and engagement of new members. Potential assignments for Commission mentors include:

- Participation in orientation sessions to help offer context, and translate acronyms and vocabulary to mentees;
- Informally meet with new Commission mentee in advance of first meeting attendance;
- Sit with mentee during meetings to assist with navigation of reports and materials;
- Debrief with mentee following meetings;
- Check-in regarding committee assignments.

Further, a new procedure was recommended for addition to Policy 5.3.1 to have Commission mentors attend all onboarding sessions with new Commissioners to provide support, enable informal meetings, and invite mentees



to meetings and events that would assist with the orientation process.

### 5.2.3 Insights from Internal Engagement

#### 5.2.3.1 Knowledge, Training, and Orientation

Commissioners frequently referenced an incomplete understanding of the Commissioner role at time of appointment. Several indicated a need for a more in-depth orientation to the role, governance, and oversight structure, as well as commission procedures. Commissioners indicated a full year of experience was necessary to begin feeling comfortable in their role.

Commissioners, staff, and the Service all noted the onboarding process has been inconsistent. The Alberta Justice & Solicitor General Police Commission Training Program online training module is not felt to be sufficient or effective. An opportunity was identified to partner with the Calgary Commission and Government to develop a more purposeful Commissioner course. While the Canadian Association of Police Governance hosts monthly sessions, there is a need to better understand governance through practice and exposure to procedures.

Commissioners, staff, and the Service all emphasized the importance of understanding the difference between oversight and operations, which is not addressed in orientation. Commissioners identified a better base level understanding of governance is needed to ensure they are working within the scope of the EPC, solidify their understanding of the Commission mandate, and allow for more thoughtful and effective questions to the Service. This is also expected to foster a greater level of trust and more effective relationship between the Commission and the Service. It is broadly believed that there is value in mentorship to help understand the role of a Commissioner.

Multiple people noted there appear to be different understandings of the respective roles of the EPC and Council, and cite political considerations as creating challenges in this relationship.

#### 5.2.3.2 Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer

Succession planning is not adequately addressed in current processes. The daily responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair are not clear to the broader Commission, which can create a very difficult learning curve for new Chairs. Both the Chair and Vice Chair will be reaching the end of their maximum terms at the same time this year. There exists an interest in developing systems to increase visibility and support greater communication across members to the benefit of the whole Commission. More open conversations about Chair opportunities are necessary to aid the potential development of successive chairs. The Committee Chair process is thought to be a helpful tool for increasing exposure to chair responsibilities, including the rotation of Committee Chairs.

### 5.2.4 Insights from Other Jurisdictions

Similar interest in improving onboarding was expressed by other jurisdictions across Canada. Orientation typically includes a staff presentation providing a broad range of information including background of the Commission, key responsibilities, public complaints process, and committees. Membership to the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) and encouragement to register for monthly seminars is common, as is the completion of relevant provincial training modules. Other jurisdictions acknowledged there can be an overwhelming amount of orientation material, generally presented in binders.

Other boards have identified a need for improved training to enable effective oversight and governance. Currently, the extent of training largely depends on the willingness of individual members to engage in self-directed learning. Typically, new board members are provided with a brief overview of the Commission and Police Service, ride-a-longs with Service members, policy binders and other materials to read on their own. Although conferences and monthly webinars by the CAPG are recommended, they are not obligatory. A significant number of respondents emphasized the importance of implementing mandatory and recurring training programs. These programs should cover essential topics such as understanding what constitutes effective oversight, mastering the review of reports, and acquiring the necessary skills to ask pertinent questions during meetings.

Differences were noted in member participation in training designated “mandatory” compared to “recommended”. To encourage ongoing training, the Vancouver Police Board follows up with members about their participation in activities cited as recommended by their policy manual. These activities include:

- Ride-alongs with Police Service;
- Attendance at Compstat meetings (Computer Statistics regarding timely and accurate intelligence; effective tactics; rapid deployment’ and relentless follow-up and assessment);
- Attendance at Community Events;
- Meetings with Community Partners to get their perspective on community needs and interest (e.g., Community Policing Centres and other community organizations that represent diverse communities in Vancouver);
- Participation in training offered (e.g., Courses offered by Police Services, BCAPB, webinars and/or the Justice Institute, including but not limited to anti-racism training, Indigenous Relations, Equity Diversity and Inclusion Training, and Governance training);
- Participation in briefings to Council.

The Vancouver Police Board also provides some orientation regarding what to expect during “A Year in the Life of a VPB Director”, along with basic lessons on the difference between (Commission) oversight and (Police Service) operations, and how the Board is connected and meant to engage with Stakeholders and Rights Holders.

Other notable items covered during orientation in other jurisdictions:

- The Ottawa Police Board’s discussion of recurring issues (e.g., Suspension Without Pay, Interactions with Racialized Communities, Thin Blue Line, Public Complaint Process, Police as Default Service Provider);
- The Winnipeg Police Board requires Board members to participate in Indigenous Awareness training, and organizes presentations from City officials, including an explanation of the budget from the Chief Financial Officer.

## 5.2.5 Recommendations

6. Strengthen Commission orientation on its governance role, including shared learning and discussion between Commissioners, the Commission and Council, and the Commission and the Police Service.

*Rationale:*

A clear emphasis on governance training will better equip Commissioners with the understanding and confidence required to be effective and engaged in their roles, in a shorter period. The current lack of governance training is a missed opportunity to teach and/or bolster understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the EPC at the outset of their term. The lack of a shared understanding of the role generally, and the difference between governance and operational considerations causes frustration and unnecessary tension between the Commission, the Service, and Council.

Part of understanding their governance role includes distinguishing between their role as a member of the Commission and their involvement in other roles (e.g., representative of an interest group or advocacy organization, etc.). Commissioners may be appointed because of their role or involvement with another interest group; however, it is important for Commissioners to recognize that their obligation as a commissioner is to the Commission. While other roles may inform their perspective and enable them to share information with other Commissioners, it is important to recognize that other interests must be set aside in the course of decision-making as a commissioner.

*Implementation Considerations:*

In April 2023, the Commission put forth a recommendation to Council to formalize orientation sessions for Councillors with the EPC and police service following each Municipal election to ensure a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each entity related to governance versus operational policing duties. A motion was put forth by Council, per recommendation to Training Policy C530, and carried unanimously.

While EPC staff have experience and expertise, engaging an external governance professional to conduct governance training and facilitate meaningful discussion between Commission, Council and Police Service would allow for continual growth in the Commission as a whole, and would remove barriers to open, frank discussion that may exist in ongoing internal relationships.

Providing orientation to governance-focused questions on topics commonly brought before the Commission (plans, budget reports, risk management, internal auditor, external auditor) would also help Commissioners understand and prepare for discussion and enable them to fulfil their governance role.

7. Include training for chairpersons of the Commission and Committees as part of orientation and enable opportunities for multiple members of the Commission to gain experience as Committee Chairs.

*Rationale:*

The role of the Chair is critically important and multifaceted, requiring the individual to provide effective and open-minded leadership to the Commission, maintain good working relationships with the Chief and Executive Police Service, and ensure meetings function efficiently and in a transparent manner. Managing public meetings addressing complex issues can be challenging and involves knowledge and skills that require training. Training

and experience as a Committee Chair enables development of skills that support succession for the Commission Chair role.

While strengthening rules of meeting conduct can provide a base of reference and common understanding for Commission members, an over-reliance on rules can stifle important discussion and development of consensus. A skilled Chairperson and well-designed agenda materials are important to balance these considerations. Several police boards in other Canadian jurisdictions tied the skill of their chair with their ability to manage their meeting agendas and allow full involvement of their members. However, insight from internal engagement with the Commission indicated that the general responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair are not clear to the broader group, and the learning curve to assume the position is steep.

Open conversation about the Chair position from orientation would serve to expose new Commissioners to the weight, value, and responsibilities of the role. Serving as a Committee Chair process helps develop experience, broadens ownership in effective meeting management, and is a learning environment for potential future Chairs of the Commission.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Training for Commission and Committee Chairs should immediately follow general Commission orientation and be required as part of the process of appointment of Officers and Committee Chairs.

Allowing voluntary attendance of all members of the Commission will help to develop an overall base of experience useful in supporting effective governance.

EPC staff have proposed adoption of stricter discussion rules in a briefing to address concerns with lengthy meetings. An ability to suspend such rules on a vote may be important to enable deeper, freer discussion on substantive topics.

8. Establish ongoing opportunities for shared learning by Commissioners, complemented by versus reliant on individually sought out learning from external organizations.

*Rationale:*

Currently, monthly meetings are the only regular opportunity for Commissioners to see one another. Designating opportunities for shared learning creates time and space to improve relationship dynamics in a setting apart from the pressure of decision-making. The group element will also help to increase accountability to each other and to the Commission.

There is a significant amount of information shared at the very onset of a Commissioner's role – extending learning over a period of time, and recurring opportunities to learn together during the year will help to enable learning and shared understanding.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Identifying regular (e.g., quarterly, annual) points in the Commission's annual schedule for education and including meaningful discussions on opportunities to improve based on annual governance self-evaluations will support continuous learning and ongoing understanding and improvement in governance process.

The strategic plan should be used to identify necessary topics for shared learning to develop a common base of

understanding on topics which will be brought before the Commission.

## 5.3 Committee Structure

### 5.3.1 Formal structures

#### 5.3.1.1 Standing Committees

In order to carry out its mandate, the EPC has utilized standing committees to examine and report on issues that fall under their authority and responsibility to assist the Commission as a whole in completing its responsibilities. Standing Committees make non-binding recommendations to the Commission which do not intrude on statutory roles held by Commissioners. The EPC currently has four standing committees, each having their own mandate, duties, and responsibilities as shown below.

- Governance Committee – Considers and recommends actions and propose policies that are in alignment with the Commission’s and Service’s strategic plans, priority areas and strategic goals (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023).
- Finance and Audit Committee – Assists the Edmonton Police Commission (the “Commission”) in fulfilling its obligations and oversight responsibilities related to – Financial Planning and Reporting; the Audit Process; Internal Controls; and Risk Management (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023).
- Professional Standards Committee - Monitors and oversees the public complaint process. While the Edmonton Police Service (“Service”) is responsible for investigating complaints, the Committee and the Public Complaint Director (“PCD”) ensure investigations are thorough, fair to all parties, and are conducted in accordance with laws and policies (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023). *Note: the mandate of this committee will require review to align with the Police Amendment Act.*
- Human Resources Committee - Considers and recommends actions and proposes human resource policies to support effective recruitment and retention, succession planning, performance planning, and review. The Human Resources Committee is also responsible for the ongoing review of current human resources policies and recommends any necessary changes and amendments. The Committee also recommends terms for contracts of employment for the Executive Director to the Commission and Chief of Police, including compensation and benefits, for approval by the Commission (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023).
- Information Technology Committee - The Committee assists with establishing strategic plans, principles, and policies relevant to information technology and other technology. Among the items considered by the Committee are responses to recommendations of Internal Audit or Enterprise Risk Management related to information technology (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023). *Note: The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the recently established IT Committee are currently in draft form and have not yet been approved by the Commission.*

The EPC Chair and both Councillor/Commissioners are ex-officio members on all Commission appointed committees with full voting privileges. The Executive Director may attend meetings as required in an administrative support capacity and does not have voting privileges. Meetings for Standing Committees are typically held monthly, and additional meetings may be considered to fulfill committee mandates and to be

equipped to make recommendations to the whole Commission in a timely manner. Policy 5.2.1 prescribes the guidelines for standing committees as the following:

1. All Standing Committees shall have a minimum of three members appointed.
2. Membership and terms of reference for all committees of the Commission shall be determined by formal resolution of the Commission.
3. At the first meeting of the year the Commission will appoint members to all Standing Committees.
4. The Commission will set the meeting schedule for each Standing Committee.
5. Each committee will elect a Chair at their first meeting of the year.
6. The Chair of each committee is responsible for establishing a formal agenda for each meeting.
7. All committees will follow the rules outlined in Appendix B – Meeting Procedures for the business portion of their meetings.
8. No committee is empowered to bind or represent the Commission.
9. All committees report directly to the Commission and will make recommendations for review and decision(s).

### 5.3.1.2 Other Advisory Committees/Bodies

There are no current policies guiding participation on other advisory committees or bodies. Policy 5.3.2 does specify that members are encouraged to take advantage of training offered by the Alberta Association of Police Governance and the Canadian Association of Police Governance.

## 5.3.2 Current Practices

### 5.3.2.1 Standing Committees

#### Terms of Reference

Every committee has specific terms of reference (TOR), outlining its mandate, composition and operations, duties and responsibilities, and its accountability to the Commission. The TOR for the Committees include a provision to review the review the terms of reference for the committee and make recommendations for changes to the Commission if required. The review period varies – the Professional Standards, Governance and Human Resources Committee specify review every three years; the recently established Information Technology Committee is five years, and there is no time period specified for the Finance and Audit Committee. By reviewing the meeting minutes of each Committee, the dates of the last TOR review are confirmed as follows:

Committee	TOR Review Date	Since last review
Governance	March 18, 2021	2 years
Professional Standards	May 21, 2020	3 years
Finance and Audit	February 17, 2022	1 year
Human Resources	September 17, 2020	3 years

## Meeting Management

The terms of reference for standing committees prescribe that “Committees shall meet on a monthly basis unless there is agreement by the committee members that a meeting is not required.” The schedules for standing committees are set by the Commission in accordance with Policy 5.2.1. The meeting frequency varies – meeting schedules for the Governance and Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) specify monthly meetings except for August. Minutes for the FAC indicate monthly meetings except for August and December in 2022, and monthly for January – May 2023. Minutes for the Governance committee indicate seven meetings in 2022 and four to date in 2023. Meeting schedules for the Professional Standards, Human Resources, and recently established Information Technology Committee specify bi-monthly meetings.

A review of the public meeting minutes of the EPC indicates that meeting minutes from standing committee meetings are not disclosed and the committees do not provide reports to the Commission in public meetings. Commission minutes indicate financial reports are presented as consent items, without any commentary, recommendation, or input from the finance committee. Where there is a report, Commission meeting minutes generally note the Finance or Governance Committee chair indicates that “matters discussed ... were covered in Item #5 (Consent Agenda)”. There is little indication of the Committee’s findings as a result of that discussion or otherwise of the work of the Committee.

The only indication of committee reporting within the Commission minutes pertains to the Professional Standards Committee, which provides a summary of compliments received by the Police Service.

### 5.3.2.2 EPC Representation On Other Advisory Committees/Bodies

#### Alberta Association of Police Governance

The Alberta Association for Police Governance (AAPG) is committed to promoting and upholding excellence in civilian governance and oversight of police services in Alberta (Alberta Association of Police Governance, 2023). AAPG offers educational opportunities, best practices, and forums for effective collaboration with related agencies. The AAPG also contributes input and feedback on potential changes to relevant legislation and policies. As an Alberta municipal police commission, EPC is a member of AAPG. EPC’s nominated representative is eligible to serve on the Board of AAPG. Commissioner Shazia Amiri currently represents the EPC on AAPG’s board.

#### Canadian Association of Police Governance

The Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) works collaboratively and proactively with members and partners to enhance civilian governance of policing in Canada (Canadian Association of Police Governance, 2022). CAPG promotes the ethical foundation of justice, rule of law, moral core, human dignity, and democratic principles in decision-making related to policing. Board members are selected for regional representation across Canada. Currently, Chair Erick Ambtman serves as the representative of the EPC on CAPG’s board.

#### ALERT Citizen’s Advisory Committee

Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) is an independent policing organization that combats organized and serious crime such as drug trafficking, gang violence and child exploitation across Alberta (Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams, 2022). ALERT is a not-for-profit Part 9 corporation which receives federal and provincial funding and operates pursuant to the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the

RCMP, the seven municipal police services, the three First Nations police services, and the Alberta Sheriffs. ALERT is a non-profit agency, governed by a Board of Directors and an appointed Chief Executive Officer, which allows the agency to operate at arm's length from the provincial government. Additionally, ALERT has a Civilian Advisory Committee, who's priority is to encourage community engagement and stakeholder relations. Commissioner Shazia Amiri currently represents the EPC on ALERT's Citizen Advisory Committee.

#### REACH Edmonton

The REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities aims to significantly increase community safety within one generation (REACH Edmonton, n.d.). Their goals include enhancing the perception of safety and inclusion among Edmontonians, while actively engaging the community in developing a culture of safety and crime prevention. Through collaboration and innovative approaches, the Council strives to create a safer and more inclusive environment for all residents, leaving a lasting legacy of safety for future generations. Currently, Commissioner Kemi Kufuor-Boake serves as the representative of the EPC on REACH Edmonton Council.

### 5.3.3 Insights from Internal Engagement

Commission members and staff indicated standing committees are a valuable asset to the EPC, providing an effective and efficient means of facilitating robust discussions on agenda topics that would otherwise be challenging to cover in regular meetings. By operating as a mechanism for presenting topics to a smaller group, this structure empowers commissioners to ask valuable questions and fosters an environment conducive to education and constructive critique. This allows Committee members to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subjects they report on during public meetings. Committees have demonstrated their proficiency in recognizing matters that require further deliberation by the whole commission.

Committee meetings also serve as an additional touchpoint with the Service. Commissioners recognize the importance of these interactions, and believe they contribute to the development of a positive and collaborative relationship with the Service and enhance the effectiveness of the EPC's decision-making processes.

Several challenges with the Committee processes were noted. There is some repetition in discussions and questions during committee and public meetings. While questions in Committee meetings enable Committee members to gain valuable insights, the way in which the same questions are posed by Committee members in the public Commission meetings can feel repetitive, challenging or performative versus sharing the understanding that was gained by the Committee with the rest of the Commission. This repetition is considered inefficient and has a negative impact on the relationship between the EPC and the EPS, and may unnecessarily impact public trust and confidence.

As discussed in section 4.3.2, while every committee is mandated to provide a report to the Commission during public meetings, this is quite limited in practice. Several respondents felt this may be intended to streamline meetings.

Lastly, feedback indicated that while the committee structure itself is effective, there is room for improvement in its execution within the broader governance mandate of the EPC. This alignment will help ensure that the committees operate efficiently and effectively in fulfilling their intended purpose.



### 5.3.4 Insights from Other Jurisdictions

Vancouver, Ottawa, and Winnipeg police boards have standing committees for subjects such as governance, finance, audits, human resources and complaints, and strategic planning. Toronto does not have standing committees. While no committee has the authority to make binding decisions on behalf of the board/commission, it is widely recognized that committees still support the board's success by helping with robust discussion and topic-specific decision making. Despite the overall feelings of committees' effectiveness, the other police boards encounter similar challenges with their committee structure.

Standing committees are not believed to alleviate the workload or agenda for the police board as discussions and questions in committee meetings tend to be repeated during public meetings. To be effective, it is crucial for committee leads to take responsibility for translating information to the rest of the board and advise on topic specific decision making. Over-use of the committee structure can also reduce effectiveness. When a committee is created for every subject matter, its intended purpose starts to erode.

### 5.3.5 Recommendations

9. Increase public transparency of Committee agendas and recommendations to the Commission.

*Rationale:*

Committees have been established to do the work of the Commission, including receiving monitoring and other information related to the Commission's public accountability. Conducting closed meetings and not publishing agendas or minutes creates a significant and unnecessary barrier to transparency.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Publicly post the agendas and minutes of Committees. Details in minutes may be limited to a general subject and the resulting recommendation to the Commission if the subject matter is confidential consistent with Commission policy. Minutes or written reports should be the standard for relaying the work of the Committee to the Board. Consistent standards for open or closed meetings should apply to Committees as well as the Commission. Enabling community members to participate on standing committees as well as technical experts could also provide community perspectives and a greater sense of transparency for these functions.

10. Review Committee Terms of Reference with Committee members not less than annually and establish a workplan consistent with Commission priorities. Formalize orientation for new Committee members and incorporate intended Committee processes in general Commission orientation.

*Rationale:*

Committees are formed to do the work of the Commission and their role remains one of governance. The additional level of detail on a topic can seem to invite an expansion of attention to operational matters. Reviewing of terms of reference annually and a deliberate orientation to these terms of reference for new members will help to ensure the Committee stays focused on governance issues.

Including discussion in the overall Commission orientation process of expectations for Committees to effectively represent topics to the Commission, efficiently sharing the understanding gained during the Committee meeting

versus re-creating the same question and answer process (essentially re-work that defeats the purpose of the Committee), would be valuable and enable shared understanding of process and expectations between the Committee, the Commission, and the Service.

The EPC has made recommendations to Council to enable non-commissioners to be members of Committees. This further increases the importance of an effective orientation to the role of the committee and interface with the Commission.

An annual workplan for each Committee, including clearly identifying information needed to perform its responsibilities, enables discussion with the Police Service regarding reasonable, appropriately targeted information requirements and will allow for an orderly approach to gathering the information, including through the internal audit annual plan. It will also help the Committee to stay focused on its governance responsibilities.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Creating and maintaining an annual agenda for committees that includes review of Terms of Reference will support this process.

In addition to the terms of reference, orientation for new committee members should include education on the current policies in place related to their area of responsibility, current methods of monitoring and reporting, and the process for sharing the Committees learning and recommendations with the Commission.

## 5.4 Meeting Processes

### 5.4.1 Formal Structures

#### 5.4.1.1 Municipal Bylaw

The City of Edmonton Bylaw 14040, Edmonton Police Commission Bylaw outlines meeting procedures and rules for the Commission (City of Edmonton, 2023), under section 9:

1. Subject to this bylaw and every applicable statute or regulation of the Province of Alberta, the Commission may establish its own rules of procedure governing its meetings, hearings and investigations;
2. Subject to section 18 of AR 200/95, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation, meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public;
3. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside over the meeting, and in the absence of the Vice-Chair, the Commission may elect one of its Members to preside at a meeting;
4. The Commission shall, unless otherwise resolved by the Commission, meet at least once in each month;
5. Quorum for a meeting of the Commission is a majority of the existing appointed Members, and Councillors who are Members shall be counted as "existing appointed members" for the purposes of determining quorum only if they attend that meeting;
6. Each Member has one vote; and
7. A motion is lost when the vote is tied.

### 5.4.1.2 Provincial Standards

The Commission is additionally required by Section II of the Alberta Policing Oversight Standards to:

- Make a meeting schedule available to the public, including where and when policing oversight meetings will take place;
- Make meeting records available to the public, including agenda, minutes, and non-confidential supplementary materials; and
- Submit annual complaints statistics to the municipality and ensure public availability via commission meetings.

### 5.4.1.3 Public and Closed Meetings

Consistent with Bylaw 14040, the Commission meets once per month, with the annual schedule established during the last meeting of the year and made available to the public. Commission meetings are open to the public, however closed meetings may be held pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation*, including in such instances as when matters relate to law enforcement, labour relations, and litigation or potential litigation. At the discretion of the Commission, meetings may be held in a “closed” fashion with the Chief of Police and members of the Edmonton Police Service, or “in camera” with the Commission and Commission staff only.

If a change is to be made to the date, time, or location of a meeting, including regarding cancellation, a notice of change must be released to the public two weeks prior to the affected meeting.

### Meeting Procedures

By designation of the EPC Policy Manual, business for each monthly meeting is to be dealt with in order of regular (public) meeting, closed meeting (with police service), in camera meeting (commission only). Agenda items that are determined to be necessary for public presentation may be carried forward accordingly, based on the will of the Commission.

It is the duty of the chair to conduct all meetings of the Commission, preserving order and decorum, and making decisions in address of all questions of procedure. The chair may call any Commissioner to order and rule when a motion is out of order. Any Commissioner wishing to speak must obtain permission from the Chair. When granted permission, all others must remain seated without interruption to the speaker. In matters of debate, Commissioners may speak twice on any motion, including once in debate and once to ask questions. Each Commissioner may speak for only five minutes and will not be granted another opportunity to speak until all those wishing to speak have had opportunity, at which point the Commission Chair may give permission to speak or question again.

### Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Pursuant to the Standards, the Commission’s Access to Information policy dictates that agendas, minutes, and reports made to the Commission by the Edmonton Police Service be available to the public without making a request. The Executive Director and the Chair of the Commission work together to set the agenda for the meetings, with the ED responsible for the preparation and circulation of meeting agendas and materials. Appendix B (EPC Meeting Procedures) of the EPC Policy Manual, identifies the Executive Director as responsible for

developing the agenda for the monthly meetings, including prioritization of items along with their designation as open or closed meeting topics. The draft agenda is submitted to the Chair for approval in advance of distribution to the Chief of Police and Commissioners.

Monthly agenda materials are distributed five days prior to the meeting date, with all submissions to be included received a minimum six days in advance. Additions after this deadline are submitted at the commencement of the monthly meeting to be approved for inclusion by vote of the Commission. As a rule, items presented on the agenda are addressed in order; at their discretion, the Chair may adjust the order to best facilitate the meeting.

The Commission's Access to Information policy further stipulates Commission staff record minutes without note or comment to allow for the preparation of official minutes. As transitory records, the rough transcription notes are destroyed after the approval of official minutes.

#### 5.4.1.4 Public Participation in Commission Meeting Processes

Public delegates must register to speak at monthly meetings by filling out the "Request to Speak" form online in advance, or in person at the outset of the public portion. Presentations must be relevant to matters within the Commission's mandate, excluding complaints about officer conduct or ongoing police investigations. Topics presented must relate to the subject matter outlined in the written request to speak. Each presenter or group spokesperson is allowed a maximum of five minutes unless consent for an extension is attained by Commission motion. Speaker presentations are recorded live but otherwise not documented in the minutes beyond name. Commissioners may ask questions of clarification from public presenters but are not permitted to enter into debate on any matters raised. See also Section 4.6 regarding public participation processes.

### 5.4.2 Current Practice

#### 5.4.2.1 Order of Business

The Order of Business for each monthly meeting of the Commission includes three sections: In-Camera (commission and staff only); Regular (Public); and Closed (with police service), conducted consecutively. The Closed meeting contains an "In Private with the Chief" section wherein only the EPC and Chief of Police are in attendance; the ED may also attend if invited. In-Camera, Public, and Closed are treated as three separate and distinct meetings with each called to order and adjourned. As required, an additional in-camera session follows the closed meeting to complete any remaining items of business.

The Executive Director sets the monthly agenda. As of 2023, the agenda is more formally submitted to the Chair for approval as required by policy. Items for discussion may be submitted by Commissioners in advance so that appropriate preparatory materials can be included. Agendas are distributed five business days ahead of scheduled meetings, received the Friday before Thursday meetings. Urgent business may be added up to and including the day of the meeting if the Commission determines the item to be warranted for immediate discussion.

In a 2023 staff briefing of *Commission Meeting Agenda Review* to the Commission, the number of presentations per meeting was found to have grown substantially from 11 total (Public and Closed) in 2019 to 26 total (Public and Closed) in 2022, with presentation time increasing from 15-20 minutes to 30 minutes. In some instances, presentation time extends beyond one hour. Recommendations to improve meeting efficiency and effectiveness included:

- Adding all motions arising from discussion and debate during the In-Camera session to the public agenda under “Motions Arising from Closed Agenda” (with appropriate exceptions related to FOIP)
- Defining and limiting the number of presentations for each agenda

#### 5.4.2.2 Rules Governing Debate

The current *Rules Governing Debate* outlined in the EPC Policy Manual Appendix B (Meeting Procedures) allow each Commissioner to speak twice on any motion, including once in debate and once to ask questions, for up to five minutes. Commissioners are not allowed to speak a second time until all members wishing to speak have had opportunity to do so, at which time the Commission may grant permission for individuals to speak again or ask further questions. Procedures further dictate that each member be given an opportunity to speak to a motion before it is put to a vote. However, based on recent evaluation of the Commission’s Meeting Procedures, these items have not been followed. In February 2023, the following clarifications and procedural supports were offered in response to these challenges, in an effort to improve the efficiency of meetings:

- A Commissioner may be granted an additional five minutes to speak to a report or presentation after an official motion has been placed and everyone has had opportunity to ask questions.
- The meeting room is equipped with a timer to be utilized as necessary.
- Administration will provide the Chair with a discussion tracking sheet to be used during the meeting.

#### 5.4.3 Insights from Internal Engagement

Recognized strengths in meeting processes include a sense of productivity during closed meetings; a general feeling of respect, flexibility, patience, and support; and the usefulness of the monthly meeting between Chief of Police and Commission Chair and Vice Chair.

Certain processes have been identified as useful for efficiency, such as the use of the Consent Agenda to collect a series of reports for information or approval that do not require discussion and may be accepted by unanimous consent. All Consent Agenda documents are included in the monthly agenda review package. Should any Commissioner wish to prompt discussion on a consent item, they may request an exemption from the Consent Agenda by the Executive Director up to two business days prior to monthly meeting. Statutory topics are items that can be reviewed in advance of monthly meetings during committee meetings with an opportunity to ask questions during the in-camera session. This allows public meetings to run more efficiently after Commissioners have voted to pass the statutory topic.

The meetings with the Chief are also felt to be valuable, allowing for more transparency on confidential and/or sensitive issues. Commissioners expressed an interest in advance information to enable preparation for the discussion.

There is some dissatisfaction surrounding the time available to review the volume of agenda materials which can range up to 700-page packages. Ensuring all Commissioners receive the information at the same time was identified as important.

Commissioners frequently commented on the length of meetings, referencing long days, heavy meetings, and dense agendas. Others suggested it would be helpful to receive some orientation to the structure and function of each of the three types of meeting.

Other concerns included:

- The inability to engage with public delegates following presentations.
- A need for a shared understanding of the difference between governance and operational matters
- Imbalance in meeting discussions
- A need to enable focus on priority items.

#### 5.4.4 Insights from Other Jurisdictions

As in Edmonton, other jurisdictions struggle with the volume and density of agenda packages. Length of meetings can be a similar struggle. The Toronto Police Services Board works with the Chief in advance of meetings to ensure understanding of the reports, which results in less need for conversation during the meetings. As a result, more agenda items pass unanimously and without discussion. In such instances, they are trying to encourage Members to speak about why they are in favour in order that the public be better informed, and to encourage the participation of all Members. The Vancouver Police Board is similarly in conversation with the Police Service to pare meeting information received as well as better understand where their focus should lie.

The order of meetings held is not consistent across other jurisdictions, with some holding confidential portions in advance of public, and some the reverse. The Vancouver Police Board holds two sessions with the police service, including one with Chief and Deputies, and one with Chief and Board only, to allow for a more intimate line of questioning.

All jurisdictions consulted agree that the ability of the Chair to manage the agenda skillfully is essential. Most Boards identified the Chair as the reason for full participation of their members, however personality type and discomfort level of knowledge on items were cited as reasons for reduced participation by some individuals. In such cases, staff and the Chair try to encourage participation.

The Toronto Police Service Board livestreams their public meetings via YouTube.

#### 5.4.5 Recommendations

11. Expand public access to meeting proceedings through increased communication and recorded video.

##### *Rationale*

Transparency, public confidence, and public understanding to enable meaningful engagement.

##### *Implementation Considerations*

This recommendation has already been partly implemented through EPC initiated action.

Livestreaming was enabled during the pandemic when meetings were conducted virtually. The meetings page noted that a webcast was available for January to March 2022 meetings. There was not a similar note or

information regarding the ability to watch the meetings for the April 2022 to February 2023 meetings, and there is not a link shown on the posted agenda. The general description of the meetings indicate they are held at City Hall. It does not indicate that citizens may watch the meetings virtually. This would limit the public's awareness of the continued ability to watch the meeting.

The EPC included a proposal for video recording and posting of Public EPC meetings in its proposed Reporting and Accountability Framework presented to Council in April 2023. As of May 2023, there is a visible link to watch the public Commission meeting, both live and recorded. Additional information about this access would be useful on the meetings description page.

#### 12. Re-align general structure of Commission meetings to maximize transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness

- Hold the closed meeting with the EPS first to enable discussion of any confidential matters that should not be presented in a public form. This should be quite limited if consistent with the Governance responsibility of the Commission. More clearly define 'law enforcement matters' which must remain confidential.
- Hold the open public meeting second, including presentation of committee recommendations and all discussion and debate on matters before the commission.
- Hold an in-camera meeting following the public meeting to allow the Commission the opportunity to discuss its own governance processes, including time without staff present.

##### *Rationale:*

Feedback from Commissioners and the Police Service indicated a need to improve the efficiency of meeting processes, balance of participation, and a constructive relationship with the Service.

An in-camera session at the end is a best practice that allows the Commission to discuss matters related to its own effectiveness in the context of the meetings that just occurred. Enabling in-camera discussion without staff present allows freer discussion, including an ongoing assessment of the support it is receiving.

##### *Implementation Considerations*

Recommendations are currently under consideration by the Commission regarding changes in agenda structure to address efficiency. The essence of these recommendations to reduce duplication through the set of agendas is positive and supported by this review. The sequence recommended above is a further development on the existing briefing and recommendations.

#### 13. Establish a standard concise format for a top-level briefing for agenda items to enable understanding of key points, and the governance considerations for the topic.

##### *Rationale*

User friendly, concise materials will allow Commissioners to quickly understand key points for the item, and to include the key policy, budget, legal and service implications of a recommendation. Specifically identifying how the item fits with the governance role of the Commission, and key related questions/considerations will help focus the discussion.

##### *Implementation Issues*

Standards and a standard template for the summary analysis to be provided with agenda items will need to be developed. Establish or clarify the responsibility of the ED to review and confirm the materials being put forward

for all items (by Commission staff or EPS) are clear, concise, and consistent with the established standards. The volume of material overall should also be evaluated to ensure it is being appropriately summarized by management (whether Service or Commission).

*See also Recommendation #7 in Learning and Development regarding training for Commission and Committee chairs.*

## 5.5 Public Participation and Input in Commission Processes

### 5.5.1 Formal structures

#### 5.5.1.1 Community Engagement Requirements

Adequate, effective, and efficient policing is defined by the Government of Alberta's Policing Oversight Standards for Municipal Police Commissions as including a number of areas where community input is needed (emphasis added) (Alberta Government, 2014):

1. Adequate policing is equitable: Provides the *community specified* needed and desired level and standard of service.
2. Adequate policing is efficient: Balance *community specified* needed and desired level and standard of service against the cost.
3. Effective policing meets specified goals *developed by community* and police: A community specified level and standard of service.

EPC Policy 1.1.2 Authority and Accountability prescribes the following guidelines related to community engagement:

1. The Commission will receive representations from the general public and will consult with key stakeholders.
2. The Commission will operate in an open and transparent manner.

Under the *Police Act*, the Commission oversees the Service and has the responsibility of establishing policing priorities and participating in consultation with the Service in the development of a strategic plan. EPC Policy 1.1.4 Police Commission and Police Service Planning provides the following guidelines on key performance indicators (KPI's) that are related to community engagement:

1. The Commission, in partnership with the Service, will develop key performance indicators and measures that take the following objectives into consideration:
  - a. The Service's existing and/or previous performance and/or estimated costs;
  - b. Crime trend analysis, and other social, demographic, and economic factors that may impact the community; and
  - c. Community expectations derived from a public consultation process.



### 5.5.1.2 Attendance at Commission Meetings

The EPC holds monthly meetings that are open to the public. The schedule for the public meetings, including dates, times, and venues, are determined during the final public Commission meeting of each year, and posted on the Commission's website (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023). In the event of any changes to the meeting time, venue, or cancellation, a notification will be issued to the public at least two weeks in advance. Public meetings provide the opportunity for residents of Edmonton to interact with the EPC and share input on policing matters in their respective communities.

Appendix B of the EPC policy manual prescribes the following guidelines for public meeting attendance:

1. Members of the public may make a presentation to the Commission during the Public Input Item on the meeting agenda. They are required to register in advance by filling out the "Request to Speak" form available on EPC's website (Edmonton Police Commission, 2023).
2. Public presentations must be relevant to matters within the Commission's mandate, with the exception of complaints about officer conduct or any ongoing investigations which are not suitable topics for this channel of input. Information presented must relate only to the subject matter specified on the request to speak form.
3. Before speaking, a member of the public must ask for permission from the Chair.
4. While a member of the public is addressing the Chair, all other members are expected to remain seated without interrupting the speaker (except on a Point of Order, Procedure or Privilege).
5. When addressing the meeting, members of the public are required to conduct themselves professionally and courteously, refraining from the use of offensive words or language.
6. The maximum time allowed for a public presenter is five minutes unless a motion is passed by the Commission to extend the allotted time.
7. Presentations can be delivered verbally and can include hardcopy materials to be submitted to the Executive Director of the Commission for inclusion in the public record.
8. Personal information is collected under the authority of Section 33 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The names of the presenters will be documented in the minutes, but the specific comments made by the speakers will not be recorded.
9. The Commission will not enter into debate on matters raised during the public input session. However, Commissioners are allowed to seek clarifications by asking questions to the presenters. The Chair of the Commission may inquire if the administration of the Commission or Service wishes to respond to any of the information that was presented.

At a Council meeting on April 17, 2023, the Edmonton Police Commission's recommendations included video recording its public meetings in addition to livestream, and that the recordings be available for up to two years. This would allow members of Council and the public to review past public meetings (City of Edmonton, 2023).

### 5.5.1.3 Participation on Standing and Advisory Committees

At a Council meeting on April 17, 2023, the EPC put forward a set of recommendations to Edmonton City Council. Among these recommendations were several focused on enhancing public involvement in EPC's committee structures. Bylaw and policy amendment may proceed as City Councillors voted unanimously in favour of these

recommendations (City of Edmonton, 2023):

1. That Administration prepare amendments to the Edmonton Police Commission Bylaw 14040 to enable the Edmonton Police Commission to make appointments of non-commissioners to its Standing Committees. The current bylaw for the Commission restricts membership on Standing Committees to include appointed Commissioners only (City of Edmonton, 2023).
2. That Administration prepare amendments to the Edmonton Police Commission Bylaw 14040 to enable the Edmonton Police Commission to establish Advisory Committees to address specific and topical issues. Currently, the City of Edmonton's bylaw for the Commission does not restrict the Commission from establishing topical advisory committees, however, it does impede the ability for the Commission to provide remuneration for the time of those members (City of Edmonton, 2023).

These recommendations may provide the following benefits in terms of fulfilling the EPC's community engagement goals (City of Edmonton, 2023):

- Enhanced public interaction with the Commission on policing matters;
- Opportunity to participate in policing governance in a role that has less time commitment than an appointed Commissioner;
- Creates an experienced pool of people who have been involved in Commission meetings who may wish to apply for a Commissioner role in the future. The Commission would be responsible for recruiting to the public positions and would seek approval to leverage past short lists from the City to assess interest from people who applied on past commissioner job postings; and
- Enshrining in a bylaw would allow for these members to be paid remuneration for their time.

## 5.5.2 Current Practice

### 5.5.2.1 Requests to Address the Commission

Current practices for public input and presentations in public meetings appear to be consistent with EPC policies as per formal structures and documentation.

Currently, members of the public have multiple options to participate in public meetings hosted by the EPC. They can attend these meetings in-person at a pre-determined location, join via livestream on Zoom, or watch recordings of previous meetings on the boards' websites. However, it is important to note that the availability of in-person meetings was temporarily halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From January to April 2022, all EPC meetings were conducted exclusively online. However, in May 2022, the EPC resumed in-person public meetings.

Typically, the EPC does not have public participation at every meeting. Based on data collected over a six-month period, it was observed that the average number of speakers per meeting was less than 2. During this specific timeframe, 26 individuals registered to speak, but only 10 of them attended the meetings in person and/or spoke. In accordance with formal structures, each speaker is granted a five-minute time slot to deliver their presentation. The allotted time limit is effectively monitored with the aid of green, yellow, and red timing lights in the meeting room. While these lights assist in maintaining the schedule, it's worth noting that the Chair does not abruptly interrupt speakers when their five-minute window elapses. Furthermore, Commissioners are not confined solely to seeking clarifications; they have the freedom to engage in broader discussions. Over time, the policies governing

public input have evolved to enhance flexibility and empower the Commission to fulfill its objectives and mandate.

### 5.5.2.2 Other Public Engagement

Current practices for public engagement activities appear to be consistent with EPC policies as per formal structures and documentation.

In 2022, EPC Administration proposed a new budgeting process to address perceived gaps such as limited public engagement by the Commission and Service on fiscal issues. As one of the roles of the EPC is to allocate funds approved by City Council, a survey was used to gather Edmontonian opinions on the Edmonton Police Service Budget. One thousand (1,000) online surveys were conducted via Leger's online panel, between April 4 and April 20, 2022 (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022). The EPC also partnered with Pe Metawe Consulting to gather input from vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations to conduct community feedback sessions and a Citizen Perception Survey (the Survey) in April 2022 (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022).

One thousand two hundred thirty (1,230) online surveys were completed via an open link, between April 4 and April 24, 2022 (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022). The Survey was available in both English and French, and the Edmonton Police Service promoted the survey through contacts in business communities and partners, to ensure broad participation amongst traditionally marginalized groups such as women, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous and other racialized groups. The Survey results were shared with the public and the 2022 Bi-Annual Report to the Community covers this engagement in more detail.

The 2020-2022 EPC and EPS Bi-Annual Reports to Community outline the following additional Service-driven engagement initiatives:

- A National Indigenous Day Pipe Ceremony was held on June 21, 2022 (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022). At a Council meeting on April 17, 2023, it was recommended that the Commission and City Council participate jointly at future Pipe Ceremonies to commemorate the signing of Treaty 6 as a collaborative effort to support reconciliation (City of Edmonton, 2023).
- Project Connection commenced in May 2022 with the goal of addressing crime and victimization and improving overall community safety through a social policing approach which combines community engagement, education, and enforcement where needed (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022).
- On June 21, 2021, National Indigenous Persons Day, EPS introduced eagle feathers to EPS policies and procedures. Introduction of this sacred Indigenous symbol was following by training employees on its use and context (Edmonton Police Commission, 2021).
- On March 5, 2021, Elders Francis Whiskeyjack and Betty Letendre smudged the new EPC Northwest campus (Edmonton Police Commission, 2021).
- A Commitment to Action Plan was launched in September 2020 and included an engagement process with representatives of Black, Indigenous, racialized, and under-served communities, representatives of non-profit organizations involved in delivering social services to vulnerable communities, representatives of the business community in Edmonton, and citizens of non-racialized communities from within and external to the City (Edmonton Police Commission, 2020).
- Recruitment for a new Indigenous advisory council was held in 2020. The new Nísohkamâkewin Council

will help EPS address the inequities and barriers Indigenous peoples face and develop and implement the best policing practices to address those challenges (Edmonton Police Commission, 2020).

### 5.5.3 Insights from Internal Engagement

Commissioners recognize that a primary element of the EPC mandate is to represent the needs and priorities of the citizens of Edmonton. They note the importance of being visible in the community and aware of what the community expects from its police service. Concerns were voiced that the current mechanisms for gathering and assessing public commentary and feedback are largely inadequate. Respondents felt that the public impression of the Commission comes across as intimidating rather than accessible and responsive.

The five-minute public presentations which occur at monthly public meetings serve as the EPC's primary, ongoing public engagement initiative. Several challenges were noted with this method of engagement. Public meetings are not well attended, and may be impacted by the time and location of meetings. Meeting attendance tends to increase with publicized trends or issues in policing such as the Freedom Convoy and Black Lives Matter protests. It was also noted this avenue may not provide equal opportunity or accessibility for all Edmonton residents. There is a formal registration process (see 5.4.1.4) and protocol on how to speak/present during public meetings. Language and jargon used at meetings may also create barriers in understanding. Public presentations provide very limited opportunity for dialogue and interaction between the Commission and members of the public. There is often limited information provided in advance for Commissioners to research and prepare ahead of meetings. While the policy specifies that Commissioners are allowed to seek clarification by asking questions to the presenters, Commissioners indicated they feel unable to engage in dialogue, and are expected to only listen.

The EPC currently does not have a public engagement plan, however there is a desire to strengthen the Commission's delivery of community engagement activities in a way that provides a balance of opportunities for both marginalized populations as well as the broader community.

### 5.5.4 Insights from Other Jurisdictions

As in Edmonton, other jurisdictions recognize the value of public engagement and strive to enhance performance in this area. The Vancouver Police Board and Toronto Police Services Board have established specialized task forces and advisory committees/panels such as mental health, chief selection, and Indigenous and African descent advisory which include public members. Additionally, these boards have established staff positions dedicated to community engagement and Indigenous engagement, aiming to support the development of effective engagement initiatives. The Toronto Police Services Board has also made public consultation a priority, seeking input on policy initiatives such as policing reform, strategic plans, and the use of force. They have created a public dashboard that provides data on calls for service, persons in crisis, modernization, firearms, human resources, budgets, and more.

The Winnipeg Police Service Board and the Halton Police Board have emphasized enhancing their visibility within their respective communities by actively participating in community events and forums and engaging with the public during the chief of police recruitment process. Compared police boards have also focused on modernizing their websites and expanding their presence on social media platforms.

The police boards in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Halton encounter comparable challenges to

Edmonton when it comes to the engagement aspect of public meetings. These challenges include:

- Limited dialogue or interaction between the commission/board and the public during presentations;
- Misuse of public presentations for activism rather than constructive advocacy; and
- Barriers to accessing public meetings, including the formal registration process and protocol on how to speak/present during public meetings.

To address these challenges, police boards have implemented the following measures:

- Offering hybrid meetings that allow both in-person attendance and livestreaming;
- Making meeting recordings available on the board website for individuals to watch at their convenience; and
- Actively inviting guest presenters from minority and disadvantaged communities to share their perspectives and highlight any collaborations and outreach efforts with the police service.

### 5.5.5 Recommendations

14. Develop a stakeholder engagement plan as part of the strategic / annual planning process that clearly states the topics on which engagement is desired, consistent with EPC's governance role (e.g., re policy, services / service levels, priorities), and the level of desired engagement.

*Rationale:*

Developing and publicizing an engagement plan will allow citizens to prepare and participate more effectively. Topic specific engagement will enable more productive public conversations and will provide valuable insights for planning if aligned with this process. Conversations beyond surveys will provide richer information and allow the Commission to be more visible.

*Implementation Considerations:*

While there may be some specific, respective interests, the Commission and the Service should generally coordinate if not integrate their methods and timing of public engagement for both efficiency and to avoid public confusion or perception that the Commission and Service are separate entities.

Working with community organizations to co-design and host discussions with target populations can encourage participation, sense of safety, etc.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) publishes a guide to help define the public's role in any public participation process (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower), describing each method of participation in alignment with its promised commitment to the public (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). Application of this tool and associated leading practice can help manage expectations, develop public trust and result in increasingly productive engagement over time.

15. Develop / include public education on the role of the Commission and the various oversight and accountability mechanisms for the Police Service on the website and as background to public engagement

*Rationale:*

There are common misunderstandings regarding the role of the commission and public opportunity for recourse

on concerns.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Information should be available in multiple languages, to reflect the diversity of the Edmonton community. Multiple tools and channels may be needed to ensure this information is accessible to all communities

16. Review policies related to public attendance at EPC meetings and discuss with the Commission the currently perceived barriers to meaningful interaction between the public and the Commission.

*Rationale:*

Accessibility to the public is important for the Commission to receive information from and understand the priorities and concerns of the public. The inability to effectively engage with members of the commission can be frustrating for both the public and Commission members.

*Implementation Considerations:*

General guidance to the public on presenting to the commission and how to be more effective/clear in their purpose and ensure presentation is consistent with the mandate of the commission, consideration of time limits, etc.

It is recognized that EPC needs to find ways to open the door for other populations to provide input whether that be in the public meetings or in a different setting. It is important to allow space for people to be emotional and where EPC does not censor the dialogue.

17. Consider use of advisory committee structures to enable ongoing insights from hard-to-reach populations.

*Rationale:*

There is an interest in ensuring EPC decision-making is informed by diverse perspectives and lived experience. Using advisory committees to engage individuals who bring this value enables flexibility in processes to improve accessibility, provides repeated opportunities for dialogue with a set of people to allow deeper understanding, and does not present the challenges that may arise with attempting to gain these insights through direct appointments to the EPC where the technical nature of decisions and materials provided may require different skills and competencies.

A recommendation to expand Bylaw 14040 to allow the Commission to remunerate public members of advisory committees is included in the EPC's currently proposed Reporting and Accountability Framework

*Implementation Considerations:*

While standards of transparency and accountability require some consistency in approach, such as notice, scheduling, and documentation of meetings, allowing the advisory committee itself to determine the structure and format of its own meetings may help remove barriers and improve the ability of Committee members to participate.

Clear terms of reference stating the committee's mandate, what and how topics are brought forward for discussion, and how information and/or recommendations flow between the Committees and the Commission, and the Commission's commitment to consider the information will be important. IAP2 principles are also a useful reference for these Committee terms of reference.

## 5.6 Compliance with Alberta Provincial Standards

### 5.6.1 Formal structures

The Policing Oversight Standards for Municipal Police Commissions (Standards) were created under the authority of Section 3.1 of the Alberta *Police Act* (Act) to guide the oversight of police practice and support the provision of effective policing (Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, 2014) (Government of Alberta, 2023). In accordance with the Act, compliance with relevant standards is mandatory, and an audit of the Edmonton Police Commission against the Standards is required on a four-year cycle. The four-year compliance review serves two purposes, allowing the oversight body to demonstrate accountability to the citizens they serve and promoting a consistent standard of police practice across the province.

As defined by the Standards, the role of the Edmonton Police Commission is to ensure the municipality receives efficient and effective policing. Its responsibilities include:

- Oversee the administration of an agreement to provide police services;
- Represent the interests and concerns of the public and of the council to the chief / officer in charge (OIC);
- Work with the chief / OIC to develop a yearly plan of priorities and strategies for policing that reflects community and council interests;
- Monitor the implementation and progress of the police performance against the yearly policing plan;
- Assist the chief / officer in charge in addressing public complaints;
- Appoint the public complaint director;
- Assist in selecting OIC / subject to ratification by Council, appoint the Chief of Police.

### 5.6.2 Current Practices

The function and operations of the Commission are outlined in the EPC Policy Manual (Edmonton Police Commission, 2022). As stipulated by the Act and EPC Policy 4.3.1, the Commission is required to conduct a comprehensive governance review at a minimum of once every four years as a commitment to continuous improvement. The process involves collecting input from Commissioners, Commission staff, and the Chief of Police, with results used to inform strategic planning, policy development and/or revision(s), educational opportunities, and address any missing skills or competencies on the Commission.

A review of EPC policies and documentation found the commission to be largely compliant with the Alberta Policing Oversight Standards. Since the last compliance audit in 2019, the Commission has acted upon the recommendations to strengthen or update policies and/or actions related to security checks for Commissioners and maintaining contact information for staff and Commissioners.

The current review determined partial or non-compliance on the following standards. Details on areas of non-compliance can be found in Appendix B.

- Roles and Responsibilities (RR) 2.4, Oath of Office – Signed and dated Oaths of Office and Code of Conduct were missing for some Commissioners.

- Personnel Administration (PA) 1.1, Member Education and Training – A record of training completed by Commissioners is not maintained.
- Organizational Management (OM) 2.1, Oversight Agency Planning – The Commission’s annual plan is not generally communicated to the Municipality nor to the Chief of Police.
- Organizational Management (OM) 3.3, Tracking the Use of Funds – A distinct report on honoraria and reimbursement of expenses for members is not included in the annual audit.
- Organizational Management (OM) 4.1, Responsibility for Records Management – Current policies do not specify who is responsible for records management.
- RR 1.1 (“Police Commission”) of the Standards specify requirements for the Municipal Bylaw establishing the Commission – The current Bylaw does not include the process for removal of members as required.

### 5.6.3 Recommendations

18. Address compliance deficiencies as soon as possible and practical.

*Rationale:*

The Standards are mandatory.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Missing Oaths of Office and Codes of Conduct should be addressed immediately as important to the integrity of the Commission.

More procedural considerations such as documenting member training, communicating the Commission’s annual plan, acknowledging audit processes and responsibility for records management in policy could be done as part of the annual cycle of related activity, as long as completed within the fiscal year.

19. Prepare a checklist of items to ensure ongoing compliance aligned with the timing of related activity and confirm completion with each annual report.

*Rationale:*

Reliable tracking to ensure regular items are completed.

*Implementation Considerations:*

Given recurring deficiencies, a checklist would be useful to ensure critical matters are addressed during onboarding of new commissioners (Oath of Office, Contact Information, Code of Conduct, etc.),

Other checklists may be useful to confirm completion of all items that should be completed annually (e.g., tracking training by Commissioners, communicating annual plan to Council and Chief, reports to Minister, etc.)

Acknowledgement of completion of these obligations in the Commission’s annual report to Council, the Minister and the Public will effectively support ongoing compliance, and facilitate the four-year audit process.



## 5.7 Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations have been listed together below for ease of reference, including the estimated resource impact and suggested timing in which they should be addressed.

Recommendation	Resource Impact	Timing (Month)		
		1-3	3-6	6-12
<b>4.1 Role of the Police Commission</b>				
1. Clarify and emphasize the Commission’s role as governance, enable discussion to support mutual understanding between the Commission, Council and the Police Service, and provide guidance regarding the distinction between governance and operational matters. <i>See also Recommendations 6-8.</i>	Moderate			
2. Frame agenda items for Commission consideration in the context of the Commission’s governance role.	Moderate			
3. Review practice of appointing members of City Council as members of the Commission.	Moderate			
4. Evolve the process for strategic planning to work jointly with the Police Service to produce one, integrated strategic plan.	Low			
5. Expand the Commission’s understanding of policing policy and its associated responsibility.	Moderate			
<b>4.2 Learning &amp; Development</b>				
6. Strengthen Commission orientation on its governance role, including shared learning and discussion between Commissioners, the Commission and Council, and the Commission and the Police Service.	Moderate			
7. Include training for chairpersons of the Commission and Committees as part of orientation and enable opportunities for multiple members of the Commission to gain experience as Committee Chairs.	Moderate			
8. Establish ongoing opportunities for shared learning by Commissioners, complemented by versus reliant on individually sought out learning from external organizations.	Moderate			
<b>4.3 Committee Structure</b>				
9. Increase public transparency of Committee agendas and recommendations to the Commission.	Low			
10. Review Committee Terms of Reference not less than annually and establish a workplan consistent with Commission priorities. Formalize orientation for new Committee members and incorporate intended Committee processes in general Commission orientation.	Moderate			
<b>4.4 Meeting Processes</b>				
11. Expand public access to meeting proceedings through increased communication and recorded video.	Moderate			
12. Re-align general structure of Commission meetings to maximize transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.	Low			

Recommendation	Resource Impact	Timing (Month)		
		1-3	3-6	6-12
13. Establish a standard concise format for a top-level briefing on agenda items to enable understanding of key points, and the governance considerations for the topic.	Moderate			
4.5 Public Participation and Input in Commission Decision-Making				
14. Develop a stakeholder engagement plan as part of strategic/annual planning that clearly states the topics on which engagement is desired, consistent with EPC's governance role, and the intended use of the engagement findings.	Moderate			
15. Develop / include public education on the role of the commission and the various oversight and accountability mechanisms for the Police Service on the website and as background to public engagement	High			
16. Review policies related to public attendance at EPC meetings and discuss with the Commission the currently perceived barriers to meaningful interaction between the public and the Commission.	Low			
17. Consider use of advisory committee structures to enable insights from hard-to-reach populations.	High			
4.5 Compliance with Provincial Standards for Police Oversight Bodies				
18. Address compliance deficiencies as soon as possible and practical. <i>[Bylaw Change]</i>	Low			
19. Prepare a checklist of items to ensure ongoing compliance aligned with the timing of related activity and confirm completion with each annual report.	Low			

## Appendix A - References

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## Appendix B –Variance to Standards

#	Standard	Findings
Roles and Responsibilities (RR) 2.4, Oath of Office	<p><i>Pursuant to the Police Act, upon appointment, successful applicants shall (a) take the Oath of Office; and receive the following: (b) The Alberta Police Act and the Police Service Regulation; (c) A Conduct/Ethics policy that the oversight agency will follow; and (d) The oversight agency's policy manual</i></p> <p>Indication of compliance should include signed Oaths of Office and Codes of Conduct from each member of the Commission.</p>	Records were incomplete for signed and dated Commissioner Oaths of Office (two missing) and Codes of Conduct (one missing)
Personnel Administration (PA) 1.1, Member education and training	<p><i>The oversight agency shall provide education and training that meets the needs of its members. Suggested inclusions are: (a) Policing oversight and complaints in Alberta (Justice and Solicitor General)</i></p> <p><i>(b) Legislated roles and responsibilities (Police Act)</i></p> <p><i>(c) Public complaints process and provincial reporting – in general</i></p> <p><i>(d) Provincial policing oversight standards</i></p> <p><i>(e) Orientation to Professional Standards Branch/Section</i></p> <p>Indication of compliance should include the policy and/or member orientation manual, and Commissioner training plan along with a record of training completed by all members of the Commission.</p>	<p>The commissioner training process includes a general orientation to the EPC, encompassing the roles and responsibilities of police commissions as designated by the <i>Police Act</i>, public complaint process, and role of the Public Complaint Director in managing complaints; along with presentations introducing governance, commission budget and finances, and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP).</p> <p>The EPC has a member orientation manual, and an Education and Training policy that indicates members of the Commission should submit quarterly reports on completed training. The EPC does not establish an overall training plan or maintain a compiled record of training completed by all members of the Commission.</p>
Organizational	<i>The oversight agency may, each year, set</i>	The Commission has not

#	Standard	Findings
Management (OM) 2.1, Oversight agency planning	<i>priorities for themselves as a Board. The oversight agency shall: (a) set annual goals and objectives for the oversight agency; and (b) communicate those annual goals and objectives to the Municipality and Chief of Police</i>	communicated annual goals and objectives to the Municipality and the Chief of Police.
OM 3.3 Tracking the use of funds	<i>The oversight agency shall have written policies that address procedures for handling funds, including honoraria (as they exist) and reimbursement of expenses for its members.</i>  Verification of this requirements is a copy of audited financial statements outlining honoraria and/or expense reimbursement to members.	EPC Policy Section 5.6 includes a series of policies related to Commission Honoraria and Expenses. The EPC and EPS are included with the overall City of Edmonton Financial Statements. There is not a separate statement or schedule outlining honoraria and/or expense reimbursement to members.
OM 4.1, Responsibility for records management	<i>The oversight agency shall have written policies that address responsibility and procedures for the records management function</i>	Existing policy 3.2.1 (Records Management) details records management procedures. It does not address responsibility.

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